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HSU transfer Lanier opts for UCLA

ABILENE (AP) — Mike Lanier, the nation's tallest college basketball player at 7-foot-6, ended months of an intensive recruiting battle Monday by announcing he would transfer from Hardin-Simmons to UCLA.

"I definitely want to play in the NBA, and you can get a whole lot of exposure from going to UCLA," Lanier said shortly before holding a news conference.

Louisiana State, Hawaii, Washington and Washington State led a list of about 25 schools that tried to lure Lanier to their respective campuses.

Lanier, who has two years of eligibility remaining, said he cleared any previous doubts about transferring to UCLA and is "very excited" about playing for a school immersed in basketball tradition.

Lanier, 20, canceled a Friday news conference to announce plans to transfer to UCLA, saying, "some problems came up."

"It's a personal matter, so I don't really have any comment about that," Lanier said Monday. "I had to check some things out, and everything turned out fine."

Dennis Harp, head basketball coach at Hardin-Simmons, said Lanier had been exposed to "negative recruiting" by some unnamed schools and needed a few extra days to make sure of his decision.

Lanier, who weighs about 285 pounds, said he will sit out next year or "redshirt" to bulk up and "raise my level of play to UCLA's level."

A native of Troy, Mich., Lanier averaged seven points and five rebounds a game last season as a sophomore at Hardin-Simmons, which plays in the Trans-American Athletic Conference.

Despite starting 22 of 28 games last season, Lanier's lack of stamina held him to a playing average of 15 minutes per game.

Coaches said Lanier could not sustain the pace of an up-tempo game and was often used only in a half-court offense.

Fear of flying gives Nuggets' coach time to devise strategy

DENVER (AP) — Weary road warrior Doug Moe made the 900-mile drive back to Denver and immediately began charting a course aimed at helping his Nuggets find their way back into playoff contention.

After bowing to the San Antonio Spurs 119-103 and 129-120, the Nuggets face elimination unless they can right themselves Tuesday night at McNichols Arena in Game 3 of the best-of-5 opening-round Western Conference series.

A fourth game, if necessary, also would be played in Denver, on Thursday.

Moe had plenty of time to plot strategy after Saturday night's Game 2 loss. He and his wife, Jane, began the grueling 15-hour drive home from San Antonio on Sunday morning. After an overnight stop in Pueblo, Moe arrived in Denver at 9 a.m. Monday, in time for his squad's light workout.

It was Moe's fear of flying, coupled with unsettled weather in the area, that caused him to choose a land route to and from San Antonio.

"I hate to fly," he said, "and I've never minded driving. We would have made it all the way on Sunday except for a major-league snowstorm in southern Colorado."

"There's no place better to drive on Earth than Texas. They've got wide roads, little traffic, and the people are courteous — they'll move

over for you."

So what game plan did Moe devise during the long trip?

"To win, we've got to score more points than they do," he cracked. "You can't get any more basic than that, right?"

"Seriously, we've got to play good defense, we've got to open the game up, we've got to rebound well enough so we can get out and run, and we've got to shut off their inside game."

To achieve the latter, Moe will insert the physical presence of forward Tim Kempton into the starting lineup, replacing the inconsistent Jerome Lane.

"Tim is more consistent, and he played well Saturday night," Moe said. "With Jerome, you never know. Sometimes he has it, sometimes he doesn't."

Besides scoring 10 points in just 15 minutes in Game 2, Kempton gave the Nuggets some of the toughness they have been missing. When San Antonio guard Rod Strickland drove to the hoop for a certain layup, Kempton wrapped his arms around the ball and Strickland and brought him back to the floor. The aggressive foul prompted a confrontation with the Spurs' Terry Cummings.

"Kempton made everybody mad," Spurs coach Larry Brown said. "In addition, he played really well."

The Nuggets probably will appear without center Dan Schayes, who missed the first two games with a sprained ankle and didn't participate in Monday's practice.

Home teams have won 15 of the 16 playoff games so far, a fact that should prove comforting to the Nuggets. On the other hand, the first two games of a best-of-5 series and come back to win the series. "That's totally irrelevant," Moe said. "That has nothing to do with our team. We're not looking at it. We're having to win three games. We play one game tomorrow night."

"Hopefully we can get into a second one. Then we'll go from there."

Moe was hopeful his team could recapture its traditional home-court dominance. The Nuggets were 33-1 at home last season but slipped 28-13 this year.

The Spurs are anxious to bring a quick end to the series.

"We're going to have to play to win," said Strickland, who had 13 points and 13 assists in Game 1. "This thing isn't over, but I hope it will be soon."

"It would be nice to end this as soon as possible," said center David Robinson, the NBA's Rookie of the Year who scored 31 points and grabbed 12 rebounds Saturday night. "But it won't be easy."

Tyson looks to future in HBO doubleheader

NEW YORK (AP) — Mike Tyson is back. The swollen left eye is healed and so is the spirit.

Both were dented rather decisively by Buster Douglas in Tokyo last February — a beating that cost Tyson the heavyweight championship.

The ex-champion prefers to look ahead, though, to a 10-round June 16 date at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas against Olympic gold medalist Henry Tillman. The other half of the HBO doubleheader sends another ex-champ, George Foreman, against Adilson Rodrigues.

The card will be co-promoted by longtime rivals Don King, who handles Tyson, and Bob Arum, who has been masterminding Foreman's comeback. Tyson opened as a 15-1 betting choice at the Caesars Sports Book, with Foreman listed at 7-1. Tyson is unimpressed.

"I was 100-1," he said of the Douglas debacle. "You're successful for a time, eventually, you get your head handed to you. There's another day. You go on. Fighters don't fear losing. They fear getting humiliated."

"The loss was a shock at first. But you realize of fighters lost. You take it from there. It took me two days to get over it. I had 37 good nights and one bad night. I'm sure I've got more good ones in me."

Tyson blamed himself for the loss to Douglas. "Three weeks before the fight, I weighed 248," he said. "I'm 226 now. I'm in good spirits and good shape and I'm looking forward to fighting again."

If the rest of the boxing world was stunned by Douglas' knockout of Tyson, Tillman was not. He beat the ex-champ not once, but twice in the 1984 Olympic boxing off, when both were amateurs. That told him Tyson was not invincible, even before Douglas proved it.

"I know he'll be up for it," Tyson said of Tillman. "He believes he can beat me. I believe I should have gotten one of those fights. He beat me one time. I've won 17. It's a different world now."

"I'm going to take advantage of the opportunity," Tillman said. "The opportunity itself has got me up to the fight."

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VW ON CAMPUS

Carmen Otte
 Embry-Riddle University

NASA trainee Carmen Otte and her favorite space vehicle.

When Aeronautical Engineering junior Carmen Otte talks about her 1982 Volkswagen Jetta, it's only natural that she begins with space.

"I like its size, especially the trunk. A big trunk is important when you go away to school and have to carry practically everything you own."

"And I love Jetta's space inside. It's roomy, comfortable. Last year I drove 200 miles each way to a summer job at NASA. I'm glad I was in my Jetta."

Of course, there's more to Carmen's Jetta than space. "My car has over 200,000 miles on it. It doesn't cost much to operate and it's good looking. I think Volkswagens are excellent cars for college students."

Since Carmen hopes to design spacecraft someday, we had to ask her what kind of vehicle she envisions in the future.

"That's easy. A red Volkswagen Cabriolet convertible. I've already got one picked out for graduation."

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