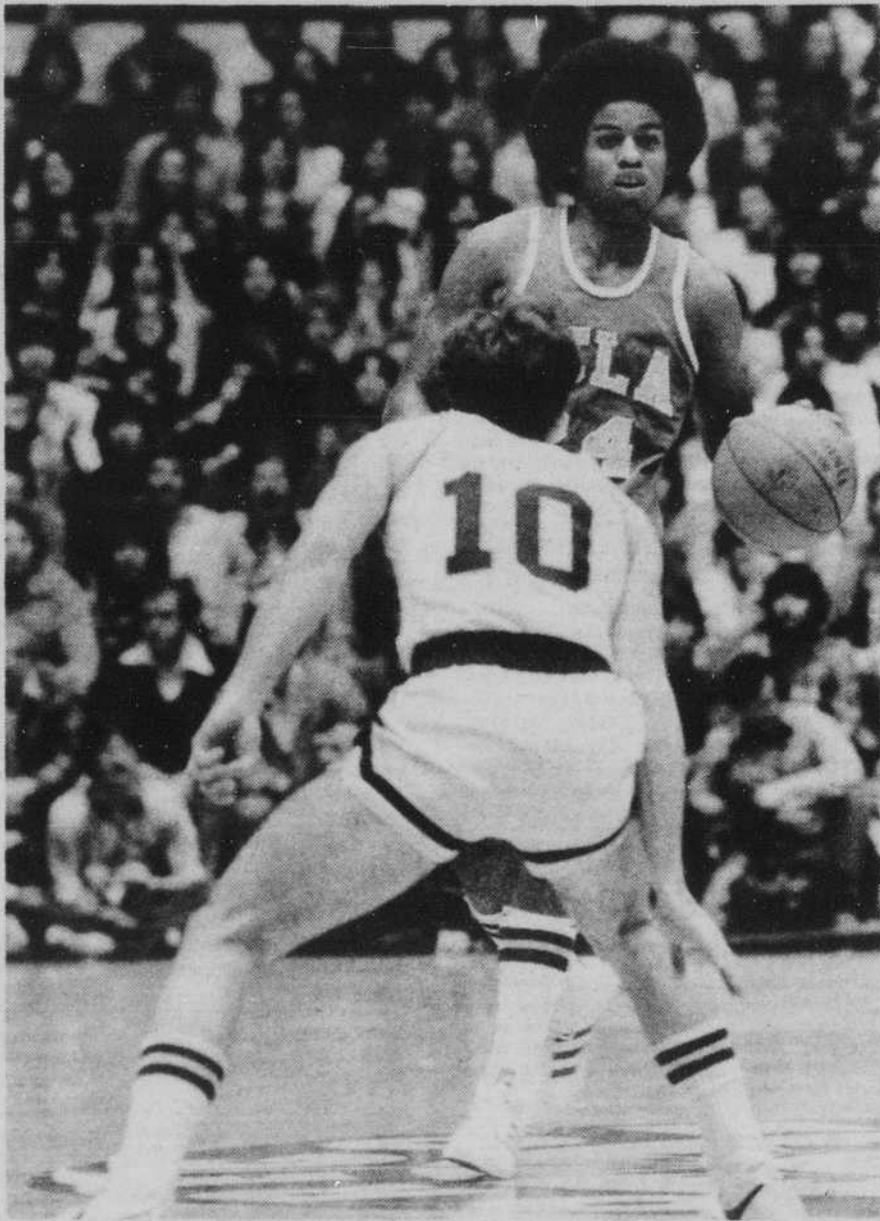


sports

Bruins' toughest NCAA foe may come first



Roy Hamilton, one of UCLA's fine guards, will face some tough foes right off the bat as the Bruins face Kansas in the NCAA opener.

By MIKE MARINO
Of the Emerald

UCLA and Kansas will open the NCAA tournament against each other Saturday at 1:15 in Mac Court, but the game could just as easily have been slated for the final hour in St. Louis.

The Bruins are sitting pretty, ranked number two in the country with a 24-2 record and a Pac-8 championship under their belts. And in all their post-season ventures, they've never once lost a first-round game.

That could change. The Jayhawks are ranked eighth or ninth, depending on poll preference and stormed through the Big Eight conference with a 13-1 record. Only they fell victim to that new enigma — the post-season league playoff — losing to Kansas State and ending up in the West. Still, they pose a problem for Gary Cunningham and his Bruins.

"It's tough when you have to start with a strong team right off," Cunningham said Thursday. "But it's the only possibility you have, and you have to take it like it's the next game on your schedule."

A bit tougher than most, though. KU, like the Bruins, has a balanced fast-break-on-offense, press-on-defense attack keyed by their backcourt duo of Darnell Valentine (13.6 points a game) and John Douglas (12.6).

"They like to run and press,"

Cunningham said. "They have good guards that can control their game."

But, you'll recall, so do the Bruins — Roy Hamilton and Raymond Townsend. And they're the key to what Cunningham calls the UCLA "transition game" — run like hell, in other words. "We had a good transition game last weekend against Michigan (a 96-70 win)," Cunningham said. "I just hope that we can get it cranked up and going against Kansas."

The real toughie, though, could come under the boards, where the Jayhawks boast some size. Junior Paul Mokeski, at 7-1 the first seven-footer at KU since Wilt Chamberlain, paces the team in rebounding with 8.3 a game. At forward there is some near-equal

stature in 6-10 Ken Koenigs, an all-Big Eight selection as a senior. Koenigs scores 11.3 points a game with over six rebounds. Add 6-9 Donnie Von Moore and it looks like a forest.

"Inside they have strength," Cunningham conceded. "But we would hope to rebound well on the defensive boards to get our running game going."

That can only mean David Greenwood, the 6-9 junior All-American who pulls down 11.7 a game. With every one running, then, the score should climb. In fact, the Bruins rank-number one in the country in scoring margin with a 19.1 spread, while KU has beaten its opponents by an average of 16 points, fourth in the nation.

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