

Evans says yes to Division II Emporia

EMPORIA, Kan. (AP) - Former Nebraska running back DeAngelo Evans will enroll next month at Division II Emporia State and participate in spring football drills.

Evans, who was a high school standout at Wichita Collegiate, left Nebraska in September after a falling out with Coach Frank Solich. The 5-foot-9, 215-pound back said he was ready for a fresh start.

"I really liked Coach (Jerry) Kill and the coaching staff, and I think I can help turn the program around," Evans told the Emporia Gazette in Thursday's editions. "It was a good fit for me, because of what they wanted to do on offense. The whole atmosphere was great."

Evans visited Emporia State on Nov. 9 when the Hornets beat Washburn 45-20. Emporia State finished the season 4-5 overall and 3-5 in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association.

Evans also considered Northern Iowa and Southwest Missouri State.

Kill declined to comment on Evans' plans, citing NCAA regulations.

An 1-back at Nebraska, Evans rushed for 994 yards on 186 carries in 14 games but was prone to injury. He missed the 1997 season with a groin injury.

In 1998 Evans was sidelined for all but three games with a tailbone injury and turf toe. He also had arthroscopic knee surgery after the season.

Evans said he was just starting to get back into shape.

"I just wanted to clear my head for a few months, step back and think about what I needed to do. And that was the main thing, to go play football somewhere where I felt comfortable."

"It was a good fit for me, because of what they wanted to do on offense."

DEANGELO EVANS
former Nebraska running back

Evans holds the Kansas high school rushing record with 8,473 yards and chose Nebraska over Penn State and Notre Dame.

He chose Emporia State in part because of the number of familiar faces on the team, Evans said. Larry Randle, Lester McCoy and Dontaye McCoy all played at Wichita Southeast High School.

"Coach Kill is a good friend of my high school coach, Mike Geher, and so I'll trust their opinions," Evans said. "I think it will be a good fit. Coach Kill knows a lot about football, and I learned a lot from a great program (Nebraska) in my three years there. ... I just haven't been able to stay healthy."

Geher said the move to Emporia State was good for Evans.

"He was bitter about what happened at Nebraska," Geher said. "But I did not lead him to Emporia State. He just looked around and decided that Emporia State was the place for him."

The Hornets have lacked a reliable running game since the graduation of Brian Shay, who set NCAA rushing and scoring records for all divisions. Shay rushed for 6,958 yards and 88 touchdowns.

Sports Opinion

Renovations? No thank you

"The House that Cigarettes Built," Nebraska's Bob Devaney Sports Center, constructed with state sin tax dollars in 1976, has seen the completion of an internal facelift.

The aim for the \$7.9 million Fan Amenities Project was to create an environment at the Bob Devaney Sports Center that was more fan-friendly and designed to attract more fans to struggling Husker basketball games.

A men's basketball program that was profiting nicely in the early and mid-'90s now barely has its head above water and is sinking fast. The new renovations inside were made to counter this.

Additions in the project include chair-back seating on the floor, new lighting, a new sound system and not one, but two almighty HuskerVision replay boards. Of course, accompanying the vast benefits of HuskerVision and the makeover of the Devaney Center is everybody's All-American buddy: corporate sponsorship.

The new renovations, and especially the commercialization of the games, are just another rung in the ladder of sports becoming more about flash and cash and less about the reason fans should be there in the first place: the games.

The replay boards are designed to create more excitement and get the crowd jacked up and excited by, oddly enough, showing replays, among other things, such as player and team features, all mixed in with the overwhelming presence of corporate America.

But a plan that has worked well at Memorial Stadium for slower-paced football games won't for up-tempo, run-and-gun basketball games.

After a touchdown or particular-

ly spectacular play in football, the crowd has 20 to 30 seconds to check out the screens for another angle on the play.

Basketball gives no such break after a spectacular dunk or a breathtaking pass.

With the way both basketball teams have played at times this year, burdened with turnovers, poor shots and all-around bad games, sometimes once has been too often to see some of their plays.

In one instance, a game was held up indirectly because of the new HuskerVision screens.

During a time-out of the Nebraska-Drake women's basketball game, a camera crew was still on the floor after shooting a children's relay race, and the teams had already lined up, ready to inbound the ball. "What part of get off the court don't you understand?" the referee shouted to them.

All around the arena now, and especially on the video boards, the stamp of Corporate America has swarmed the Sports Center and been crammed right down the fans' throats.

"Today's corporate sponsor (insert company name here) welcomes you to the Bob Devaney Sports Center for tonight's contest matching your Nebraska Cornhuskers and the (insert low-quality, directional school here)."

Companies such as Ford, Pepsi, Runza, Nebraska Public Power and Embassy Suites have all chipped in for ad space around the arena and on the replay boards.

The worst combination of private funding and school spirit, maybe ever, is the "Nebraska Public Power Husker Power Chant." It is sad that a sponsor would even be considered for a cheer.

How much of the \$7.9 million of this project was spent on new compact discs? At every dead ball of the game a different song is blasting out of the new sound system, too loud and too often.

The basketball games have turned into a concert of sorts.

At some points, during an out-of-bounds call or some other turnover, a song will start, and when the ball is put back into play four seconds later, it fades out before it ever really begins. The whole process is more annoying than entertaining.

The plan hasn't been working ideally so far. Through three men's home games, average attendance is down 15 percent. A loss to Western Carolina, and, consequently, a third-place finish in their own tournament and an overtime squeaker against Eastern Illinois don't exactly give the marketing department a whole lot to work with.

The same goes for the ladies, too. Their attendance is down 14 percent from this same time last year. Their loss to Drake was the fourth in their last six home dates, dating back to last season.

You could pass out \$20 bills at the turnstiles and still not get fans in the seats if the product on the floor isn't fun to watch.

That is all beside the point, however.

The games have now become more of a spectacle in advertising and extravagance, and while corporate fat-cats turn back flips in their corner offices, the basketball purists of yesteryear turn over in their graves.

David Diehl is a freshman news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan staff writer.

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