



MATT MILLER/DN

**NU GYMNAST JESS SWIFT is mobbed by her teammates after hitting a career-best score of 9.750 on the vault March 21. The Huskers won the Big 12 Championship for the second consecutive year with a score of 196.55 – the second-best in school history.**

## Women's gymnasts win Big 12

### Huskers capture fifth straight title, tie school records

By **DARREN IVY**  
Assignment Reporter

As soon as Nebraska gymnast Heather Brink stuck the landing on her uneven bars routine – a routine she hadn't hit in three weeks – she leaped in the air and began to smile.

The fierce competitor from Lincoln could now relax because she had just capped off the best performance of her career.

Before family, friends and relatives, Brink tied three school records and claimed three first-place finishes at Big 12 Conference Gymnastics Championships March 21 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"(The records) were one of the things to add to the list of how well the night went for me," Brink said. "But I

am happiest with our team championship."

Hitting 21 out of 24 routines, winning four of the five individual titles and posting six season-high vault scores propelled the Nebraska women's gymnastics team to its second-best score ever and allowed the team to win a school – and conference – record fifth straight title.

The 12th-ranked Cornhuskers (196.550) outpaced No. 13 Iowa State (195.800), Oklahoma (193.500) and Missouri (191.925) to give Coach Dan Kendig his fifth title in five years.

Nebraska jumped out to an early lead – scoring a 49.075 on the balance beam. Nicole Wilkinson, who finished fourth in the all-around, earned All-Big 12 honors in the beam as well, finishing fourth with a 9.875. All-Big 12 honors are given to gymnasts who

place in the top four on individual events or the top four in the all-around.

The Huskers followed the beam with a 48.975 on the floor exercise to take a 98.050-97.325 lead over Oklahoma. Misty Oxford, who placed second in the all-around, won the event with a 9.90, Brink was second with a 9.875 and Courtney Brown tied for fourth with a 9.775.

Then Kendig got the surprise of a 49 before we did it tonight," Kendig said. "If you would have told me the vault would be our second-best score before the meet, I would have told you we lost."

"I didn't think we were capable of a 49 before we did it tonight," Kendig said. "If you would have told me the vault would be our second-best score before the meet, I would have told you we lost."

Brown got NU started with a season-best 9.750. Freshman Amy Ringo

and junior Jess Swift followed with career bests – 9.700 and 9.750 respectively. Wilkinson scored a 9.850 to place second, and Brink put the exclamation point on the vault by scoring a school-record-tying 9.950. Her mark tied the record Oxford set last year.

On the final routine – the uneven bars – NU scored a Devaney Center- and school-record 49.400. Individually, Brink tied the 9.950 school record set by Crystal Savage (1989) and Shelly Bartlett (1997). Wilkinson also posted a career-high 9.925.

But Oxford's 9.90 after a Jess Swift fall was the "biggest routine of the day," Kendig said.

Oxford said NU has had two great meets in a row and hopes to continue the string at the Midwest Regionals Saturday in Tempe, Ariz.

## Spring practice will help Solich fill voids

By **SAM MCKEWON**  
Senior Reporter

For new Nebraska Football Coach Frank Solich, spring football provides many questions

with little time to answer them.

Twenty-seven days to be exact.

The 12th-ranked Cornhuskers will practice every Monday, Wednesday and Friday through the month of April – with scrimmages on Saturday. Spring practice will

culminate April 25 with the annual Red-White Spring Game. Solich is faced with replacing 12 starters from an NU team that was 13-0 and won a national championship in 1997.

The most talked about position has been quarterback, left vacant by Scott Frost. As many as "four or five" players could contend for the starting spot, Solich says.

Quarterback, Matt Prater, finished last season with 2,429 yards and 22 touchdowns. Last year, Prater ran for 1,033 yards and three touchdowns and

**Spring Football '98**

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## Swimmers finish in top 20

By **LISA VONNAHME**  
Staff Reporter

After a slow start at the NCAA Championships in Minneapolis, the Nebraska women's swimming and diving team ended its season March 21 with an 11th-place finish while the men finished 18th in Auburn, Ala., Saturday.

The women's team had a lot of expectations going into the meet, including a top-five finish, but the Cornhuskers were unable to meet all of their goals, NU coach Cal Bentz said.

The meet was highlighted by the 1998 women's 400-yard freestyle relay, in which the Huskers placed second, a first for the team. The relay consisted of four swimmers: Jennifer Brink, Heather Brink, Heather Brink and Heather Brink.

NU's 800-yard freestyle relay squad of Anna Windsor, Helene Muller, Therese Alshammar and Shandra Johnson just missed a national championship by one-

tenth of a second. Nebraska finished in a school-record time of 7:10.89, but Stanford edged the Huskers to win the title with a time of 7:10.79.

"That relay was a defining moment," Bentz said. "We really needed that spark."

Eight Huskers – Windsor, Muller, Alshammar, Johnson, Beth Karara, Destiny Lauren, Lenka Manhalova and Terrie Miller earned All-American honors at the meet.

With two freshmen, eight sophomores and a junior making up the 1998 quality, in just the women's team has made itself a top team.

"We've got a lot of young girls that are going to improve and we'll be here next year," Bentz said. "With the field getting as fast as it is, we need to focus more on saving some energy from this meet instead of doing everything it takes to get here. We'll be back."

The men's team will be back,

## Pitcher leads NU to win

■ **Sophomore Jenny Voss stands out in showdown against Texas A&M.**

By **DARREN IVY**  
Assignment Reporter

After earning 10 wins in Nebraska's last 11 games, pitcher Jenny Voss might be considered a superwoman by some. But actually she's just blessed with a super arm.

On Sunday, the sophomore from Ankeny, Iowa, pitched five innings in the first game and three innings in the second to lead No. 12 Nebraska to 10-2 and 5-0 wins over Texas A&M before 310 fans at the Nebraska Softball Complex.

With two wins against No. 6 Texas and two against Texas A&M this weekend, the Cornhuskers (26-8) are off to their second-best start in school history and also are in first place in the Big 12 Conference with a 4-0 record.

Saturday, Voss pitched 14 innings of scoreless softball and also outdueled Olympic pitcher Christa Williams as NU defeated Texas 4-0 and 2-0.

NU used a six-run second inning Sunday against A&M pitcher Ashely Lewis to jump ahead in the first game. Smith hit a home run and drove in three runs.

The second game was scoreless after four innings until NU used a suicide squeeze from Ali Viola, its second-leading hitter, to score Jennifer Lizama in the bottom of the fifth.

In the top of the fifth Revelle opted to replace freshman Lori Tschannen, who hadn't allowed a hit, with Voss.

"Lori pitched excellently," Revelle said, "but we planned to bring back Jenny if the game was close because she had handled them so well in the first game."

Voss allowed two hits, but the Aggies managed no runs. She said this weekend was important for the team.

"We wanted to make a statement that we aren't going to lose at home," Voss said. "I think we did a nice job of setting the tone."

too, after coming off its seventh-best showing in the team's 77-year history.

"Given the tightness of this meet, we had a pretty good three days," Bentz said. "All in all, being 18th is a fine finish. With the depth of competition getting deeper every year, we have to be proud to be in the top 20."

NU ended the three-day meet by scoring seven points on the final day of competition. The Huskers finished the meet with 80 points. Top-ranked Stanford won the meet title with 599 points.

For the second straight year, Husker women have qualified for the national finals. In 1997, the Huskers finished 12th in a field of 47 swimmers. This year, the Huskers finished 11th in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

All of the Nebraska qualifiers – seven swimmers and two divers – earned All-American recognition.