



NEBRASKA PITCHER SHANE KOMINE may not look the part, but the 5-foot-9 sophomore has one of the best fastballs on the team at around 94 miles per hour.

Lydia Gonzales/DN

## Komine looks to the future

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innings while posting a 1.94 ERA.

But Komine doesn't know those numbers by heart; he doesn't even care as long as his team wins.

"The statistics and awards feel good, but they're pretty much a team thing," he says. "I wouldn't be able to get it if my teammates didn't play solid defense and offense."

Because he throws in the mid-90s and averages nearly 13 strikeouts per nine innings, Komine has been labeled a power pitcher.

But he's not the typical 6-foot-4-inch farm boy who's been throwing baseballs against the barn all his life.

He's the scrawny beachbum who's been riding the waves on the sandy beaches of Oahu.

Komine says his parents took him to the beach when he was 2 years old, and he's been addicted to it ever since.

"I surfed every day when I was a kid," he says. "I grew up in the water."

Komine's parents also decided that their son needed to broaden his hori-

zons and get involved with a sport.

The first choice was soccer, but Komine says that didn't quite fit him.

"The next thing I tried was baseball, and I've been with it ever since," he says.

It was tough trying to get Division-I attention when he was pitching on an island halfway to Japan.

But when the Huskers played in a spring tournament in Hawaii during the 1998 season, Komine caught the eye of NU Coach Dave Van Horn.

"We watched him throw, and we realized he was something special," Van Horn said. "We followed him throughout the season and eventually offered him a scholarship."

Komine said few colleges recruited him because of his seclusion in the Hawaiian Islands, and many of those who did, scoffed at the 135-pound pitcher.

"They told me I wasn't big enough, and they weren't sure if I could make it in college ball," he said.

Despite his success at Nebraska, professional scouts are telling him the

*"I don't care if he's small, he can pitch."*

Dave Van Horn  
NU baseball coach

same thing.

"They keep telling me, 'If you were a couple inches taller, we'd draft you.'"

Van Horn said the scouts are being close-minded.

"I don't care if he's small; he can pitch," he said. "I have no doubt that he'll pitch and pitch successfully in the next level."

Komine hopes he gets the chance to pitch in the big leagues, but for now, he's got other things to do. He wants to get a degree and is leaning toward sociology as a major. He will get a degree, Komine said, even if he gets drafted early.

And if he doesn't?

"I'll just go home, surf and enjoy the rest of my life," Komine said.

## Huskers to regain Nelson for NCAA's

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The boost adds to the upswing NU has been on the last three weeks after suffering through a season of downfalls. Along with Nelson's injury, 1999 NCAA all-around champion Jason Hardabura has been out nearly the entire season with shoulder and back injuries.

With that and a slew of injuries to other top contributors, the ultra-thin Huskers put up some of the worst scores in school history and lost five of their six dual meets.

But with the return of injured sophomore Grant Clinton to the lineup, NU shocked higher-ranked teams at the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Championships two weeks ago by finishing third with a 228.225 — its best score by nearly four points.

The score also insured the Huskers' spot in the NCAA's. The top 12 teams in the national rankings qualified for the championships, and the top six teams in Thursday's qualifier will compete on Friday night for the team title. Friday also will showcase the all-around title, and the event will culminate with Saturday's individual events titles.

The teams are divided into two six-team divisions, with the top three teams from each region qualifying. NU is in the 1 p.m. session with No. 1 Michigan, No. 4 Ohio State, No. 5 Penn State, No. 8 Illinois and Massachusetts.

With last year's top two finishers MU and OSU being safe bets,

*"He wants to write the final chapter to his career. It's not the chapter we wanted, but it's better than no chapter."*

Francis Allen  
men's gymnastics coach

Allen said he expects to compete with Illinois and Penn State — who pisted NU on March 4 — for the third and final spot.

But with a hobbling Nelson possibly set to provide a history-making memory and the team's drastic improvement over the last month, NU expects to surprise some people.

"God, I hope we do," said Leiter, a senior who is expected to compete for the all-around title. "If we don't, I might just have to burn the roof off or chop the rings in half."

"It's been a 180-degree turn-around in this gym the last month. I don't want people to look back and remember us as the team that got hurt. I want them to remember us for the character and the quality of gymnasts we had."

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