

# Kansas' success surprises coach

Jayhawks have won eight straight without injured star Vaughn.

BY TREVOR PARKS  
Senior Reporter

These days the only thing slowing down the Kansas basketball team is final exams.



Williams

Playing without injured All-American point guard Jacque Vaughn, the Jayhawks have surprisingly rolled to a 7-0 record and last week took over the No. 1 spot in The Associated Press poll.

KU continued to prove its worth beating George Washington (85-56) Wednesday night at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence, Kan. The game was the final bump in the road before final exams begin today.

Kansas Coach Roy Williams said juggling practice time and studies has been hard for his players. The Jayhawks did not practice Sunday or Monday before returning to the court Tuesday.

"It's extremely difficult to get everything we want to get done at this time of the season," Williams said during the Big 12 basketball coaches teleconference Tuesday. "With finals starting this is a difficult time for our team."

So far this season the game-time tests have not been difficult for the Jayhawks.

Kansas had one of its most impressive performances of the season Saturday, beating UCLA 96-83 in Los Angeles.

Against the Bruins, Raef LaFrentz scored a career-high 31 points. LaFrentz also had career-bests making 13 field goals, attempting 21 field goals and having three assists.

Replacement point guard Ryan Robertson showed Vaughn-like flashes dishing out 11 assists against UCLA. In Vaughn's absence, Robertson has seen increased playing time. Robertson, a 6-foot-5 sophomore from St. Charles, Mo., has averaged 32.4 minutes per game compared to just nine minutes he played per game last season.

He has become the Jayhawks' cre-

Men's Basketball	
BIG 12 CONFERENCE	
Standings	Record
Team	Record
<b>North Division</b>	
Kansas	2-0
Iowa St.	5-0
Nebraska	6-1
Kansas St.	4-1
Missouri	4-3
Colorado	4-2
<b>South Division</b>	
Texas Tech	5-0
Oklahoma	5-0
Baylor	6-1
Texas	4-1
Texas A&M	4-1
Oklahoma St.	3-2

ator, dishing 45 assists compared to turning the ball over 16 times in seven games.

"Once the game starts he's concerned with not giving it away," Williams said. "I'm pleased with the way he has filled in for Jacque, and I do hope he continues to improve."

This season, Williams has seen continuous improvement out of his team.

After opening the year with a shaky win at Santa Clara, KU picked things up beating Louisiana State, California and Virginia winning the Maui Invitational in Hawaii.

The Jayhawks beat San Diego 79-72 Dec. 1 at Allen Fieldhouse in their first home game of the season.

Last Wednesday, KU kept its momentum rolling beating preseason No. 1 Cincinnati 72-65 at the Great Eight Tournament in Chicago.

Last night's win over the Colonials was the first of a five-game home stretch. The Jayhawks have won 31 consecutive games at Allen Fieldhouse. KU plays North Carolina-Asheville, North Carolina State, Washburn and Brown at home before opening conference play Jan. 4 at Kansas State.

By then a healthy Vaughn is expected to be back in the lineup.

"I've never been one to look down the schedule recordwise," Williams said, "but if you would have told me in September when Jacque got hurt that we would be 8-0, I would have been astounded."

# Russell continues NU swimming legacy

RUSSELL jump from page 13

"I learned a lot about myself in the water in the Olympics," Russell said. "I learned about what I needed to do and what I didn't need to do to win."

"I learned so much in the Olympics, it's hard to put in words."

NU Assistant Coach Jan Bidman, who coaches Nebraska's breaststrokes and coached Heyns on her journey to gold, is a man of few words when it comes to describing Russell.

• On her breaststroke: "She's one of the top eight in the world."

• On her shot at winning an NCAA Championship: "She can win it all."

• On her work ethic: "She is extremely competitive. She really wants to win."

Before Russell began her Nebraska career, Bidman said one knock against Russell was she lacked intensity.

"I've never seen that from her at all," Bidman said. "She was pretty in-

tense from the day she got here."

Living in Nebraska almost the entire year, Russell gets the chance to return home only once. She spent last summer training and competing in preparation for the Summer Games.

Still, Russell said Lincoln is her second home.

"It hasn't always been easy," Russell said. "But the people and the team make you feel so good about being here. It's like a family."

Another motivating factor has been the presence of Heyns. Russell has known Heyns since they were 12. The two often worked out together in Lincoln and pushed each other in Atlanta.

Heyns has been a major factor in Russell's development, Russell said.

"Penny has helped with the mental part of racing," Russell said. "She taught me how to learn from each race."

# Husker track teams ready for tougher competition

BY VINCE D'ADAMO  
Staff Reporter

In the Big Eight Conference, Coach Gary Pepin's Nebraska men's and women's track and field teams win conference titles more frequently than congressmen get re-elected. Every year.

With the advent of the Big 12 Conference, the Cornhuskers look to continue their winning legacy.

Even though big-name track schools like Texas, Texas A&M, Baylor and Texas Tech have joined the league, Pepin said NU's goal of being on top has remained the same. "Our goals haven't changed," Pepin said. "We still want to finish in the top 10. We haven't talked about it with the team, but they know."

The Husker women's team won 17 straight Big Eight indoor championships and had won 16 straight outdoor titles before placing second behind Colorado last spring.

On the men's side, the Huskers won the last three indoor championships and the final two outdoor

titles in conference history.

Pepin said competition in the Big 12 will simulate running in a national championship meet.

"There won't be very many easy points," Pepin said. "It'll probably be one of the top two or three conferences at the lowest."

Facing tough competition is just fine with shot putter Tressa Thompson. Thompson, who holds the Husker indoor shot put record, said the teams in the Big 12 will prepare Nebraska for top-caliber NCAA competition.

"Any meet that's like a miniature national meet will help you a bunch," Thompson said.

Very few coaching changes will also contribute to continued success, Thompson said. Pepin begins his 17th season as the women's coach and 14th year as the men's coach.

"Leadership has been good for our team because they know how to prepare the athletes," Thompson said.

Besides Thompson, Angee Henry, the defending NCAA indoor long jump national champion, re-

turns to lead the women.

Sprinter Charmaine Burton, a transfer from Riverside Community College and triple jumper Dahlia Ingram from Liberal, Kan., figure to contribute right away, Pepin said.

"Both have looked real good," Pepin said. "They are proven competitors who have won all kinds of records and championships."

"They were gifted athletes before anyone started coaching them."

On the men's side the distance races should give NU an advantage. Jonah Kiptarus, who finished second in the NCAA cross country championships in November, will compete in the mile and 3000-meter run. Cleophas Boor, who placed third in the cross country championships, should contend for national title honors in the 5000-meter run.

High jumper Shane Lavy and long jumper Joe Laster are two field athletes that figure to be strong in the conference, Pepin said. Chris Wright, a transfer from Kansas City, Kan. Junior College, figures to push Laster in the long jump.

The Huskers open the indoor season Jan. 18 at the Kansas State Open.

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