

Joel Sartore/Daily Nebraskan  
Middle guard Kenny Shead wraps up a Gopher during Saturday's 38-7 victory.

## Cross country teams begin season in style

By Rich Cooper  
Daily Nebraskan Staff Writer

The men's and women's cross country teams go off on the right foot by putting in strong performances at the Husker Invitational at Pioneer Park Saturday.

Coach Jay Dirksen said he was happy with the strong running of the men's team. The Huskers captured first place in the tournament with a perfect score of 15 points. Air Force came in second with 48 points and Midland College came in third with 81 points.

Kurt Russel placed first with a time of 31:32.8. Tom Hoffman was second (31:39.7), followed by Gerard O'Callaghan (32:09.6). Dirksen said he also was happy with junior Mike Herring, who cut four minutes from his last year's time, finishing at 33:42.

"Our team is almost all equal as far as ability and the men are basically in great shape," Dirksen said.

Dirksen said he thinks this year's team is much better than the 1983 squad. The Cornhuskers basically ran in a pack the whole race, Dirksen said, which is fine, just as long as each runner ran his own individual race.

"I hope we can avoid injuries, because if we do, who knows how far we can go," Dirksen said.

The men's team won't travel to the Kansas Invitational next week because the race is only five miles.

"It doesn't prepare us for what we want," he said. "The goal of these invitationals is to get the runners used to running 10,000

meters," he said.

Dirksen said the men will train hard to get ready for the Illinois Invitational Sept. 29 at the University of Illinois.

Dirksen said he was also happy with the women's performance especially since two of the squad's top runners didn't compete in the meet. South Dakota State won the overall championship with 38 points. The Husker women finished second with 48 points and UNO took third with 68 points.

Karlene Erickson and Laura Wight finished first and second and set a new meet record. Erickson ran a 17:33.9 and Wight a 17:40.4.

"I guess I am used to the course but it is a little bumpy, but I just went out and ran my own race and hoped that I could hold onto my lead," Erickson said.

Dirksen said all the women ran very well. Carol Nunnely was the

biggest surprise as she took seventh place and ran a personal best time of 18:50, he said. Dirksen said he was also happy with the performance of Nicole Ali, who ran well for her first Cross Country race.

"The team ran well and it looks like we could have a strong team this year," Dirksen said.

Mary Amen and Jill Noel did not compete. Amen has a strained muscle behind her right knee, but she is probable for the Jayhawk Invitational. Noel didn't run because of a family emergency.

"Not having Amen and Noel really hurt us as far as winning the meet, but we will be ready next week," Dirksen said.

Dirksen said the women will travel to the Kansas Invitational where both Kansas and Kansas State will compete.

"Kansas State could win the Big Eight Championship so they will be tough," Dirksen said.

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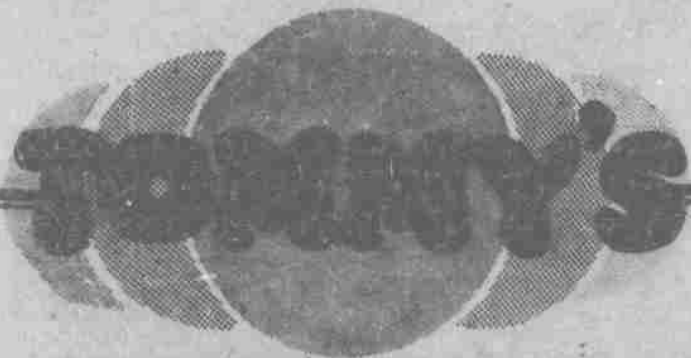
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Joel Sartore/Daily Nebraskan

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