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# Husker walk-ons have 36 holes to prove they belong

**GOLF from Page 12**

He had walked off the course, another victim of dashed hopes at the most pressure-packed college sporting event you have never heard of.

"It was easy to see he was a good player," said Romjue. "But he couldn't bring it to the course today. That was all she wrote."

That was the stark reality facing 12 walk-ons as they teed it up on Saturday for the first day of the two-day tryouts. Each had been accomplished high school golfers. Each felt they had been overlooked, or they had received other offers from smaller schools but elected to attend NU.

The goal was the same—make the team. This was their last chance. This was their only chance. Each thought they could do so.

Romjue knew better. "Only a couple of kids out here have any kind of a chance," he said after he watched the final walk-on group hit their initial tee shots.

Romjue said he wouldn't absolutely rule out anyone before he saw their nine-hole scores. But, in his 30 years as coach, he has learned a thing or two about these tryouts.

"The best of walk-ons are going to be comparable to my worst players," he said.

An hour later, the nine-hole scores proved Romjue right. The NU players, all of whom were participating, shot between 33 and 38. The walk-ons ranged from 38 to near 50.

Romjue seemed excited, maybe a little relieved, that his players trounced the walk-ons, even though he had history on his side.

"Since I've been here, I've never found any player out here that I didn't know about coming in. I've heard about guys before hand, but nobody has ever walked in here cold and made the team."

Three decades. Zero Cinderella stories.

But while most of the 12 walk-

ons fell by the wayside very early, several tried to buck those seemingly impossible odds.

Justin Borsych, Joel Monahan, Nathan Salmon and JT Douglas each broke 80, bringing them back for a second day of tryouts at Holmes Golf Course, and at least a small chance at making the team.

Borsych, a junior, had carded the best walk-on score, a 76. It still left him well behind many of the NU golfers.

The competition had been whittled, but the pressure had not.

Now the golfers had only 18 holes left to prove themselves. They weren't playing the golf course or each other, but rather some invisible line they had to cross to make the team.

The man they had to convince remained unconvinced.

"I think Justin (Borsych) is the only one with a real shot right now," Romjue said, standing on the practice tee before the round. "He's going to have to have a really good round today to have a shot."

That invisible line was looking unreachable. The walk-ons seemed to know it. While the Husker golfers talked, joked and hit shots at one side of the driving range in preparation for the second round, the walk-ons silently pounded balls at the other end.

For many, the strain was evident.

"I was feeling quite a bit of

pressure," Borsych said. "I was thinking I had to shoot a really good round to make up for yesterday, when I didn't play really good."

"It was a lot of pressure. But when it came right down to it, I didn't think I had a chance."

But Borsych proved himself wrong, shooting a 69 at Holmes to place him second, behind only top Husker golfer Seth Porter, who shot 68.

He made a believer out of Romjue—sort of.

"We are going to bring Justin back and have him play some tougher courses," Romjue said. "I have a feeling he might struggle a little more on them, but right now he's going to continue."

The others may or may not be so lucky. Romjue has yet to decide on the status of several others who impressed him but didn't score well.

Most likely, there is just Borsych, a junior transfer student from Colorado State.

He didn't play golf in college. In fact, last year, he didn't play golf at all after severely injuring his wrist. Borsych couldn't even pick up a club.

Romjue knew little or nothing about him before Saturday.

He is the new feel-good story of the tryouts, but Romjue offers a word of caution.

"Guess there is a first time for everything," he said on Sunday night. "But he's still got a way to go. There are no guarantees yet."

No one knows that better than Ken Soell. He is a one-handicapper at Woodland Hills. He works at the course. He may have been the best of the walk-ons.

After 14 holes of golf, he is right where he started off.

"I felt it was a little unfair .... I felt it was very up to chance," he said. "Two bad holes and I was out."

"It was so ... unfair."



JT Douglas and Ken Soell, two walk-ons trying to make the squad, react to their shots differently.

## Quarterback question at center of Texas A&M

**AGGIES from page 12**

tious A&M fans will have to lower their expectations in 2000. A disappointing 8-4 record in 1999 may look like something to shoot for in 2000 with Kansas State, Texas and Oklahoma on the schedule.

But Slocum said he is looking at the glass as being half full.

"We're a good football team," he said during the Big 12 Media Days in July. "This team reminds me of our Big 12 championship team. Nobody picked us to win it that year. I don't see ourselves as an underdog, that's why you play the games."

That's where A&M might run into some problems, if they do any running at all.

A rushing game that was practically nonexistent last year (the leading rusher had 583 yards) forced the Aggies to rely upon the arm of departed quarterback Randy McCown.

A one-dimensional offense doomed the Aggies to go from a 5-1 start and a ranking as high as fifth to a 3-3 finish and being outscored by an astonishing 112-6 in those last losses—blowouts to Oklahoma, Nebraska and Penn State University.

"When you suffer losses like we did," said senior linebacker Jason Glenn, "it shouldn't take much to motivate you. That's been the case this summer."

The summer and fall workouts have been spent trying to improve the predictable Aggie offense of last season.

But without a talented quarterback like McCown to throw the ball, Slocum had a big decision about who would be under center.

Going into fall camp, competition for starting quarterback was between three inexperienced signal callers: sophomores Vance Smith and Mark Farris, and redshirt freshman Colby Freeman. They have combined for 30 career pass attempts.

Farris, a drop-back throwing quarterback, has since emerged as the leader, with Slocum naming him the starter for the opener at Notre Dame. But the coach said in July that just because a Quarterback starts one game, doesn't mean he'll be the starter all season.

"Some guys just make good

## BIG XII PREVIEW

- Texas A&M Aggies**
- Preseason Rank: 5th (South Division)
  - 1999: 8-4 (5-3 Big XII, 2nd in South)
  - Offensive Starters Returning: 5
  - Defensive Starters Returning: 6
  - Prognosis: Aggies take a big plunge in the South because their offense isn't going anywhere quick.

Delan Lonowski/DN

things happen on the field," Slocum said. "We're looking for that guy."

Receiver Chris Taylor said it's of no importance to him who's delivering the ball.

"All three can really play," the senior said. "It's not a question of which guy I like best. All three are capable, and on any given Saturday, any of them could lead us on the field to victory."

If Farris can't get the job done with his arm, A&M may have trouble getting it done on the ground, even though Slocum said he expects to be a better running team this year. The return of fullback Ja'mar Toombs and three returners on the offensive line help that cause a little.

"Toombs is a well-molded fullback," Slocum said of the 265-pounder. "When he carries the ball, he's a load. We'll definitely give him his chances to carry the ball."

Toombs is the only semi-proven weapon in the rushing attack, with a freshman and sophomore occupying the top two spots at running back.

"We have a number of young backs that didn't play last year, and we'll see how they stack up," Slocum said.

With expectations always high at Texas A&M, a repeat of last year's second half will not be permitted by the faithful, Glenn said.

"Our strength coaches remind us of those games last year each time we work out," he said. "We won't ever forget it."

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