

UNO ATHLETICS

Not easy, but officials stand behind Mav move

Alberts said watching decisions being made with his knowledge of UNO's possible D-1 move was difficult.

By HENRY J. CORDES
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

In early February, UNO Athletic Director Trev Alberts watched the Maverick football team sign a 20-member recruiting class. Around the same time, he also signed off on the hiring of a new assistant football coach.

At the time, Alberts acknowledges, he knew there was a strong possibility the University of Nebraska at Omaha would not be fielding a football team this fall.

UNO was in serious discussions with the Division I Summit League about

membership, and one athletic department document suggests Alberts had what he considered an informal invitation from the league as early as Jan. 25. And if the bid became official, Alberts knew he would be recommending the school drop both football and wrestling.

Alberts says watching the football team move ahead with those life-altering decisions was "absolutely" troubling to him.

But he and UNO Chancellor John Christensen stand by Alberts' decision not to intervene, saying the Maverick

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UNO Athletic Director Trev Alberts said it was "absolutely" troubling to him when he saw the football team signing recruits he knew may never play for the school if it did move up to Division I.

KENT SIEVERS
THE WORLD-HERALD



Tom Shatel

Huskers' turn as new kids on block

Bow tie? Check. Leather helmet? Check. Midwestern values and cultural fit? Check. AAU membership card? Oops. And so it begins. Nebraska doesn't officially join the Big Ten Conference until July 1, but UNL will send an entourage — including Athletic Director Tom Osborne and football coach Bo Pelini — to the Big Ten's spring meetings Tuesday and Wednesday in Chicago.

That's opposed to the "Conference Spring Meetings Pro-Am." There's no golf at the Big Ten spring meetings. But a navy blazer for dinner is recommended.

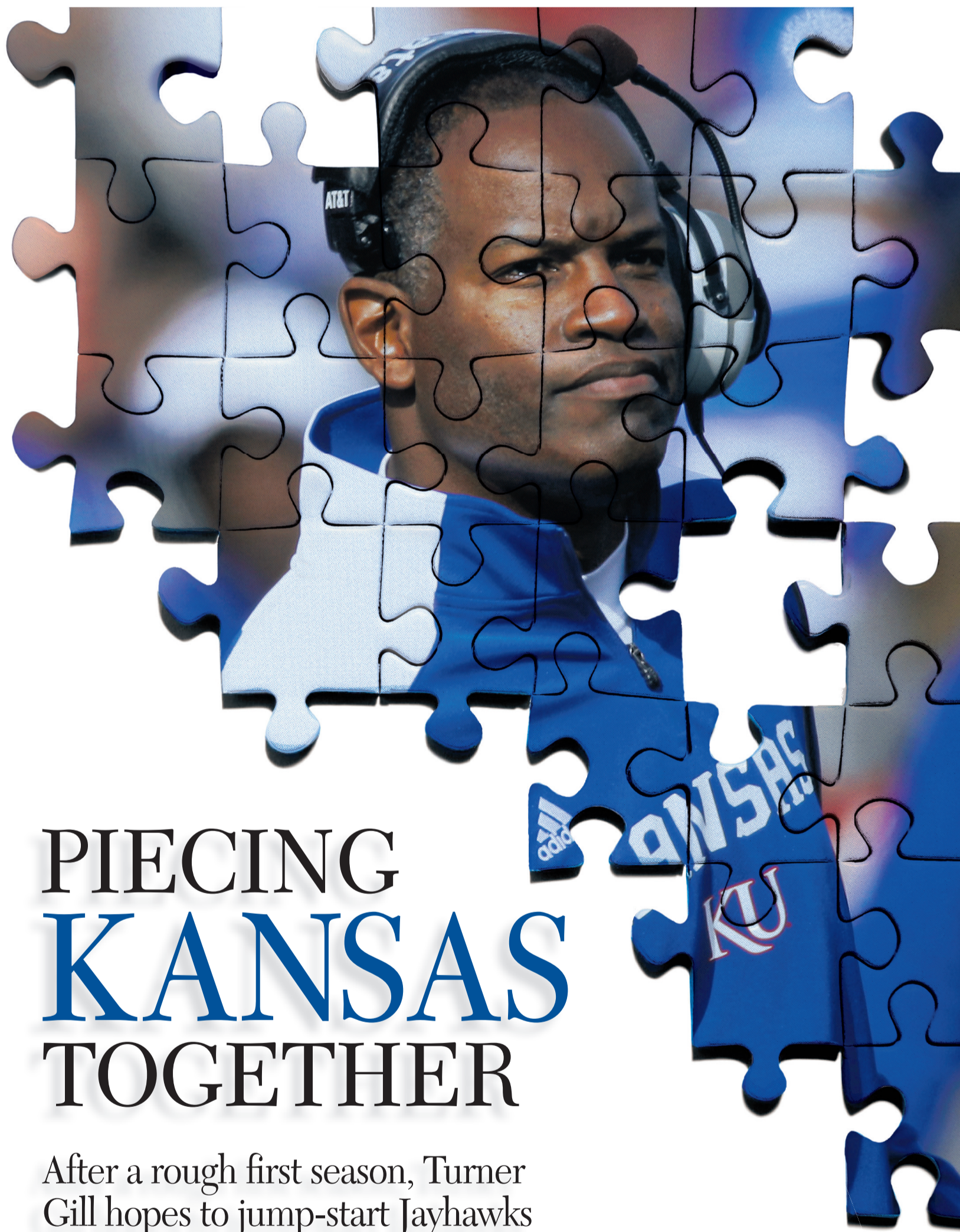
Issues such as a nine-game schedule for football and sites for the conference football championship game are sure to come up, but the Huskers don't get a vote yet. That's just fine.

Big Red needs a serious break from league politics. This week the Huskers are the new kid on the block. And while some new kids feel the need to flex their muscles and brag up their résumé, often it's better to sit back, listen and try to fit in. That will certainly be Nebraska's approach.

Osborne and Co. will find a welcome sign on the door: "No Bullies Allowed." The Big Ten is a family with a team approach, led by Commissioner Jim Delany.

That wasn't always the case, as Wisconsin Athletic Director Barry Alvarez vividly remembers.

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PIECING KANSAS TOGETHER

After a rough first season, Turner Gill hopes to jump-start Jayhawks

By SAM MCKEON
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

So Turner Gill's at a small airfield in Pittsburg, Kan., recruiting some kid. This is years ago when he still coached quarterbacks at Nebraska. He's about to board a plane when a car drives out on the runway. A couple of guys pop the hood on the car, fish out some jumper cables and attach one end to the vehicle's engine. The other end is being extended out to the plane.

"They start the car — and that starts the plane," Gill said. "That's how I got home. Jumper cables. On a car."

The joke takes the second-year head coach at Kansas less than 30 seconds to tell, but it lands perfectly on this middle-aged Omaha audience, which laughs on cue at the punchline. This

kind of deadpan humor is one of the better pages out of the public speaking playbook of Gill's mentor, Tom Osborne.

Here in a Catholic school gymnasium, standing on a stage framed by blue theater curtains, the eternally upbeat Gill doesn't take note of the dual meaning inside his story.

That he lived four years of it at Buffalo, a proverbial plane sitting on a runway with a dead engine, waiting for life, where players were too ashamed to wear the uniform or even look him in the eye.

That Gill jump-started the Bulls, parlaying their newfound belief in themselves into a conference title and a \$2 million job at Kansas.

That the Jayhawks' proverbial plane not only has engine troubles of its own

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BASEBALL

McCook's 'Little Satchel'

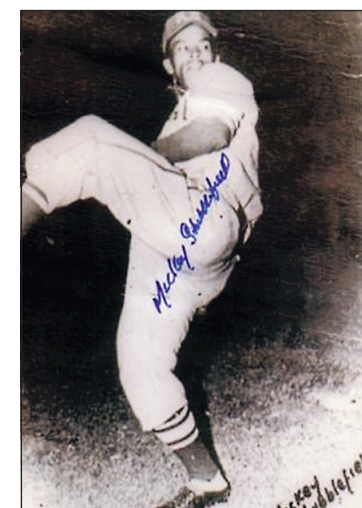
By ROB WHITE
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Mickey Stubblefield may not have had to travel great distances to break the color barrier in the old Kitty League, but as with the experiences of many of the black men honored this weekend by baseball, there was still so far to go.

Stubblefield, who played semi-pro ball and later lived in McCook, Neb., signed in 1952 with the Mayfield (Ky.) Clothiers, his hometown team. The Pittsburgh Pirates farm team was in last place in the Class D Kentucky-Illinois-Tennessee (Kitty) League when he made his debut in June 1952.

"It was a beautiful town, and I was a happy-go-lucky guy," Stubblefield said. "I wasn't trying to fool anyone. I went my way and

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Mickey Stubblefield, a groundbreaking baseball player who spent parts of his career with the McCook Cats, was honored at the Negro Leagues Tribute Game.

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