

OSU breaks KU supremacy in Big 12 poll

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Staff writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — For the first two seasons of men's basketball ball in the Big 12 Conference, it has been the Kansas show.



Williams

Preseason media and coaches' polls show Oklahoma State is ready to move in.

The preseason Coaches' Poll has Oklahoma State in first place. Seven of the 12 coaches voted for the Cowboys to replace KU at the top of the ladder.

"Kansas is not as strong as they have been," Oklahoma State Coach Eddie Sutton said. "Everyone else has pulled closer to Kansas."

The Cowboys may have eclipsed the Jayhawks. They return 71 percent of their scoring, four starters and the best backcourt in the Big 12 with Doug Gottlieb and forward Adrian Peterson.

Those four starters are joined by three other returning letter-winners that lost to Duke in the second round of the NCAA Tournament 79-73.

"I am going into my 40th year of coaching," Sutton said. "Some years you are not excited about starting the season, but I am looking forward to coaching this team."

Peterson is the catalyst for OSU. The preseason player of the year in the Coaches' Poll, Peterson averaged 17.7 points and 6.7 rebounds per game.

"It's a great honor for the coaches to pick me," Peterson said. "But I still have to go out and prove myself throughout the conference season."

Junior forward Desmond Mason joins Peterson on the preseason all-conference team after averaging 14.6 points per game last season.

KU doesn't have the luxury of returning big scorers. Gone are Raef LaFrentz and Paul Pierce, both NBA Draft Lottery picks. Combined, they averaged 40.2 points per game.

The only returning starters: guard Ryan Robertson and T.J. Pugh.

But the injury bug has struck Pugh as he had surgery on his ankle Wednesday and probably will be out

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DANNY NEE
NU basketball coach

for a month.

"We have a lot of question marks, and we still haven't figured out what to do," KU Coach Roy Williams said. "We are way behind where we want to be."

Most of the coaches at the Big 12 basketball media day didn't seem to disagree on the top two teams in the conference; they did disagree which

would be No. 1.

Nebraska Coach Danny Nee, who was one of the five coaches to pick Kansas for the top spot, said the conference should have a much-improved year.

"I still feel (Kansas) is the dominant team," Nee said. "There will be a lot of surprises this season. It won't be Kansas and the little 11."

NU prepares for critical games

BY CARRIE HEATON
Staff writer

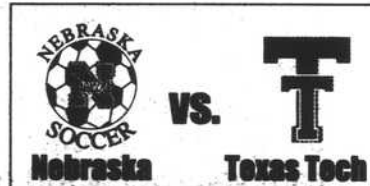
Unlike the first two seasons, the Big 12 regular season soccer title will not involve a battle between Nebraska and Texas A&M.

Instead the No. 9 Cornhuskers travel to No. 16 Baylor on Sunday for a game that will likely determine the conference champion.

Currently, NU is 8-0 in the Big 12, while the Bears are 7-0-1. BU's only blemish on the record is 0-0 tie against Texas earlier this season.

Before that game, NU plays Texas Tech, which currently stands at 3-3-2 in the conference and 7-5-3 overall, on Friday.

NU Coach John Walker said that both games will be important; if NU



loses once, it may lose out on the Big 12 title and the No. 1 seat in the Big 12 Tournament, held Nov. 5-8.

"We played well in the conference," Walker said, "and we realize both games are very important and will be tough."

The Red Raiders get the first shot at the Huskers, and Tech Coach Felix Oskam said defense will be the key.

But shutting down Nebraska won't prove to be an easy task. NU has the leading goal-scorer in the nation in senior Kim Engesser.

Huskers face tough odds at Championships

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"They're really tight and they've kept a great attitude."

Witter said Broekzitter's absence has caused more runners to step up and challenge for a leadership position.

"It helps the team mentally to know that we don't just have one lead guy," Witter said. "All seven of us have to run hard for us to do well."

In addition, Witter said, the team is hitting its stride right on time.

"Everybody's running well," he said. "We're really peaking right now."

Though several Husker runners are battling for the top team spot, Witter said he thinks a good deal of the race leadership has fallen on his shoulders

and those of senior Jim Vance.

Over the course of the season, Witter has led the Huskers in four races, and Vance has followed close behind in each one, usually finishing second for the team.

In the last meet at Oregon, Vance took 24th and Witter finished 25th.

On the women's side, the Huskers also face a CU defending champion team.

Dirksen said he believes there are eight very strong teams in the conference, and without lead runner Amy Wiseman and a sick Jeannette Zimmer, the women's race will take a more difficult turn. Wiseman will not run on Saturday because of a bout with bronchitis. Zimmer will compete, but has

been hindered by a cold this week.

"We'd thought we could finish high among those top eight, but it's going to be a little bit tougher," Dirksen said. "But I think we'll still have a good meet."

With Wiseman out and Zimmer hampered, Dirksen said he expected other runners to come to the forefront.

Team captain Melissa Wilson said it will take a strong race from the squad as a whole to overcome the perceived problems in Wiseman's absence and Zimmer's illness.

"It's going to be tough," she said. "We all have to have a good race. Hopefully Jeannette will be feeling better, but you never know. We all know we have to step it up a notch and stay positive."

NU All-Americans to be honored

CHRISTO from page 9

The 6-foot, 195-pounder, who entered the season third on the depth chart, also recorded a career-high 67 yards on the ground while completing one pass for 7 yards.

Despite not having a consistent starter each week, Solich said he has been satisfied with the play of the quarterbacks this season.

"I think that you have three guys

that have stepped up and played well when called upon," Solich said. "But your No. 1 guy is No. 1 for a reason."

In other news:

One hundred seventeen Nebraska first, second and third-team Academic All-Americans will be recognized Saturday during a halftime ceremony.

A display, honoring the award winners, now hangs from Memorial

Stadium's east upper deck.

Nebraska leads the nation with 157 GTE College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-Americans in all sports. The Husker list also includes a nation-high 67 football players.

Of NU's 117 Academic All-Americans, seven have become attorneys, 17 have become doctors, and 10 have become coaches.

Revenge no factor in UT matchup

REVENGE from page 9

will coach his first game against the Longhorns after taking over for the retired Tom Osborne.

Texas Coach Mack Brown will also walk the sidelines for the first time against Nebraska. The Longhorns fired John Makovic, a coach revered by the fans and the media for his fourth down and 1 call in the waning minutes of the 1996 title game that resulted in a 63-yard pass to set up Texas' final touchdown.

With Makovic and James Brown gone, tailback Ricky Williams is one of the few prominent players remaining who competed in the last NU-Texas game.

Williams leads the country in rushing with 212 yards per game. He also scores a nation-leading 20.6 points per game. Nebraska has, however, been effective against the run at times. The Blackshirts held Missouri's Devin West, the No. 2 rusher in the country, to 72 yards last week.

"I don't think anybody who has watched (Williams) play would not agree that he's an outstanding back," Solich said. "I think he will be a guy who can go on and play at the next level."

While the UT offense has rolled to 543 yards per game over the last four games, NU's offense has struggled at times. The have struggled with injuries to several key players, including receivers Lance Brown and Kenny Cheatham and quarterbacks Bobby Newcombe and Eric Crouch.

The Huskers totaled 215 yards against Oklahoma State on Oct. 3 and

Football Starters

Nebraska starters

Offense

Pos.	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.
QB	9	Monte Christo	6-0	195
IB	4	DeAngelo Evans	5-9	210
FB	45	Joel Makovic	5-11	240
WB	5	Shovin Wiggins	5-11	200
SE	6	Kenny Cheatham	6-4	210
TE	88	Sheldon Jackson	6-4	245
LT	69	Adam Julich	6-5	315
LG	63	James Sherman	6-2	295
C	59	Josh Heskew	6-3	290
RG	72	Ben Gessford	6-2	290
RT	65	Jason Schwab	6-1	300
PK	35	Kris Brown	5-10	205

Defense

Pos.	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.
LB	57	Chad Kelsey	6-3	250
NT	99	Jason Wiltz	6-1	310
DT	91	Loran Kaiser	6-5	290
WR	84	Mike Rucker	6-6	260
SLB	37	Tony Ortiz	6-0	215
MLB	44	Jay Foreman	6-1	240
WLB	27	Eric Johnson	6-1	205
LCB	16	Erwin Swiney	6-0	185
FS	19	Clint Finley	5-11	200
RCV	21	Mike Brown	5-10	205
P	23	Bill Lafleur	5-11	200

Texas starters

Offense

Pos.	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.
SE	8	Wane McGarity	5-8	190
LT	75	Octavius Bishop	6-5	330
LG	72	Roger Rossler	6-5	300
C	54	Russell Gaskamp	6-4	305
RG	79	Ben Adams	6-5	315
RT	67	Jay Humphrey	6-7	300
TE	82	Derek Lewis	6-2	235
FLK	9	Kwame Cavil	6-2	200
RB	34	Ricky Williams	6-0	225
RB	44	Ricky Brown	6-0	222
QB	11	Major Applewhite	6-1	195
PK	13	Kris Stockton	5-9	185

Defense

Pos.	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.
LE	48	Aaron Humphrey	6-3	255
LT	64	Casey Hampton	6-1	300
RT	50	Cedric Woodard	6-3	280
RE	84	J.J. Kelly	6-2	237
SLB	55	Anthony Hicks	6-0	232
MLB	46	Dusty Renfro	6-0	239
WLB	4	De'Andre Lewis	6-1	225
LCB	31	Tony Holmes	5-9	180
FS	6	Charlin Jammer	6-1	180
SS	7	Donald McCowen	6-0	205
RCB	17	Joe Walker	6-0	175
P	13	Kris Stockton	5-9	185

345 against eighth-ranked Texas A&M the following week.

"I wonder myself if we were flat," NU center Josh Heskew said. "You can see it in players' eyes, the way they are walking around. It could be a long season. Fourteen games maybe. I hope they don't pace themselves for the season."

"Us older guys know what it takes. We're winning games and thinking the

problem will take care of itself."

Solich does not expect a letdown against Texas.

"The players are probably reacting to questions about why we're not clicking at times," Solich said. "They start trying to find reasons. Sometimes they come up with reasons. Sometimes I come up with reasons. But very few players have not responded when we've asked them to respond."

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