

Lue headed for Nuggets

BY DARREN IVY
Co-editor

Watching from his agent's house in New York, Tyronn Lue watched as three other first-team Big 12 players were taken ahead of him in the 1998 NBA Draft in Vancouver, B.C.

Then came Lue's turn to be in the spotlight.

With the 23rd selection, the Denver Nuggets picked the 6-foot 175-pound point guard from Nebraska.

"My heart kind of stopped for a minute," Lue said. "It just seems not real. I'm finally taking the step toward my dream."

Lue will join Kansas's Raef LaFrentz, who was taken as the third overall pick by the Nuggets, and a solid nucleus of young players who went 11-71 last season.

"It's a great opportunity," Lue said. They are an up-tempo team with great players like LaPhonso Ellis and Tony Battie coming back."

Nebraska Assistant Coach Jimmy Williams also thought the Nuggets were a perfect team for Lue.

"He will fit in very well out there,"

said NU Assistant Coach Jimmy Williams. "(The Nuggets were unhappy with their point guard last year so Tyronn should have a chance to come in and play substantial time right away."

"That is important in the NBA because rookies can only sign three-year contracts now. Players need to prove themselves in the first two years."

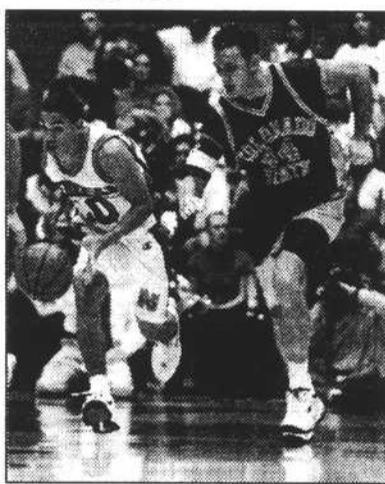
Now that he's been drafted, Lue has taken the first step toward his dream of becoming a professional.

"Ever since he was a little kid, he dreamed of playing in the pros," said Lue's mother, Kim Miller. "He used to get up early and practice every day."

That hard work earned him a scholarship at NU where he started for three years.

As a three-year starter at NU, Lue averaged 15.9 points, 3.4 rebounds and 4.4 assists per game in 99 career games. He also was named to the first-team All-Big 12 as a junior and second-team All-big 12 as a sophomore.

Williams coached Lue at NU and also went with him to the NBA tryout camp in Chicago before the draft. Williams said Lue was trying to be too perfect at the tryout and didn't make some of the plays Williams was used to



MIKE WARREN/DN
TYRONN LUE was selected as the 23rd pick in the NBA Draft by the Denver Nuggets Wednesday night.

seeing him make. He said those two factors may have affected Lue's stock in the draft.

But Williams knows Lue's true talent. "Denver really got a steal," Williams said. "He has big-time quickness. I know the Lakers are probably really disappointed. Jerry West really wanted him."

Former NU players in softball league

Echo-Hawk, Smith, McCoy making their marks in new women's fastpitch clubs

BY TANYA WRIGHT
Staff Reporter

Three former Nebraska softball players are now chasing dreams that just a few years ago seemed almost impossible to fulfill.

After exhausting their college eligibility, former NU players Tobin Echo-Hawk, Jenny Smith and Christie McCoy are continuing their playing careers in the new professional women's fast pitch league.

Women's Professional Fastpitch made its debut in 1997 after eight years of planning, and currently consists of six teams based in Gastonia, N.C., Hampton Roads, Va., Durham, N.C., Columbus, Ga., Orlando, Fla., and Tampa Bay, Fla.

The league boasts enormous talent, including former U.S. National Team members, NCAA All-Americans and U.S. Olympians.

Among the stand-outs is second-year player Tobin Echo-Hawk.

Arguably the best third base player in NU history, last year Echo-Hawk led the WPF in doubles, was second in runs, tied for third in hits and ranked seventh in batting average and slugging percentage.

A member of the Orlando Wahoos, last year's league champions, she cites fewer distractions as a major difference from the college game.

"You wake up and all you have to worry about is the game that night," she said. "You're more focused."

This season Echo-Hawk has been slowed by minor injuries and is waiting to make her presence felt.

"She's such a savvy, heady ball player," said first year coach Sharron Backus. "She started slow because of injuries, but she'll do fine."

Backus was quick to point out that the league has changed a great deal from the previous year. The distance between bases has decreased from 65 feet to 60 feet, while the pitching mound was moved in three feet to the college distance of 43 feet.

The addition of the 1998 WPF Draft, in which 60 college seniors were chosen by the six teams, has drastically improved the talent level in the league.

Former NU catcher and 1997 Academic All-American Jenny Smith was the first catcher chosen in

Upcoming Televised Games on ESPN2

WPF All-Star Game	July 20
Orlando at Georgia	July 27
Tampa Bay at Virginia	Aug. 3
Durham at Georgia	Aug. 10
Carolina at Durham	Aug. 17
Virginia at Georgia	Aug. 24
Orlando at Virginia	Aug. 31
WPF Championship Series Game	Sept. 7



JON FRANK/DN

the draft. She went in the third round to Durham and has since started every game behind the plate for the second-place Dragons. Currently, she leads the league in doubles.

Despite coming in and garnering immediate playing time, Smith said there were still adjustments she had to make.

"In college the coaches always called the pitches," she said. "The biggest change here is that I call all the pitches myself. It makes me focus more and makes me a better player."

Tampa Bay FireStix designated hitter Christie McCoy has also made an impact. Although known for her powerful bat — she's currently second in the league in RBIs and fourth in slugging percentage — McCoy has impressed her coach with her hard work and pitching ability.

"Christie came in with a lot of game experience," said Tampa Bay Coach Lisa Bassi. "She knows what it takes to compete and brings great power to the game."

Originally scheduled to pitch relief or rest the starters, McCoy has shown that she can do the job on the mound.

"We were pleasantly surprised," Bassi said. "We're working her into the starting line-up."

Not only have the players thrived, but the league has also been active.

Bassi said the league hopes to expand to 18 teams by 2004 with teams evenly divided between three regions, the West, Midwest and Southeast.

"I think the league is promising," McCoy said. "A lot of people believe in it."

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