

8 BIG 12 NORTH
THE BATTALION

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Running back hoists
KSU on shouldersBY JEFF WEBB
Staff writer

Kansas State University running back Mike Lawrence carried the ball for 982 yards last year. His legs better be ready for 1997, because the 5-foot, 9-inch, 200 pound senior will have to carry the entire KSU offense this year.

The Wildcats finished 9-3 last season and third in the Big 12 North behind The University of Nebraska and Colorado University. For the fourth year in a row they were invited to a bowl game, traveling to the Cotton Bowl where they lost to Brigham Young University 19-14.

Head Coach Bill Snyder is faced with the monstrous task of replacing first-team all-Big 12 wide receiver Kevin Lockett and second-team all-

Big 12 quarterback Brian Kavanagh.

The offensive line remains intact for the most part, with only two spots having to be filled. The good news for Wildcat faithfuls is the return of the backfield tandem of Lawrence and junior Marlon Charles.

Luckily, the Wildcats will not have to depend on their offense to outscore anyone. Despite returning only four starters to the defense, KSU expects their defense to be up to the challenge.

Linebacker Mark Simoneau anchors a defense that was ranked 16th in the nation last season. The loss of Big 12 interception leader Chris Cauty to the New England Patriots means freshman Adrian Beard or Blinn Community College transfer Keith Black will be victimized often.

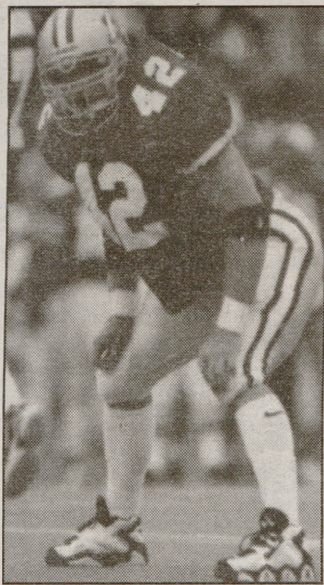


PHOTO COURTESY OF KANSAS STATE SPORTS INFORMATION
Sophomore linebacker Mark Simoneau

Kansas State will be strong at linebacker where junior Travis Ochs and sophomore Big 12 Freshman of the Year Simoneau will be returning.

KU adds new coach

BY MARGAUX HARRIS
Staff writer

The Kansas University Jayhawks ended their 1996 season 4-7, but their expectations this year are much higher with the addition of new Head Coach Terry Allen.

Allen inherits a relatively young Kansas team with only 15 starters returning but has lofty goals of bringing Kansas atop of the Big 12. Allen is also not accustomed to losing. He ended an eight-year career at Northern Iowa, with a record of 75-26.

Allen seems excited to begin a new career at Kansas. "I'm here to be a players' coach," Allen said. "We'll do what it takes to be successful." KU will have a competitive 1997 season. Six Jayhawk opponents had winning records last season.

The Jayhawk offense will have to rebuild this year with the loss of eight starters including running

back June Henley and wide receiver Isaac Byrd. Henley led the Jayhawk offense in 1996 averaging 177.3 rushing yards a game. His shoes will be filled by senior Eric Vann who averaged 14.2 rushing yards per game last season.

Quarterbacks Mat Johner and Zac Wegner will contend for the starting job this year. Johner averaged 123.2 yards a game in the eight games he started last season, while Wegner redshirted his freshman year and did not play last season. The Kansas offense finished last season ranked 10th in the Big 12, but should show remarkable improvement this year.

Defensively, KU is loaded with talent, depth and experience with 22 letterman and eight starters returning. Nose tackle Brett McGraw led the lineman in total tackles in 1995 and 1996. The KU secondary also will be a major factor this season.

Cyclones try to blow its way into Big 12 without Davis

BY NICOLE HOOVEN
Staff writer

This fall, the Iowa State Cyclones will be returning to Ames, minus one of their favorite sons, 1996 Heisman Trophy runner-up Troy Davis. Have no fear, however. There is a new Davis in Jack Trice Stadium. Troy's little brother, Darren, will be taking over his second year at tailback. As a true freshman, Darren ranked second in the Big 12 and 27th nationally, averaging 24.1 yards on 21 kickoff returns and had an average of

6.8 yards on 30 carries. He will try his luck this season at the tailback, punt return, and kickoff return positions.

There is a great deal of talent helping Davis add substance to the backfield, most of whom are underclassmen. Youngsters James O'Neal and Damian Brown are both a relatively new addition to the offense, with equally outstanding high school credentials. Adding to the potent mix are junior Joe Parmentier, who caught three touchdown passes last season, and his backup Jerome Heavens.

Also adding to the offense's strength are the receivers. The Cyclones have a quality receiving team with the three-year starter Ed Williams, Daman Green and Tyrone Watley, who caught 27 passes for 419 yards last fall.

Although the receivers, tailbacks and fullbacks look to be relatively stable, the offensive line seems to be a negative on the team. The offensive line, which will be led by senior co-captain left guard Matt Rahfaldt, is in the midst of a rebuilding year, although it consists of sev-

eral upperclassmen.

The defensive line shows similar problems as the offensive line. It needs a great deal of development, and could prove very ineffective when matched against opponents with strong offenses. The Cyclones had a great deal of trouble last fall holding on to leads late in the game.

The team's secondary, on the other hand, has a relatively even number of freshmen, juniors, and seniors. Here the spotlight will be on +left cornerback Dawan Anderson, who made his mark in 1996.

Tigers try to claw out of the dweller

BY TRAVIS V. DABNEY
Staff writer

The Missouri Tigers begin their fourth year under Head Coach Larry Smith this season with two things on their mind: a winning record and a bowl game. The Tigers saw considerable improvement at the end of last season and hope to build on it in their 1997 campaign to end a 14 year losing streak.

"There is a confidence factor that was gained last season; now we will challenge the players to take it to the next level," Smith said.

On offense the Tigers return eight starters including upstart quarterback Corby Jones and running back Brock Olivo. Jones has seen considerable improvement over his two seasons at quarterback garnering a 111.4 efficiency rating last season.

"Corby had an outstanding spring" Smith said. "He really showed excellent maturity and overall understanding of the passing game."

Olivo returns after a superb season in which he was the 12th

leading rusher in the Big 12 that featured the likes of Troy Davis of Iowa State and Byron Hanspard of Texas Tech.

"I can honestly say that Brock Olivo is the only player that I've ever coached that has never had a bad day" Smith said.

The offensive line should prove to be the strength of the team as they pave the way for the ninth leading rushing team in the NCAA last season.

"We have a good strong unit there from tackle to tackle," Smith said.

The Tigers return seven starters from last year's defense, yet things are not quite as settled as they are for the offense. The Tigers will have to make up for the loss of their top two defensive players in linebacker Darryl Chatman and defensive back DeMontie Cross.

"We will probably have linebacker by committee this fall," Smith said. "We are not very big up front and we will have to rely on our speed."

The Tigers will return a quartet of defensive backs this season who



PHOTO COURTESY OF MISSOURI SPORTS INFORMATION

Senior running back Brock Olivo have all seen playing time and are hoping to see big things from cornerback Shad Criss.

"I think that our secondary will be strong this year, maybe even stronger than last season," Smith said.

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