

GYMNASTICS

# On a roll: Gymnasts could extend streak

By Jason Merrihew  
Staff Writer

The season is flying by. The Masters Classic symbolizes that the Big 12 championships are just around the corner for the Nebraska women's gymnastics team.

"Wow!" Coach Dan Kendig said. "We're towards the end here. Not very long, we'll be at the championship part of our season."

The Masters Classic, slated to begin at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Bob Devaney Center and aired live on NETV, has been won by Nebraska the past five years, and also will include 13<sup>th</sup>-ranked West Virginia, Utah State, and Southern Utah.

The Mountaineers, who placed 12<sup>th</sup> at the NCAA championships last season, are figured to be NU's toughest competitor. WVU boasts a 10-4 record and is coming off a second-place showing at a quadrangular last weekend at Penn State.

"Our only competition will probably be West Virginia," NU freshman Jess Wertz said.

The two Utah teams will come into the Devaney Center on Sunday without the notoriety or success that Nebraska and West Virginia share.

Utah State heads into Lincoln with a 5-4 record. The Aggies scored a season-high 195.55 earlier this month against conference foe, Brigham Young.

Southern Utah will be the only competitor

*"Our only competition will probably be West Virginia."*

Jess Wertz  
• NU freshman

that will compete at the Master Classic with a losing record. The 2-7 Thunderbirds scored a season-high 193.575 last Friday against Utah State.

The Cornhuskers will try to extend their regular-season home winning streak to 29. Nebraska, which last lost to Michigan State during the 1993 Master Classic, has yet to lose a regular-season meet under the direction of Coach Kendig. Kendig's streak is at 26 straight.

"It's our invitational," Kendig said. "It's a meet we're expected to do well. We compete well at home, and we want to continue to do so."

The fans who attend the Classic or watch it live on television will be treated to two of the best gymnasts on the vault. Nebraska's Heather Brink and West Virginia's TeShawne Jackson scored perfect 10s on the apparatus during the course of this season. Brink is currently ranked second on the vault, while Jackson is ranked ninth.

# Hardabura, Clinton sidelined this weekend

By John Gaskins  
Staff writer

The temptation for Nebraska gymnastics Coach Francis Allen to let injured gymnasts Jason Hardabura and Grant Clinton compete is tough to resist.

The 10<sup>th</sup>-ranked Cornhuskers could use all the help they can get when they take on two top-seven powerhouses in three days. First, NU will travel to Iowa City to battle No. 4 Iowa tonight at 7. Then, they'll come back home for a rematch of their earlier loss to No. 7 Oklahoma in the Bob Devaney Sports Center on Monday.

Hardabura, the 1999 NCAA all-around champion, re-aggravated his back injury last week in his first meet back since injuring it at the beginning of the season. Clinton has been suffering lower back spasms all season.

Allen is not taking his

chances with either of them, even if that means suffering defeat. NU has been riddled with injuries all season, and the coach doesn't want to risk any more.

"They're not going to compete, unless something miraculous happens," Allen said. "And miraculous is not a word in my vocabulary any longer."

"We beat Iowa last year, and we have a huge rivalry with Oklahoma. Both of these teams are going to want to beat the hell out of us. They could care less if we're healthy or not."

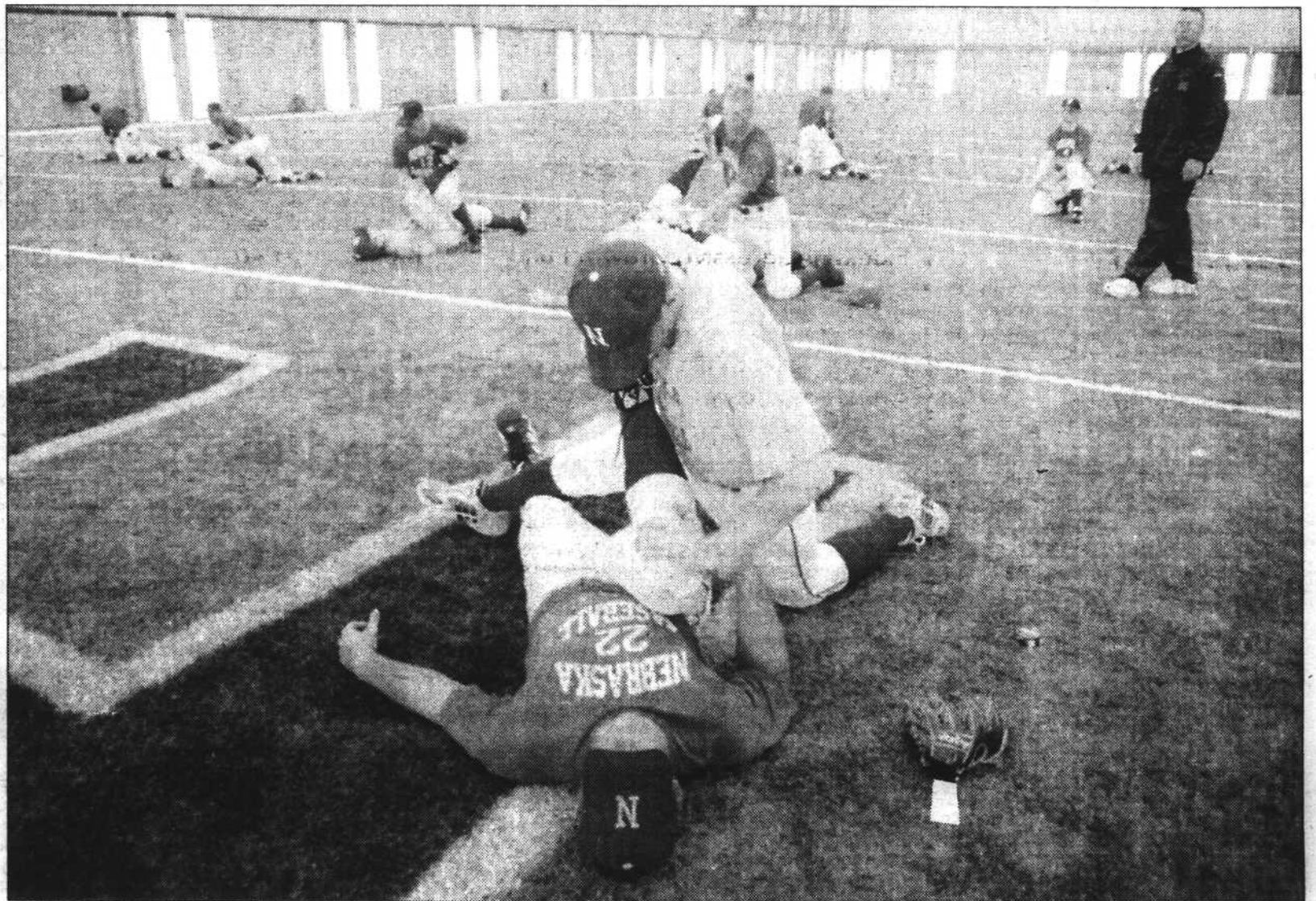
Allen will have to rely on the services of All-American Derek Leiter to carry NU. The senior co-captain tied the floor exercise school record and posted his best all-around score of the season with a 57.30 in last week's win over UC-Santa Barbara.

It will be the final home meet for Leiter and three other seniors - All-Americans

Blake Bucacek and Asher Lichterman and three-time NCAA Champion Marshall Nelson. Nelson will not compete - his career is over after tearing a knee ligament against OU two weeks ago.

Bucacek has been training in NU's facility for 16 years, Leiter for 12. Both were a part of NU Coach Chuck Chmelka's Nebraska School of Gymnastics program before becoming Huskers. Both said they will miss competing in the Devaney Center arena after being around the program for so long.

"We've been coming to all the meets since we were little kids," Leiter said. "It's the best place in America to compete. It's got the best equipment, the best set-up, the best showmanship. It's got bright lights, and it's kind of fancy. I'm probably not going to realize it's my last meet there until afterward. I'll never regret going here."



THE NEBRASKA BASEBALL TEAM stretches out during the beginning of practice in Cook Pavilion on Wednesday.

Lydia S. Gonzales/DN

# Huskers look to repeat success in Texas

■ The baseball team hopes for another 3-0 weekend in Texas.

By Dane Stickney  
Senior editor

The Nebraska baseball team will make its third trip to Texas this season for a three-game series against Texas-San Antonio this weekend.

Last weekend, the Cornhuskers (4-2) picked up three wins at the 2000 Arlington Morning News Invitational in Arlington, Texas.

The Huskers' bats came alive last weekend as they defeated Texas-

Arlington, Washington State and Arkansas by a combined score of 28-7.

Senior catcher Justin Cowan, who hit two homeruns and drove in 10 runs last weekend, said the team expects to keep playing well.

"We're just going to go out and play the same as we have been," he said. "We've worked hard in practice, so we expect our offensive onslaught to continue this weekend."

UTSA is 3-7 on the season with a big win over Big 12 power Texas A&M in the opening game of the its season.

The Roadrunners then lost seven in a row before winning their last two

against Texas-Pan American and Texas A&M-Kingsville.

Nebraska Coach Dave Van Horn said UTSA is better than its record indicates.

"They're probably the best 3-7 team in the country," he said. "They're a good team, and I'm sure they'll be ready for us."

Van Horn said Nebraska's pitching staff has been especially strong this season, giving up only 3.8 runs per game.

"They've kept us in a position to win all of our games," he said. "That really takes the pressure off of the offense."

Senior Chad Wiles, who held

Texas-Arlington to one unearned run last weekend, most likely will be the starting pitcher today.

Freshman Jamie Rodrigue, who gave up four runs in four innings against Washington State, will pitch on Saturday.

Sophomore Shane Komine, who held Arkansas to four hitless and scoreless innings, will take the mound on Sunday.

Van Horn said this weekend's series is important for the team.

"We had a disappointing first weekend and a solid second weekend," he said.

"So it's important for us to keep the momentum rolling."

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