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Senior makes impact off court

BY JAY SAUNDERS
 Staff Reporter

“I understand there are better people than me, I just want the team to win.”

KRISTIE BILECKY
 NU women's tennis player

Kristie Bilecky has proven an athlete doesn't have to be in the public eye to make a huge impact for her team.



Bilecky

Bilecky, a senior on the Nebraska women's tennis team from Vacaville, Calif., transferred to Nebraska after two seasons at Cal State-Sacramento Junior College. After two years in Sacramento,

Bilecky knew it was time for a change. “I was unhappy with the program there,” Bilecky said. “Tennis is taken more serious here. I knew it was what I wanted.”

Bilecky made an instant contribution last year, playing No. 5 and 6 singles and No. 3 doubles. But this year, a talented freshman Cornhusker class bumped Bilecky out of NU's rotation. Instead of having her ego bruised by not playing, she has done everything in her power to help this year's young squad.

“I try to make everyone feel relaxed,” Bilecky said. “I understand there are better people than me, I just

want the team to win.”

NU Coach Scott Jacobson attributes a big part of the team's 15-7 record to the help of Bilecky. Jacobson said his job is made easier by Bilecky's rapport with the rest of the players.

“She has a more powerful impact on her peers than I can ever have,” Jacobson said. “She brings a certain comfort level to the players. She is truly interested in the people in the program.”

As an education major, Bilecky hopes to become a high school teacher in the future. She said she hopes a lot of what she does with the younger players will help her future career.

“When I have something to say, people usually listen,” Bilecky said. “I try to let the younger players know everyone has to go through this.”

Part of the responsibility of being a teacher is also being a leader. Bilecky said leaders are people who will say what they need to say and respect what

others have to say about themselves. She doesn't know if she is a leader on this year's team, but Jacobson said he has no doubt.

“She is truly a leader,” Jacobson said. “She is accepting of others, non-judgmental and always trying to find the bright side. We can all aspire to be a little bit more like Kristie.”

Notes:

The Nebraska women will be the sixth seed at the Big 12 Conference tournament which begins Thursday. NU will play No. 11-seed Iowa State in the first round. If the Huskers win they play third-seed Texas A&M in the second round.

The Nebraska men's team is the eighth seed and will play either Baylor or Texas Tech. If NU wins it will play Texas, the tournament's top seed.

NU golf team in fourth

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska women's golf team moved up one spot to fourth after the second round of the Big 12 Tournament in Lawrence, Kan.

The Cornhuskers, who shot a second-round score of 313 Monday for a two-day total of 624, are 18 strokes behind leader Texas (606) entering the tournament's final round today. Texas A&M is second with a score of 616 and Oklahoma State is third with a 622.

“We had a real shaky start and didn't play very well on the front nine,” NU Coach Robin Krapfl said. “We'd definitely like to move up to

second and obviously our goal is to finish as high as we can get.”

Freshman Elizabeth Bahensky, who was in sixth after the first round, moved into a three-way tie for third with a round of 77 on Monday. Bahensky has a total of 153 for the tournament. NU's Hanne Nyquist also shot a 77 on Monday and is in sixth place with a 154. Nyquist ended her round with a triple-bogey on No. 18.

Texas' Heather Bowie leads the tournament with a 139 after firing a round of 68 on Monday.

Other Nebraska scores: Rachelle Tacha is in ninth with a 156; Shirin Hornecker is tied for 43rd with a score of 165 and Maureen Regan is tied for 51st with a 169.

Beck may leave for ABL

BECK from page 7

changes, that's what my emphasis is and what my focus is on. When I'm at liberty to discuss something, I will.”

Anne Cribbs, ABL vice president for sponsorship and community development said the league wasn't ready to make a comment. Cribbs said Beck was one of a number of candidates interviewed for the opening.

“We would like to name a head coach soon, but we're not ready yet,” said Cribbs who was a part of the interviewing process. “I just love her energy and enthusiasm. I could say paragraphs about her.”

When Lowrey was fired, ABL officials said they wanted to hire someone who had more experience working with top-level athletes. Before her one-year stint at San Jose, Lowrey was the coach at Division II Tarelton State University in Texas for 20 years.

Cribbs said another positive in Beck's favor is her experience coaching at the Division-I level. Before arriving at NU in 1986, Beck spent three years each as the coach at Bradley and Southwest Missouri State.

Gary Cavalli, the ABL's vice president for communications and marketing, was in Seattle Monday night and unavailable for comment.

However, both Cribbs and Cavalli have stated publicly that they want to have a head coach hired before the pre-draft player combines, which begin Thursday at the University of San Francisco's Koret Center.

This past year, NU opened its season with a school-best nine-game win-

ning streak and, at one point, was 16-1 and ranked in the Top 25. Along with that, the Huskers defeated then-No. 9 Iowa, which was the highest ranked opponent a Beck-coached team has ever defeated.

However, Nebraska lost eight of its last 11 games and, despite a 19-9 overall record, the team was denied an invitation to the NCAA Tournament.

In Beck's 11 seasons, her teams averaged 17 wins per year and finished below .500 only three times.

The Lasers finished last season 18-22 with a second-place finish in the Western Division behind Portland.

San Jose was hampered when starting guard and former Stanford player Jennifer Azzi, who played on the gold medal-winning U.S. Olympic Basketball team, suffered a season-ending shoulder separation in December.

Other members of the Lasers include former Stanford players Anita Kaplan, Sonja Henning and Val Whiting. Azzi, Henning and Whiting all played on Stanford's 1990 national championship team, while Whiting was also on the 1992 team that won the title.

Also on the Lasers' 10-player roster is former Colorado star Jamillah Lang.

Unlike the National Basketball Association, the ABL was organized as a single entity that owns all the teams and pays all the players' salaries. Cavalli and Cribbs, along with Steve Hams and Bobby Johnson, organized the league with the intent to keep the nation's best women basketball players playing in the United States.

Brown has experience

BROWN from page 7

“I knew that he was going to be tested a lot for the simple reason that he was a freshman,” Nebraska Defensive Backs Coach George Darlington said. “But he was the best player we had at that time at that position. Quite frankly, he performed as well as we could expect a freshman to perform.”

The 5-foot-11, 180-pound native of Hacienda Heights, Calif., broke up 12 passes — second most in a single season ever at NU — and returned four interceptions for 83 yards and a touchdown against Oklahoma, earning him Big 12 Conference Defensive Newcomer-of-the-Year honors.

“I'm glad they picked on me,” Brown said. “It made me better as a player and a person. I would make mistakes but I'd just try harder on the next play. It helped my confidence level a lot.”

Brown carried that newfound confidence into spring practices, where, as a sophomore, he is the Huskers' lone returning starter in the secondary. Nebraska's young secondary includes only eight players with any NU playing experience, a junior college transfer, and three recruits — including Joe Walker, who is already on campus for spring ball.

“We have a lot of young guys who don't have that much experience on the field,” Brown said, “So that really motivates me to get out there and work harder.”

Brown's hard work and leadership have been an important factor in the development of the secondary this spring, Darlington said.

“We have the potential to have a very good secondary with younger players,” Darlington said. “He's played a tremendous part in that, and he's done a really nice job of leadership even though he's only been on campus for a year.”

“You can't just tell somebody they have to be a leader if it isn't in their nature. He's talked to kids like Joe Walker and helped him with things he obviously doesn't know yet. He's made a real impact, and we've been really pleased with that.”