

New coach creates new hope

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Assignment Reporter

After gradually climbing up the college women's basketball ladder for 11 years under former Coach Angela Beck, the members of Nebraska women's basketball team expect to take a giant leap this season with new Coach Paul Sanderford.

Sanderford brings new hope to the Cornhuskers.

Beck's last season left little more than several "near misses" and "not quites" after Nebraska lost nine games by less than eight points.

The Huskers ended the season with disappointment, losing eight of their last 11 games and narrowly missing an NCAA Tournament bid with a 19-9 record.

"Coach Beck took us as far as she could until we were at the point where we weren't really going any further," sophomore Nicole Kubik said. "It was always, 'maybe we'll make the NCAA Tournament, or maybe we won't.'"

"But there is no doubt this year. We really believe that we're going to be there."

A renewed enthusiasm and confidence characterizes Sanderford's first team at Nebraska. The players believe in the southern coach's up-tempo, high-scoring philosophy, Kubik said.

Sanderford's 365-120 career record speaks for itself. In 15 years at Western Kentucky, Sanderford

guided the Lady Toppers to 12 NCAA Tournament appearances.

After building a national power at WKU, Sanderford hopes to place Nebraska in a similar situation in five years, he said.

In preseason practices, Sanderford has already laid the groundwork. Several Husker players have called his practices the most physically difficult they've ever participated in.

Senior Emily Thompson, who started in 10 of Nebraska's 29 games last season, said the Huskers were surprised at the intensity of Sanderford's practices.

Thompson said the intense workouts have driven NU to another level physically and mentally.

"We are working so hard," Thompson said. "We are absolutely working our tails off, and we expect to see the results. There is no doubt in anybody's mind that we are going to win that Big 12 Championship."

"Our strength is our confidence in each other and in the coaches."

Nebraska, ranked in the top 25 in most preseason polls, will have experience to work with in its quest to win the league championship. The Huskers return 12 players who saw action in 1996, including five seniors.

The backcourt should prove an early strength for NU. First-team All-Big 12 selection Anna DeForge should provide most of Nebraska's offensive output. The senior guard led the Huskers with 17.5 points per game and 3.0 assists per game.

Sophomores Kubik and Brooke Schwartz, along with senior Jami Kubik, also supply NU with experience in the backcourt. Nebraska's biggest question mark is the point guard position where they lost LaToya Doage. Sanderford will experiment with Nicole Kubik at the position.

Sanderford, who wants the Huskers to average 18-20 three-point field goals, said to look for increased scoring from DeForge, Schwartz and both Kubiks.

In the paint, Sanderford anticipates higher rebound numbers this season. Nebraska loses top rebounder Tina McClain, who completed her eligibility last season. Sanderford, however, said DeForge and forwards Thompson, Charlie Rogers and Cori McDill should pick up the slack.

Freshman Amanda Cleveland, who Sanderford said will compete for a starting position, will also be counted on to contribute heavily in the paint.

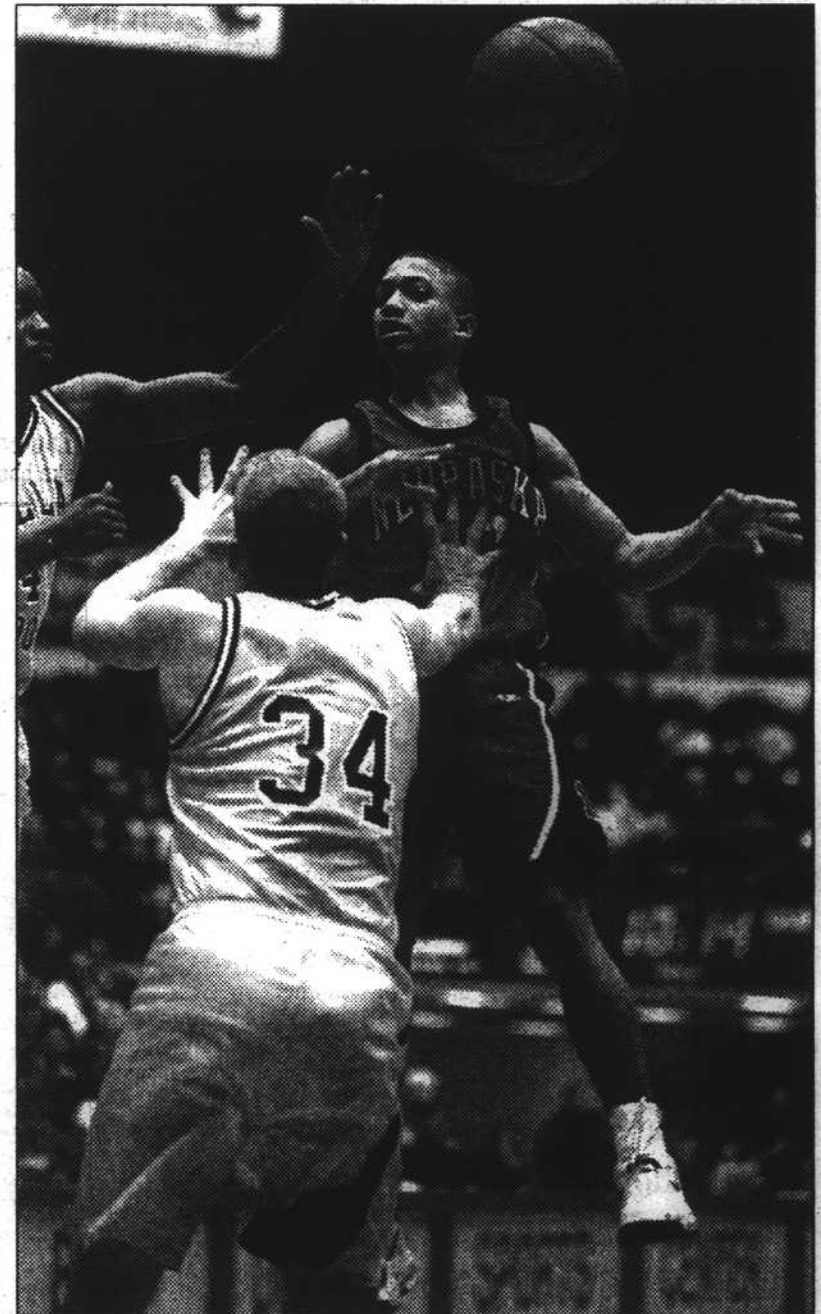
Returning experience and higher intensity should help the Huskers to avoid the slip ups of last season, DeForge said.

"You could just feel the disappointment settle in when we didn't make the NCAA Tournament last year," DeForge said. "I think we just took a step back and looked at ourselves and realized that's not a feeling we ever want to feel again."

"If there were ever a year for us to get a Big 12 ring, this is it. We have the talent and the ability, we just need to put it all together."

1997-98 Nebraska Women's Basketball Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time	Site
Nov. 7	Zala Volan (Hungary)	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Nov. 12	Victorian All-Stars	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Nov. 14-22	Women's NIT	TBA	TBA
Nov. 14	Miami (Ohio)	8:35 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Nov. 24	Creighton	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Nov. 28-29	CableVision Classic		Lincoln, Neb.
Nov. 28	Kentucky vs. Illinois-Chicago	3:05 p.m.	
	Nebraska vs. Stetson	5:05 p.m.	
Nov. 29	Consolation	1:05 p.m.	
	Championship	3:05 p.m.	
Dec. 3	Bradley	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Dec. 5-7	Copper Bowl Classic		Tucson, Ariz.
Dec. 5	Nebraska vs. Wichita St.	5 p.m.	
	Arizona St. vs. Northeastern	7 p.m.	
Dec. 7	Consolation	Noon	
	Championship	2 p.m.	
Dec. 12	Wisconsin-Green Bay	7 p.m.	Green Bay, Wis.
Dec. 13	Wisconsin-Milwaukee	7 p.m.	Milwaukee, Wis.
Dec. 20	Wyoming	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Dec. 30	Northern Illinois	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Jan. 4	Kansas St.	2:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Jan. 7	Colorado	8 p.m.	Boulder, Colo.
Jan. 10	Kansas	7 p.m.	Lawrence, Kan.
Jan. 14	Texas A&M	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Jan. 17	Kansas St.	7 p.m.	Manhattan, Kan.
Jan. 21	Baylor	7 p.m.	Waco, Texas
Jan. 28	Texas	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Jan. 31	Oklahoma St.	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Feb. 4	Missouri	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Feb. 7	Iowa St.	7 p.m.	Ames, Iowa
Feb. 11	Kansas	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Feb. 14	Oklahoma	7 p.m.	Norman, Okla.
Feb. 17	Missouri	7 p.m.	Columbia, Mo.
Feb. 22	Colorado	2:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
Feb. 25	Texas Tech	7 p.m.	Lubbock, Texas
Feb. 28	Iowa St.	7:05 p.m.	Lincoln, Neb.
March 3-7	Big 12 Conference Tournament	TBA	Kansas City, Mo.



RYAN SODERLIN/DN
NEBRASKA JUNIOR POINT GUARD Tyronn Lue dishes off one of his game-high 11 assists in Nebraska's exhibition victory against Pella Windows on Wednesday. Lue is recognized as one of the best players in the country.

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