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Brown: UT will beat NU

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas quarterback James Brown boldly stated Monday that the Longhorns will beat three-touchdown favorite Nebraska Saturday in the Big 12 championship game.

"I think we're going to win by three touchdowns," said Brown, who threw for four scores and 336 yards without an interception in a 51-15 victory over Texas A&M on Friday. "If they blitz us, and we make plays against the blitz, we'll be all right."

"I'm as confident about this game as I was going into the A&M game."

On paper, Brown figures to have a long day against the nation's fourth-ranked defense, which is giving up just 77.8 yards on the ground and 232 yards total per game.

"I watched the Colorado game, and they sacked (Koy) Detmer every other time he dropped back to pass," Brown said. "To sack me, they're going to have to catch me."

"If they bring everyone, it means they are going to be man-to-man, and I don't think they can cover our receivers the whole game man-to-man."

Hanspard wins Doak Walker

Texas Tech junior Byron Hanspard was announced as the winner of the Doak Walker Award on Monday, given annually to the best running back in college football.

Hanspard, the sixth back in NCAA history to rush for more than 2,000 yards in a season, edged juniors Troy Davis of Iowa State and Northwestern's Darnell Autry for the award.

"It's great to go there with all my family and friends and people I grew up with," he said. "It's an honor to go back home and receive the award."

Hanspard ran for 2,084 yards this season, but Davis topped him for the Big 12 rushing title with a national-best 2,185.

Hanspard's only statistical edge over Davis was in yards per attempt, 6.1 to 5.4.

But Hanspard led Texas Tech to a 7-4 season, compared with 2-9 for Davis' Cyclones.

"All I can do is give God praise for all the blessings he's given me and the teammates he's surrounded me with," Hanspard said.

Note:

Hanspard and Davis were both named to the Football Writers Association All-America team on Monday. Nebraska rush end Grant Wistrom and center Aaron Taylor also made the team, along with fellow Big 12 players Matt Russell of Colorado and Chris Canty of Kansas State.

Pettit pleased with composure

Huskers appear to be hitting stride at the right time.

By SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
 Staff Reporter

Nebraska Volleyball Coach Terry Pettit knew at the beginning of the 1996 season that his team had the potential to accomplish great things.



Nepo

Pettit sensed that this young Nebraska team—nine of 12 players are sophomores and freshmen—could overcome the loss of four key members from its 1995 national championship team.

"It was just a refusal to lower our standards," Pettit said. "And eventually, we grew into those standards and we played some great volleyball."

NU's great volleyball paid off Sunday, when the Huskers were awarded the top seed in the East Region of the NCAA Tournament. If Nebraska wins Saturday night at the NU Coliseum against either Rhode Island or Arkansas, the Huskers will play host to a regional tournament for the third straight season.

In the last four weeks, Pettit said—particularly last weekend against Texas and Texas A&M—the individual pieces of the puzzle have fallen into place for the Huskers, who appear to be playing their best at the perfect time.

Since losing to Texas Tech on Oct. 26, NU has won 10 straight matches, including four against ranked opponents. By defeating eighth-ranked Texas and No. 16 Texas A&M—neither of which had lost a match at home—Nebraska secured the conference title and a top seed in the tournament.

"I said about four weeks ago that we needed to win all of our matches

"I always sensed that this team wanted to aspire to great things."

TERRY PETTIT
 NU volleyball coach

from that point," Pettit said. "We didn't talk about it as a team. We didn't start hyperventilating over it or anything."

"Our goal was to win the Big 12, so we didn't need to state that again."

Sophomore setter Fiona Nepo said the Huskers remained composed during the season's stretch run and didn't think much about the postseason.

"That was always in the back of our minds," Nepo said. "But we just wanted to concentrate on each match. I can see the improvement in my play and also in the team's. It's just amazing. The team has improved so much in the last two weeks."

Pettit cited several factors in the improvement, including an increase in leadership, something he said his team lacked after its Nov. 22 win over Texas Tech.

"We got it in several ways," Pettit said. "We got it from (Lisa) Reitsma and her physical play. We got it from Stacie Maser, someone who hasn't played a lot this year but showed what it means to be an experienced player by raising her level of play and taking the team with it."

Pettit also credited Nebraska's success to Nepo's consistency and the communication skills of seniors Kate Crnich and Maria Hedbeck.

"It's been a gradual but consistent growth," Pettit said. "That's different than having great athletes or having great individual skills. That's a mental factor, and it's taken some time to develop."

"I always sensed that this team wanted to aspire to great things."

NU bowl options abound

BOWLS from page 7

ment Monday. But Reid said the Holiday Bowl would be happy to have Nebraska.

But until Sunday, nothing can become official, said Paul Hoolahan, executive director of the Sugar Bowl, not even Florida State's invitation to the Jan. 2 game in New Orleans. The Seminoles finished the regular season 11-0 after defeating Florida 24-21 on Saturday.

Note:

Nebraska I-back Ahman Green suf-

fered a stress fracture in his foot Friday against Colorado and probably will not play Saturday against Texas.

"I think it's about a done deal," NU Coach Tom Osborne said, "but I don't know for sure."

Fellow I-back Damon Benning also missed practice on Monday with a sprained ankle.

Because of the injuries and the Big 12's 66-man travel roster, fullbacks Joel Makovicka and Brian Schuster will practice at I-back this week behind DeAngelo Evans and Jay Sims.

NU to face test tonight

HOOPS from page 7

playing well, with all five starters averaging at least 10.3 points per game. Forward Venson Hamilton is coming off the bench to average 10.7 points and 8.7 rebounds per game.

Because of injuries to 6-8 forward Andy Markowski and Florence, the Huskers are using their third starting lineup in four games.

After missing the first two games, Markowski returned to the NU lineup against Oregon State, scoring five

points and grabbing one rebound.

Although Markowski said he was out of game shape, he was glad to get back on the court. After watching two games from the bench, he said he noticed that NU is playing enthusiastically this season.

"Each game we've had a different type of team to play against," Markowski said. "We are just going off what the coaches say about the personnel and play to the scouting report. We hope to improve on certain aspects, and so far in the past three games, we have done that."

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