## Freshman Hale takes mound vs. Oklahoma

By DAVID WILSON Staff writer

Granted, this year's Oklahoma baseball team may be a little younger than previous Sooner squads, but Nebraska pitcher Steve Hale knows that in Norman, Okla., some things never

"They've always been an offensive team," said Hale, who grew up 30 minutes from the OU campus. "That's what I've always heard.'

A native of Yukon, Okla., Hale will make his first Big 12 Conference start Saturday as the Cornhuskers (8-5) travel to Norman for a three-game series with the Sooners (10-6).

Through 16 games, OU has posted a .324 batting average. But Hale, who has allowed opponents to hit .225 this year, isn't intimidated.

"It will probably be pretty tough, but it would be nice to go down there and sweep them," Hale said.

Hale, a true freshman, began the year for NU coming out of the bullpen, but has since worked his way into the Huskers' three-man starting rotation.

In 21 2/3 innings, Hale owns a team-low 2.49 earned-run average and has struck out a team-high 26 batters. His early success, Nebraska Pitching his staff's lack of experience. Coach Rob Childress said, made the decision to try Hale as a starter a nobrainer.

"He was just so consistent every time he got the ball," Childress said. "He was throwing strikes and getting people out. More than anything, he earned the start and has done well since



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For the right-handed Hale, the transition from high school to college ball hasn't been too difficult - with the exception of a few mistakes.

"It was a little hard at first," Hale said. "If you make a mistake, in high school, you can get by with it - here they'll hammer it.

Along with Hale, left-hander Scott Fries and righty Shane Komine will also make starts on the mound this weekend against the Sooners.

Komine, also a true freshman, has 21 strikeouts in 22 1/3 innings.

"Those guys aren't freshmen any more," Childress said of Hale and Komine. "Throughout the fall and the last four weeks, they're as game-ready and as conference-ready as any junior or senior.'

While NU will start three pitchers with no Big 12 experience, Oklahoma likely will send at least one veteran, ace Jared Hoerman, to the mound vs. NU.

Hoerman (4-0), a senior, owns a 1.10 ERA and has struck out 43 batters in 32 2/3 innings.

"I know their No. 1 is as good as anybody's in the league," Childress said. "He's going to be tough to beat, but I

And Childress isn't worried about

Neither is Hale.

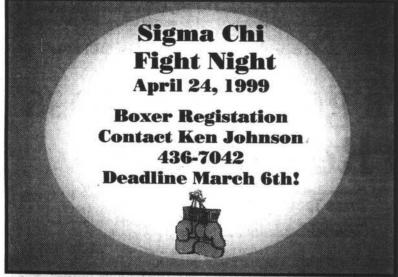
"Right now, I've been throwing well," Hale said. "I just need to keep doing that and give my team a chance to win. It makes it easy to go out there and pitch when you have a good defense behind you, and you know your offense can score runs for you."

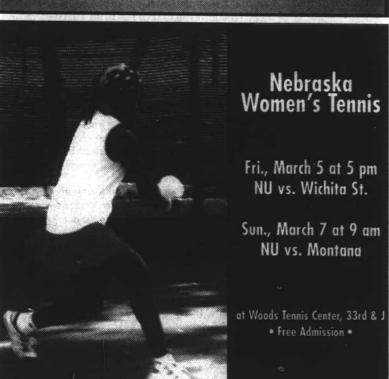
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# **Huskers ready for NCAAs**

Lavy, Klassen highlight field for NU track team

By Josh Camenzind Staff writer

The Nebraska track and field team will be sending eight athletes to Indianapolis this weekend for the NCAA Indoor Championships.

The men will be sending two competitors, high jumper Shane Lavy and 35-pound weight thrower Joe Erdkamp. The women who qualified are Dalhia Ingram in the triple jump, shot putter Becky Beachler and the 4x400 meter relay team.

The relay team consists of Lesley Owusu, Cheryl Harmon, Seneik Saavedra and Stella Klassen - who also is competing in the 800meter run, in which she is ranked

Klassen is excited about the team's chances at the nationals.

"We are peaking at the right time, and I think we are going to run even faster this weekend," Klassen said. Head Coach

Gary Pepin is also optimistic about the relay Pepin team's chances.

"I'm hoping that they (the 4x400 team) are going to be in a high scoring position," Pepin said. "They are a group that is going to continue to run better and better, and each per-

son has improved a lot this year. I am hoping they will place high in the

Beachler will be competing in the shot put, in which she is ranked 13th in the nation. Erdkamp will be throwing the 35-pound weight, in

which he is also ranked 13th Lavy will be contending for the title in the high jump, in which he is currently ranked third in the nation.

"Shane is in a position to win, but he must have a good meet to do that," Pepin said.

Overall, Pepin is pleased with those who have qualified and anxious to see how they do.

"If you can duplicate your qualifying performance, you have a

chance to score."

## Gymnasts travel to BYU

By JOHN GASKINS Staff writer

When they arrive in Provo, Utah, tomorrow for a double dual with Brigham Young, one Nebraska gymnastics team will look like a well-oiled machine, while the other will look like an infirmary unit.

The healthy and deep No. 7 NU women will be riding high on a fivemeet win streak, while the hobbling No. 9 men will be trying to recover from a nasty hangover they suffered after a brutal loss to No. 6 Oklahoma last week.

The mayhem of the double dual with the Cougars (No. 24 men and No. 22 women) will start at 8 p.m. on Saturday. The men's meet will also feature No. 7 Michigan State.

NU Women's Coach Dan Kendig said competition for the six spots in every event had been intense, as it had all season, thanks to the team's lack of major injuries.

'We're as healthy as we'd like and expect to be," Kendig said. "We've got seven, eight, nine people who can get the job done in each event."

Junior All-American Heather Brink, who missed two weeks of meets in a row thanks to a sore ankle, will follow up her return to competition last Sunday at the Master's Classic and compete in every event except the floor exercise. Junior Nicole Wilkinson is the only definite Husker to compete in the all-around.

Meanwhile, the men are looking to get back on their feet after crashing hard last weekend at OU after rolling to a 7-0 start.

### Defense shuts down Texas Tech

**DEFENSE** from page7

he was presented with the Big 12 player-of-the-year award.

Hamilton also received a lot of scoring help. Freshman Louis Truscott had a season-high 12 points, Larry Florence chipped in 11 and Belcher added 10.

By the time the rout was over,

1,500 people remained in the Kemper Arena.

It was a win that pleased Nee, especially since a loss would have spelled doom for the Huskers' NCAA Tournament chances.

"I think this will help us with getting a tournament bid," Nee said.
"We deserve to play in the NCAA Tournament."

#### NU wrestlers ready for OSU at Big 12 meet

MEET from page7

man. Although Vering is not expected to earn the top seed in today's seeding meeting, he is not looking at his seed as a setback.

"I'm going to go out there and wrestle as good as I can," Vering said. "I expect to win all of my matches.

Neumann predicted Thursday 157pounder Bryan Snyder and heavyweight J.R. Plienis would earn top seeds for the tournament - something that serves simply as a confidence

"It's nice to be the No. 1 seed for confidence reasons," Plienis said. "But my weight class is pretty balanced. Anything can happen."

Neumann and the Huskers agree they would like to return to Lincoln as conference champs. In order to do that, NU must upset favored OSU - something Neumann said "is possible if the guys wrestle like they have all year."

Notes: Questions remained concerning the 165-pound weight class following Thursday's practice. Freshman starter Josh Henson injured his Achilles tendon, and Neumann said he was unsure if he would compete. If not, Zac Dominquez will wrestle in his

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BE ALL YOU CAN BE:

# NU battles another ranked foe in Kansas

■ The men's tennis team to battle KU, while the women's team is at home.

> By JAKE BLEED Staff writer

The storm hasn't quite passed for Nebraska men's tennis. Saturday's match against Kansas will be the Huskers' fourth against a ranked opponent in five matches, a series that NU hasn't quite dominated.

Saturday's match will give Nebraska, at 4-5 overall and 1-2 in the Big 12 Conference, the chance to even both their overall and Big 12 records.

Kansas (6-1 overall) will go into Saturday's match on a five-match winning streak. The Jayhawks have a reputation for hosting a loud match.

"They like to get a little rowdy," Coach Kerry McDermott said. "That's OK, though; we like it, too."

No. 1 singles player, Dinko Verzi, has his work cut out for him. KU's No. 1, Luis Uribe, is ranked No. 9 in the nation and will be looking to take his 100th career victory against NU.

The status of No. 5 Juan Hamdam is still questionable. Hamdam threw out of how NU would fare.

his shoulder Feb. 21 against Texas Tech. The match has been scheduled for 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Lawrence.

Nebraska women's tennis will return to Lincoln this weekend, playing host to Wichita State and Montana at the Woods tennis complex.

NU will ride into this weekend's matches after almost taking No. 6 Texas in the Lone Star state.

The kids are feeling pretty confident," Coach Scott Jacobson said.

The Huskers will meet Wichita State (1-4) on Friday at 5 p.m. WSU has struggled this season, but Jacobson said they were usually able to field a strong squad.

Montana, on the other hand, will arrive in Lincoln after having romped 3-0 over Gonzaga, Eastern Washington and Portland State.

"We're going to have to be ready to play this weekend," Jacobson said.

Riva Wig is still out, leaving the Huskers with the minimum six players in playing condition. Jacobson said he liked being able to give everyone playing time but was worried about a poten-

Adding to Jacobson's worries, new national rankings are due out sometime next week. Jacobson said he was unsure