

# Self, Hamilton lead possible coach crop

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And the success didn't stop there. In the last six years, Miami has compiled a 110-66 mark and made the NCAA Tournament in each of the last three seasons.

With the Hurricanes making their first Sweet 16 appearance in school history, Hamilton's rebuilding job seems successful. And, if teams like Georgia Tech, where long-time Coach Bobby Cremins stepped down, and the Huskers get their way, it also will be over after this season.

Tulsa's Self knows Hamilton's predicament well, but he may know Hamilton better. Self was an assistant under Hamilton at Oklahoma State. Together, they led the Cowboys to two NIT appearances during Hamilton's reign.

Now, at Tulsa, Self will be facing his former boss. He also faces the same predicament as Hamilton - whether to stay or go.

After getting the job at Oral Roberts in 1993, Self engineered a turnaround that rivals Hamilton's at Miami. ORU won only five games in the year before Self took over and six in his first season.

Three years later, the win total was 23. And Self was off to Tulsa.

The coach has had similar success with the Golden Hurricanes. Despite coaching at the same university that spawned coaches Nolan Richardson (Arkansas), Tubby Smith (Georgia and now Kentucky) and Steve Robinson (Florida State), Self has stood out.

This season's 31 wins are already the most in school history. TU has been ranked as high as No. 12, and, if it beats Miami on Thursday night, TU will have advanced farther than any other Golden Hurricane team in history.

For two seasons, some have anticipated that Self will follow in the footsteps of past TU coaches and search for greener pastures.

After last year, the 37-year old Self interviewed for the Missouri job eventually given to Quin Snyder. And the coach has said he will consider offers once the season is over.

But Self said not to assume anything about his leaving.

"There's a misconception about Tulsa," he said. "People look at it as a mid-major school, but it's a high-major job for fan support, and the financial resources will come."

Other coaches, after Self and Hamilton, fit into the NU search.

Butler's Barry Collier tasted some NCAA flavor of his own this season after his Bulldogs won the Midwest Collegiate Conference Tournament.

Butler was knocked out in the first round by the Florida Gators 69-68 in overtime on a shot at the buzzer. The Bulldogs finished the season with a 23-8 mark - the fifth time Collier has reached the 20-win plateau in his career.

Since Collier was named coach in 1989, the Bulldogs have made it to post-season play six times and have only had a losing record twice in Collier's 11 seasons.

Before going back to Butler to coach his alma mater, Collier held assistant jobs at five different schools, including Idaho, Oregon and Stanford.

Dayton's Oliver Purnell can sympathize with Collier when it comes to first-round NCAA exits. Purnell's Flyers also lost by one point in the first round, 62-61 to Purdue.

The Flyers finished 22-9 in Purnell's fifth year at the helm after going 11-17 last season. His record at Dayton is 89-86 and 190-161 in his 12 years of coaching overall.

Purnell, 46, previously had coached at Radford and Old Dominion and assisted at ODU and Maryland before taking the job at Dayton.

Southern Methodist's Mike Dement, like Dayton's Purnell, is in his fifth year at his respective school. Dement has compiled a 78-65 record at SMU, while turning around a dormant Mustang program.

Dement, 45, has a mark of 200-188 in his 14 years of coaching, which includes stops at Cornell and North Carolina-Greensboro. He has assisted at Duke, Cornell and East Carolina before being hired in 1995 by SMU.

Dement finished 21-9 this season, 10 wins better than NU.

Colorado State's Richie McKay is one name linked to the Nebraska job who didn't make an appearance in the Big Dance this season.

In fact, Colorado State, like Nebraska, didn't even make postseason play. Despite that, McKay has led the Rams to success in his two seasons.

Coming off two seasons at tiny Portland State, where he was the program's first basketball coach, McKay, at only 32, won the Colorado State job.

In his two years at CSU, McKay's teams have compiled a 37-23 record. The Rams made the NIT last year before being shut out of postseason play this season despite an 18-12 record.

Perry Watson led Detroit-Mercy to a 20-12 mark this season. The 49-year-old has a 133-76 mark in his seven seasons at Detroit.

Last season his team finished with a 25-6 mark for the second year in a row and made it past the first round of NCAA tourney both years.

Before coming to Detroit, Watson assisted at Michigan during the Fab Five era and was the coach at Southwestern High School in Detroit.

Along with Watson, Appalachian State's Buzz Peterson is a coach from a small conference looking to move up.

Peterson hasn't always been at a school that most people are unaware of. Although he now walks the sidelines in Boone, N.C., he played in at a more well-known North Carolina location, Chapel Hill.

Peterson was a member of the Tar Heel team that won the National Championship in 1984. After a number of assistant jobs, Peterson took the Appalachian State job.

The team has compiled a 81-39 record under Peterson.

# Bentz likes Husker's chances

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chance on the boards, coming off a Big 12 Championship in the one-meter event and a second-place finish to defending national champion Troy Dumais of Texas on the three-meter board. Cook beat Dumais in the one meter.

NU Diving Coach Jim Hocking said in the days leading up to the conference meet, very little separates the top divers, and he believes Cook is always in the hunt, no matter who's the competition.

"Diving is a lot like golf in which a guy can have one bad hole and lose it all," Hocking said. "One bad dive by the leader under that pressure, and he goes from first to sixth, and that's when Erik can really take advantage."

Some youthful Huskers that could

make an impact are sophomores Anthony Rogis and Javier Botello.

Nebraska has hopes of at least a top-eight finish from Rogis in either the 100- or 200-meter freestyle. Rogis picked up a bronze in the 200 at last year's meet.

Botello hopes to challenge for All-American status in the 200-meter freestyle, and will also swim the 100-meter freestyle and several relays.

Freshman Erik Wiken will dip his toes in the NCAA waters for the first time of his career, handling the backstroke duties for NU in the 100-meter event.

With all these factors, Bentz says his team has a chance to go to places NU men's swimming has never been.

"We've got a good group of competitors, and the experience they bring in will do nothing but help us."

# Newcombe leads talented returners

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tion, a lot of inspiration," Newcombe said. "After that, we went on to win the game and people were thanking me for it in the locker room."

As Newcombe - last year's No. 2 punt returner in the nation at 18.4 yards-per-return - reflected on that return after the second day of spring practice Wednesday, he looked forward to busting a few more in the fall.

Newcombe heads a dangerous crop of punt returners who will look to give the Huskers favorable field position and, in the case of the Kansas run and his second-quarter 60-yard TD return vs. Tennessee, exciting, game-breaking points.

Senior Joe Walker and junior Keyou Craver will be there when punters kick away from Newcombe, which should be often. But opponents won't be getting much of a bargain in Walker, who is tied with Newcombe for ninth place on NU's all-time punt return list.

"With Bobby and I back there, teams better watch out," Walker said. "We're going to try to take it to the house every time. That's the goal, that's the only thing you think about standing back there."

Walker knows a thing or two about

game-breakers. His 73-yard TD return against Oklahoma State in 1998 kept NU undefeated and ranked No. 2 before losing four of its last nine games. He also broke open NU's season opener against Louisiana Tech that season, taking a kickoff return 99 yards for a score after the Bulldogs had mounted a serious second-half comeback.

This season, the NU's third-best all-time kickoff returner will take returns with junior linebacker Randy Stella, who led the team in the department last year. It's a department both Walker and Coach Frank Solich said has vast room for improvement, mainly because of mediocre downfield blocking.

"We need to get better on kickoff returns and kickoff coverage this spring," Solich said. "We have the personnel for it, but we are not among the best teams in the country in those areas."

But no such problems exist on punt returns. Newcombe is on pace to break 1972 Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Rodgers' record for punt return average, and his 20.33 average-per-return in '97 is a school record.

Walker said he is at "98 percent full speed" after recovering from a torn left knee that kept him out of 1999's first

**WHO'S BACK:**

PR/KR Bobby Newcombe (16 ret. 294 yards, 1 TD on punts)

PR/KR Joe Walker (30 ret. 216 yards on punts, 8 ret. 149 yards on kickoffs)

PR/KR Keyou Craver (10 ret. 108 yards in punts)

PR/KR Randy Stella (2 ret. 10 yards on punts 10 ret. 232 yards on kickoffs)

**WHO'S GONE:**

No one

**OUTLOOK:**

No team would enjoy kicking to any of the four returners, but Newcombe's vision and speed make him among the most dangerous in the nation. Stella has speed on kickoffs, while Craver displayed sure hands over the course of last season. Walker gets the most work, and when 100 percent healthy, represents a home run threat.

David Jané/DN

two games and hobbled him throughout the season.

It's a combination that might lead teams to do what KU, Tennessee, OSU and La. Tech maybe should have done - keep the ball out of their hands.

"I wouldn't kick to us," Walker said. "It wouldn't be wise."

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Men's Gymnastics

Nebraska is heading to the NCAA Championships in Iowa City, Iowa, on March 30-April 1, where it will compete in East Regional to determine if it can advance to the National Championship round.

No. 9 NU was one of 12 teams selected for regional competition and will be competing against No. 1 Michigan, No. 4 Ohio State, No. 5 Penn State, No. 8 Illinois and No. 13 Massachusetts on March 30. The top three advance to the final round on March 31, where three teams from the West Region will join them.

If the Huskers do not qualify for the finals as a team, they still can qualify individuals performers if they finish within the top three of their respective event or the all-around among competitors not part of a qualified team. Derek Leiter is expected to be among the top all-around competitors in the NCAA Championships.

### Men's golf

Nebraska finished 15<sup>th</sup> at the Cleveland Golf Collegiate Championship in Aiken, S.C., this weekend after shooting a team score of 907. Augusta State led the way with a team score of 847.

Leading NU were sophomore Seth Porter and freshman Rob Arthur who tied for 49<sup>th</sup> in the competition with scores of 225.

### Women's Gymnastics

The Husker women also won awards for their academic work as five were named to Academic All-Big 12 Teams. Heather Brink, Laura Goss, Arica Lamb and Nicole Wilkinson were on the first team, while Amy Ringo was named to the second team.

### Cross Country

NU women earned a distinctive honor Wednesday, after being named Academic All-Americans by the Women Intercollegiate Cross Country Coaches Association. Nebraska was one of 60 teams honored.

The Huskers posted a 3.68 team grade point average, trailing Belmont

University (3.78) and Southwest Missouri State (3.77).

Husker senior Jaime Pauli was named an individual Academic All-American as she carries a 3.59 GPA in accounting and finished in the top 10 percent at the NCAA Championships.

### Volleyball

A new director of operations has been created for the Cornhusker team as Coach John Cook announced the addition of Diane Mendenhall to the NU office. Mendenhall's presence was necessary, Cook said, because of the growing "demand placed on coaches and the overall program." Cook said he wanted to "relieve some of the administrative duties on the coaching staff."

NU is in its second full week of practice and will be holding a coaches clinic on Friday and Saturday at the NU Coliseum.

**WARNING!**

Job opportunity may provide learning experience, fun, frustration and money for withstanding the furies of Union dungeon!

The Daily Nebraskan is now accepting applications for the fall semester. Any major field and class standing will be eligible as long as you are taking at least six credit hours and have a 2.0 GPA or higher.

Pick up an application and job description and sign up for an interview at the Daily Nebraskan, 20 Nebraska Union. Applications are due March 30. Interviews will be held during the first week of April. Positions will be announced in early April.

The Daily Nebraskan is an equal opportunity employer and adheres to all applicable hiring guidelines.

Positions are open for: Web editor, assistant Web editor, managing editor, associate news editors, assignment editor, copy desk chief, copy editors, sports editor, A&E editor, opinion editor, night editors, design chief, designers, art director, photo chief, senior artist, senior reporters, senior photographers, advertising account executives, creative ad designer and classified staff.

## N Sport Clubs

### At Home this Weekend

**Men's & Women's Rugby**  
Friday - Mabel Lee Hall Fields  
7:00 pm Women  
8:00 pm Men A-side vs. Iowa

**Men's Rugby**  
Saturday - Whittier Field  
9:00 am B-side vs. Iowa

**Judo Tournament**  
Saturday - East Campus Activities Bldg.  
11:00 am

### On the Road

NU Baseball will be traveling to Carbondale, IL this weekend to take on Southern Illinois.

On Saturday, **Women's Rugby** versus University of South Dakota.

**Women's Soccer** travels to Iowa City, IA competing in the University of Iowa Soccer Tournament.

**Get Involved!**

Join an NU SPORT CLUB! New clubs include Roller Hockey, Cycling and Handball plus 25+ other clubs to choose from. For more information call 472-3467.

For more information regarding any of the UNL Sport Clubs events - Please contact the Office of Campus Recreation 472-3467

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