

# Big Eight + baseball = tough

Third in a series detailing Big Eight baseball.  
By Scott Ahlstrand

Oklahoma baseball Coach Enos Semore said the 1984 Big Eight Conference race is going to be hard-fought.

Everybody in the Big Eight can play, and if you're not ready to go all out, you're going to get beat," Semore said.

The Sooner coach said Oklahoma State should be considered the favorite to capture the conference's title.

The Cowboys entered the season ranked No. 2 nationally with a host of potential All-Americans.

"Somebody has to be put up there and we take it as a compliment," Cowboy Coach Gary Ward said of the No. 2 ranking. "But we've got our share of unknowns."

Kansas State Coach Bill Hickey said the Cowboys are impressive, but he believes the Sooners could win the title.

"By the end of the season Oklahoma could very easily be the best team in the conference," Hickey said.

The Sooners return three All-Big Eight players from last year's team in left fielder Ron Leon, right

fielder Paul Williams and third baseman Jay Searcy.

Most conference coaches believe that Nebraska and Missouri will finish among the conference's top four.

"We'd like to be one of the top teams in the Big Eight," Nebraska Coach John Sanders said. "We're pretty realistic about our goals and we think we'll do well in the conference. It's too early to tell but it looks like Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State will fight it out for the title."

Kansas Coach Marty Pattin said an improved pitching staff and a solid defense should keep the Jayhawks competitive. Iowa State Coach Larry Corrigan said his team's speed could be a factor in the race.

"I think every team in the conference would like to finish in the top four, and that's our goal too," Corrigan said. "We're pretty positive about our team's chances."

K-State's Hickey said the Wildcats have talent enough to challenge, but the team has to work on its attitude.

"If we can get the guys to play hard for a whole game, we'll be pretty tough," Hickey said.

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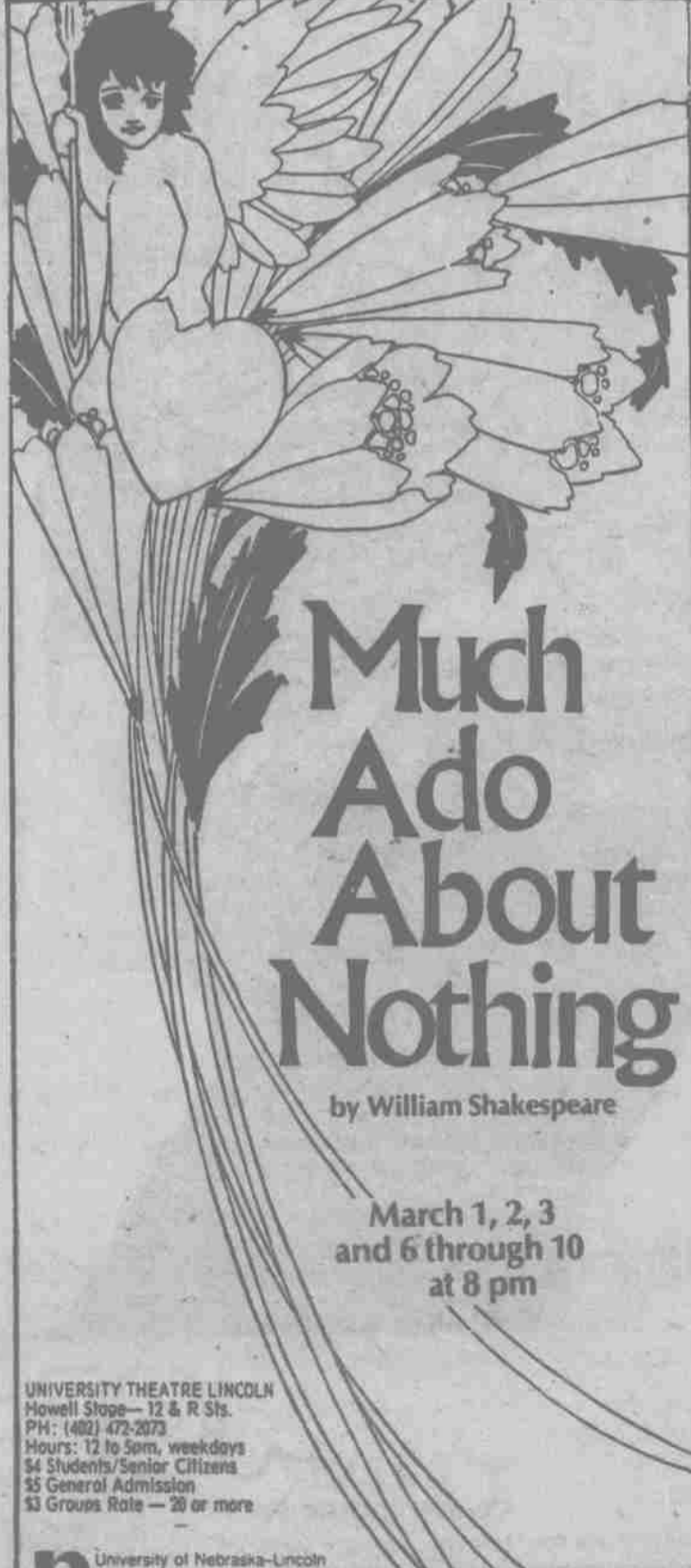
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