

# SPORTS

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## Short-staffed NU to take on Texas

*Komine, Hale to sit out with injuries; pitchers up for 'biggest test this season'*

BY DAVID WILSON  
Staff writer

With two of its top starting pitchers out with injuries, the Nebraska baseball team will face its biggest challenge of the season this weekend a little short-handed on the mound.

For the first time since 1988, two ranked teams will square off at Buck Beltzer Field today, when the 30<sup>th</sup>-ranked Cornhuskers (17-6 overall and 5-1 in the Big 12 Conference) play host to No. 9 Texas (22-8 and 8-1) at 7 p.m.

With the exception of junior lefty

Scott Fries (4-1), who will get one starting nod for NU this weekend, the Huskers will pitch by committee, Coach Dave Van Horn said.

Both freshmen righties, Shane Komine and Steve Hale, who have combined to start 14 games for NU – winning eight – will likely sit out with injuries suffered last weekend at Kansas.

Texas will arrive in Lincoln after winning 11 of its last 13 contests, including a 5-1 win over Houston on Wednesday. The Longhorns currently sit atop the Big 12 – 1½ games ahead of the Huskers.

R.D. Spiehs, a right-handed freshman pitcher, said the Husker pitching staff – shorthanded or not – would be up for its biggest test this season.

"They'll probably be the best hitting team we've faced this year, but (Pitching) Coach (Rob) Childress has us prepared well," Spiehs said. "We'll be ready to go."

"The injury situation just makes everyone aware that they have a possibility to get a shot. Everyone is going to be ready to go. I know a lot of guys don't have very many innings. They're going to be anxious to throw."

Of course, with only two other

"They'll probably be the best hitting team we've faced this year..."

R.D. SPIEHS  
NU pitcher

pitchers on the roster with more than one game started this season – senior Jay Sirianni and junior Chad Wiles – Van Horn may not have much choice.

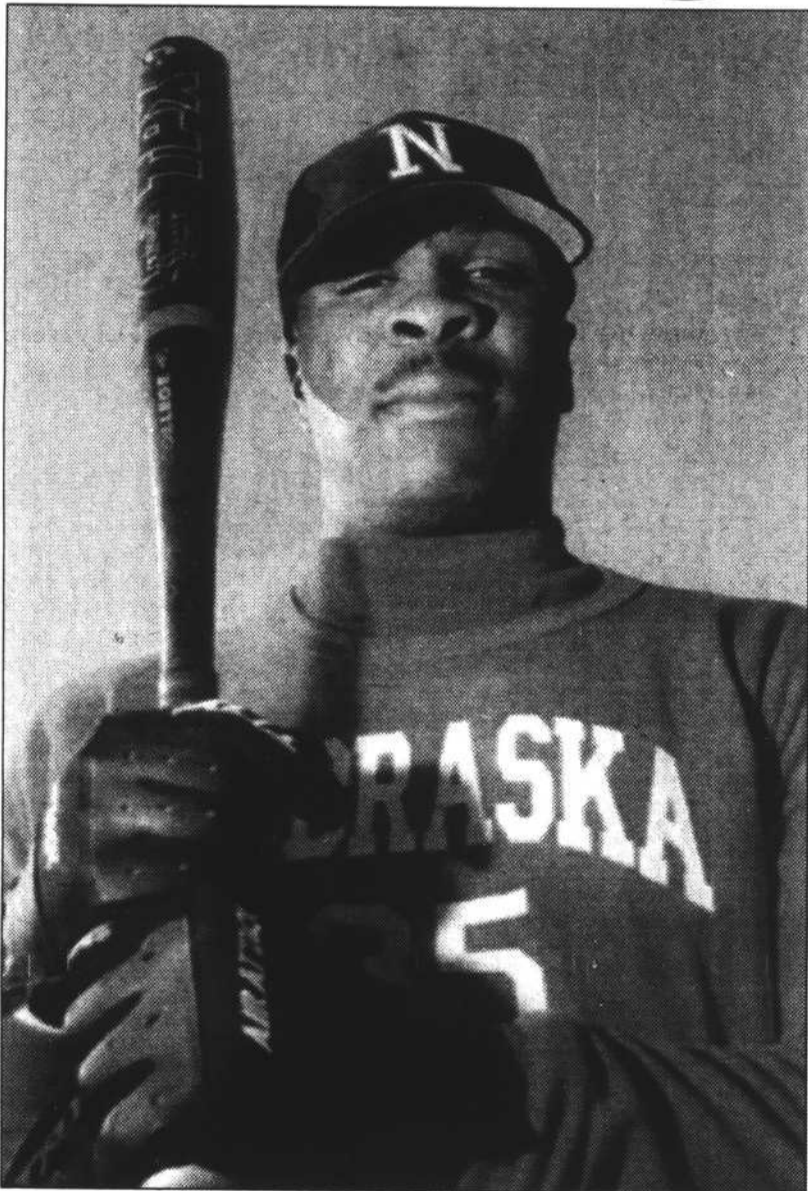
"I just hope some of our pitchers that haven't thrown much can come in

and do a good job for us," Van Horn said.

Offensively, on the other hand, the Huskers have averaged over 16 runs per

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# Heavy



SCOTT McCLURG/DN  
**KEN HARVEY AND JENNIFER LIZAMA** are the leading hitters for the Nebraska baseball and softball teams, respectively. Both are juniors for the Cornhuskers.

*Harvey acknowledges fame, says team keeps him humble*

BY DAVID WILSON  
Staff writer

With a smile spread across his face, Nebraska junior outfielder Jamal Strong has no problem calling his 6-foot-2, 250-pound teammate, Ken Harvey, a camera hog.

In similar fashion, junior outfielder Adam Shabala has noticed a relationship between Harvey and print journalists.

"Every time you look in a paper, you see his face," Shabala said. "It's all about Ken Harvey."

So the two have taken it upon themselves to keep the Cornhuskers' leading average and home run hitter from getting a big head.

"We always mess around with him and call him 'Franchise,'" Strong said.

But don't get the wrong impression. Though Harvey has the size and numbers to back up whatever kind of smack he wants to talk, the seemingly calm and quiet first baseman doesn't come across as cocky.

And if anything, the addition of

Please see **HARVEY** on 11



## Hitters

*Lizama plays hardball for NU softball*

BY JAKE BLEED  
Staff writer

Whoever put the "soft" in softball never met Jennifer Lizama.

"There's never a day when I feel good; when I wake up and say 'Wow there's nothing sore today,'" the NU junior second baseman said. "Pain's just part of it."

For all the pain, sweat and intensity, Lizama has thrived in the hardball world of collegiate softball.

"She's a tough player," NU Coach Rhonda Revelle said. Revelle added that Lizama's toughness as a player could be seen in the intensity NU's second baseman brought to a game.

"I put a lot of pressure on myself because I've got a job to do," Lizama said. "That's what I was recruited for; that's what I came here for: to do a job."

Lizama's been at work for years. Her father, a former state champion basketball player, had her playing softball when she was five, and even went so far as to build a batting cage in the backyard of their California home.

"I had to pitch 200 pitches a day when I was nine years old," Lizama said.

One reason for all the work, Lizama said, was so she could go to school. Lizama said she was the first person from her family to go to college.

"The main thing I want to do is make them happy by graduating," Lizama said. "They don't want me to struggle like they did."

She came to NU from San Lorenzo, Calif. Revelle, who pitched for NU in the early '80s, coached at San Jose State before returning to NU, and said she first heard of Lizama when the second baseman was in eighth grade.

By the time she reached Bishop O'Dowd High School, Lizama was being named a Fastpitch World All American. Before she graduated, "Zama" broke the California high school record for home runs, a record she still holds.

In her first year at NU, Lizama became the second freshman ever to be named second-team All American. She was also named Big-12 freshman of the year, led the team in a slew of statistics and got a concussion sliding into home plate against Iowa.

Her success continued through her sophomore year and into Tuesday's match against Creighton.

"She hit a home run (last night) that probably still hasn't landed," Revelle said. The hit, estimated at 340 feet and one of the longest in Husker history, helped No. 24 NU to a 6-5 victory.

Lizama currently leads the team with a .667 slugging percentage, 18 walks drawn, 26 hits, 27 runs scored

"Almost every time I get on base in the first inning, we score."

JENNIFER LIZAMA  
NU second baseman

and 44 total bases, among others.

"I just want to get on base when I can," Lizama said. "But if a home run comes, a home run comes."

Home run pitches are, even for Lizama, few and far between. But, fortunately for the Huskers, other forms of offense are a little more reliable.

For all of Lizama's skills at the plate, NU's lead hitter leads the team in stolen bases (14) and on-base percentage (5.29).

"Almost every time I get on base in the first inning, we score," Lizama said.

Nebraska will need all the scoring it can get when the team travels to Texas this weekend to begin the defense of their Big-12 title.

"After last year, we should get to the World Series every year," Lizama said. "I'd like to have some more banners up there."