

Newcombe, Crouch see quarterback

STARTER from page 37

"Is that thing on?"
Somewhere toward the end of the only game he would not win in 1998, Bobby Newcombe evolved from quarterback into something out of an Akira Kurosawa film. His face hardened up. He took his injury, a torn posterior cruciate ligament in his left knee, hard, probably harder than most. "There's no perfect way to recover from an injury. It's too psychologically damaging," he says.

Somewhere between last fall, before the Louisiana Tech game, and right now, Newcombe changed. He admits this, although he includes phrases like "more confident," "more patient" and "more experienced."

But Newcombe's demeanor has changed, too, from somewhat bouncy, even jovial, to something that — at least publicly — seems entirely different.

In the game against Texas A&M, a 28-21 loss, many NU diehards swore Newcombe was taking the Huskers in, reviving the team from a 21-point deficit.

The stands rocking from the crowd, Newcombe started a campaign in the fourth quarter that had already put 14 points on the board and was going toward another touchdown. He took on the image of the cool, fearless field general, a man

“I'm preparing myself to lead a team to a national championship. I'm not saying anything else.”

BOBBY NEWCOMBE
NU junior quarterback

operating on a bum knee and the pressure of 19 consecutive wins on his shoulders against a maroon storm of speed and fury.

He took on the image of a man who wasn't going to flinch.

The gunslinger.
And, when it failed, which did not seem possible, Newcombe unleashed for all to see. Eyes got wide, people questioned his temper, and the media hounded him about it for weeks.

Look back at it now. The miniature tirade went beyond pout. Deeper than pettiness. The moment, revealed now, has a certain roar to it — *failure does not enter into my equation.*

And it doesn't enter into the equation now. Newcombe "doesn't battle against other players." Losing the job (as if the job were the point, which with Newcombe, it's not anymore), to Crouch, to anyone, is not part of the equation.

"I'm preparing myself to lead a team to a national championship," Newcombe says. He repeats it five seconds later for emphasis, then adds, "I'm not saying anything else."

He doesn't say he will start. He doesn't talk about having to play well to keep the job. Starting, whether he says it or not, seems implied, as he says it has been all along — beginning with that meeting at Solich's office, right before spring practice.

Newcombe does things on his terms. You sit for the interview, he stands. So you stand.

How're you doing, Bobby?
"Fine."

Practice go all right?
"Sure."

He appears to think you really don't care about things like that.

And, in many cases, he's right.

Ah, but there's that recorder, its little red bulb flush with light.

"Is that thing on?"
His question is affirmed.
"All right."

He stands at attention. His attitude, which probably could be mistaken for sullen, is probably more pure focus. The interview is uneventful; if a score would be kept, he'd have his scrubs in by now. He is finally asked about where he thinks all the gossip is coming from.

"I don't research that topic very often," Newcombe says. "As a matter of fact, I've never researched that topic at all."

Newcombe signs autographs when asked, the "B" and "N" swooping over the rest of his name. He takes pictures with the families. He is not stoic all the time.

But when he leaves the interview, turning to walk to another, and fires off a curt "you're welcome," to the customary thank you, there's isn't much choice lip service on that tape. Newcombe betrays the red bulb.

What is left is an *impression* — a sense that if Bobby Newcombe says he's going to lead a team to a national championship, then that's what he'll damn well do.

Bobby Newcombe may not want you to like him. Certainly, it doesn't seem to be a major goal of his. But you can walk away from an interview liking him.

Fans could, too. And though they

may clamor for his move to wingback, they would likely follow him into battle and toward the national title he seems so bent on delivering.

Eric Crouch points it out simply, sans clarity or emphasis. An observation of sorts.

There is still no quarterback controversy.

But there is a competition.

There is a battle.

Otherwise, the coaches would have named a starter already.

Right?
And Crouch plans to play that competition out over fall camp, just like he was told he would be able to.

He remembers the Solich meeting right before spring practice began. With Newcombe. Same room, same time.

Solich told them the situation. Only Crouch doesn't really quite remember what was said. And if it was an edict, it didn't hit him at the time.

And on Aug. 11, when Solich suggested an early pecking order, Crouch never heard the actual words. He never read any newspapers. He didn't see the news at 6.

Crouch insists reports of his perceived demotion have been greatly exaggerated. The Nebraska quarterback project is not yet finished, no

DRINK
RESPONSIBLY



Anheuser-Busch, Inc.
ONE OF THE ANHEUSER BUSCH COMPANIES

Do you need to get on-line or connected to the outside world? Sign-up for Telephone and Internet Service at our booth in the Nebraska Union:

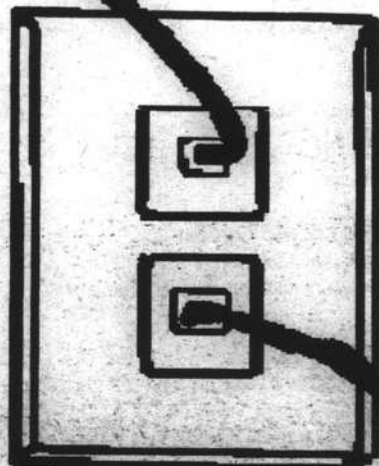
Date	City Union	East Union
August 19	9 a.m. - 11 a.m.	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
August 20	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.	9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
August 23	8 a.m. - 12 p.m.	
August 24		8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Or visit the Telecommunication Service Window at 211 Nebraska Hall.

New:

Information Services - Telecommunications now offers a rate of 10¢ PER MINUTE, 24 hours a day, on calls placed within the United States.*

*Offer is only available to students using University phone service.



NEWS FLASH

Aviation has landed on the UNL campus.

The Aviation Institute Offers:

- Intro to Aviation
- Private Pilot Theory
- History of Aviation
- Aviation Safety
- Special Topics:
 - General Aviation
 - Aviation Law
 - Aviation Meteorology



See the class schedule for courses or for more information call 472-0957 UNO Aviation Institute



The University of Nebraska at Omaha is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

Welcome New Huskers!



Get on a path to success. We can help!

- visit our website at www.unl.edu/careers
- make an appointment with a counselor
- drop in sessions Monday-Friday 10am-4pm

Career Services

230 Nebraska Union
472-3145

<http://www.unl.edu/careers>

dailyneb.com