

Gymnast Nelson to compete at NCAA

By John Gaskins

Staff writer

In a season full of surprises, the Nebraska men's gymnastics team saved the best for last.

Barely able to walk normally and supposedly finished with his injury-plagued career, three-time NCAA champion Marshall Nelson said on Tuesday he will compete on the pommel horse in today's qualifying round of the NCAA Championships in Iowa City, Iowa.

The senior decided last Thursday, and received approval from his doctor on Monday, to perform in an event he finished second in at the 1998 NAAs.

The decision comes nearly two

months after he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee in a dual at Oklahoma on Feb. 4. It was the same injury that kept the Greeley, Colo., native out of the entire 1999 season, when the Huskers finished third at the NAAs.

Nelson said at the time of the injury he was dead set on not returning. But his rehabilitation has gone faster than he expected.

And in the last week when he had the chance to do so, Nelson decided he would rather finish his career as a contributor instead of a spectator. The last time he competed at the NAAs, in 1998, he walked away with titles on the parallel bars and horizontal bar.

"Am I thinking I'm crazy?" Nelson said. "Yeah, I am. But something just makes me want to do it. I'm confident knowing the risks I'm taking."

"There are two reasons why I am doing it. One, I think I can help the team, even if it will only be by a few tenths of a point. Two, it gives me the sense of closure I've been feeling since I've been missing."

"If I can inspire anybody to do anything they wouldn't normally have already done, then it's worth it."

According to his teammates, it will mean a lot more.

"Marshall hitting his horse will be the most exciting routine of the NAAs," fellow senior and All-American Derek Leiter said. "It

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Marshall Nelson
senior NU gymnast

shows everyone that you need heart to compete in this sport. He's all heart, and he's been that way since he got here."

NU Coach Francis Allen said that despite Nelson's rustiness — he's only been practicing for a few days and only attempted landing once — he penciled his co-captain back into the horse lineup in a heartbeat.

"He'll do a full-difficulty routine, he'll just have to soften the landing," Allen said. "Just having him in there will give the team a huge boost. He wants to write the final chapter to his career. It's not the chapter we wanted, but it's better than no chapter."

Please see GYM on 19



Josh Wolfe/DN

SOPHOMORE SARAH SASSE has moved into the top spot on the women's golf team. After a disappointing freshman season, Sasse claimed her first collegiate win on March 19 at the Longhorn Class in Austin, Texas.

Year holds promise for Sasse

■ Golfer ready for second season after an unfocused freshman year.

By Matthew Hansen

Staff writer

Even prodigies get scared sometimes.

Sarah Sasse can remember one confidence-shaking moment. It occurred when she saw Omaha Country Club, the course where she would be playing in her first Nebraska State Girl's Championship.

The holes looked too long. The rough looked too tall. The competitors looked too mature.

Sasse was 10. Because you must be 12 to play a round on a Lincoln public course, Sasse never had golfed a full-length layout.

It was all very upsetting to the fifth-grader.

"I burst into tears and told my dad that I didn't want to play," she said. "I just wanted to go home."

Eventually, she quit crying. She played the course, competing against

Please see SASSE on 18

Defensive line has talent, depth

■ Despite failing to recruit new linemen, coaches say unit has potential.

By Brandon Schulte

Staff writer

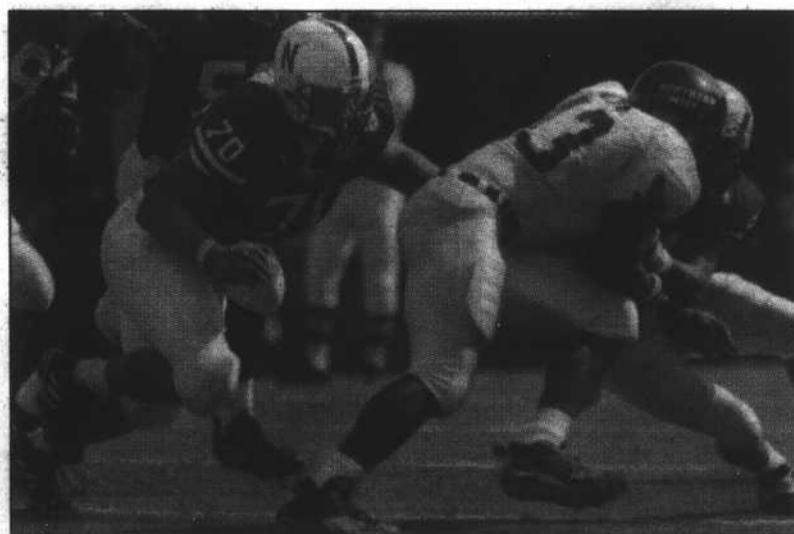
A quick scan of the 2000 Nebraska football recruiting class reveals that the Cornhuskers failed to sign a quarterback.

A more in-depth analysis also discloses that NU didn't sign any defensive lineman either.

But unlike quarterback prospects, who were scared off at the thought of playing behind Eric Crouch the next two seasons, defensive linemen aren't headed to Lincoln next fall because the Husker coaching staff thought they already had a more than adequate supply.

This fact becomes incredibly apparent when Coach Frank Solich was asked about his crop linemen this spring.

Among those he mentioned were Loran Kaiser, Jon Clanton, Jason



Mike Warren/DN

JASON LOHR (70) will be one of the returning defensive linemen for NU, along with Loran Kaiser and Jeremy Schlecta. Kyle Vanden Bosch and Chris Kelsay, along with many other defensive linemen, round out a talented group, many with some game experience.

Lohr, Patrick Kabongo and Ryon Bingham.

It doesn't stop there, throw rush ends Kyle Vanden Bosch, Demoiné

Adams and J.P. Wichman into the mix.

Please see LINE on 18

NU ace pitcher looking at professional career

■ Coach: Komine has the potential to make it into the big leagues.

By Dane Stickney

Staff writer

As the Nebraska baseball team files out of the locker room, a media guide is needed to tell many of them apart.

Virtually all of them wear blue jeans, tennis shoes, athletic T-shirts and various baseball caps.

Shane Komine is the exception.

The Cornhuskers' ace pitcher walks out of the locker room in a care-free manner, his arms stuffed with papers, folders, two baseball caps, a pair of shoes. As he sits down, he drops his load and it scatters on the floor.

He's wearing a black stocking cap with a smiley face on it that hides

most of his head, except for his earlobes, which bear diamond earrings.

He doesn't look like any other NU player; Komine comes from a Japanese and Filipino background, but he was born and raised in Hawaii.

It's hard to think that this 5-foot-9, 170-pound kid is a star pitcher who can throw 94 miles per hour.

It's hard to believe this is the player who was the 1999 Big 12 Freshman of the Year and the Big 12 Pitcher of the Week.

But Komine says he's used to not being respected.

"It's kind of an advantage for me," he says. "Guys look at me and see that I'm small, so they think I don't throw that hard. But when they get in the box, it's a different story."

So far, this season has been a stellar chapter for Komine, who has struck out 69 batters in only 51

Please see ACE on 19