

# the national CHAMPIONS

## Trio of NU athletes give tremendous final-season efforts



photo by Matt Miller

### ▲ Heather Brink

By Samuel McKewon  
Senior editor

It couldn't have been a better individual year for Nebraska's Heather Brink.

A couple perfect 10s on the vault. National championships in the all-around and the vault. Recipient of the Honda Award, given to the top gymnast in the country.

And Brink has said many times that she'd have given it away for a NCAA team title. It eluded Nebraska again this year, but the Huskers are getting closer.

Brink posted a school record 39.625 all-around score earlier, .25 better than her 39.6 winning score in the NCAA championships. Brink had a 9.95 on the vault for the title there.

And the icing on the cake is the Honda, given to one woman athlete in each sport. Brink is the fourth Husker to pick up the award.

"I'm really excited," Brink said. "After the season ends, you don't expect things like this to happen. I guess it showed that all the hard work paid off. It's kind of like I am leaving behind a statement. It goes to my teammates as much as it goes to me because they worked just as hard."

Said Coach Dan Kendig: The consistency Heather showed this season was directly related to how much effort she put in.

"After her career is over, she will look back and see what a tremendous honor this really is. We are all proud of her."

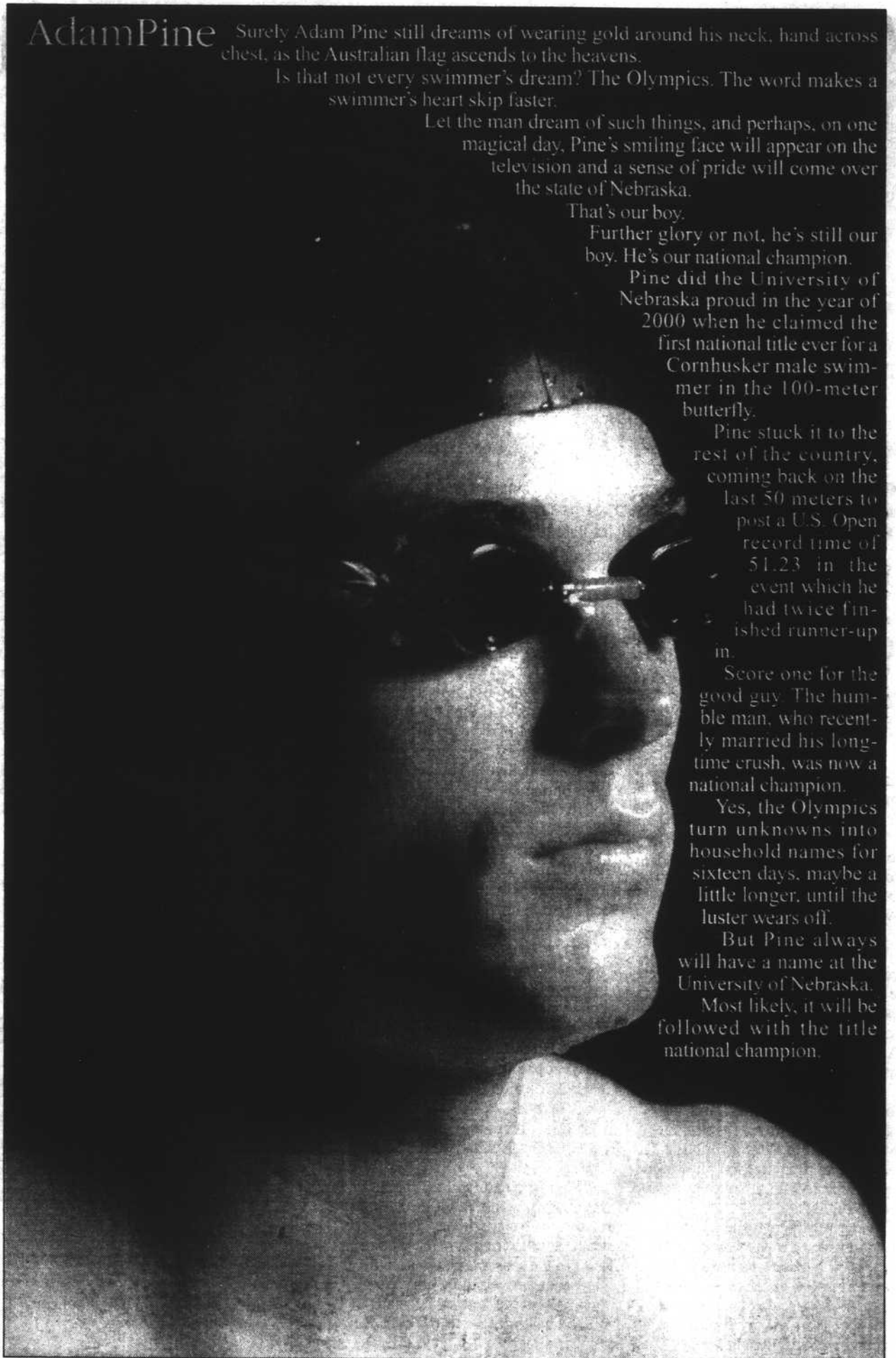


photo illustration by Matt Miller, story by Brian Christopherson

**Adam Pine** Surely Adam Pine still dreams of wearing gold around his neck, hand across chest, as the Australian flag ascends to the heavens. Is that not every swimmer's dream? The Olympics. The word makes a swimmer's heart skip faster.

Let the man dream of such things, and perhaps, on one magical day, Pine's smiling face will appear on the television and a sense of pride will come over the state of Nebraska.

That's our boy.

Further glory or not, he's still our boy. He's our national champion.

Pine did the University of Nebraska proud in the year of 2000 when he claimed the first national title ever for a Cornhusker male swimmer in the 100-meter butterfly.

Pine stuck it to the rest of the country, coming back on the last 50 meters to post a U.S. Open record time of 51.23 in the event which he had twice finished runner-up in.

Score one for the good guy. The humble man, who recently married his long-time crush, was now a national champion.

Yes, the Olympics turn unknowns into household names for sixteen days, maybe a little longer, until the luster wears off.

But Pine always will have a name at the University of Nebraska.

Most likely, it will be followed with the title national champion.

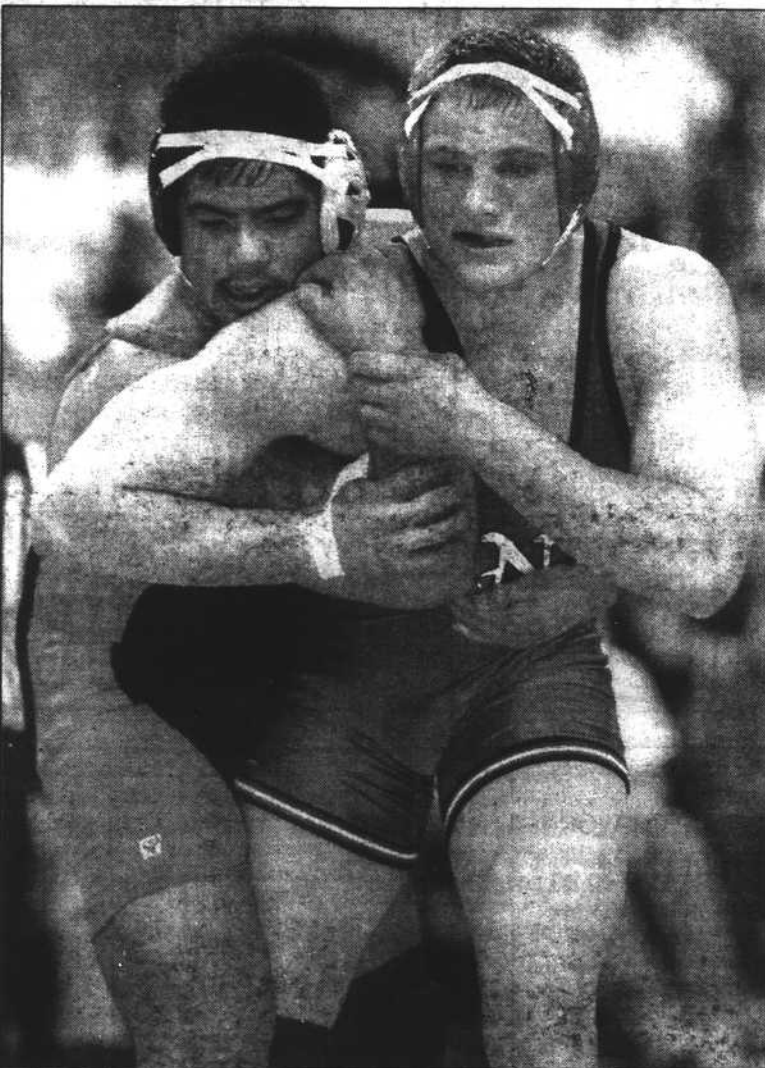


photo by Josh Wolfe

### ◀ Brad Vering

By David Diehl  
Staff writer

Raise your fists, champ. Raise them high. Gold is such a great color, especially when it's hanging around your neck.

Brad Vering, you are Nebraska's champ. A homegrown, hometown, champion. Born and bred to sweat, win, and conquer like a champion does—all for the Cornhusker state.

When you brought home Nebraska's seventh individual national wrestling title, you brought it home to a very grateful, very proud, state.

Look at what you've done, champ. For an entire season you were as close to untouchable as wrestlers not named Cael Sanderson can be.

You were 32-2 and about twenty seconds away from 34-0. Sure, that 32<sup>nd</sup> win would have been so much bigger if it was against Mark Munoz.

But look at what's hanging around your neck and then look what's around his.

Gold looks so much better than bronze, doesn't it, champ? It looks better than any medal.

It looks best on you. It signifies the hours in the wrestling room, the weight room, and all the extra time you spent working toward the top. It was hard work but it has its rewards.

There were only 10 kids in the country that finished their season on a six match winning streak at the year's toughest tournament. You are one in ten.