

# Women

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immediate impact.

"I feel like Brooke will be a catalyst for us and the future of the Nebraska program," Beck said. "Brooke is one of the best players ever to come out of the state of Nebraska."

"She's unbelievable," Jacobs said. "She'll do whatever Coach Beck has her do."

Kubik, another all-state performer, said she would sign her letter-of-intent today. Her sister, Jami, a sophomore guard, is expected to be a starter for the Huskers this season. That made Nicole's decision to come to Lincoln even easier.

"I looked at a couple of other schools," Kubik said. "But I pretty much knew it would be Nebraska. I grew up here, and having my sister there just made it that much easier."

The 5-10 guard has started since her freshman year for Coach Mike Tomlin's Trojans. In that time, Cambridge has not lost a game, winning three state titles.

"Every part of her game is strong," Tomlin said. "She's very

coachable. Not many people give her credit for her defense, but half of her points come off of layups from steals."

Kubik averaged 23.7 points per game in her junior year, along with 8.1 steals and 7.8 assists.

Rogers, a 6-2 1/2 center, also earned all-state honors, and averaged 16 points per game for coach Kelly Flynn's South Sioux City Cardinals as a junior.

"She's a very dedicated player," Flynn said. "She has a super attitude. She's got a 3.9 grade point average and just great basketball savvy."

The three future Huskers played together this summer on the Dobman-Woodwin all-star team in Washington, D.C., which won a national tournament by capturing 10 straight games.

"It was one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had," Rogers said. "We just clicked so well. I was really honored to play with such a talented group. It's just awesome to have the chance to play with them again."

Senior Reporter Trevor Parks contributed to this report.

# Tough mentality guides Shepherd

By Gregg Madsen  
Staff Reporter

Cross country is not a sport for the weak.

Every race challenges runners with hills, trees and unpredictable conditions. But Nora Shepherd loves it.

The sophomore Cornhusker runner from York has a competitive spirit and a drive that has made her a leader on the Nebraska cross country team.

"She's a person that wants to be the front runner," Husker coach Jay Dirksen said. "She really wants that leadership role."

Shepherd said she excelled in the worst conditions.

"I feel that I'm a strong runner," Shepherd said. "I'm tough mentally."

Last year, Shepherd had to adjust from winning nearly every race in high school to the stiffer competition at the college level.

"It was a tough transition," Shepherd said. "The team really helped me last year and gave me a lot of attention, though. I had to realize that you're not always going to be number one."

As her freshman season progressed, the change became more of a challenge and less of a hardship, Shepherd said.

"It is usually easier for the women to make the transfer in cross country," Dirksen said. "She didn't have to double the distance like the guys do. She just got better as the year went on."

Shepherd finished 11th last year at the Big Eight Championships as the second runner for the Huskers, and she qualified for nationals.

"Throughout her career, for her age, she's done very well," Dirksen said. "She's not that far from the next level."

Shepherd, who runs both cross country and track, logged an average of 70 miles a week this summer while training for this season.

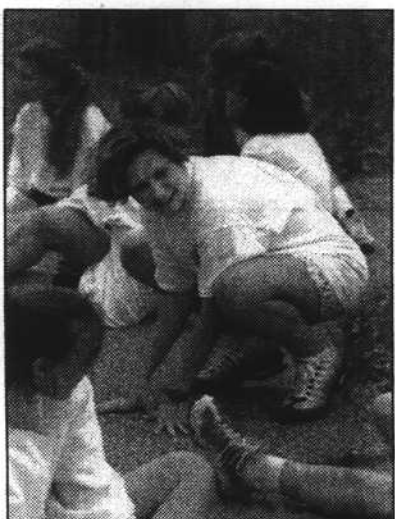
The long workouts, she said, helped her gain strength.

"I just got into shape," Shepherd said. "I had all this endurance, but I just didn't feel fast."

Shepherd said her practices changed to speed-oriented workouts as the season wore on, allowing her to regain her racing form.

She notched her first collegiate victory at Texas A&M on Oct. 14, finishing in 17 minutes, 30 seconds. Last Friday, Shepherd placed sixth in the Big Eight meet at Lawrence, Kan., with a time of 18:14.

Despite heavy winds and a tough



Angela Heywood/DN

Nora Shepherd stretches before Nebraska cross country practice on Monday.

course, both coach and runner were pleased with the results.

"I thought she had a really strong performance in a really good field," Dirksen said. "She had a great race. I was hoping she could finish in the top ten. It was a real lousy day to run. The wind was blowing and it was dusty, but she handled it real well."

# Men

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with," Belcher said Wednesday. "I'm glad everything is done. It's a big relief to finally sign."

Belcher, who committed to Nebraska on Oct. 19, was a first team all-state selection a year ago, averaging 22 points, nine rebounds and three assists per game. He was also a USA Today honorable mention All-American for Mexico, which finished 28-3 last season and won the Missouri Class 3A (second largest class) state title.

"We are very excited to sign a player of Cookie's caliber, because he was our No. 1 recruiting target from the beginning of the recruiting period," Husker coach Danny Nee said.

"The thing that has impressed me about Cookie is the great work ethic he has. The people of Mexico, Mo., can be very proud of Cookie and Tyrone. I believe they will be the heart and soul of the Huskers for a long time to come."

Belcher chose Nebraska over Missouri, Tulsa, St. Louis and Memphis. He said he visited the Nebraska campus in September, and attended the Nebraska-Arizona State football game with Luc, Belcher's longtime friend and distant cousin.

"Tyronn being there had a little to do with (my decision)," Belcher said.

Luc moved from Mexico to Kansas City, Mo., during high school before the duo had a chance to showcase their talent in the same backcourt.

Other than a summer league, Belcher — who is academically eligible to play as a freshman next fall — said he had never had a chance to play organized basketball with Luc.

"I'm looking forward to that," Belcher said. "He looks real promising, and everything seems to be working out real well for him. That's encouraging for me."

The Huskers have one more scholarship available. They may be holding it for Ryan Bailey, a 6-3 guard originally from Los Angeles, who attends Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Va. Bailey, the younger brother of UCLA's Toby Bailey, will decide between Nebraska and Maryland this weekend and sign on Monday.

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