

# NU loses one recruit, has chance at others

■ **Omaha's Williams** picks MU, but many seniors remain in the running.

BY JAY SAUNDERS  
Staff writer

An hour before a Wednesday afternoon press conference, Brandon Williams walked around the halls of Omaha Central High School.

Williams, a 5-foot-11 senior, was still trying to decide where he wanted to go to college to play football. Would it be Michigan or Nebraska?

His mother, Paula Barte-Williams, did not know which school her son was going to choose until five minutes before he told the crowd gathered in Central's library.

"He sat down next to me and I said, 'Where are you going to go?'" Barte-Williams said. "Then he rubbed the blue on his shirt."

That simple act let his mother know he chose the Wolverines over the Cornhuskers.

The 180-pound Williams, who runs the 40-yard dash in a electronic 4.4 seconds, said he made his final decision five minutes before he walked in to the press conference.

Williams played a variety of positions for Central Coach Joe McMenamin. Williams was listed as a cornerback by several recruiting services, and with Nebraska's depth in the defensive backfield, Michigan was a better fit.

"It just came down to playing early on the defensive side of the ball," Williams said. "I decided I didn't want to take the year off at cornerback."

Williams said the Michigan

coaching staff told him he has the possibility of being a second-string player next year, and could play on both offense and defense in his sophomore season.

Williams might also be returning kicks, just like his favorite player, 1997 Heisman Trophy winner Charles Woodson.

"I took my game after his," Williams said. "Both of these schools have been my favorite, but I think I still have a lot to learn playing corner."

In other recruiting news, two players are expected to make decisions today concerning their collegiate futures. They include Tomatu Togoai, a 6-3, 280-pounder from Honolulu. He and teammate Joe Siofele, a 6-2, 235-pound linebacker, both hail from St. Louis High School. Togoai is looking at NU and California, while Siofele is looking at NU and Arizona. Nebraska is expected to have a decent chance at landing both.

Another standout, BJ Ward of Kimball High School in Dallas, remains undecided between the Huskers and Florida State, Kimball Coach James Jones said. UCLA also remains in the picture.

Darin Naatjes, a 6-6, 230-pound athlete from Inwood, Iowa, also has Nebraska in his final two. Naatjes, who also is a baseball player, will choose between NU and Stanford.

The Huskers remain in the running for Travaris Robinson, a 5-11, 175-pound receiver from Miami. He's looking at NU, Virginia Tech and Miami. Jeff Faine, a lineman from Sanford, Fla., has his choices down to Nebraska and Florida. Onterio Smith, a running back out Sacramento, Calif., is looking at Nebraska, Tennessee, California, Oregon and Southern California.

# Texas slows down under Barnes, rattles off a string of victories

Team's quality hasn't suffered from change of pace

BY CHRISTOPHER HEINE  
Staff writer

Coaches around the Big 12 weren't fooled by Texas' 4-8 nonconference start under new Coach Rick Barnes.

They knew the Longhorns had way too much talent on the court to be that bad.

Forwards Kris Clack and Gabe Muoneke, and center Chris Mihm all had shown spurts of big-time ability in previous seasons under the run-and-gun style of their former coach, Tom Penders.

Clack, a 6-foot-5 senior, entered the 1998-99 season with more than 1,000 career points. Muoneke, a 6-7 junior, had posted 27 double-digit scoring efforts in his first two seasons at Texas.

Mihm was named Big 12 rookie of the week three times last season. Preseason rumors had even entertained the idea of the 7-0 center making himself eligible for this season's NBA draft.

Texas Tech Coach James Dickey said during a teleconference Monday that it was just a matter of time before the Longhorns got on track.

"Those are as good a set of three players in the league at their positions," Dickey said. "Rick has done a nice job of getting the guys around them to understand the patience of getting Mihm, Muoneke and Clack the basketball."

Under Penders, the Longhorns had become accustomed to a fast-paced style of play.

Dickey said Texas' slow start had a lot to do with Barnes' new players having to slow down and not "play the full 94 feet like they did under Tom Penders."

Kansas State Coach Tom Asbury said it was natural for the Longhorns to need time to learn Barnes' more patient style.

"Whether you want to run off 25 seconds or 10 seconds off the shot clock, patience is going to be the key," Asbury said.

"Patience is always a good philosophy."

For Texas and Barnes, it is starting to prove to be a winning one.

The Longhorns are off to a 5-1 start in the Big 12, and are in position to give league preseason favorites, Kansas and Oklahoma State, a run for the regular-season conference title.

Oklahoma Coach Kelvin

"Whether you want to run off 25 seconds or 10 seconds off the shot clock, patience is going to be the key. Patience is always a good philosophy."

TOM ASBURY  
Kansas State coach

Sampson said he isn't surprised by Texas' slow start or their recent emergence. Both developments can be attributed to Barnes and his players adjusting to each other, he said.

"Initially I think Rick was probably doing a real good job, but the kids weren't buying into his philosophy," Sampson said.

"I think all the coaches knew they were really talented."

# Women's basketball team proud of hard-hitting game

Sanderford stresses physical play, adaptability

BY DARREN IVY  
Senior staff writer

In Gillette, Wyo., high school girls' basketball was a lot like rustling cattle.

According to Nebraska senior basketball player Cori McDill, a Gillette native, almost anything went in those games.

"We played really physical," McDill recalled. "It was downright dirty basketball where I came from."

When McDill came to NU four years ago, she brought that toughness and aggressiveness with her, but it wasn't always appreciated, she said.

"I think my freshman year I came in and even then people thought I was pretty dirty on the team and pretty physical," McDill said. "Coach (Angela) Beck never really thought that was a good thing, but Coach Sanderford, he loves it."

"I think everybody has really gotten into it now and we love pounding on each other. But then we don't take it personal - we pound on each other and smile about it."

Kansas standout Lynn Pride wasn't smiling about NU's physical play Saturday.

McDill and junior Cisco Gilmore took turns pounding on the preseason Big 12 Conference player of the year. And Pride wasn't effective for most of the game.

"We tried to come out and establish that it was going to be a physical game, a knock-down-drag-out (fight)," Assistant Coach Jeff Walz said.

"They banged (Pride) the first five or six times down the floor. It frustrated her a great deal. They kept on banging on her. Every time she cut, she had someone leaning on her, elbowing her, a little forearm here and forearm there. That makes a big, big difference."

It did make a big difference, as Pride scored just three first-half points and committed seven turnovers, while her team fell behind

"We played really physical. It was downright dirty basketball where I came from."

CORI McDILL  
NU basketball player

NU 42-24 at halftime.

"Our game plan was to go out and just be physical with her the whole game and just wear her out," said Gilmore, a 5-foot-10 forward. "I think at one point in the game, she was so tired she couldn't shoot free throws."

Since coming to Nebraska from Western Kentucky last year, Sanderford and his staff have stressed physical play, Gilmore said.

"He's not about having finesse players," Gilmore said. "He's all about being physical, roughing people up."

The physical play started the first day of practice, Gilmore said.

"We're taught to bump cutters, just bump people all the time as far as getting them out of position," Gilmore said. "It's sort of like fundamentals, you learn to bump people."

"But boy, the higher you get up in levels of play, I think when you're being physical with other players on different teams, it really helps."

"It shows what kind of shape they're in. We bump each other every day. We're physical every day. I think it helps us to get into shape. It builds us up pretty good. We're used to it when other people are more physical with us."

Walz said the Huskers stress physical play because Big 12 referees don't call too many fouls, sometimes a trend in major conference college basketball.

But the key is being able to adapt if the refs call games tighter, Walz said.

"What's going to make us a really good team is the ability of our girls to adjust to the officiating," Walz said. "If they are going to let us play physi-

cal, then we need to come out and keep playing physical."

The advantages of playing physical are clear, Gilmore said. It wears players down and takes them out of their game.

While some might call the style of play dirty, McDill said, it's just physical play - physical play with a purpose, that is.

"I think we intimidate a lot of teams that we play," McDill said.

"I think they come out and they know they are going to get a pounding. Maybe they think a little bit before they are making that cut through the lane. After they make that first cut, maybe we get a foul called on us, but they aren't going to make that cut again."

The Huskers haven't been the aggressors in all their games, though.

"I think in most of the games we've lost, we've let those teams be more physical than we were," Gilmore said.

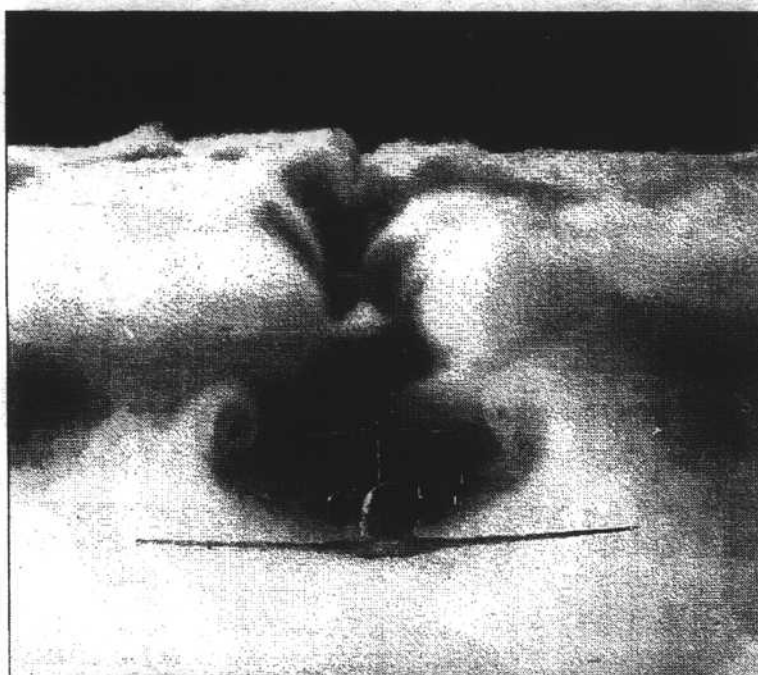
"In the Kansas State game, we let them beat us up. That's something we can't do. We just didn't play hard."

The whole team may not have played hard in those losses, but playing hard is something McDill always does.

From her days in Gillette, she's learned she must in order to survive.

That attitude has rubbed off on her teammates and now the Huskers want all future opponents to take notice.

"When people think of Nebraska women's basketball," McDill said, "we want them to think they're going to get a pounding and it's going to be a physical game."



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