

Jayhawks sack coach after two losing seasons

By Dave Skretta
AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Turner Gill arrived at Kansas after taking a perennially downtrodden program at Buffalo to unimaginable heights. He's leaving after a two-year stretch in which the Jayhawks slipped back to their familiar place in the Big 12 cellar.

Gill was fired Sunday after a meeting with Athletic Director Sheahon Zenger, one day after the Jayhawks lost 24-10 to rival Missouri and finished the season 2-10.

"After a thorough evaluation of our football program, I have concluded that new leadership is necessary to place us on the path toward competing for championships in the Big 12 Conference," Zenger said in a statement.

Gill was hired by Zenger's predecessor, Lew Perkins, and given a five-year, \$10 million contract that was befitting of a high-profile coach. But he never lived up to

the expectations that came with it, losing the first game he coached at Kansas to lower-division North Dakota State.

The high-water mark came in Gill's second game, when the Jayhawks stunned then-No. 15 Georgia Tech last season. But that was the only victory over a ranked team, and Kansas would lose 17 of the next 21 with Gill on the sideline, the lone conference win coming against a Colorado program that fired its coach immediately after the defeat.

Fielding one of the youngest teams in the Big 12, Gill got the Jayhawks off to a promising start with wins over McNeese State and Northern Illinois, which has gone on to finish 9-3 and will play Ohio for the Mid-American Conference championship on Friday.

But things unraveled quickly in a 66-24 defeat at Georgia Tech, the start of 10 consecutive losses that included some of the most embarrassing in the history of a program

accustomed to losing.

The Jayhawks were routed 70-28 by Oklahoma State, which pulled most of its starters at half-time, and 43-0 at Texas, when they managed 46 yards of total offense. They blew a 24-3 fourth-quarter lead against Baylor, allowed Texas A&M to score 61 points in just three quarters, and blew a 10-0 first-half lead against Missouri in what could be the final game of their 120-year-old rivalry.

Gill, a former star quarterback at Nebraska, said afterward that he expected to be back for a third season, which is how long it took him to turn the program at Buffalo into a winner.

Zenger said that Kansas will honor Gill's contract, which still owes him about \$6 million. The search for a replacement will begin immediately, while running backs coach Reggie Mitchell — who also served as Gill's recruiting coordinator — will take over on an interim basis.

Broncos go into overtime, win 16-13 against San Diego

By Bernie Wilson
AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO — It wasn't always pretty and it almost ended in the NFL's first tie since 2008.

Still, there was Tim Tebow, doing enough to help lead the Denver Broncos to a 16-13 win over the staggering San Diego Chargers. After Nick Novak missed a 53-yard field goal, Denver's Matt Prater kicked a 37-yarder with 29 seconds left, making Tebow 5-1 since he was elevated to starting quarterback.

Tebow wasn't watching as Novak lined up to try the 53-yarder. He was praying, of course.

Did Tebow ask for a miss? "I might have said that. Or maybe a block. Maybe all of it," the Denver quarterback said with a laugh.

Whatever, it worked. Novak pushed his kick wide right. Tebow moved the Broncos down the field for the kick that sent the Chargers tumbling to their sixth straight loss.

With that kick, there now hasn't been a tie in the NFL since Cincinnati and Philadelphia ended deadlocked at 13 on Nov. 16, 2008.

"This is a special team, a special team when you have a bunch of guys that when things aren't going good we get closer instead of pulling apart," said Tebow, who grates on some people because he's openly religious. "The No. 1

reason we are like that is because we believe in each other, we believe in the coaching staff."

Coach John Fox believes in his quarterback, even if Hall of Famer John Elway, the Broncos executive VP of football operations, isn't totally sold on his third-down conversions and passing numbers.

"Tim has outstanding ability," Fox said. "He proved it at a high level of college football in the SEC at Florida. (The option is) something that he is comfortable with. I think our team has adapted to it. Right now it's working in the run portion of our offense. We still have some growth to do in the pass portion."

Tebow has been a savior for the Broncos since Fox elevated him to starter in the wake of his performance in a close loss to the Chargers on Oct. 9 in Denver.

The Broncos (6-5) have won four straight to trail Oakland by one game in the AFC West. Additionally, they're 4-0 on the road under Tebow.

Tebow led Denver from its 43 after Novak was wide right on a 53-yard field goal attempt with 2:31 left in overtime. Novak made a 53-yarder in the first quarter, a career-best, and was wide right on a 48-yard try early in the fourth quarter.

Tebow had a 12-yard gain and Willis McGahee ran 24 yards up the middle to set up Prater's winning kick, which was right down

the middle. McGahee finished with 117 yards on 23 carries.

Tebow, the talk of the NFL because he runs the read option and often struggles while passing, carried 22 times for 67 yards — the most carries by a quarterback in a game since 1950, according to STATS LLC.

He also threw for one touchdown and finished with a better rating than Philip Rivers, 95.4 to 77.1. Rivers was pressured all day by Elvis Dumervil, who had two sacks, and rookie Von Miller, who had one.

Novak didn't have an explanation for his OT miss.

"I had a good warmup and hit that ball pretty decent," he said of the 53-yarder he kicked in the first quarter. "When you make the first kick of the game from 53, it gives you a lot of confidence for the next kicks to come."

The Chargers (4-7) are on their longest streak since ending 2001 with nine straight defeats and are last in the division, three games behind Oakland with five to play.

"There's nothing I can say to make it sound good," Rivers said. "It's about as rough as it gets."

San Diego's Ryan Mathews, who was having the best game of his two-year career, was on the sideline for the crucial possession when Novak missed. Fullback Mike Tolbert was thrown for a 4-yard loss the play before Novak missed.

Basketball season begins on Friday

By Judy Rogers
Golden Plains High School

The Golden Plains High School 2011-2012 basketball season begins with the home opener against the Greeley County Jackrabbits from Tribune on Friday in Rexford. Both the boys and girls teams started practice on Nov. 14, and despite lots of moans and groans from muscles being trained, they have been enthusiastically preparing for the upcoming season.

The girls have 15 team members running their drills in preparation for their first game. With no senior girls on this year's squad, the younger girls are gaining considerable experience and promise an exciting season. The girls ended last season with a 7-15 record and hope to improve that this year. They are coached for the seventh season by the coaching team of Parker Christensen and Steve Shaw.

The boys have 19 players working hard in the gym. With several returning seniors and a number of juniors, this group of athletes has high hopes of repeating last year's 13-8 state qualifying run. Terry Preston and Tanner Moss are coaching for their second season.

"My goal this year is to return to the state tournament and win," senior Cole Christensen said.

A full schedule for the season can be found on the school web site at <http://www.usd316.k12.ks.us>.



JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains High School
Senior Cole Christensen ran drills during basketball practice at Golden Plains. Christensen is looking forward to his senior season with high hopes of returning to the state tournament in March.

SEND BOUQUETS FOR ANY OCCASION

anniversary
birthday
just because

FLOWERS FROM **\$19⁹⁹** +s/h

SAVE an extra **20% OFF**
already reduced prices on other bouquets.*

ProFlowers

*Minimum product and accessories purchase of \$29.99. Does not apply to gift cards or certificates, same-day or international delivery, shipping & handling, taxes, or third-party hosted products (e.g. wine). Offer expires 12/31/11.

Offer ONLY available at:
proflowers.com/award
or call 1.866.589.8959

Our Recipe for a Hometown Christmas

Get Hooked on

- Savings
- Selection
- Service

Holiday Hours
8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Mon. - Fri.
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sat.

PALACE DRUG STORE
460 N. Franklin
Colby KS
785-462-7507

Hours
8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Mon. - Sat.

COLBY DMJDGE
CHRYSLER Jeep

1000 Taylor Ave., Colby KS
785-460-3317

Holiday Hours
Tues - Sat • 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

goulosh
HOME DECOR
470 N. Franklin,
Colby KS
785-460-0404

COLBY FREE PRESS
155 W. Fifth St. • Colby • 785-462-3963

Make a Difference Please Recycle