

KSU cautious, confident about game with Huskers

By DAVID WILSON
Senior staff writer

MANHATTAN, Kan. — To Darnell McDonald, it still doesn't make complete sense.

Nine wins, no losses, and now Nebraska — a team Kansas State hasn't defeated since 1968 — is the next road-block between the Wildcats and a national championship.

KSU hasn't been two wins away from an undefeated regular season since 1918.

Still, McDonald, pinned against a wall by reporters from across the country Tuesday, confidently fielded questions regarding what could be the biggest game of his career.

"I never envisioned that we would have a

shot at a national title," said McDonald, a senior receiver.

But thoughts of a championship aren't lurking heavily in the minds of the Wildcats this week, McDonald said.



McDonald

First, they have to prove they can beat the Cornhuskers (8-2 overall and 4-2 in the Big 12 Conference) at 2:35 p.m. on Wagner Field in Manhattan. The game will be televised by ABC.

"We want to show everyone that K-State is for real," said senior defensive tackle Andrae Rowe. "I think this could be the biggest win ever in this program.

We just have to stay focused."

A loss to Nebraska last season in Lincoln proved to be the only blemish on the Wildcat schedule. KSU finished 11-1 after defeating 14th-ranked Syracuse in the Fiesta Bowl.

This season, Rowe said, things are a little different — on both sides.

"I think they've struggled a little bit this year," Rowe said. "They still have talent, just not as much as they have in the past.

"I think we have a lot more confidence than we did last year. I think this is the most talent K-State has ever had."

And it's their talent, along with their togetherness and emotional preparation, that has helped the Wildcats this season, senior offensive lineman Jeremy Martin said.

"There are teams in this country that have

more talent than us that have only won one or two games," Martin said.

With the exception of a 52-20 win over Oklahoma State, the Wildcats have not allowed an opponent to score more than nine points all season. And, other than a 16-9 win against Colorado, KSU has always won by at least 32 points.

But even another loss to Nebraska won't send the Wildcat program into a tailspin, Kansas State Coach Bill Snyder said.

Senior offensive lineman Jeremy Martin agreed.

"I'm going to wake up Sunday if we lose," Martin said. "I may be hurting a little bit, but I'll be alive.

"When I'm done here, I will never say I had a bad time at Kansas State."

Taking

New guard hopes to fill Lue's shoes

By DARREN IVY
Staff writer

Basketball recruiting can be called anything but an exact science. Nebraska point guard Joe Holmes might be the best example of that.

When Tyrone Lue made his decision to forego his senior season April 1, he left NU coaches searching for someone to fill his void at the point guard position.

At the top of Coach Danny Nee's list was Lamont Perry, a 6-foot-3, 175-pound guard from Southwestern College in Chula Vista, Calif.

Nebraska supposedly was at the top of Perry's list too. He officially committed April 14.

But you've never heard of him. Perry never came here. His letter of intent was sent via the wrong mail system so the coaches never received it. Good-bye Lamont Perry.

Hello Joe Holmes.

Holmes, a 5-foot-11 guard, was seriously considering Norfolk State, South Carolina State or South Alabama.

That's before his teammate at Tyler (Texas) Community College helped him to play for Nebraska.

Rodney Fields, a 6-foot-3 guard, had already committed to Nebraska. When Lue left, Fields knew NU was looking for a true point guard.

"I put in the word to Coach (Jimmy) Williams," Fields said. "He evaluated Joe's game through me. Lue was a great player. I told him, 'Joe would fill his shoes in terms of being solid. He would play hard defense and make good passes.'"

Williams liked what he heard from Fields and what he saw on tapes. Holmes, who averaged 10.4 points and 8.1 assists per game his sophomore year, was now at the top of NU's list.

Williams contacted Tyler Coach Kyle Keller and told him this.

Keller, who was a psychology major, always played mind games with his guys, Fields said, so Holmes never knew when to take him seriously.

When Keller asked Holmes if he would like to continue playing basketball with Fields, he said he'd love to. But maybe it was another of Keller's games. Holmes didn't believe Keller when he said Williams was on the line.

"I said, 'Who is Coach Williams?'" Holmes said.

Holmes expected it to be a prank. When Nebraska Assistant Coach Jimmy Williams introduced himself, Holmes knew it wasn't a joke.



Holmes called Derrick Chandler, a former NU center, to ask him about the program. Chandler gave NU a positive endorsement. Holmes sent his letter. This time, the coaches got it.

"I was trying to find a situation just like this where I could step in and play," Holmes said.

Holmes was tired of bad experiences with college coaches. Out of Duval High School in Baltimore, Holmes had college coaches talking to him, but nothing worked out. Holmes didn't enroll in college and took a semester off.

During that time, he just played basketball. His AAU Coach, Harold Gates, landed him the tryout at Tyler.

"That's all I needed was that one chance," Holmes said. "Things happen for a reason. I kept the faith and knew that things would happen sooner or later."

When Holmes arrived at Tyler, Fields said he never foresaw Holmes playing for a Division I school. But Holmes improved quickly.

"Joe has come a long way from the time I first played with him," Fields said. "He was hesitant in the things he did. He's matured in every aspect of his game. His decision making has improved and his whole level of play has risen."

Now, wearing a Husker uniform, Holmes is taking charge.

"I'm not here to be Tyrone Lue," Holmes said. "I'm here to be Joe Holmes. He did a lot of good things here. I'm here to run the show."

Holmes, who once was the coaches' second choice, is now the starter.

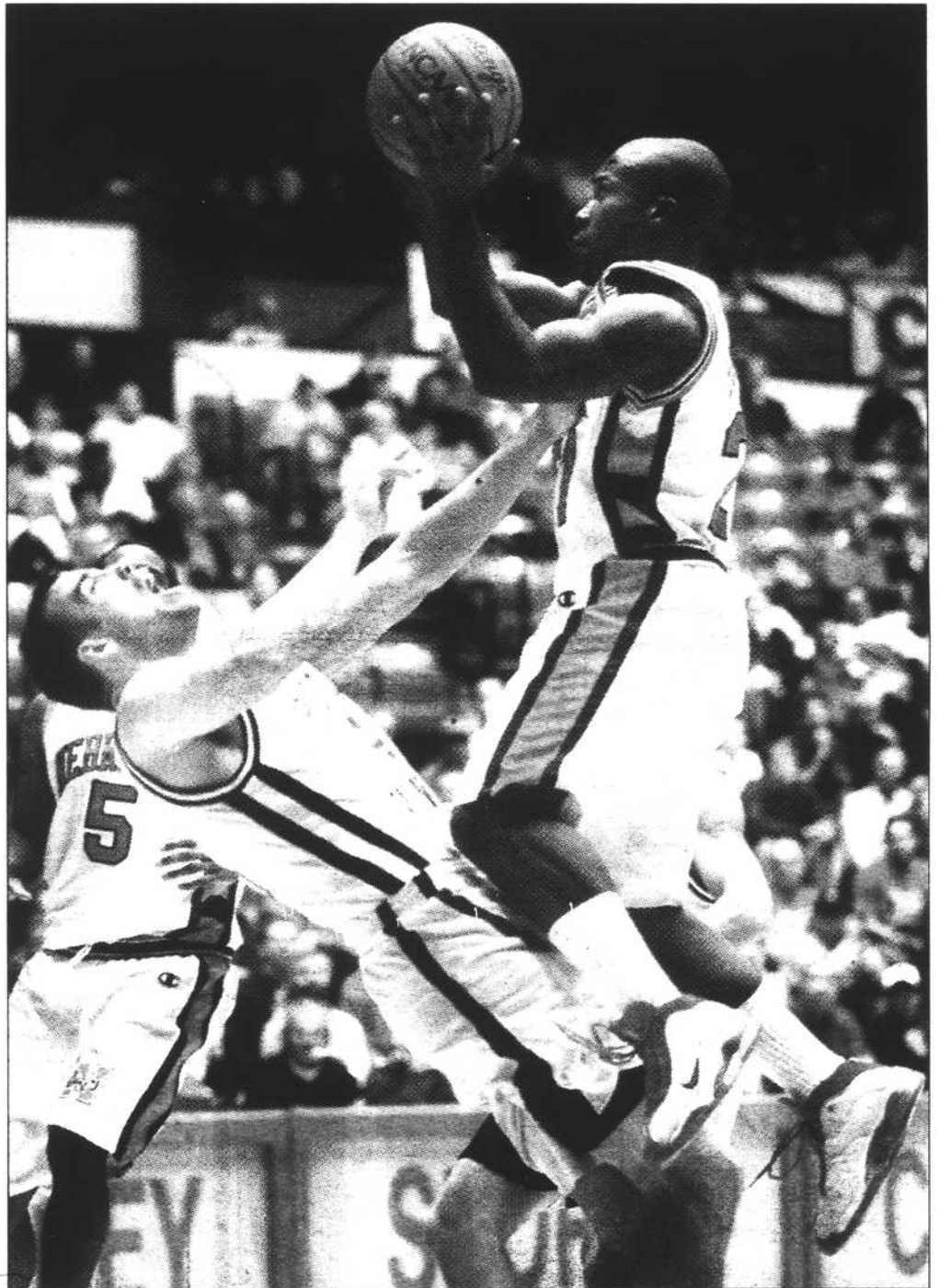
In his first two games at the helm, Holmes has averaged 2.5 points, three assists and no turnovers per game. While the numbers may not be staggering, Holmes brings stability and consistency to the point.

"Once we went with the starting rotation two days ago, we've been executing the best since I've been here at Nebraska," said senior forward Andy Markowski. "People know their roles and shots they will take."

When people don't fulfill their roles, Holmes is not afraid to get on them. That attitude is what Nee likes and expects from Holmes.

"I want him to be the quarterback, the leader, the floor general," Nee said. "We want him to be an assist man. We don't need him to be a scorer."

POINT



JUNIORS NICOLE KUBIK (top) and Joe Holmes (right) take over the point guard spot for both the Nebraska women's and men's basketball teams. Kubik is in her third season with the Huskers, Holmes his first.

Guard leads women's team by actions

By CHRISTOPHER HEINE
Staff writer

Nicole Kubik, with her feathery voice, will never be mistaken for General Patton.

Kubik could only use a growling baritone and a beet-red face in mock to keep her teammates loose. One of her teammates called her a prankster.

But make no mistake about it: The junior point guard is a serious leader. She just prefers to lead by her actions. Just ask the rest of Nebraska's women's basketball team.

Guard Amanda Went said that while Kubik is not extremely vocal, she is a perfect floor general.

"I think she's a great leader," she said. "She loves to pass. She has an

amazing sense of the floor. If you set a screen for her you better be ready for the ball when you roll."

Junior guard Brooke Schwartz had her own big praise for Kubik.

"Her talent is unbelievable," Schwartz said. "I look up to her even though we're both juniors."

Kubik has a lot to live up to. NU lost Anna DeForge to graduation.

Went said those two players were the leaders of last year's record-setting squad. On route to a berth in the NCAA tournament, that team generated more excitement in women's basketball than any other in recent Nebraska memory.

Coach Paul Sanderford, whose enthusiasm has invigorated the program, isn't about to understate what he expects his point guard to get done this season.

"I need Nicole Kubik to consistently

be the best player on the court every day," Sanderford said.

That means doing a little of everything.

"She has to score some. She has to take care of the ball and get it to the right people. That's her job."

Kubik averaged a solid 13 points per game last season. She lead the Big 12 with 104 steals while setting an NU single-season record. The point guard was voted third-team all-conference.

Kubik played big when her team needed her most. Kubik scored more than 20 points in five games last year — all on the road.

Kubik said her past performances are confidence-builders. However, she knows the new responsibilities that lie

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