

NCAA decides on eligibilities

From staff reports

The NCAA ruled Monday on the futures of two Nebraska football players.

NU's Shevin Wiggins, who appealed to the NCAA for another year of eligibility, had his request denied. The committee cited that Wiggins had used up the five years allotted to complete four years of athletic participation.

Giving an athlete a sixth year is not a common practice and is usually only granted in cases of injury.

Wiggins played in just three seasons on the Cornhusker football team. After sitting out a year in 1994 in order to meet NCAA initial eligibility requirements, Wiggins red-

shirted in 1995 before beginning his playing career in 1996.

The NCAA committee decided that Wiggins had used up his five-year clock and, without extenuating circumstances, a sixth year was not warranted.

While denying Wiggins' request, the committee did grant a fifth and sixth year to injury-riddled backup quarterback Jeff Perino.

Perino joined NU in 1995 as part of the recruiting class, and redshirted that season, then proceeded to miss the next two seasons because of knee injuries and surgeries.

He will be back next season and will join spring practice when it begins March 22. Perino will be eligible the following season.

OSU's Cooper joins millionaire coaches

■ Incentives could place the OSU coach among his highest-paid colleagues.

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ohio State's John Cooper is about to join an exclusive club: college football coaches with contracts guaranteeing them at least \$1 million a year.

Unidentified sources told The Columbus Dispatch in a story published Sunday that Cooper and Ohio State are working on a new contract that will assure him of reaching the million-dollar plateau.

The contract Cooper signed in 1995 has matured to nearly \$750,000 a year.

The numbers include \$170,772 in base salary, \$290,000 in radio-TV compensation and \$217,000 from the athletic department's multimillion-dollar contract with Nike.

Added to that will be a \$35,000 bonus for taking the team to the Sugar Bowl; \$10,000 for the team finishing in the top 10 of at least one major poll; and \$10,000 for at least a nine-win season that included a victory over Michigan.

Cooper also has earned three

more "rollover" years to be added to the five-year contract he signed in 1995, meaning his current deal would take him through the 2002 season anyway.

The newspaper said the total doesn't include what is said to be a \$100,000 personal-services contract with the Kroger department store chain, and any other compensation he can find, with the school's approval.

Cooper is expected to join Florida's Steve Spurrier, Florida State's Bobby Bowden and Penn State's Joe Paterno as college football coaches thought to earn at least \$1 million.

Recent newcomers to the group include Mack Brown of Texas, Phil Fulmer of Tennessee, Rick Neuheisel of Washington, Bill Snyder of Kansas State and Tommy Tuberville of Auburn.

Cooper won't talk about the prospects of joining the club, but athletics director Andy Geiger said the pay scale for coaches is being driven by the marketplace.

"You might feel comfortable with it or not comfortable with it, but it falls under the 'facts of life' department," Geiger said.

KU receiver released after assault, shooting

■ Police say they have no suspects, and no arrests had been made Monday.

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — Kansas wide receiver Michael Chandler was released from the hospital Monday after a weekend shooting by masked intruders.

Chandler left Lawrence Memorial Hospital on Monday morning, where he had surgery for a gunshot wound in the groin area. He was beaten and shot early Saturday morning after answering a knock at the door of his off-campus townhouse and encountering three men wearing masks.

"Michael is going to spend a few days at home resting before returning to KU later this week," said Chandler's father, Ron Williams.

Police haven't been able to conduct a thorough interview with Chandler yet, Sgt. Richard Nickell said Monday morning. No arrests had been made as of Monday and police said they had no suspects.

Police have released few details.

But one of Chandler's roommates told The Lawrence Journal-World that Chandler had been asleep on a couch when someone knocked on the door. When Chandler partially opened the door, the suspects kicked it in and one of them hit him across the ribs with a baseball bat, the roommate said.

The assailants asked for Michael Chandler, he said, and after determining it was Chandler who had opened the door, one of the suspects shot him with a small-caliber handgun. The suspects then ran from the area, the roommate said.

Chandler, a 5-foot-11, 195-pound junior from Kansas City, Kan., has 46 career receptions for 577 yards. Last season he was third on the team with 21 catches for 236 yards and a touchdown.

He had been expected to sit out contact drills this spring while recovering from surgery to repair ligament damage in his left ankle.

Doctors said the injury from the shooting should have no effect on Chandler's football career at Kansas.

Kenny Walker returns to NU as strength coach

■ The former Husker football player comes back to his roots after stints in the NFL and CFL.

By DARREN IVY
Senior staff writer

On the wall in Nebraska Assistant Athletic Director Boyd Epley's office, amidst numerous national championship football team pictures and trophies, hangs a framed drawing of former Cornhusker defensive tackle Kenny Walker lifting weights.

The picture of Walker, who overcame being deaf to become an All-American at Nebraska in 1990, is the only picture of an individual athlete to ever hang on Epley's wall. There's a reason for that, Epley said.

"I have tremendous respect for what Kenny Walker has done," Epley said. "For a deaf player to go through our program, and to make All-American and then make academic All-American and then make it to the professional level is absolutely incredible."

So when Walker's wife, Martina, contacted Epley last year and told him that Walker was interested in becoming a strength coach, Epley listened.

"He's a very special guy. Naturally, when I learned he wanted to be a strength coach, I didn't waste any time going around asking for permission," Epley said. "Bill Byrne made this happen, kind of as a favor to me and to Kenny. We probably wouldn't have gone out of our way for too many people, but for Kenny, we did. I don't think there is anything wrong with that."

Walker started his two-year internship in the Memorial Stadium weight room in October and he is now one of the most popular strength

coaches.

"Boyd is the reason I came here," Walker said. "He was there for me almost every day while I was in college. He's a very good guy."

Now Walker is the one who is there every day for current Cornhusker football players. One particular guy Walker keeps after is junior linebacker Carlos Polk.

And Walker already is making a big impact, Polk said.

"Before, I pretty much went through the motions," Polk said. "(Walker) pushes me. He demands the best out of you. It's hard to say no to him. He knows what it takes to get to the next level. He'll get down and do exercises with you."

"He's the kind of person who has you set a goal and he makes you reach it. Now I do more than the coaches ask me to do."

Walker said he has a special way with people.

"I am good with helping people," Walker said. "I have the ability to motivate athletes."

Before returning to his alma mater, Walker motivated students at the Iowa School for the Deaf for three years. He said he loved his job, serving as an assistant football coach along with duties.

"I was a role model for them," Walker said. "I showed them what they could accomplish. It's something they needed to see. They didn't want me to leave. That was the hardest part for me."

But Walker missed his wife and three children, Tommy, Kenny and Anna. He worked at the school from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday. When his children got home from school, Walker would leave for work.

Though he now lives in Lincoln, Walker still has ties at the Iowa School for the Deaf. Tommy goes to school and stays in the dormitory there dur-

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KENNY WALKER
NU strength coach

ing the week and comes home on the weekends.

It's hard on Tommy because it's the first time he has been away from home, Walker said.

"My wife and I sat down with him and explained that the Iowa School for the Deaf is the best thing for him because he needs to learn social skills," Walker said.

Walker never attended a special school for the deaf growing up. He grew up in Denver before moving to Crane, Texas, for high school. He lettered at NU in 1989-90 before being drafted in the eighth round by the Denver Broncos in 1991. Walker played with the Broncos from 1991-93 before heading to the Canadian Football League in 1994-96.

He retired in 1996.

"I lost my motivation," Walker said. "My heart wasn't in it anymore."

Walker has had no trouble keeping his heart in his new job in Lincoln, Epley said.

"He jumped right into this job and has done a tremendous job for us," Epley said. "He's aggressive and gets right in there with the guys. He doesn't stand back and watch. They know he has been through the battle the hard way. There is a lot of respect for him. He gets along with everybody. Everybody loves him."

Walker loves the players too.

"They are like family."

'Baby Bull' Cepeda elected to Hall of Fame by Veterans

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Orlando Cepeda, the Baby Bull who earned his reputation with a big bat, and three others were elected to the Hall of Fame today by the Veterans Committee.

Former umpire Nestor Chylak, turn-of-the-century manager Frank Selee and Negro Leagues pitcher Smokey Joe Williams also were selected.

The 12-member Veterans panel, which included former Cepeda teammate Juan Marichal, Ted Williams and Stan Musial, passed over Bill Mazeroski, Dom DiMaggio, former manager Dick Williams and umpire Doug Harvey.

Candidates needed 75 percent — nine votes — for election. Voting totals were not released.

"As a rookie on the Veterans Committee, I'm glad he got in on my first year," Marichal said of Cepeda.

"He was the type of player who had no fear, the type of player you wanted playing behind you," he said.

Induction ceremonies will be held July 25 at Cooperstown, N.Y. Nolan Ryan, George Brett and Robin Yount were elected in January by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

Cepeda was the NL's rookie of the year in 1958 with San Francisco and the league's first unanimous MVP in 1967 with St. Louis. The first baseman hit .297 with 379 home runs and 1,365 RBI for his career.

Also called "Cha-Cha," Cepeda played in nine All-Star games and often batted cleanup.

Cepeda played on great Giants

teams with Willie Mays, Willie McCovey and Marichal, all of them Hall of Famers.

Cepeda, 61, missed by just seven votes in the BBWAA election five years ago, his final try with the writers. He came close last year in voting by the Veterans.

In 1975, Cepeda was arrested at an airport on charges of trying to pick up 160 pounds of marijuana. He was sentenced to five years and served 10 months. This incident is widely believed to have worked against Cepeda in previous bids for the Hall.

"I just hope this time I make it," Cepeda, a community relations representative for the Giants, said a few days before the voting. "It would be the highest thing. It's hard to describe how much it would mean."

Cepeda's father, Pedro, was called "The Bull" and also the "Babe Ruth of Puerto Rico." Cepeda joins Roberto Clemente as the only Hall of Famers born in Puerto Rico.

Chylak, the eighth umpire elected to the Hall, worked in the American League from 1954-78 and called five World Series and six All-Star games. He died in 1982.

Selee managed from 1890 to 1905

in the National League with Boston and Chicago, and had a winning percentage of .598. He died in 1909.

Selee became the 15th manager elected to the Hall.

Williams, also nicknamed "Cyclone," pitched from 1910-32 with several teams, including the Homestead Grays and New York Lincoln Giants. He was credited with a winning percentage of .624. He died in 1946.

Williams was the 16th player elected for his accomplishments in the Negro Leagues.

The Veterans panel was down to 12 from its usual 15 because of the retirement of longtime executive Buzzie Bavasi and the health of writer Leonard Koppett and Hall of Fame shortstop Pee Wee Reese.

The Vets could elect one person from each of four categories: former major leaguers, Negro Leaguers, 19th century players and personnel, plus a composite of managers, umpires, executives and Negro Leaguers.

This was the final year of a five-year plan to add a supplemental vote for two of the categories — Negro Leaguers and 19th century players and personnel.