

# HUSKERS WILL HAVE A NEW LOOK THIS SEASON

By Jerry Trickie, Nebraska Media Relations

Every year, coaches open the season talking about how different their team is from a year ago. Players graduate, newcomers join the program and the trek starts all over again with thoughts of dancing in March.

When coach Doc Sadler talks about his 2009-10 Cornhuskers, there will be no way to understate how different this team will be from the one that won 18 games and earned a postseason bid last year. That was a veteran squad defined by the effort it displayed, a fact shown by its eight wins in Big 12 play – the most in a decade – despite being the shortest team in Division I.

Throw those heights, statistics and records out the window this year as only four scholarship letterwinners return from that squad. New this season will be three mature junior college players, four highly talented true freshmen and the addition of two redshirted players who could have made significant contributions last year. Among those in the running to see bountiful minutes of playing time are four players standing at least 6-8, three more than NU had available last year. Add in the stout defensive principles Sadler teaches, mix it all together and what Husker fans hope to see is a recipe for success.

While trying to get so many newcomers on the same page may be a challenge, one benefit of the influx of talent is the additional depth the Huskers have, compared to recent years. Sadler believes that it will produce a more competitive atmosphere and will push players to be on top of their game starting from the first practice of the season.

"I think the thing I'm most encouraged about is the competition we're going to have in practice," Sadler said. "It's really going to be the first time since I've been here that I think competition for every position is wide open. That's only going to make us better over time. I'm looking forward to that competition, and hopefully that'll lead to more wins down the road."

Sadler focuses on teaching effort and toughness. Those two principles are needed for his players to be able to play the game – especially defense – the way Sadler expects it to be played. And playing defense is a staple of what the Huskers have come to stand for under Sadler.

Over the past two seasons, Nebraska has led the Big 12 Conference in scoring defense each year. When the final buzzer has sounded, the Huskers were among the top 25 nationally in scoring defense. They also led the Big 12 in scoring defense during league play for the first time in history.

As NU looks to continue its defensive success under Sadler this season, it may have more talent on the squad to employ than in previous seasons.

"I really like this basketball team as far as the talent and the size," Sadler said. "The guard play – their size and athleticism – is as important as it is for the big guys inside. We're starting to look more like a Big 12 team athletically and size-wise, and that is a good sign for the future."

Last year, the Huskers had five players returning who had started at least 19 games the previous season and had 11 letterwinners overall back from a 20-win squad. The benefit of experience will not be on Nebraska's side this year as only four scholarship letterwinners return. All told, there are 19 players on the squad this season and only six have ever played in a Division I contest.

Every season, coaches hope to see their seniors provide the necessary leadership within the team. But with his team's inexperience, Sadler knows that his senior leaders – Ryan Anderson and Sek Henry – will need to raise the bar.

"We obviously lack experience in a lot of areas, so we need Ryan and Sek and even Toney (McCray) and Brandon (Richardson) to all step it up, but especially those first two. If we have success this year, those seniors have to play like we know they're capable of every day," Sadler said.

Anderson is the Huskers' most proven offensive threat entering the season. The savvy 6-4 guard – who has played the 4 spot each of his first three years – begins his final season already ranked

among the top 10 3-point shooters in school history in both made treys and 3-point percentage.

Henry has earned a reputation as one of the Huskers' top man-to-man defenders, leading to his appearance in every Husker contest (95 games entering the season) since he arrived in Lincoln in 2006. This year, his focus will be on being more consistent on the offensive end where he's shown flashes of an explosive game but never for an extended period of time.

Even with Anderson and Henry, Nebraska returns only 37 percent of its scoring from last season, presenting a great chance for players to step up into new roles.

"I like to think that there's an opportunity out there," Sadler said of where the team's scoring will come from this year. "One reason we struggled some scoring last year was our depth. We got tired, but I don't think that will be a problem with our depth now. I also think we'll be able to score better on the low post and that always helps open things up."

Also returning is Toney McCray, a talented young wing who has excellent size and a solid skill set, and Brandon Richardson, who showed promise as one of the team's strongest shooters from the perimeter.

The back court will be crowded this season with several newcomers looking to step in and provide a lift. While he isn't technically a newcomer, guard Eshaunte Jones can be added to that list as he will likely see the first significant action of his career after sitting out all but four games last year with an injury. Junior college transfers Lance Jeter, an honorable-mention junior college All-American last year, and Myles Holley also figure to challenge for immediate playing time in the back court.

The Huskers also have a pair of freshmen guards who could make an impact this season in Ray Gallegos and Adrien Coleman.

"Of all the guys, early in the year I've been most pleased with the true freshmen," Sadler said. "They work hard. The good news is that I really believe for first time that I can look beyond this year and say that we could put a run together for two or three straight years with these guys. And that's good and that can only happen because I have that much confidence in the freshmen and sophomores that are here now."

Among that group of freshmen are a pair of forwards who are likely to make contributions this year. Brandon Ubel has impressed coaches and teammates with his ability, while Christian Standhardinger is a highly touted rookie who has a significant background in his native Germany.

Redshirt freshman center Brian Diaz may be the most intriguing addition to the Husker lineup this season as the Huskers' tallest player at 6-11. While Diaz may be the tallest Husker, newcomer Quincy Hankins-Cole will eat up as much space in the paint as anyone and comes in after being one of the nation's top rebounders in junior college the last two years.

## 2009-10 Nebraska Basketball Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown
0	Mitch Albers	G	6-3	180	Jr.	Papillion, Neb.
1	Eshaunte Jones	G	6-4	190	RFr.	Fort Wayne, Ind.
2	Myles Holley	G	6-4	190	So.	Norfolk, Va.
3	Brandon Richardson	G	6-0	190	So.	Los Angeles, Calif.
5	Sek Henry	G	6-4	200	Sr.	Los Angeles, Calif.
11	Christian Standhardinger	F	6-8	210	Fr.	Munich, Germany
12	Matt Karn	G	6-3	190	Sr.	Philpot, Ky.
13	Brandon Ubel	F	6-10	220	Fr.	Overland Park, Kan.
14	Christopher Niemann	C	6-11	265	So.	Kühlungsborn, Germany
15	Ray Gallegos	G	6-2	175	Fr.	Jordan, Utah
20	Drake Beranek	G	6-3	185	Sr.	Ravenna, Neb.
21	Brian Diaz	C	6-11	235	RFr.	Caguas, Puerto Rico
23	Quincy Hankins-Cole	F	6-8	240	Jr.	Roosevelt, N.Y.
24	Adrien Coleman	G	6-4	195	Fr.	Stone Mountain, Ga.
30	Toney McCray	G	6-6	205	So.	Missouri City, Texas
33	Mike Fox	G	6-4	195	RFr.	Beatrice, Neb.
34	Lance Jeter	G	6-3	225	Jr.	Beaver Falls, Pa.
35	Ben Nelson	F	6-9	230	Sr.	Atwater, Minn.
44	Ryan Anderson	G	6-4	205	Sr.	Seattle, Wash.

