

Collier most likely next basketball coach

By Matthew Hansen

Staff writer

It looks as if the wait for a new Nebraska basketball coach is all but officially over.

Several sources close to the Nebraska basketball team said Tuesday that Barry Collier would be announced as the new Nebraska coach as early as Wednesday.

Collier toured the Bob Devaney Sports Center on Tuesday morning, then met with Husker basketball personnel for lunch at the Hewitt Center.

The meeting, according to a

source near the program, was organized to let Collier meet the people he will be working with.

The prospective coach also met with Husker team representatives Cookie Belcher and Cary Cochran during his stay in Lincoln before returning to Indianapolis on Tuesday afternoon.

Larry Florence, who talked briefly to Collier at the Hewitt Center on Monday, said he thought the Butler coach was just tying up some loose ends before being announced as the new Nebraska coach.

"It's done, but not officially

done," Florence said. "I'm sure they are just ironing out the last details, and then they'll have the press conference."

Some of those details probably include addressing his current players. Collier reportedly returned to Butler on Tuesday to meet with his team, which won a school-record 23 games last season, to tell them he was leaving.

"I think he will go back home and talk to his players first," said Kimani Ffriend, who said he hadn't spoken to Collier as of Tuesday. "Before he would meet with us, I'd assume that

"It's done, but not officially done."

Larry Florence
NU basketball player

he would meet with them."

Ffriend, like most of his teammates, knows little about Collier. The center said that when he did meet him, he wanted to learn several things.

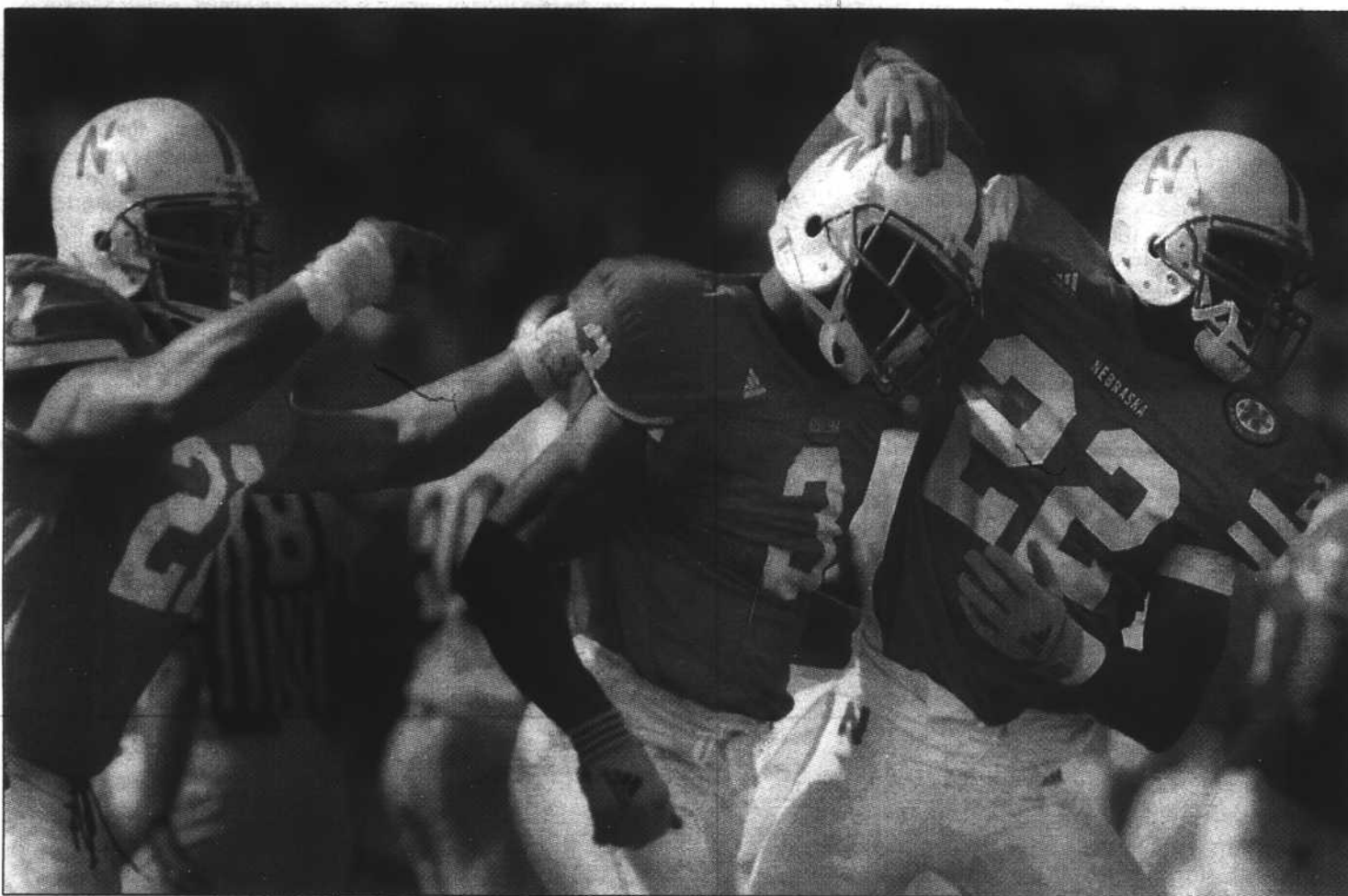
"Yeah, I'd like to know where he wants to take this program," he said. "I'd be interested in knowing his phi-

losophy, his plans for the team.

"But," Ffriend added. "I don't think we'll be meeting with him anytime soon."

This fact was disputed by Florence and other sources, who claimed that a meeting, along with

Please see **COLLIER** on 11



BILL SNYDER and the Wildcats finished strong in the 1999 season with an 11-1 record. However, even with 15 returning starters, the Wildcats look to replace talented players at skilled positions this spring.

Browns leave big shoes to fill

Football team looks to fill gaps in secondary left by leaving players

By Brian Christopherson

Staff writer

Nebraska football doesn't rebuild. It reloads, right?

NU Secondary Coach George Darlington prays that such a philosophy is correct, although completely filling the indentation left from the graduation of All-American rover Mike Brown and cornerback Ralph Brown would be a minor miracle.

Cornerback Keyuo Craver finds himself as the grizzled veteran of this returning bunch. The junior is the only returning defensive back to start all 13 games last season for a secondary that ranked No. 2 in the country in pass-efficiency defense, behind only Kansas State.

"There will not be a letdown," Craver said. "When you lose players like Mike and Ralph and the linebackers we had, other people just have to step up into those roles."

The loss of Ralph Brown is eased somewhat by the return of former starter Erwin Swiney.

Swiney started every game as a sophomore at left cornerback in 1998, but a serious groin injury forced the junior into a medical redshirt last season.

"Erwin appears to be fully recovered and seems to have worked himself back into where he was naturally before the injury," Darlington said.

Craver is excited at the opportunity to have Swiney back in uniform again. He served as a backup to Swiney during his freshman season in 1998.

"He's a great player, and I am expecting big things out of him this year," Craver said.

While Craver is planted strongly at the No. 1 position on the depth chart at the left corner, the right-corner starting slot is still up for grabs this spring — competing are Swiney and sophomore DeJuan Groce, Darlington said.

"DeJuan is having a really good spring and has experience from starting on our dime package last year," Darlington said.

While the battle wages to replace Ralph Brown, Darlington already is clued into who will replace Mike Brown at the rover position.

Senior Joe Walker should step into that role, bringing some big game experience to the position.

"Joe has been a starting rover," Darlington said. "He started there two years ago when Clint Finley was hurt and did a nice job."

Junior Dion Booker and Finley are both listed as No. 1 on the depth charts for the free safety position right now.

Neither player is new to the starting role, with Finley having started the first eight games at free safety last season, backing up Booker in the final five contests.

Booker's emergence in the starting spot has allowed Secondary Coach Darlington the flexibility of playing Finley at the rover position also.

Building depth beyond those players has been a concern to Darlington this spring, mostly because of injuries.

"I think we're progressing well this spring in replacing Mike and Ralph, and we could have some depth if we get everyone healthy," Darlington said.

"We had the senior leadership last year on defense, and the offense has it this year on the line."

George Darlington
secondary coach

However, the dark cloud hovering over this spring has been the domination displayed by the offense over the defense so far.

"Holding some of the players we have held out has been a big factor to that," Darlington said. "And the offense is just better than they were last year at this point."

Craver doesn't see it as a concern, either.

"That's just part of football," he said. "We had the senior leadership last year on defense, and the offense has it this year on the line. Once players get situated, we'll be good."

The secondary should be tested perhaps even more than usual, with traditional running schools like Texas Tech and Missouri hyping a more pass-oriented offense this season.

"It has usually been a strong point of this team to have very good success against passing teams," Darlington said. "We see teams going to more of the modern football. We just have to keep putting the athletes out there against them."

Track star discovered niche late

Now the top javelin-thrower in the Big 12, Cassi Morelock found her sport relatively late.

By Jamie Suhr

Staff writer

Cassi Morelock didn't throw a javelin until after she graduated high school.

Now, Morelock is an All-American javelin-thrower for the Nebraska track and field team and the top thrower in the Big 12 Conference.

Her talent went undiscovered until she stepped onto the field at a post-high school pentathlon, where Morelock shocked coaches by stepping up and throwing the javelin 128 feet.

"I practiced for like an hour," Morelock said. "I didn't realize how far I threw until someone told me I broke the record."

However, Morelock already had accepted a basketball scholarship to Central Arizona Community College, where she played point guard alongside NU basketball player Monique Whitfield.

After her two years of eligibility expired at CACC, Morelock had won a championship in both track and field and basketball, and letters began to pour in but not for the sport Morelock expected.

"I would get letter after letter and I'd be excited," Morelock said. "But they were all for track."

One of the first college coaches to visit her was Mark Kostek, NU javelin and multi-events coach. Morelock said he left shocked.

"He looked at me like I was some kind of freak," Morelock said. "He said, 'How long have you been throwing?'"

Success would come quickly for Morelock at NU. She took home first place at the Big 12 Outdoor Conference Championships last year.

Things took a turn for the worse a few weeks later. Morelock hurt her back while warming up at the NCAA Outdoor National Championships. Morelock had been battling a shoulder injury all season.

Despite the injury, she still managed to finish No. 8 in the country.

"I tried my hardest, but every time I threw, it felt like I was getting hit with a sledge hammer in my back," Morelock said.

After nursing the injury, Morelock competed in the United States Track and Field Championships, finishing second with a throw of 175-1 and gaining a spot in the World University Games. That same year, she competed for the United States in the Pan-American Games.

Morelock said she's only 70 percent healthy and believed it was her rigorous training that caused her back to go out.

"I'm a workhorse," Morelock said. "It's my fault I'm injured. If I'm told to squat 200 pounds, I'll move it to 220."

Morelock is paying for that now. She must

Please see **NICHE** on 11