

Henson commits to K-State

By Greg Peters

The Hutchinson News

Some 11th-hour soul searching Wednesday night turned McPherson High star Steve Henson from the hottest guard prospect in the state into the first player to verbally commit to Kansas State for new head coach Lon Kruger.

The 6-foot-1 point guard had tentatively planned to make his final recruiting visit Thursday and Friday and then announce a decision Saturday. Henson telephoned University of Alabama officials late Wednesday night and told them he was foregoing his trip.

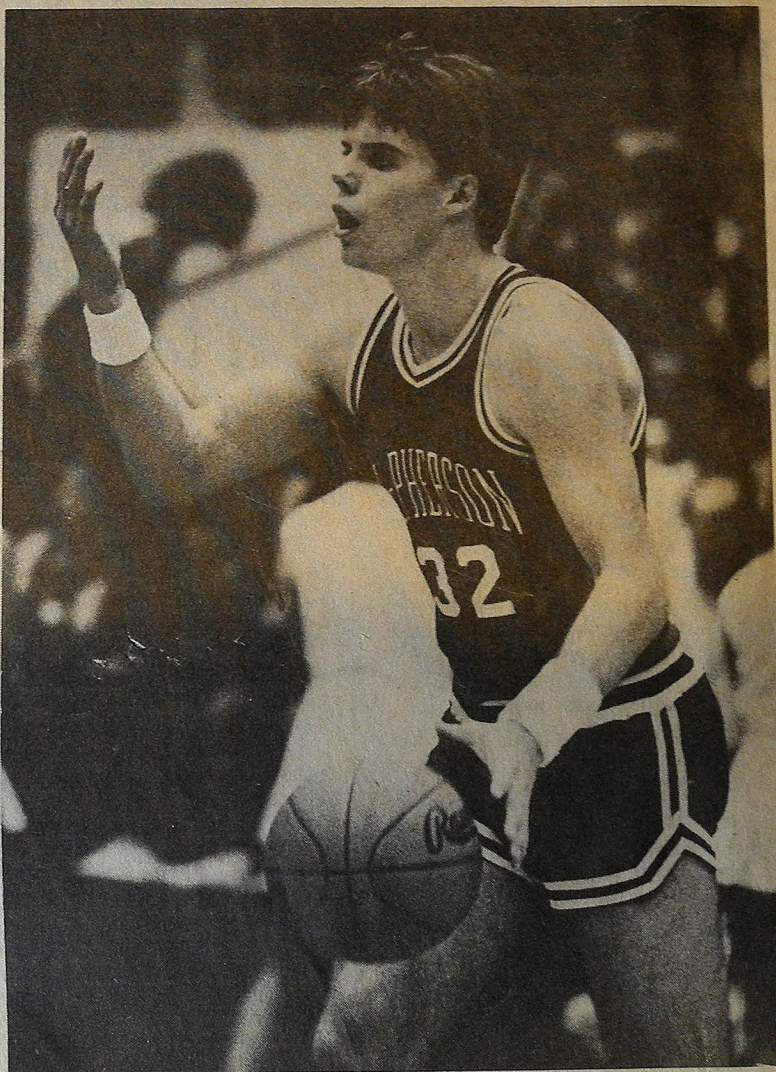
"Steve's going to K-State," his father and coach Mike Henson said Thursday afternoon. "He decided he wasn't going to visit Alabama. After thinking about it for some time, he decided it would be a waste of time."

"After he told the people at Alabama he wasn't coming, he sat down and hashed it out between New Mexico and Kansas State. We called Lon late last night to tell him the decision."

"I didn't really plan on making a decision (Wednesday)," the younger Henson said. "We started putting it on paper and it was pretty even between New Mexico and Kansas State. I just felt good about K-State."

"I don't think it was any one thing," he added. "I wanted a place where I was comfortable — a place that I could play. And I like the coach."

"The biggest problem with K-State is I thought the team might not be good. But talking with Coach Kruger, he said he's got a chance to sign some good players. I think he's gonna get K-State back on top of the Big Eight pretty quick."



By Chris Ochsner

McPherson's Steve Henson directs traffic in a game earlier this season. The Bullpup guard committed to KSU Thursday.

Henson, who has been contacted by more than 100 schools for basketball and track over the last three years, will not be officially

committed to K-State until the NCAA's spring signing period begins Wednesday. The elder Henson said he thought Kruger would be in McPherson for the signing.

"We're really pleased that Steve has indicated he's coming to K-State said Kruger, who's comments are restricted by NCAA rules before the signing date. "Our recruiting is going well. We've had a good response. We've been recruiting some guards, not necessarily point or off guards."

Henson is the first of Kruger's recruits but the second Sunflower State high school player to commit to the Wildcats this year. Howard Bonser, a 6-11 center from Manhattan, signed with K-State in the fall.

"When Coach (Jack) Hartman resigned and things were going bad, K-State was completely out of the picture," Henson said. "But when Kruger got the K-State job, he did a good job of showing me that things were not going to be bad for that long. I have to give credit to Coach Kruger and the track coach for giving me the confidence that things will be improving."

In three seasons at McPherson, Henson started all 69 games for the Bullpups as they rolled up a 57-12 record. He led the team to two fourth-place finishes in the state tournament. Henson is the all-time scoring (1,159 points) and assist (377) leader.

This season he led Mac to the championship in the Ark Valley League and shared conference MVP honors with Hutchinson's Todd Baugh. He averaged 20.5 points a game while dishing off seven assists and pulling down six rebounds per game.