

Raiders expect more with Leach at helm

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

For two years, Texas Tech's Ricky Williams toiled in the obscurity of being known as "the other Ricky."

The Texas version had overshadowed Williams in his first two seasons at Tech, despite numbers that would impress any coach in the country.

Last season was supposed to be a sort of coming-out party for the junior running back. He had preseason accolades galore, and it looked as if Williams was in for a breakout season.

But that script was torn up and shredded to pieces as Williams was injured for the season in the opening game at Arizona State.

Williams was forced to watch helplessly as the Red Raiders struggled to a 6-5 record, and Spike Dykes was run out of Lubbock.

But Williams wants to forget 1999, much like many of the fans of Tech.

It won't take long.

New Tech Coach Mike Leach brings his passing attack south from Oklahoma, where he helped resurrect the Sooner program as offensive coordinator under Bob Stoops.

Leach's wide-open passing scheme will differ greatly from Dykes' running attack—and it has both players and fans excited about the opportunity it brings.

"I felt (the excitement) the very first day he walked in," said Williams, who has his sights on a 1,000 yard rushing and receiving year. "He came in and talked with everybody and made us feel as if we can communicate with him."

While Williams' carries will go down in Leach's new scheme, he will get compensation from catching passes in the open field.

"I will be getting more catches and will be in one on one situations with linebackers—which is one of my strengths," said Williams, who had 306 rushing attempts for 1,582 yards in his sophomore season.

Leach will try hard to keep his star running back happy with touches.

This goal wasn't completely accomplished in Tech's opener, a 24-3 win over New Mexico on Saturday.

Williams gained 78 yards on only 15 carries as Tech quarterback Cliff Kingsbury struggled at times, hitting only 21 of 47 passes for 186 yards.

BIG XII PREVIEW

- Texas Tech**
- Preseason Rank: 3rd (South Division)
 - 1999: 6-5 (5-3 Big XII, 1-2 in South)
 - Offensive Starters Returning: 6
 - Defensive Starters Returning: 4
 - Prognosis: **The guess here is that offensive guru and new Red Raider Coach Mike Leach will take his team to a mid-level bowl.**

Tech's star running back did, however, catch his first career touchdown pass in the game.

Getting the ball to Williams is crucial because Leach knows the running back will be a big part in his attempt to create the same turnaround he spearheaded as OU's offensive coordinator.

He doubled OU's point production (16.7 to 36.8 per game) from 1998 to 1999 and made stars out of Oklahoma's Josh Heupel and former Kentucky star Tim Couch.

But Leach's job won't be an easy task. Despite the return of Williams and 10 starters total on offense and defense, several questions remain.

The Red Raiders starting quarterback in 2000 is Kingsbury, a sophomore who attempted only 57 passes in six games. Kingsbury will eclipse that mark by the Utah State game—Tech's second of the year.

But Kingsbury's lack of experience running Leach's new offense does not detract from the confidence his teammates have in him.

"He is a great quarterback and works so hard," said strong safety Kevin Curtis. "He is always running extra or in there watching film. He is good because he wants to be good."

Leach stresses that his offense will not catch anyone in the Big 12 Conference off guard, and execution is the main ingredient to its success.

But in the end, his philosophy is pretty simple.

"We want to get Ricky the ball as many times as possible, and we want to keep the ball away from the other team as much as possible," he said.

Chinese volleyball star helps coach Huskers

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the Nebraska volleyball program and hope to make the most of this opportunity."

With all of the high name status Li carried in China, why would she want to leave?

In China Li was just an assistant coach to a high school volleyball team despite being considered one of the best players in the world and a brilliant volleyball mind.

Cook thinks Li came over to the United States not just because of volleyball but for equal rights as a woman.

"I think her dream right now is to maybe come to the U.S. and maybe coach," Cook said. "At the high school she was the assistant coach although she did everything."

"The guy who was the head coach looked like he was a custodian. But in China women aren't allowed the status of leadership positions. I think she feels stifled."

"She's not your typical Chinese woman. She's been all over the world, and she's played in two Olympics. I think she wants the opportunity to have a more dynamic role of coaching and America is where that can happen."

Even All-American Nancy Meendering realizes how lucky she and the rest of her teammates are to have someone like Li to work with on a daily basis.

For most of the year Meendering worked out at the international level during her tryout with the Olympic team.

The best comparison Meendering and Cook could make on Li's ability was comparing her to former NU All-American and Olympic team member Allison Weston.

"I think you can even see it now that she'll make a dig that's just amazing, or she'll hit a shot

that you never saw coming," Meendering said. "When you see stuff like that you can tell when she was in her prime she just must have been unreal."

What took Li out of her prime was an ankle injury she suffered in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

At that time China was favored to win the gold medal, but when they lost Li they didn't even advance out of pool play.

"When she broke her ankle they just took her out, shot her up with a bunch of stuff, taped her up and sent her back in," Meendering said. "It was broken in two places. So obviously she's very tough mentally."

"Her English is still improving. It's hard to talk to her, but we can see by the way she plays in practice she was a great player."

The thing Wolfe was amazed with was how many NU students from China recognized Li.

Wolfe said that next to legendary coach Lang Pi, Li is the most recognizable women's athlete in China.

"People on campus come into the Rec Center and know exactly who she is," Wolfe said. "I think June's probably our biggest surprise."

"We have been embraced by the Chinese community here at Nebraska."

"I've never been around

something like that before."

At first Cook looked at making Li a part of the coaching staff as an opportunity to help her.

Now, after having Li on his staff for several months, Cook looks at the situation much differently.

"When I got her in the gym I realized how lucky we were to have somebody like her," Cook said. "She sees and feels the game in ways that I cannot because I haven't played it like she has."

"Just by having that role model in the gym and our players' seeing how she plays the game gives us a tremendous benefit."

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Careful optimism merited

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NU's system, sitting on the depth chart as the inexperienced No. 2 left cornerback, he isn't currently keeping Bill Snyder and his receivers up at night.

Other depth questions are posed, such as: Can John Gibson be half as effective as Bobby Newcombe in the slot? Can red-shirt lineman Chris Loos keep

Casey Hampton off Crouch's back?

The Big Red will roll through the first three fourths of the season with its talent, but during a strong late schedule, some aspects of NU's depth could be exploited.

So there it is, right in your own hands. Your simple excuse to be cautiously optimistic about the prospect of the 2000 Cornhuskers.

have not impressed Solich enough to get the nod.

With All-American candidate punter Dan Hadenfeldt serving a one-game suspension for violating NCAA rules by playing in the Hula Bowl, Solich would not name a definite replacement. Place kicker Josh Brown is expected to fill in at punter.

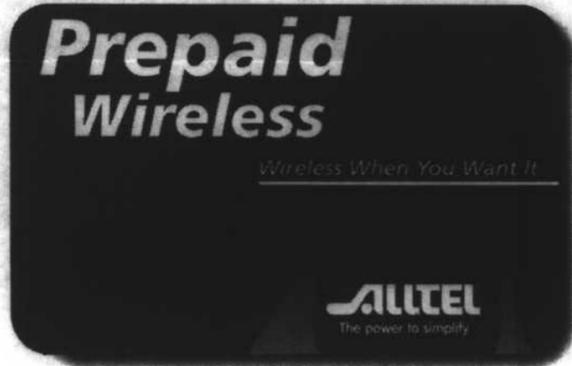
NU makes history with webcast

WEBCAST from page 10

Lohr's backup, sophomore John Clanton, has a twisted ankle.

The Huskers still have not named a clear-cut backup quarterback to Eric Crouch. Redshirt freshman Jammal Lord and sophomore walk-on Joe Chrisman continue to battle for the spot, but

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