

ST. LOUIS' Tony Van Zant, regarded by many as the top high school football prospect in the country, stands with his mother at a banquet hosted by the Mizzou Quarterback Club-St. Louis Jan. 16, the night Van Zant committed to the Tigers.

By STEVE SHINN

TIGER TALK



NEW A.D.

JACK LENGYEL, who left Mizzou three years ago to become athletic director at Fresno State University, returns April 1 to succeed former boss Dave Hart as athletic director of the Tigers. Hart is leaving to become commissioner of the Southern Athletic Conference.

At a March 3 news conference announcing his appointment, Lengyel said that "Athletics can be a vehicle to promote a university and to facilitate and assist academic areas.

"The state motto is 'Show me.' What we need," he said, "is everybody's help to collectively get together and say that it's our turn to show them."

The 51-year-old Lengyel, who served as associate athletic director at Missouri from 1980 until 1983, also pledged to reverse Mizzou's controversial ticket policy that requires contributions in order to obtain priority seating at football and men's basketball games.

A search committee had named Lengyel and Gary Cunningham, athletic director at the University of Wyoming, finalists for the AD position in mid-February. Both men then withdrew their names, but Lengyel later resurfaced to be named to Mizzou's top athletic post. He said he signed a five-year contract calling for an annual salary of \$80,000. That reportedly makes him the highest-paid athletic director in the Big Eight Conference. Hart's salary was in the \$62,000 range. □

RECRUITING

TONY VAN ZANT, *Parade* magazine's player of the year and the highest-rated running back in the history of Emfinger's high-school prospect rating service, led an impressive list of recruits who agreed to play football for Woody Widenhofer and the Missouri Tigers.

One of the truisms of college football, of course, is that everyone has a good recruiting class in the spring. It's a couple of years later before the truth is known. But by all accounts, Widenhofer seems to have done well in his first full season as Tiger coach.

"Last year, according to *The Sporting News*, we had our best recruiting year ever," Widenhofer said. "But I'd say this year is even better."

After a 1-10 season, Widenhofer obviously needed to recruit well. It's also obvious he believed the cupboard he inherited, if not bare, wasn't exactly full, either. He maintains he wants to rebuild the Missouri program with Missouri high-school players. But he signed nine junior college transfers to fill specific needs and provide what he hopes will be a quick fix for next season. His juco class is ranked among the nation's top five and includes all-America tight end Robert Delpino of Dodge City (Kan.) Community College and all-America defensive lineman Darrin Grossich of Long Beach (Calif.) Community College. Both already are enrolled at Mizzou and will be available for spring practice, as will three other jucos and four transfers from Drake, who came to Missouri after the Des Moines university dropped its Division I football program.

Of the 18 high-school recruits, 12 are from Missouri, including metropolitan St. Louis and Kansas City. Widenhofer figures about 50 Missouri prospects signed with Division I schools, and the Tigers actively

recruited 23 of them. Illinois, making it most serious incursion into St. Louis, signed three St. Louis players whom Widenhofer also wanted.

Besides Van Zant, nationally recruited high-school stars coming to Missouri include *Parade* all-America defensive end Mark Keough of St. Louis; offensive tackle Rob Dryden of St. Charles, Mo.; tight end Tim Bruton of Houston; linebacker Jerold Fletcher of Bonner Springs, Kan.; defensive back Adrian Jones of Hollywood Hills, Fla.; full-back Chad Mueller of Belleville, Ill.; defensive back Dennis Paloucek of LaGrange, Ill.; and offensive tackle Rick Trumbull of St. Louis.

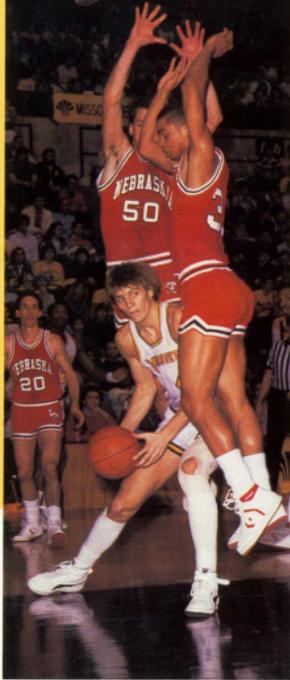
Affecting everyone's recruiting was a NCAA requirement that recruits needed a 2.0-grade average in high school core courses and a minimum ACT (15) or SAT (700) score to be eligible to play as freshmen. □

CONSTRUCTION

SOMETIME this spring, Mizzou's football program will move into Tom N. Taylor Sports Complex near the football practice fields on Stadium Boulevard.

"This is one of our most significant projects," Coach Woody Widenhofer says. "It's been frustrating to have the football offices in one building, while the practice field is at another location and the dining hall is almost a mile from both the field and our offices. It made it almost impossible to unite the team."

Donor of the \$200,000 building, Taylor is president of T.N. Taylor Investments of Dallas. He is an active member of the Alumni Association, serving on the board of directors of the Dallas chapter. □



SCOTT ELLIOTT PHOTO

BASKETBALL

A YOUNG, EXCITING basketball team found and clawed its way into the NCAA tourney, the Tigers' first NCAA appearance since 1983. Seven of Coach Norm Stewart's teams have made NCAA appearances, five in the past seven years.

Mizzou had a 21-13 record going into the tournament and had finished Big Eight Conference play at 8-6, good for a tie for third place. Missouri was chosen as an at-large entry in the NCAA.

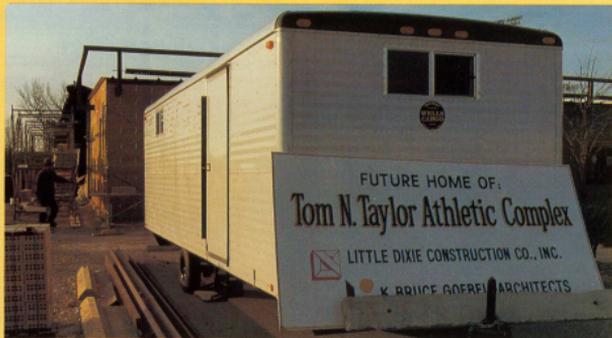
The Tigers could be characterized as being a good team that was very close to being a very good team. Last-second miscues cost them chances against nationally ranked Kansas, Oklahoma and Virginia, although they did beat OU in one of three games.

With a solid group returning, another good recruiting season this spring could make Mizzou a force in 1986-87.

The women Tigers won their way into the NCAA tournament for the fifth straight year. They finished fourth in the conference, but won the post-season Big Eight tourney to gain an automatic NCAA berth. □

FRESHMAN STARTER MIKE SANDBOTHE of Washington, Mo., led a strong contingent of newcomers that forecasts good things for Mizzou basketball.

THANKS TO A \$200,000 GIFT from Tom N. Taylor, BS BA '53, of Dallas, the Missouri athletic program will have a new dining hall and offices for both football coaches and academic counselors. The new building is south of the Dutton Brookfield facility near the football practice fields.



TASK FORCE

A SPECIAL task force reported in early March that it found "broad recognition of the importance of intercollegiate athletics for the University of Missouri-Columbia and through it for the people of the state of Missouri."

The task force recommended that the Campus administration, therefore, continue to maintain an NCAA Division I-A program, and bring the athletic department's budget into the regular Campus budgeting channels. In years that athletic expenses exceed income, the shortfall would be made up from other Campus resources. In years that athletic revenues exceed expenses, the surplus could be used for academic programs, special athletic needs or added to various Campus endowments, including athletics. After five years, the scope of the athletic program will be re-evaluated if the athletic department fails to show progress toward self-sufficiency.

Chancellor Barbara Uehling created the task force in December after it became clear that athletic department expenses would outstrip revenues during 1986-87. The 10

members were to consider funding options and to recommend future directions for the Missouri athletic program. The March report was the result of their deliberations.

The committee held one open meeting and talked with student, faculty and alumni groups in executive sessions. It found that Tiger fans want a clean, competitive and comprehensive program. They want the student athletes to have the opportunity for high-level competition, and they want them to graduate.

That's the type of program, the task force said, that brings positive, national recognition to the University and state, contributes to the University's educational mission, enriches the Campus environment and helps unify students, faculty, alumni and other friends of the University.

Among other task-force recommendations were ones calling for more cooperation between the athletic department and other Campus units, including the Hearnes building, parking operations, KOMU-TV and the Division of Development, University and Alumni Relations. The task force also urged that students be polled about several student-ticket options in an effort to increase student attendance at athletic contests. □