

## Baseball team to face fifth-place Cyclones

By Peter Theoharis  
Staff Reporter

As Nebraska's baseball team edges closer and closer to a Big Eight Conference Tournament bid, its coach emphasizes more and more his belief in "one game at a time."

Nebraska travels to Iowa State this weekend to face the fifth-place Cyclones (8-12).

The two teams are scheduled to begin play Friday in a 1 p.m. doubleheader. The series concludes Saturday with two games scheduled to begin at 1 p.m.

"We have two series left with eight games on the road," Coach John Sanders said. "The players are looking up to the challenge, but we need to focus on looking at each game at a time and not doing mathematics."

For those who care about mathematics, the 28-19 Cornhuskers are third in the conference with a 9-7 mark and must finish among the top four clubs to advance to the tournament May 15-17 at Oklahoma City.

The Huskers trail 14-6 Oklahoma and 13-7 Oklahoma State. Nebraska is four games ahead of fourth-place Missouri in the loss column. The Tigers are 9-11.

Iowa State is 20-20 overall and tied for fifth with Kansas State.

Under Sanders, Nebraska has compiled a 36-15 record against the Cyclones. The two teams split their series in Lincoln last season.

Sanders said the Cyclones were a solid club.

"They pitch well and play good defense," Sanders said. "Recently they have put some offense together, as well."

The rotation for the Huskers will contain Mike Zajeski, John Izumi and Josh Bullock, Sanders said.

Bullock and Zajeski have been the two workhorses for Nebraska. Bullock leads the team with 83 innings pitched and has a 8-4 record with a 4.88 earned run average. Zajeski is 5-4 with a 4.54 ERA in 73 innings pitched.

Zajeski leads the team in strikeouts with 87. Bullock is second with 73.

Offensively, Nebraska is hitting .318, which ranks second in the Big Eight. The Huskers' .300 mark in conference games ties them for first with Oklahoma State.

Freshman Jed Dalton leads Nebraska with a .354 average. Dale Hagy is second at .352 and leads the club with 11 home runs and 38 runs batted in.

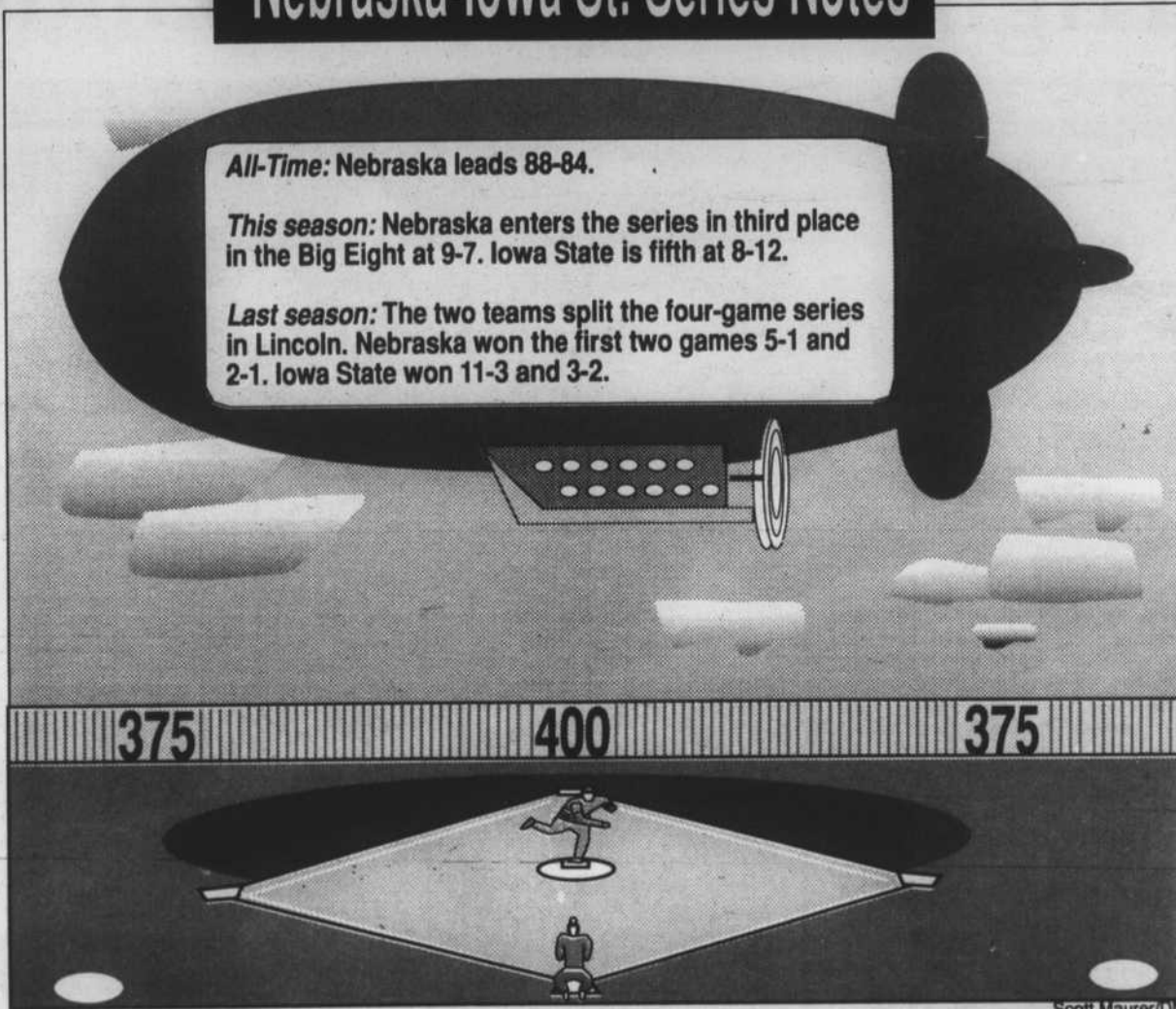
Troy Brohawn is third in conference batting at .408. He has 10 RBI in 49 times at bat.

## Nebraska-Iowa St. Series Notes

All-Time: Nebraska leads 88-84.

This season: Nebraska enters the series in third place in the Big Eight at 9-7. Iowa State is fifth at 8-12.

Last season: The two teams split the four-game series in Lincoln. Nebraska won the first two games 5-1 and 2-1. Iowa State won 11-3 and 3-2.



Scott Maurer/DN

## NU softball team must play harder in conference tourney, coach says

By Jeff Griesch  
Staff Reporter

Heading into the Big Eight softball tournament, Nebraska coach Ron Wolforth is looking for his team to step up its level of play a notch.

"We need to play at a higher level this weekend," Wolforth said. "We are going to need good pitching and defense every single game if we are going to have a chance at winning the tournament."

The tournament will be played this weekend at Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City.

The Huskers, 22-28, and seeded fifth going into the tournament, will face No. 4 seed Missouri at noon on Friday. If the Huskers win, they play No. 1 seed Kansas at 4 p.m.

The championship game will be played Sunday at 3 p.m. with the champion representing the Big Eight at the NCAA Softball Championship.

The tournament will showcase

three of the top 15 teams in the country — Missouri, Oklahoma State and Kansas. Despite the quality of competition in the conference, Wolforth said he believed that Kansas was the clear favorite.

"Kansas is definitely the team to beat," Wolforth said. "They have two or three of the top pitchers in the conference, and that makes them extremely tough to beat."

Despite the tough pitching in the conference, Wolforth said hitting was not a major concern to him.

"This is one of the top one or two offensive ballclubs in the history of the University of Nebraska," Wolforth said. "But you won't win the Big Eight with hitting, you need pitching to be successful."

The Huskers will rely heavily on the arm of NU pitcher Lisa Shandy, 14-14, to carry them through the tournament.

"Lisa has been pitching extremely well, and the team seems to be playing with an air of confi-

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Wolforth  
NU softball coach

dence behind her," Wolforth said. "She will probably pitch as many games as she possibly can for us."

Despite having a difficult regular season, Wolforth said Nebraska was anxious to compete in the tournament and eager to prove itself against the quality competition in the conference.

"From the first team meeting in September, the team has been looking forward to the Big Eight," Wolforth said. "I wish we could have played a little better during the season, but with better pitching and defense we can win this thing."

## Weekend track contest to prepare Husker men

By John Gardner  
Staff Reporter

It's crunch time for the Nebraska track and field teams.

With the NCAA Championships just weeks away, the Huskers first will play host to a quadrangular Saturday at the Ed Weir Track. Teams from Kansas, Kansas State and Iowa will attend.

Coach Gary Pepin said his teams must get the job done this weekend.

"This is the time of year where the competitors need to be in their best shape and get ready for the conference or national meets," he said.

All one has to do is look at the current Big Eight charts, Pepin said, to realize there is still room for improvement.

"There are some events where we just aren't ranked high, so we need to get more people up in those areas," he said. "Our objective right now is to continue to improve our performances and get more people qualified for nationals."

One thing Pepin said he was wor-

ried about was all the injuries his teams had sustained over the course of the year.

"This is by far one of the worst years we've ever had in getting people recovered from injuries," he said. "At the same time, if those people can't compete, you can't dwell on it, you just have to go with what you have."

And Nebraska has done just that all year. In fact, Pepin said, he is happy with the way things have been going.

"We've had a real good season so far," he said. "Especially last week where we had a great meet at Drake under very adverse weather conditions."

The weather will be fine this weekend, however, so times should reflect this, he said.

"We should have some real good performances because of the weather," Pepin said. "Some events will be real good, some will not be so good, but up and down the line, it should be a good meet."

And just another meet used up. "We're running out of meets here," Pepin said.

## Husker sprinter Lucas plans to go out with a 'bang'

By John Gardner  
Staff Reporter

Denise Lucas is peaking at just the right time.

The senior sprinter from Nebraska has improved her times from week to week all through this outdoor season.

And basically she just wants to keep getting better.

"After improving as much as I have this year, I know now that I can keep improving," Lucas said. This sudden improvement came from out of nowhere, too.

"I really haven't done anything different," she said. "I think it's just running outdoors. The outdoors just pumps me up."

This Saturday, Lucas will com-

pete in the first of two final home meets for her. She wants to do something special.

"This will be the last time I'll run on our track," Lucas said. "I want to go out with a bang, that's for sure."

"I know I'll miss practicing even though I complain all the time."

But the Nebraska coaches aren't complaining.

Lucas' coach, Steve Rainbolt, has nothing but praise for her.

"Denise is really running well this year," Rainbolt said. "I don't think people realize how well she is running because she's been overshadowed her whole career by great sprinters."

The feelings are mutual. "Coach (Rainbolt) is great," Lucas said. "He just loves his girls."

Rainbolt has reason to love Lucas this year. So far in this outdoor season, Lucas has posted provisional qualifying marks in three events and an automatic qualifying time in an-

other.

In the 100-meter dash, Lucas has recorded a time of 11.47, which is a personal best and ranks her fourth on Nebraska's all-time charts. In the 200, she has run a 23.54.

Lucas also has joined Kathy Travis, Kwani Stewart and Shanelle Porter on the 400 relay team, which has run a qualifying time of 44.37. She also runs a leg on the 1,600 relay, with Stewart, Porter and Susan Hedrick-Rehm, helping them to a season-best time of 3:38.06.

It would be fitting for Lucas to finish her career with a high placing at the NCAA Championships.

Not that she's never been there before.

As a freshman in 1988, Lucas ran on the 400 relay team that qualified for nationals. It went on to place sixth at the "big dance," giving Lucas All-America honors. She said that was quite a thrill.

"My freshman year was really fun,"

she said. "At the NCAA meet, I was screaming because we placed sixth. I also got to meet Jackie Joyner there."

"I was just happy to be there."

Lucas said at this point she didn't really think she was all that good.

"My coach did, though," she said. "I was just like, 'Okay, whatever you say.'"

During her sophomore year, she was good. Lucas captured the Big Eight outdoor 100 title in a time of 11.54, and came close to placing at nationals.

Then in 1991, Lucas picked up a couple All-America awards by placing sixth in the 200 (23.61) and ran a leg on the third-place 400 relay team that ran a 43.71.

Now in her senior year, Lucas has even greater goals. She said she would like to place high in all four events she runs in, and then it's on to bigger and better things.

"I'm going to run the 200 at the Olympic Trials this summer," Lucas

said. "It would be incredible to run in the Olympics, but it would be a great shock if I actually made the team."

But Lucas said if she kept improving the way she had this year, there might be a chance.

"But that will be it," she added. "There won't be a 1996 for me. I'm an old lady."

Twenty-two years old, to be exact. Lucas celebrated her birthday on a day when most people are recovering and watching bowl games. Her birthday is on New Year's Day.

"It never was very fun growing up, though," Lucas said. "It seemed like it was always snowing out, so I could never enjoy myself."

If the Olympic dreams don't come true, at least Lucas has a back-up. She will receive a degree in human development and elementary education next May.

"I really want to teach fourth-graders," she said. "Hopefully I can coach track to the kids, too."