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Smith brings toughness to field

By **MIKE KLUCK**
Senior Reporter

Nebraska softball catcher Jenny Smith has two very distinct sides.

One side of the junior from Fort Collins, Colo., is a person who enjoys sitting down at the piano or with a guitar composing music. She also finds enjoyment from sitting at The Mill in the Haymarket drinking hazelnut coffee while drawing,

Smith

and watching people.

At her 20-year college reunion, this Jenny Smith hopes to be a successful computer graphics designer for an advertising agency.

But then there's the other Jenny Smith.

The one who enjoys outdoor activities like hiking, mountain biking, fishing and camping. This Smith would be an ideal candidate for a Mountain Dew commercial.

This is the one who wanted to be a police officer when she graduated but had to be talked out of it by her mother. Now Smith plans on fighting fires after college.

A combination of the two Smiths is what made the right-hander a first-team All-Big 12 member last season and a strong candidate to repeat this year.

The rugged Smith has challenged herself to the near impossible feat of not allowing any balls to pass this season. It's that same type of personality

and pride Smith takes in blocking home plate and all the bases when she's playing.

"When I'm playing I feel really territorial about the plate and even about the bases," Smith said. "I like to play little mind games with myself when a runner gets on first base. It's like that's my base, and if they get off too far then they're dead."

"I feel that way with every base, but especially home. I know as a hitter how important it is to score. So as a defender, I know that it is my position and that it is my plate and I have to defend it. I take real pride in protecting the plate and I take it real hard when someone squeaks by."

It's that pride that evolved last season when Smith improved from being a good athlete to becoming a good catcher, Cornhusker Coach Rhonda Revelle said.

After hitting just .297 in her freshman season, Smith improved to finish second for the Huskers last season batting .353 while playing in all 65 games and earning first-team All-Midwest Region.

"I just really think she has worked hard and has taken a lot of things personally," Revelle said. "You get yourself to the highest level when you take it so personally."

"She understands what it means if the opponent touches her area. That's been gigantic. In the last year, she has increased her intensity in taking pride in stuff like that and it has really shown. She needs to have that kind of attitude."

But it's also the quiet Smith who has helped the young Huskers (7-9) this season.

As a catcher she has acted in the

"I take real pride in protecting the plate, and I take it real hard when someone squeaks by."

JENNY SMITH
NU catcher

role of field general communicating between the players and coaches and making sure NU is in the proper defensive alignments.

With the youth of the Huskers, especially in the infield, Smith has had an added challenge.

"I feel like she is soothing to the pitchers, yet demanding," Revelle said. "Last season, she saw the light as far as what it takes to be a catcher, to be a field general, to work with your coach on the sidelines and communicate with what's going on and still maintain your hitting."

But Smith has started slow this season in the batter's box. She is hitting just .173 with two home runs.

Smith — who is fourth on the Nebraska career home run list with 18 — said she is not concerned about her early-season hitting slump.

"I need to keep hitting well but I'm sort of like a late bloomer," Smith said. "I'm not worried about that."

Tennis teams look to improve

By **JAY SAUNDERS**
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's and women's tennis teams both have a weekend full of important matches, but for entirely different reasons.

The women's team, who just returned from a 3-0 trip to Fullerton, Calif., last weekend, heads west again to compete in the Boise Tournament in Boise, Idaho.

Last weekend, Women's Coach Scott Jacobson said his team took a step in the right direction after sweeping three duals. The Cornhuskers notched wins against Cal State-Fullerton, Fairfield and Indiana State to improve to 8-3.

"That was good preparation for our

trip to Boise," Jacobson said. "Those matches will be great competition for us."

NU will play against three regional foes this weekend. The Huskers will play Montana State, Idaho and host team Boise State. Jacobson said his team is focusing on these regional matches because of their impact later in the season.

The men's team isn't playing a regional match, but the team does continue its Big 12 Conference schedule.

NU dropped a disappointing 5-2 decision to Baylor last weekend. The Huskers are looking for their first conference win at Texas this weekend. The Longhorns play host to Nebraska on Friday, and the Huskers will then travel to College Station, Texas, to face Texas A&M.

Seminoles get NU-UConn winner

Florida State and Arkansas advance to NIT Final Four with wins over WVU, UNLV.

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP)—James Collins scored 24 points and injury-plagued Corey Louis came off the bench for 14 as Florida State beat West Virginia 76-71 Wednesday night in the third round of the National Invitation Tournament.

The Seminoles advanced to the NIT Final Four joining Arkansas, an 86-73 winner over UNLV. The Final Four starts Tuesday at Madison Square Garden in New York.

The Mountaineers (21-10) lost a last chance when Brent Solheim was

called for an intentional foul with 2.9 seconds remaining. Randell Jackson, who finished with 19 points, made two free throws as the Seminoles held the ball until time expired.

Florida State (19-11), playing in the postseason for the first time in four years, advanced to face the winner of Friday's Connecticut-Nebraska game next week in the semifinals at New York.

In Fayetteville, Ark., Tarik Wallace and Pat Bradley combined for 21 points early in the second half as the Razorbacks opened an 11-point lead on the way to an 86-73 victory over the Runnin' Rebels.

UNLV (22-10) led by six with a minute left in the half, but Arkansas (18-12) outscored the Rebels 32-15 during the next eight minutes. The run

NIT Roundup

included three 3-pointers by Wallace, two by Bradley and one by Glendon Alexander. The spurt ended with two baskets by Kareem Reid making the score 63-52.

The Rebels got as close as six four times in the final seven minutes. Only once did they have a chance to get it below six, and on that occasion, Keon Clark lost the ball out of bounds.

The threats ended when Reid got into the lane for a basket, Wallace beat the shot clock after Reid's steal, Reid made both ends of a one and one and Bradley did the same.

The Razorbacks advanced to New York to play either Notre Dame or Michigan.

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