

Heather Glenboski/DN

**JUNIOR SPRINTER Chris Chandler has set records in both the 60 meter and 200 meter events this year. The 200 time was the fastest thus far this season.**

## Chandler starts to turn heads at NU

By Sean Callahan

Staff writer

Before Chris Chandler came to Nebraska, he never had to try very hard to be a successful sprinter.

While at Wallace State (Ala.) Community College, Chandler never went to practice and he never ran much on his own. He just showed up on the days of his meets and competed.

Without any real work ethic, Chandler still managed to be the national junior college champion in the 55-meter dash.

When Chandler, a junior from Starke, Fla., accepted a scholarship to Nebraska, he knew his work ethic would have to change.

He figured the transition would be

easy. But he wasn't running faster times than he did in junior college or even in high school.

"I wasn't used to the training and (NU Sprints Coach Billy Maxwell) had me training when I was never doing that before," Chandler said.

Chandler was sore from workouts. And his confidence level began to drop. Not only did Chandler begin to feel frustrated, but Maxwell did as well.

"I was frustrated that I wasn't doing a very good job of conveying to him exactly what was going on," Maxwell said. "I never had any doubt that he was a talented athlete and if he could struggle through that he could see the light at the end of the tunnel."

Chandler began to see the light Maxwell was talking about. He began to

realize the workouts were helping him. After his body adapted to the workouts, Chandler's running started to improve.

By the time of the Frank Sevine Husker Invitational, Chandler was ready to make some noise.

His 60-meter dash time of 6.61 seconds and his time of 21.40 in the 200 meters not only won both events, but earned him the meet's most outstanding male performer.

"It was basically that I had too much training and I wasn't used to it," Chandler said. "I had to sit back and let my legs get up under me, and once I did that, I just came out."

Now Chandler is fresh off his record-breaking performance at the Big 12 Conference meet.

While capturing the crowns in both

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Chris Chandler  
NU sprinter

the 60 (6.63) and 200 (20.53) meters, Chandler set new conference records in both events. His 200 time is the fastest this season.

On top of that feat Chandler ran a 45.6 second leg for the 4-by-400-meter relay team. The team not only ran its best time of the indoor season but provisionally qualified for nationals as well.

It was the first time Chandler ran a 400 since his senior year in high school.

So far, distance hasn't mattered much.

When Chandler steps up to the starting line and removes his baggy gray sweats and red and white cap, he said he

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### SPORTS OPINION

## Nelson story has tragic end



John Gaskins

Most of you never saw Nebraska's Marshall Nelson do a gymnastics routine. Most of you probably don't even know who Marshall Nelson is.

But you have probably seen Jerry Rice twinkle-toe down the sidelines to pull down a reception. You have probably seen Kobe Bryant glide through the lane and knife through defenders like butter.

You have probably seen Ken Griffey, Jr. swing a bat, Fred Couples swing a golf club or Pete Sampras swing a tennis racket like it was a magic wand.

All of these athletes perform in a unique way compared to 99 percent of their peers - they make what they do an art form. A thing of beauty. They bring grace to athletic competition.

That is what Marshall Nelson did for gymnastics.

That says a lot, considering he's brought grace to an already graceful sport. Nelson did it right here. At Nebraska. For four years.

"I'll tell you what; when he competed at the NCAAs, the whole crowd would be just dead-ass quiet because they knew he was coming," said Nebraska Coach Francis Allen, a

two-time U.S. Olympic Coach. "They wanted to see what a beautiful gymnast he was, and he's a very elegant gymnast."

Sadly, Allen now has to add that no one will ever see Nelson compete again. Not at NU, anyway.

Nelson used his grace to win three national championships in two events during his sophomore and junior years - the parallel bars in both 1997 and '98 and the horizontal bar in '98 - and earn All-American honors six times.

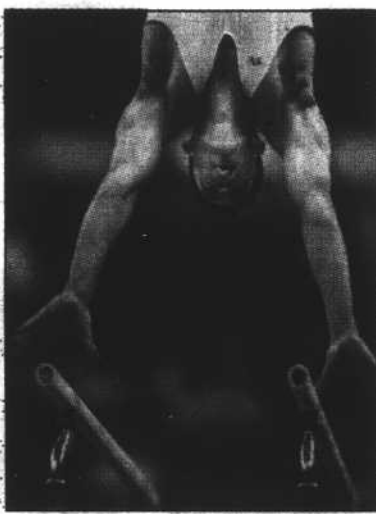
He came back this season from a torn anterior cruciate ligament injury that forced him to redshirt all of 1999 and broke or tied two school records in the season's first two meets, looking even more spectacular than he had when he was winning national championships.

"I'd say I was better than I had been," Nelson said. "I knew I was ready. I was feeling healthy. I knew I could compete with anybody. That's the part of the sport I love - being in awesome shape, competing at the highest physical and mental level. Not many people can achieve that."

This was supposed to be the culminating dream season for both Nelson and the Cornhuskers. Without him, the team still made a brave run at No. 1 last year and finished third at the NCAAs.

Canadian sophomore Jason Hardabura picked up the slack by winning the all-around, which is synonymous with being the best gymnast in the nation. Junior Derek Leiter was on his heels all year and finished fifth in the all-around last year.

Combine that with All-American



Mike Warren/DN

**MARSHALL NELSON was injured on the parallel bars, also his best event.**

Blake Bukacek and the addition of transfer Asher Lichterman, an All-American from New Mexico, and NU had itself a title contender. The cover of the team's media guide is red and simply reads: "One Goal," with a hand making a No. 1 pose and a few hands grabbing onto it.

For the Huskers, especially for Nelson, the dues were about to finally pay off. Even when NU opened the season with poor scores and Hardabura was sidelined with a sore back, Nelson was the team's shining star. He gave the Huskers something to cheer about.

And now we're not going to see that happen.

Nelson tore the same ACL last year.

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## Huskers meet Tigers at season crossroads

By Matthew Hansen

Staff writer

Missouri comes into Wednesday's contest against the Cornhuskers in desperate need of a victory to prolong its season, according to Tiger Coach Quin Snyder.

Meanwhile, Nebraska (11-16 overall, 4-10) will travel to Columbia searching for an elusive road victory with nothing to lose, Cary Cochran said.



Nee

While the Huskers will attempt to gain momentum and a better seed for next week's Big 12 Tournament, Mizzou (16-10, 9-5) is focused on cementing its position as an NCAA Tournament team.

Snyder said a home loss to NU might relegate the Tigers to the NIT.

"It's a 'must not lose' game for use, or it is pretty close," he said. "There are still scenarios you can figure to get us into the NCAAs, but I would say this game has very, very large ramifications for us."

The Huskers' only hope to crash the Big Dance is to win the Big 12 Tournament and get the conference's automatic bid. The team is otherwise mathematically eliminated from post-season play, since they cannot reach the required .500 record without winning the conference tournament.

Cochran said the team relished the chance to pull off an upset.

"We're not hunted anymore, and we are really liking this hunter role now," he

said. "We had that mindset against Colorado, and we'll have that same attitude against Missouri."

The 69-64 victory over Colorado broke NU's six-game losing streak, one that started back on Feb. 5 against Missouri. The 84-78 Devaney Center loss to the Tigers was one that was tough to swallow, Cochran said.

"We felt like we should've had that last game against Missouri," he said. "We kind of choked. They are a good team, but if we had played 40 minutes instead of 34 against them last time, we would've won."

The Tigers are coming off a tough loss of their own, an 83-56 thrashing at the hands of Oklahoma.

"I think the inclination is to be down after a game like that, but we have to pick ourselves back up and use the Oklahoma game to our benefit," he said.

Nebraska Coach Danny Nee said the Huskers had much to play for despite the circumstances. He said the team was still striving to improve in the last week of the season.

However, he said, neither he nor the Huskers would be satisfied with a good effort against the Tigers.

"There is absolutely no reason why we can't go on the road and beat Missouri or anybody else," he said. "We're due to play well and get a win like this."

Snyder said his team should have no problem getting ready to play if they wanted to participate in March Madness.

"You hope that there is some urgency that comes with these type of situations. Like any emotional game, the kids need to respond, and they have responded in similar situations before."