

NU's Hamilton headed for Europe

BY DARREN IVY
Co-editor

When practice for the first-ever Big 12 All-Star basketball team starts Monday in Dallas, it will not be for the meek.

That's because Texas Tech Basketball Coach James Dickey is a firm believer in having physically-fit players - even if it's not Big 12 basketball season.

"Coach Dickey said, 'If you're not in shape, I won't play you,'" said Nebraska senior center Venson Hamilton, who was one of 12 players selected to the team that will travel to England, France, Germany and Belgium in August.

Hamilton has taken Dickey's words to heart and said he is in the "best shape" he's ever been in at this time of the year. The 6-foot-10 center from Forest City, N.C., said he lifts weights and runs on his own, as well as playing ball with his NU teammates each day.

In addition, Hamilton went to Mexico, Mo., for three days last week and played ball all day, everyday with former Cornhusker Tyrone Lue and some current Missouri players.

The honorable mention All-Big 12 selection in 1997-98 hopes his hard work and experiences playing against some of the best European players will allow him to grow as a basketball player. That way he can assume a greater leadership role on the NU basket-

ball team this year.

This is not the first international basketball experience for Hamilton, who played on an all-star team last summer that went to Italy, but he thinks this year's competition will be better.

"Last summer we played mediocre players," he said. "This year we are playing the real pros."

Hamilton is looking forward to playing against quality players on other teams, but NU Assistant Coach Jimmy Williams couldn't say enough about the other players on the Big 12 team.

"There is going to be some good competition, not only on other teams, but on his own team," Williams said. "If players want to play, they will have to earn it. That will make them better players."

Williams said playing with different coaches, different players and in a different environment should be a positive learning experience for Hamilton.

"It is part of the maturing process that every player should experience," Williams said. "Whenever you go and play in a different venue, you always learn something. You learn 'maybe I need to work harder or focus more on something.'"

"It's good to play for other coaches because we want our guys to see things from a different perspective. There is more than one way to skin a cat."

For Dickey, the trip to Europe will be his first, although he's

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JIMMY WILLIAMS
NU Assistant Coach

been to Japan and Hong Kong.

"I'm really excited. This is an outstanding group," Dickey said. "I'm really pleased the conference decided to do this because this is an outstanding basketball and cultural experience for the kids."

The team boasts five players taller than 6-foot-9 including Hamilton, Eric Chenoweth of Kansas, Chris Mihm of Texas, Martin Rancik of Iowa State and Shawn Rhodes of Kansas State.

After two days of practice, the team will leave for London on Wednesday and then play its first game Aug. 7 against the England Select team.

Hamilton said one hidden benefit of the trip for him is being seen by European basketball coaches and scouts.

"If I don't make the next level (NBA), I may have to go over there and play."

Newcombe adjusting to role as team leader

NEWCOMBE from page 7

ready before the season started," Newcombe said. "I wanted to feel that when the season started, that over the past three months I had worked hard enough and prepared well enough that when it comes game time I am ready to play."

With less than a month before the first football game against Louisiana Tech, Newcombe sat down and evaluated his progress.

"I feel I definitely have worked pretty hard and that I am prepared," Newcombe said. "But I guess that all will be determined when the season starts."

Throughout the summer, Newcombe has put himself through a strict, self-imposed workout

schedule that includes getting up each morning before class and throwing the ball with NU senior tight end Sheldon Jackson, taking 15 hours of summer school, lifting weights and then running each night.

Even with such a busy schedule, Newcombe still finds at least an hour a day to be a student of the game - studying defenses and learning the NU offense.

Coach (Frank) Solich and Coach (Turner) Gill provided me with the resources that I can learn the stuff on my own time and on my own pace," Newcombe said. "That has really helped me progressed dramatically over the last couple of months."

NU senior fullback Joel Makovica said he sees the motivation behind Newcombe's work ethic.

"He knows he's the starter, and wants to be the best he can be," Makovica said. "I hate to put that expectation on him but he has the potential to be the best ever."

Piloting the winningest team of the 1990s, the calm, quiet Newcombe knows there will be a lot of expectations to win, but he doesn't let it bother him.

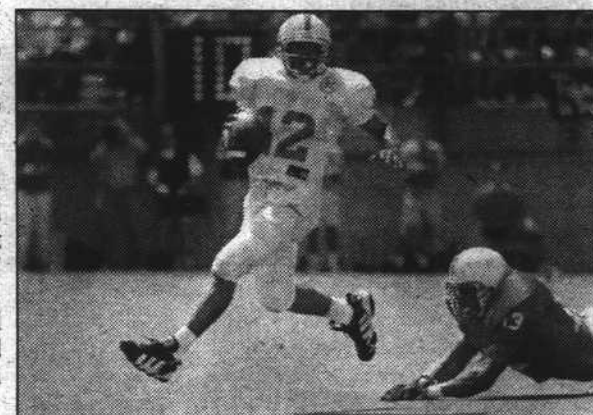
"I don't think about the pressure too much," Newcombe said. "Sheldon (Jackson) has really helped out with that. He probably doesn't realize it, but he has. A lot of other guys have helped me out as well."

Newcombe also isn't worried

about how the fans will treat him.

"You just try to go out and have fun and play the game you love," Newcombe said. "If I start worrying about the little mistakes, I am going to make even more and more mistakes. But if I just play the game I love, I will make less and less mistakes."

"Even if I do make mistakes,



SCOTT MCCLURG/DN
BOBBY NEWCOMBE was named the Huskers' starting quarterback after his performance in the Spring Game.

which I will, they will be more positive than negative because I always look on the positive side of the game."

Coach Frank Solich is confident in Newcombe's ability and thinks he will do as good of job as Scott Frost did. Solich said Newcombe is physical player like Frost, but Newcombe has a stronger arm and more acceleration and ability as a runner.

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BOBBY NEWCOMBE
NU Quarterback

As a freshman wingback, Newcombe rushed 16 times for 158 yards and scored one touchdown.

But it was during the spring game April 25 that Newcombe turned people's heads. As a quarterback, he rushed 13 times for 175 yards and completed 4 of 9 passes for 64 yards including a 43-yard touchdown pass to Casey Vanderhoef.

Quarterback's Coach Turner Gill liked the big-play potential he saw from Newcombe in the spring game.

"When a young man gets into positions, he has to make a big play out of it," Gill said. "That's something you can't coach and it's something you can't teach. Definitely, Bobby has that ability to make a big play out of something that may not be there."

One NU player who knows all about Newcombe's big-play ability is MIKE linebacker Jay Foreman.

"He's electrifying," Foreman said. "You think you have him and then he make a little burst and he's in the end-zone."

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