

# Key players injured in spring practice

## Only two healthy quarterbacks left

By Jeff Singer  
Senior Reporter

The good news for the Nebraska football team on Saturday was that the Cornhusker offense was finally able to execute consistently.

The bad news was that the Huskers lost two key performers in the process.

Quarterback Ben Rutz and I-back Marvin Sims both suffered apparent

serious knee injuries in the second scrimmage of the spring season, which will probably keep both players out of action for the remainder of the spring and possibly the fall.

Rutz, a redshirt freshman from Oklahoma City, was expected to challenge Tommie Frazier for the starting quarterback spot in the fall.

With the early departure of Derek Brown to the National Football League, Sims was considered a serious contender to back up Heisman Trophy candidate Calvin Jones at I-back.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said it was tough to lose key players like Rutz and Sims during spring prac-

“*I might have been a little behind execution-wise, but as time goes on, hopefully that will get better.*”

—Jones  
NU I-back

tices.

“The initial news isn't very good,” Osborne said. “We're really sorry to see that because we had them going along pretty good.”

George Sullivan, Nebraska's head

athletic trainer, said the early prognosis for recovery of the two players' anterior cruciate ligaments was not too optimistic.

“If they tore it and need surgery, it will be a good six to eight months,” Sullivan said.

Rutz, who had completed seven of nine passes for 102 yards before his injury, including a 38-yard touchdown pass to tight end Gerald Armstrong, wasn't the only Husker quarterback hurting on Saturday.

Brook Berringer saw limited action as he was hampered by both elbow and groin injuries, and Tony Veland sat out the scrimmage with an

ankle sprain, leaving Nebraska with two healthy quarterbacks after Saturday: Frazier and freshman walk-on Matt Turman.

While Frazier completed 10 of 20 passes for 114 yards and one touchdown to accompany his 50 yards rushing on nine carries, Turman also played well.

The 5-foot-11 Wahoo native, who switched from wingback to quarterback before spring practices, completed six of 11 passes for 94 yards, highlighted by scoring strikes of 36 yards to Riley Washington and 39 yards to Brendan Holbein.

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Nebraska's Cody Dusenberry gets ready to release a pitch against Oklahoma State Sunday. Nebraska lost 4-0 and was swept in the weekend series. Staci McKee/DN

## Cowgirls control four-game series

By Jeff Griesch  
Staff Reporter

The Oklahoma State softball team came into its series with Nebraska as the best team in the Big Eight, and before leaving Lincoln, the Cowgirls had proven why.

The Cowgirls swept the four-game series with the Huskers to improve their record to 35-6 on the season. The Huskers fell to 9-12.

In the first game of Sunday's doubleheader, Linda Sodano smashed a two-run homer to lead Oklahoma State to a 3-1 win over the Huskers.

Sodano, a senior first baseman, also homered in the first game on Saturday and now owns the only home runs off Nebraska pitchers this season.

Nebraska jumped out to an early lead against Oklahoma State in

game one on Sunday off starting pitcher Chrissy Oliver.

Kris Vucurevic singled with two outs and stole second, and Shae Sloan followed with an RBI single to center to give Nebraska its first lead of the series.

Oklahoma State threatened in each inning, but Jody Splichal was able to work her way out of trouble until the fifth inning when the Cowgirls' K.K. McCoy scored to tie the game 1-1.

Nebraska rallied in the sixth with back-to-back singles by Vucurevic and Sloan, but relief pitcher Melanie Roche struck out the side to end the inning.

Nebraska coach Rhonda Revelle said the Huskers' inability to score with two on and no outs was a crucial point in the game.

“We needed someone to step up and change the complexion of the

game, but we just didn't get it,” Revelle said.

After Sodano's homer in Oklahoma State's half of the seventh, Roche set Nebraska down in order to seal the win.

Jody Splichal took the pitching loss for Nebraska, but Revelle said that she was pleased Splichal's pitching.

“I was proud of Jody and happy with our pitching; Jody battled all day,” Revelle said. “It's tough to get thumped in the head and come back and fight the next day.”

Splichal also lost in game one Saturday, allowing eight runs on 11 hits in five innings in Oklahoma State's 8-1 win.

Chrissy Oliver carried a perfect game into the sixth inning against the Huskers in game two on Saturday, until Sandra Brown singled with one out.

The Cowgirls won 6-1, with Cody Dusenberry taking the loss for the Huskers.

In Sunday's second game, the Cowgirls got all the runs they needed in the third inning.

Kendra Hanes led off with a walk and McCoy followed with a single. April Austin then grounded sharply to Husker third baseman Tobin Echo-Hawk, who did not make a throw after looking Hanes back to third base.

With the bases loaded, Sodano flied out deep to center, scoring Hanes. Cleanup hitter Sandra Burke followed with an RBI single to give Oklahoma State a 2-0 lead.

The Cowgirls added two more runs in the fifth inning, and Roche shut down the Huskers to pick up the complete game shutout and her third win of the series.

## OSU ace at best against Cornhuskers

By Jeff Griesch  
Staff Reporter

Melanie Roche stalks around the pitching circle with a confident smile on her face. With the ball in her hand, she leaves no doubt who is in control of the game.

And this weekend, Roche won three games against Nebraska and showed why she is one of the best pitchers in the country.

Roche, a senior All-American from Claymore, New South Wales, pitched 14 innings for Oklahoma

State, allowing only six hits and no runs while striking out 19 Cornhusker batters.

What makes Roche even more effective than her intimidating presence is her ability to reach back for something extra when she is in trouble.

In 145 2/3 innings this year, Roche has allowed only eight earned runs and 53 hits while recording 218 strikeouts.

Nebraska coach Rhonda Revelle said Roche's presence on the field intimidated the Huskers and stifled

them the entire series.

“You can almost see it on her face that ‘You're not going to score on me,’” Revelle said. “She was working just masterfully today.”

Roche said that she felt good throughout the series, and she thought her pitching was better now than earlier in the year.

“At the beginning of the the season, it took me a while to get going, but now I guess that I'm in sync or in some kind of a groove,” Roche said.

Although Roche overpowered

the Huskers, she said Nebraska was a tough team to pitch against.

“Nebraska is a really challenging ballclub,” Roche said. “They are all good hitters, and you can never just sit back and relax when you're pitching to them.”

Roche credits her pitching success to the confidence she has on the mound and the patience she has in the Cowgirls' offense.

“I know that the offense will come eventually; you just have to be patient and not let it affect you,” she said.

## Huskers blow past weekend competition

### Margin of victory surprises coach

By Susie Arth  
Senior Reporter

The Cornhusker track teams used the good weekend weather to outshine their opponents at a quadrangular Saturday at Ed Weir Track.

Cornhusker coach Gary Pepin said he was pleased with the performances he saw this weekend.

“We had a really good meet overall,” he said. “Both the men and the women did a real good job.”

The women, who scored 92 points, soundly defeated Colorado State and Minnesota, who scored 45 and 43 points respectively.

The men, who scored 105.5 points, also defeated Minnesota, Colorado State and South Dakota by large margins.

Minnesota was second with 44.5 points.

Pepin said he was surprised that Nebraska won the meet by such a large amount.

“We didn't try to win the meet by a large amount of points or strategically place our athletes,” he said. “But we still won by a fairly large margin.”

Pepin said he was pleased with several individual efforts on both the men's and women's squads.

The men's effort was led by Robert Thomas, who set a school record in the long jump, and Willie Hibler's race in the 400-meter hurdles, Pepin said.

Travis Grant, who finished first in the 100-meter dash, also turned in a solid performance, Pepin said.

On the women's side, Pepin said he was pleased with the sprinters and the distance runners.

Pepin said the only mistakes he saw Saturday were sloppy passes of the baton by both the men and women.

“Those are the kind of disappointments that you kind of expect,” he said. “I would say we had very, very few unexpected mistakes.”

Pepin said he hoped his team would continue to improve because the competition would get much stiffer next weekend.

The Huskers will send split squads to Lawrence, Kan., for the Kansas Relays and to Walnut, Calif. for the Mount SAC Relays.

“We're going to have some really tough competition,” he said. “If we hope to do well, we're really going to have to up our level of competition.”