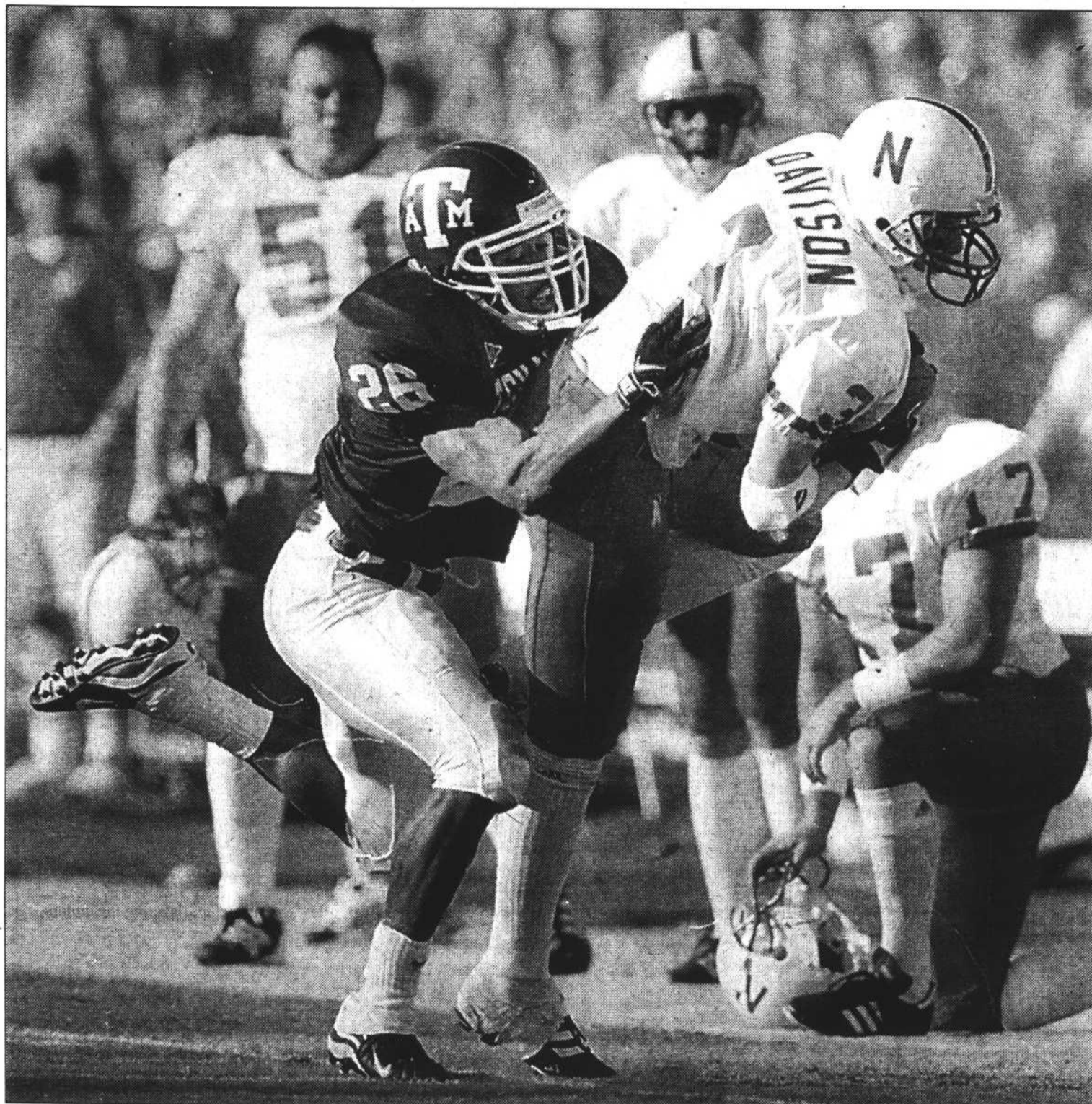


# SPORTS

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NEBRASKA WIDE RECEIVER Matt Davison will participate in the Spring Game, unlike some of his injured teammates.

DN FILE PHOTO

## NU players ready for NFL draft Saturday

BY DARREN IVY  
Senior staff writer

After his Nebraska football season ended Dec. 30, former rush end Mike Rucker headed for the mountains of Colorado.

Rucker wasn't running from the law or checking out all the hot ski spots.

Rather, he went to Denver to train in an altitude with the hopes of raising his stock in the upcoming NFL Draft, which will be held tomorrow and Sunday in the Marriot Marquis Hotel in New York City.

Most of the analysts have Rucker slated as a late first-round to early second-round pick. In mock drafts earlier this week, CBS Sportsline, ESPN SportsZone, CNN/SI, Sporting News and Fox Sports didn't have Rucker being taken in the first round.

But the NFL Draft is usually a crap shoot and, Rucker said, he is just thankful to be in a position to be drafted.

The 6-foot-6, 267-pound Rucker will watch the draft from his parents' home in St. Joseph, Mo., provided the weather in Colorado improves.

On Thursday, Rucker had to scoop his first snow of the year as a storm dropped snow on the Mile High City. Living in Missouri and Nebraska, Rucker is used to snow. One thing he wasn't accustomed to was the higher altitude.

"I could really tell the first day," Rucker said. "I was really sucking eggs."

Rucker has since adjusted to the altitude, and used the three months of training to his advantage.

He said the training helped his endurance at the Senior Bowl and NFL Combine. In the Senior Bowl, Rucker had two sacks and his play had scouts talking positively about him.

The positive vibes from scouts about Rucker haven't been there during the entire season.

Following his junior season at NU, in which he had 7.5 sacks and 15 tackles for a loss of 70 yards, Rucker was selected as a pre-season All-American.

But a pelvic injury limited Rucker to the first four games (just four total tackles) and his sacks didn't come close to his sophomore or junior totals. Thus, his season was viewed as disappointing by many scouts even though Rucker posted a career-high 53 tackles.

As a result, his stock plummeted.

Rucker said he didn't worry about the negatives, because it was something he couldn't control.

"It's whether you sit on the bench or play through the injury," Rucker said. "I played through the injury, and I think that will be a positive."

After his injury healed before the Colorado game, Rucker said, he was back to his old self.

He had 1.5 sacks against Colorado, and two against Arizona in the bowl game. Then the Senior Bowl brought him two more sacks.

"I felt like I was on a roll and couldn't be stopped," Rucker said. "It just goes to show I still have pass rush ability, and can get the job done. I think I am peaking at the right time."

Former NU linebacker Jay Foreman also said he is peaking at the right time. Foreman, who will be in Washington, D.C., for the NFL Draft, said his agent and teams are telling him he probably will be a third- to fifth-round pick.

At Nebraska, Foreman started 35 out of 45 games and finished his career with five sacks and 233 tackles.

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## Spring game goes on despite injuries

BY DARREN IVY  
Senior staff writer

The sidelines of Tom Osborne Field have turned into a M.A.S.H. unit this spring with as many as 15 players being on the sidelines in sweat pants because of injuries.

Among these wounded Cornhuskers are at least eight probable starters. And though the injured NU players are showing signs of recovery, all of them will be missing from action during the annual Spring Game on Saturday at 12:30 p.m.

Coach Frank Solich prays there will be no more casualties in the final scrimmage at Memorial Stadium.

"We're not through with it," Solich said. "We've got one day left."

Co-No. 1 quarterback Eric Crouch will continue to wear the green jersey, signifying he can't be hit, but everyone else will be fair game.

With so many key offensive players out with injuries, the offense has struggled to get into a rhythm this spring.

Solich is optimistic that that will change Saturday.

"I think we can be a good pass-protection team, and I think we will be a better run-blocking team, too," Solich said. "We have more healthy guys and that should make a big difference."

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"I think we can be a good pass-protection team, and I think we will be a better run-blocking team, too."

FRANK SOLICH  
NU head coach

## Van Horn warns NU against complacency

■ Nebraska plays weak but dangerous Iowa State in weekend series.

BY JOSH CAMENZIND  
Staff writer

There are reasons why Nebraska Baseball Coach Dave Van Horn is wary of Iowa State.

The Cyclones are winless this season in the Big 12 as the Nebraska baseball team (25-10) travels to Ames, Iowa, for three

games this weekend.

While the Cyclones (13-23) have struggled through the Big 12 schedule, they are winners of six straight. They are undefeated at home (8-0) and have been playing teams close lately on the road. They last swept South Dakota in a double-header Tuesday, 14-6 and 5-4.

And ISU has Van Horn worried.

"They have lost a lot of tight games and we are playing on the road," Van Horn said. "These games are very important for us and we at least need to win two out

of three."

NU and Iowa State will play one game per day with a 3 p.m. start Friday and 1 p.m. start both Saturday and Sunday.

Van Horn was confident that the Huskers were not overlooking the Cyclones the way they might have Texas A&M earlier in the season.

"These are important games for us, and I do not think that our guys are looking past them at all," Van Horn said.

The Huskers, winners of five out of their last six, are riding a

winning streak of their own. Wednesday's game in Omaha against Creighton was rained out and will be made up May 12 at Rosenblatt Stadium.

As far as the Big 12 race is concerned, this weekend is huge if the team wants to maintain a good position in the standings.

"The teams in front of us are starting to play each other so something has to give there," Van Horn said. "It would be nice to gain a couple of games on those teams

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