

Evans' 1st year ends at Final 4

By C.J. Risak
staff writer

Success is a relative concept. Winning more than losing is enough for some teams, for others, anything less than a national title isn't enough. This season's Nevada-Las Vegas basketball team is a prime example.

So is Tennessee's. That's Tennessee's women's basketball team, which will be appearing in the NCAA Final Four for the fifth time in the last six years this weekend in New Orleans.

Included in that run are two NCAA championships. Dena Head, a junior from Canton (Salem HS), remembers the second one. Head started at point guard as a freshman when the Lady Volunteers beat Auburn for the title in 1989.

That tradition is what lured Peggy Evans, the 1989 Miss Basketball, to a Detroit Country Day graduate, to Tennessee. Like Head (another former Miss Basketball), Evans has contributed greatly as a freshman.

She is hoping her first year at Tennessee ends as successfully.

Certainly, Evans' first year of college basketball was difficult to anticipate. "I probably played more defense the first day of practice here than I did in four years of high school," she said.

SHE ALSO learned very quickly that to play for coach Pat Summitt, she'd have to keep playing a lot of defense. "Our team really focuses on defense," said Evans. "The people who play the best defense will probably play the most."

It is a philosophy Evans endorses completely. "I just think Pat is one of the best coaches around. If you work hard and show her what you can do, she'll give you a chance. She's very fair."

Evans was convinced of that early. She got into Tennessee's season-opener against Stanford, the defending NCAA champion, and responded by scoring 20 points. For the year, Evans has averaged 45 points and 5.7 rebounds while playing 19.2 min-

college sports

utes a game. She has started nine times.

Of course, Evans would love to repeat that performance Saturday, when the Lady Vols meet Stanford again in the NCAA semifinals. It's the third time this season the two teams will clash. Tennessee won the first two.

"I think it's an honor to go to the Final Four," she said. "Most freshmen never get that chance. The experience will help me later on."

As for her previous success against Stanford, Evans said, "I got some confidence from it, proving to people what I could do. I'm not going to dwell on it, though. I want to concentrate on what we need to do to win this weekend."

MAYBE HEAD can answer that. She was part of Tennessee's "disappointing" 1989-90 season, the Lady Vols made it only to the NCAA regional finals.

"We started our preseason pretty much the day after last season ended," said Head. "And we worked hard all during the off-season."

(The loss in the regionals) is always in the back of your mind. There is some motivation from it, but we don't dwell on it."

What the Lady Vols did was reassemble an even more determined team. It showed Saturday in their 69-65 regional final victory over Auburn. Head hit the clinching two free throws and finished with nine points. Now, switching between point guard and off-guard, Head has stepped up her game again. She averaged 11.4 points as a sophomore, making 45 percent of her floor shots. This season, Head is averaging 12.6 points, 5.7 rebounds and a team-leading 3.7 assists. All except the assists are career bests.

But most impressive is her shoot-

ing. Head is making better than 50 percent of her floor shots. And from the perimeter, she has connected on a team-high 49 percent of her three-point attempts — 25 of 51. In her previous two seasons combined, Head had attempted just four three-pointers.

"THE THREE-POINT shot is definitely a key part of the college game," she said. "It's something you want to take advantage of. I've been given the green light to shoot it, and given the opportunity, I'm going to take it. It's a great tool."

But it isn't improved shooting that Head thinks is her biggest contribution to this year's team. It's leadership. And it's something she wants to keep doing, particularly through the weekend.

"I want to continue to be a leader for our team and do whatever is necessary, whatever it takes, to win," said Head.

First, the Lady Vols must get past Stanford. To accomplish that, Head said they'll have to play tough de-



Peggy Evans has helped Tennessee reach the Final Four.

ference against point guard Sonya Henning and control their post people.

And they'll have to rebound, especially on the defensive boards.

A win against Stanford will put Tennessee into Sunday's nationally televised final against the Virginia Commonwealth winner. And while such success may be a school tradition, it's not one the Lady Vols tire of.

OU wins pair on trip

The season had a mirror-like start for Oakland University's basketball team — the Pioneers' spring trip through Kentucky and Indiana began with a double-header rainout and ended the same way Tuesday.

OU also started and ended the trip with wins. Unfortunately, they were the only ones the team recorded in its six games.

On Monday, the Pioneers split a pair at Hanover (Ind.) College, losing the opener 8-4 before rallying for a 5-4 triumph in the nightcap. A four-run Hanover fourth off losing pitcher Jim VerVaecke proved pivotal in the first game, it extended Hanover's lead from one to five runs.

Paul Kaiser, Greg Revere, Ron Curia and Dan Lezotte each had two hits for OU, with Curia and Lezotte knocking in a run each.

In the second game, Dylan Raymond slugged a two-run double with two out in the seventh to rally the Pioneers to a 4-3 triumph. The comeback started with two out on a pinch-hit single by Lezotte. Curia followed with a single before Raymond delivered his clutch double.

CURIA ALSO contributed mightily, crushing a two-run home run in the fifth that tied the score at 2-2. Hanover got a run off Aaron Kolehmainen to go back in front in the sixth. Ralph Mugha came out of the bullpen to snuff out the threat, getting the third out with the bases loaded. Mugha pitched a

hitless seventh to earn the victory. Curia had two hits in the win, which dropped Hanover to 17-9.

On Sunday, the Pioneers lost twice to Indiana Southwest, 8-7 and 8-3. In New Albany, Dave Perazza was the losing pitcher in the opener, in relief of starter Dave Kalist. Kalist gave up seven runs in three innings. Perazza hurled 3 1/3 innings of strong relief but surrendered an unearned run in the bottom of the seventh to take the loss.

Trading 7-5, OU rallied for two runs in the top of the seventh on a solo homer by Dave Sipak and a pinch-hit single by Mike Gunn. Sipak had three hits, including a double and his homer, and drove in two runs. Revere also had two hits and two RBI, and Lezotte had two hits.

IN THE NIGHTCAP, OU allowed seven runs in the fifth to blow a 3-1 lead. Losing pitcher Jeff Tugate was tagged for six runs in 1 1/3 innings, including five runs in the fifth. Revere, Gunn and John Karam all had two hits for the Pioneers, with Karam smacking a solo homer in the second.

OU opened the season last Saturday at Indiana Southwest with a pair of five-inning mercy games. The Pioneers pounded their hosts 12-2 in the opener, with Sipak, Curia and Tugate getting three hits apiece. Sipak also knocked in three runs. Curia had two RBIs.

Kaiser added a double and a triple. Raymond had two doubles and Revere collected two hits.

Eagles climb to new heights in NAIA

THE POSTSEASON is upon us. The shows of winter are now just a shivering memory. Of trust, and coaches are already looking ahead to their next campaign.

Three seasons just completed by St. Mary's College and Oakland University deserve praise. The Eagles did better than any of their predecessors, not only reaching the NAIA Tournament but winning two games before losing to eventual national champion Oklahoma City.

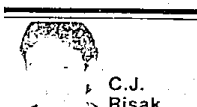
Both of OU's basketball teams extended their seasons, too, although not as far. They reached the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Tournament but lost in the opening round.

For OU's swimmers, the end was far more spectacular. The women captured their second straight NCAA Division II championship, and they did it with relative ease.

The men overcame the loss of top swimmer Hilton Woods — a down-to-the-wire decision made during the NCAA II meet, one that could have been emotionally devastating. But still finished second to six-time champion California State-Bakersfield. It was the fifth straight second place finish for OU.

TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY, I have to rate St. Mary's basketball accomplishments slightly ahead of OU's women's swim team's capture of a second-straight title. Certainly, not because of magnitude — winning an NCAA title rates second to none.

But St. Mary's did travel further than it ever had before. Each season



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the Eagles play in two top-notch, small college tournaments — the National Catholic Basketball Tournament in January and of course, the NAIA. Under current coach Glen Donahue, they had never won a game together, until this year.

St. Mary's first-ever NAIA District II title was an accomplishment worth savoring, but the Eagles didn't stop there. They entered the 1991 NAIA Tournament as the 26th seed, and made quick work of two top-10 seeds.

One major reason for their success was James Gillespie, a player Donahue coached at Highland Park Community College who transferred to St. Mary's from Wisconsin. When lost in NAIA, Gillespie gets an NCAA Division II player of Gillespie's ability to make a huge difference. Like him, Mangel who started at Kent State for Oklahoma City.

UNFORTUNATELY, Gillespie did not get a year of eligibility. Which makes one wonder: What if

last year's rising star, Joachim Jerchow, had stuck with the team instead of returning home to the Netherlands?

Yeah, we thought about it," said Donahue when asked if he had pondered the same thing. "Sure, he would have made a difference, no question, a player of his ability."

There's a chance Jerchow, a 6-foot-8 forward with outstanding shot-blocking skills, will return. Gillespie will be gone, but another one-year player may replace him. Willie Vance, a 6'6 forward who can't score like Gillespie but is strong on the boards and on defense.

So if Jerchow returns and Vance develops, the Eagles have almost everyone else back — then maybe, just maybe.

NOW FOR OU's swimming. There's not much more one can say about the women's performance, except that it was exceptional.

Moreover, coach Tracy Huth was a target when he called it a team victory. In a sport that is largely individualistic, the Lady Pioneers displayed a lot of teamwork.

Like the OU men, they were faced with a dismal prospect: going into the biggest meet of the year with their best swimmer, Lyn Schermer, who was hampered by a virus. And like the OU men they responded posi-

tively, winning in spite of the obstacles they faced.

It was no small accomplishment. Neither were Lisa Guilfoyle's two victories in the 50-yard and 100-yard freestyle. It was a fitting end to her stellar collegiate swimming career.

THE MEN, unfortunately, were faced with a much more difficult task. Even with Woods, the NAIA II men's swimmer of the year in 1989, they would have been hard-pressed to beat Bakersfield. Without him, the task was impossible.

Woods' predicament — he officially became academically ineligible after the fall semester — was a tragedy, not just for him. As coach, Pete Howard described it, "I was very, very upset and disappointed that he put his standing in jeopardy, and his team's standing in jeopardy."

Unlike Guilfoyle, who finished her career in style, Woods — also a senior — goes out shamefully. It doesn't seem fair to the former Olympian that his troubles were self-inflicted.

What should be covered are the performances of OU's champions. Doug Aarn — winner of the 200-yard butterfly and 200 individual medley — and Dave Mark Horston, who captured the one-meter title.

Their performances earned them swimmer and diver-of-the-year honors, respectively.

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