

NU's Molnar sets record with second-place finish

By John Addisson
Staff Reporter

Although Nebraska's Tamas Molnar didn't win his race, he was all smiles on Saturday night.

The sophomore from Nyireggyoza, Hungary, set a Hungarian indoor record in the 400-meter dash en route to losing to Iowa State's Frankie Atwater at the Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational.

The 46.37 minute clocking also was good enough to earn Molnar a spot in the NCAA championships to be held in Indianapolis in March.

"This is one of the happiest moments of my life," Molnar said after finishing the race.

The 400 was one of the most highly anticipated events of the track meet. Atwater and Molnar didn't disappoint the Bob Devaney Sports Center crowd of more than 2,000 as they battled to the wire.

Atwater, who was named the meet's most valuable performer, shattered the invitational and Sports Center record by .78 of a second with a time of 46.20.

But Atwater praised Molnar and said his presence helped him set the record.

"He's really, really good," Atwater said. "We help to push each other."

The two most likely to meet again in two weeks at the Big Eight Indoor Championships in Lincoln, and Molnar indicated that he would be up to the

challenge.

"He beat me tonight, but tonight I was mainly concentrating on the time," Molnar said. "I might think more about beating him next time."

Molnar followed up on his national qualifying mark in the 400 by helping the Nebraska men's 400 relay qualify for the national meet. He teamed with Ken Waller, Bob Jelks, and Mark Jackson to set a Sports Center and Husker Invite record in the relay with a 3:08.77 clocking.

Nebraska track coach Gary Pepin said he was pleased with his team's performance in the relay.

"We didn't think that anybody could ever come close to breaking the record in this building," Pepin said. "That was a sparkling effort."

Although Molnar and the relay team were the only members of the men's team to qualify automatically for the national meet, five other Husker men may have earned a ticket to Indianapolis.

Those individuals included Stephen Golding in the 55 hurdles, Bob Jelks and James Cobb in the 200, Kevin Coleman in the shot put, and Jacques van Rensburg in the 3,000, who all met the provisional qualifying standards set by the NCAA.

If there are not enough qualifying marks obtained by athletes by the time of the NCAA meet, all those who have met the provisional standards will be invited to attend.

Depth

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McKenna said the toughest situation he has faced in his career was being a member of the USA junior team. He said the team was a high-pressure squad because all the players on it were locked in a fierce competition for playing time.

McKenna also is locked in a competition at Nebraska, a situation which he has mixed feelings about.

"Everybody on the team would like to have the job to themselves," McKenna said, "but we've got a lot of great catchers."

McKenna solidified his role Sunday by teaming with first baseman Bobby Benjamin to do some major

damage. While McKenna was hitting his doubles and scoring his runs, Benjamin hit a pair of home runs that soared over the right-centerfield fence.

McKenna and Benjamin's heroics helped Nebraska jump out to a 7-0 lead after two innings. Kearney State cut the Huskers' lead to 8-3 in the top of the fourth inning, but Nebraska tallied five runs in the bottom of the fifth to put the game out of reach.

Doug Tegtmeier, 1-0, was the winning pitcher, while Kearney State's Bill Jelkin took the loss.

Nebraska's next game is today, when the Huskers face Wayne State at 4 p.m. at Buck Beltzer Field. Sanders said the contest against the Wildcats, who like Kearney State are members of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, is an important one.

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