

Miami's Davis takes Browns job

■ The man who restored the University of Miami to football power now gets his crack at the NFL's Cleveland team.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEREA, Ohio — Butch Davis rebuilt a once-proud football program in shambles at the University of Miami. Now, he'll have a chance to do the same thing for the Cleveland Browns.

Davis, who in six years brought the Hurricanes back from ruin to national-title contenders, resigned Monday to become coach of the Browns.

"I'm excited," Davis said Monday night. "It's a great opportunity, one that I felt for me and my family I couldn't pass up."

Davis will be introduced Tuesday at the club's suburban training facility, Browns president Carmen Policy said.

"I think he's going to bring a combination of excitement, energy and a new view," said Policy.

Both Davis and the Browns had spent the past few weeks rejecting rumors that he would come to Cleveland, and Policy said only a series of developments during the weekend led to the hiring.

The Browns have been looking for a coach since Jan. 11, when they fired Chris Palmer after a disturbing and injury-ravaged 3-13 season.

Davis' agent, Marvin Demoff, said after arriving in Cleveland that his client had not yet signed a contract with the Browns but the sides were "in serious discussions. It's pretty close."

An NFL source, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Davis was seeking a five-year deal in the \$13-15 million range.

Kansas City recently signed Dick Vermeil to a comparable three-year, \$10 million contract.

"He's a solid coach and a great pick," said Browns guard Jim Pyne. "He's a high-energy guy who has a lot of enthusiasm and fire. He's a tough disciplinarian and that can only help a young team. I'm really happy he's coming."

The Browns had one of the league's

youngest rosters last season, and Policy had hoped to hire a coach who could relate to young players. Davis was tough, but popular, with his teams at Miami.

For weeks, Davis denied he would leave Miami, where he inherited a program racked by scandal and under NCAA sanctions in 1995. He had been working on a contract extension with the university.

The Browns also denied having had a secret meeting with Davis in Florida.

But something made Davis change his mind about Cleveland, and money could be one of the biggest reasons.

Davis' contract with Miami paid him \$900,000 annually and the school's new five-year offer was said to be worth about \$1.3 million a year.

Palmer made about \$1 million a year with Cleveland and, when he was dismissed, the team made it clear that billionaire owner Al Lerner wanted to pay him for the three remaining years on his contract and then some.

Davis told the Hurricanes' players of his decision Monday morning. His departure comes at a difficult time for the school with just one week left before the end of the college signing period.

"I'm disappointed," said Miami athletic director Paul Dee. "I think Coach Davis had a lot to give UM, and I'm pleased at the success we had."

Dee chose offensive coordinator Larry Coker as interim coach.

Just last week, the Browns said they were focusing their search on NFL assistants, all but ruling out the possibility of hiring Davis, Oklahoma Coach Bob Stoops or Washington Coach Rick Neuheisel.

Lerner even shot down reports Davis was coming to Cleveland, saying, "There is no Butch Davis."

Well, he's now the Browns' 10th full-time coach in club history and second in three years.

The 49-year-old Davis, who interviewed for the expansion Houston Texans' head coaching job, had reportedly lost interest in pursuing a job with the Browns because he would not have full control of football operations in Cleveland.

Dwight Clark is in charge of personnel

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Jim Pyne
Cleveland Browns guard

decisions with the Browns, but Davis' hiring could indicate a reshuffling in the team's front office.

The Browns' coaching search is ending just when it seemed to be picking up steam. The club was set to speak with Super Bowl Defensive Coordinators Marvin Lewis of Baltimore and John Fox of the Giants this week. Both coaches had scheduled visits to Cleveland.

"It's a little bit discouraging," Fox said. "The rules do penalize guys that make it to the Super Bowl."

The Browns interviewed three assistants last week, including Defensive Coordinator Romeo Crennel, but were thought to be leaning toward Lewis, now the front-runner to replace Wade Phillips in Buffalo.

Davis turned around Miami's troubled program after it was hit with numerous NCAA violations that stripped the school of scholarships and banned the 'Canes from bowl appearances.

This season, Davis led Miami to an 11-1 record and a 37-0 rout of Florida in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 2.

Davis, known as a strict disciplinarian, also served as a defensive assistant coach, then coordinator for Dallas under Jimmy Johnson from 1989-94, when the Cowboys won two Super Bowls.

Davis inherits a team that went 5-27 in its first two years back in the league.

The Browns ranked near the bottom of the league in most statistical categories in 1999 and 2000. They were shut out four times last season in losing 12 of their last 13 games.

Big XII

Four Big 12 teams are rated in the latest Top 25 poll released Monday. Kansas continued its climb, moving up one spot to 3rd. Iowa State is 18th after two conference wins last week. The Cyclones are followed by Oklahoma at 21st and Texas at 24th. Missouri is the only other Big 12 team receiving votes.

with 30 seconds left to give Missouri the 66-64 win.

Rush, who averages 21.6 points per game, and Clarence Gilbert (18.2 per contest) have contributed just over 50 percent of the Tigers' points on the season.

Texas A&M continues to struggle in conference play. The Aggies, 0-7 in the Big 12, haven't won a league game since March 4, 2000 when they defeated Nebraska 83-76 in overtime.

Television and radio broadcasters will wear orange and black ribbons through the remainder of the season to honor those who perished in the Oklahoma State plane crash on Saturday.

Due to the crash, the Big 12 Player of the Week and Rookie of the Week announcement was rescheduled for today.

Compiled by Dirk Chatelain.

Those No. 3 Jayhawks continue to lead the nation in field goal percentage at 51.3 percent. Their success can also be attributed to having six players average double figures in points. KU Coach Roy Williams maintains a controlled optimism, though.

"Everyone thinks we're sitting fat and happy," said Williams. "But the next four weeks is when the champion will be decided."

Kareem Rush of Missouri came up big once again on Saturday against Texas Tech. With the Tigers on the verge of losing their fourth straight, the MU sophomore guard hit the game-winning three pointer

Conference coaches reflect on OSU tragedy

FLIGHT from page 10

Another factor is the need to minimize missed class time. Games that are played midweek can force players to miss two days of classes. Chartered flights allow teams to leave later and get home sooner.

Missouri Coach Quin Snyder, who admittedly doesn't like flying, was on a flight to Baylor with his team last year when the plane lost cabin pressure and was required to make an emergency landing. His mood, like most of the conference coaches, was noticeably somber during Monday's tele-

conference. "It could've been us," said Snyder.

The usual topic of basketball strategy during the teleconference was absent as coaches expressed their sympathy for those involved.

"It's put everything in perspective," said Colorado Coach Ricardo Patton. "The game we play and love is still just a game."

A memorial service will be held in Stillwater, Okla., on Wednesday, and OSU's game against Texas Tech, originally scheduled for Tuesday night, has been indefinitely postponed.

Lewis won't be going to Disneyland

■ The commercial perks of being MVP won't be bestowed on the Ravens player, who is still linked with an unsolved double murder.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Super Bowl's most valuable player won't be going to Disney World and his face won't be on the cover of the next Wheaties box.

Ray Lewis, the Baltimore Ravens' star linebacker linked to a double-killing last year, was shut out of the traditional post-Super Bowl endorsements after his team beat the New York Giants on Sunday.

Instead, it was Ravens quarterback Trent Dilfer who shouted, "I'm going to Disney World!" And General Mills chose tight end Shannon Sharpe and four other Ravens to appear on a commemorative Wheaties box.

"We look for a great story, and Trent Dilfer offered us that story," Disney spokesman Craig Dezern said Monday.

General Mills Inc., which manufactures Wheaties, said in a statement, "The five players who appear on the Ravens Wheaties box represent the entire team and reflect its historic accomplishments this season."

Industry analysts say the Lewis' marketability has been tarnished by his connection to the fatal double-stabbing after last year's Super Bowl in Atlanta.

Lewis eventually pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of obstruction of justice and was fined \$250,000 by the NFL. No one has been convicted for the stabbings.

"Whatever the result of the trial, to have someone who is close enough to a double murder as recently as last year is not the kind of spokesman that corporate America wants to have represent them right now," said Sean

Brenner, managing editor of the Chicago-based IEG Sponsorship sports marketing newsletter.

Disney traditionally has asked the Super Bowl MVP the "What's next?" question and featured that player in a parade the next day.

This was the fourth time in the ad's 15-year run that the MVP did not ride in the parade.

Neither company would comment on their selection process, and Disney declined to discuss whether the company had considered Lewis, but a spokesman said Dilfer was picked because the game played in Tampa, Fla., capped a comeback from his release by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers last year.

Lewis shrugged off the apparent Disney snub after the game.

"I wasn't going there anyway. I have kids who were not going to let me go to Disney World. They wanted to see me," he said.

Rush keys Mizzou upset of No. 3 KU

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Kareem Rush had 27 points and 11 rebounds, and Missouri squandered a 17-point lead but didn't crumble in a 75-66 victory over No. 3 Kansas on Monday night.

Kansas (17-2, 6-1 Big 12) has lost the last five times it has come to Missouri ranked in the Top 25. This time, Missouri (14-6, 5-2) ended Kansas' 10-game winning streak.

Brian Grawer added 14 points and was 4-for-7 from 3-point range, and Clarence Gilbert had 12 for Missouri, which is 10-0 in the Hearnes Center. The floor was named for former longtime coach Norm Stewart during a half-time ceremony, and after the game Stewart was given the game ball.

Kansas erased a 17-point second-half deficit with an 18-0 run over a stretch of 5:50. Jeff Boschee had two 3-pointers in the run and Kirk Hinrich's 3-pointer gave the Jayhawks the lead for the first time at 44-43 with 12:20 left.

But Missouri quickly regained control. Rush scored eight points in a three-minute span as the Tigers pulled ahead 59-52 with 7:30 to go. Kansas, despite shooting 50 percent the second half, never got any closer than five points the rest of the way.

Drew Gooden led Kansas with 19 points, Kenny Gregory added 16 and Boschee had 11.

Missouri is 5-4 against Kansas in Big 12 play,

although the Jayhawks lead the overall series 152-90.

Missouri held Kansas to 35.5 percent shooting in the first half, leading 37-23. The Tigers were 5-for-10 from 3-point range and Gilbert had 11 points.

Kansas, which leads the nation with 52 percent shooting, began the game 2-12.

Before the game, there was a moment of silence for victims of the Oklahoma State basketball crash on Saturday night. Both coaches as well as several others wore black and orange ribbons, the Oklahoma State school colors, during the game.

Rifle team gears up for championships

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The fifth-ranked Nebraska rifle team finished in third place at the Roger Withrow Invitational held in Murray, Ky. this past weekend.

In the overall scoring the Cornhuskers (6,181) were defeated by top-ranked Alaska-Fairbanks (6,273) and No. 2 ranked Kentucky (6,215).

In the smallbore competition the Huskers scored 4,623 points, led by freshman Melissa Downsbrogh who finished with a 1,164, good enough for an eighth-place finish overall.

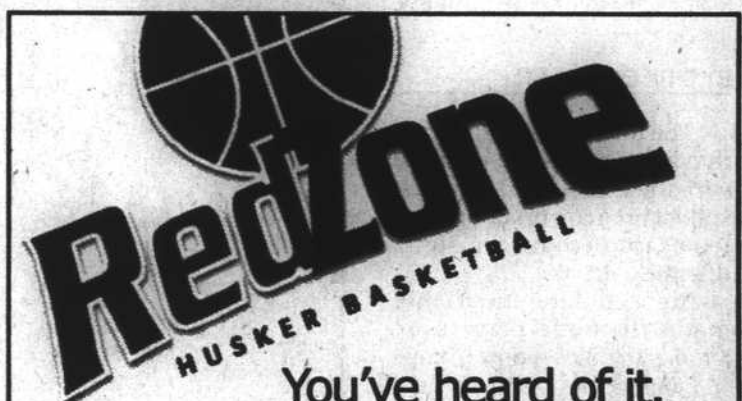
In the air rifle competition, NU shot a 1,558 and were led by sophomore Amanda Trujillo's fifth-place score of 391.

Nebraska Coach Karen Anthony liked her team's consistency at the meet.

"We have never had a match with (air rifle) scores so consistently tight," Anthony said. "From top to bottom, we've got a four-point spread between all four members of the team. I'm real pleased with that kind of consistency."

The Huskers will use the next few weeks to prepare for the NCAA qualifying match on Feb. 10 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Several qualifying matches are held across the country with the top eight team scores in both air and smallbore advancing to the NCAA Championships on March 8-10 in Columbus, Ohio.



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