

## Bolt's consistent play charges team

NU second baseman Will Bolt was selected as one of three tri-captains for the 2001 NU baseball team. Bolt was named to the 2001 pre-season first team All-Big 12 by Baseball America.



Derek Lippincott/DN

BY SAMUEL MCKEWON

Will Bolt doesn't like the little guy question. The 5-foot-9, 175-pound Nebraska second baseman will answer the question. He will do it politely. He doesn't like it.

Never thought about it, he says. Never considered it. Smaller strike zone? Not unless the pitcher can't throw strikes.

"It's just not an issue," he said. Bolt doesn't consider his size a liability, a disadvantage or the opposite of such. That he's a tri-captain for the Cornhuskers is fitting — his team emulates his demeanor (Bolt himself got it from Coach Dave Van Horn). His size and playing style give him a flexible approach that allows him to play three separate positions in the infield with equal skill.

"Will's a baller, a gamer," teammate and outfielder Adam Stern said. "You know, a lot of us are. We're not the biggest guys there are, and we don't have a bunch of big slow guys that try to hit out of the park. We run and hit, go station to station. Will's one of those guys."

Bolt was also on the ground floor — part of Van Horn's first recruiting class, part of his second

team but really his first, considering the 1998 club had more than 10 rainouts and Van Horn only had 35 days to work before that season began.

It didn't take him long to land Bolt, who hadn't known Nebraska had a baseball team before Van Horn. Van Horn, who had courted Bolt while coach at Northwestern (La.) State, came courting again, offering Bolt a chance to start as a freshman. Bolt, a Houston, Texas, native who strongly considered attending hometown Rice, bought into Van Horn's quick-fix remedies and signed on.

"It was a risk to come here, but I just had a hunch it was going to be good," Bolt said. "Coach Van Horn said a lot of the right things and got a lot of guys to believe in the system."

That system blossomed into two consecutive trips to the NCAA regionals, along with two Big 12 tournament championships. Bolt was a fixture on both teams — neither the top hitter, runner or thrower, but simply consistently good, the kind of player clubs need as glue

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## Suhr brings talent back to softball

After battling injuries much of last year, the junior was named Big 12 player of the week after a stellar UNLV Tournament showing.

BY VAN JENSEN

Last weekend, Leigh Suhr went wild in Las Vegas. Wild at the plate, that is.

Suhr was named Big 12 player of the week after leading the Huskers in hits (7), runs (6), RBIs (8), home runs (1), total bases (12), doubles (2), slugging percentage (.857) and walks (2) at the UNLV Tournament. The starting second baseman also batted .500, tying her with catcher Amber Burgess for the team lead as the team went 3-2 in Vegas.

"It is definitely an honor," Suhr said. "It's something that comes with doing what you are supposed to be doing."

The honor is even more remarkable because the UNLV Tournament was the first time Suhr has played near full strength in almost a year.

Accolades aren't new to the junior. She has been player of the week before as a freshman. That season, Suhr batted .375 over the final 16 games of that year, and she seemed poised to become a star.

Suhr's rise came to a halt during her sophomore season however. A hip injury, brought on by a genetic condition, kept Suhr out of Nebraska's lineup for almost a month.

Suhr returned to the team as a pinch hitter and designated hitter in time to play in the Big 12 tournament and the NCAA regionals. She batted .348 in the 26 games after her return.

The injury bug had not passed however as Suhr was forced to undergo surgery on an injured ankle last November.

Suhr was undaunted by the months of rehab that followed.

"From the day I decided I was going to have surgery, we mapped out when exactly I could be back by," said Suhr, who played in high school at Papillion-LaVista. "I did my everyday rehab, and I did my everyday work to get back by that time."

Coach Rhonda Revelle is more than likely glad to have Suhr back, but she does realize the recov-

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## Last-second loss dims NIT hopes

The NU men's basketball team let another game get away in the final seconds, falling to Texas Tech on the road.

BY BRIAN CHRISTOPHERSON

Nebraska had the basketball game in its hands, literally, with 11.3 seconds remaining on Wednesday night.

But things went sour for the Cornhuskers, as did postseason hopes, when Texas Tech rallied to pull off a 65-64 win in Lubbock, Texas.

The loss dropped NU to 13-13 overall, 6-7 in the Big 12 conference. Texas Tech ended a seven-game losing streak and upped its record to 9-14, 3-9 in conference.

Nebraska watched the game slip away in the final 11.3 seconds when senior guard Rodney Fields was called for a five-second violation on an inbound pass with NU leading 64-63. The Huskers had time-outs left when Fields was whistled for the violation.

"We have nobody to blame but ourselves ..." Nebraska Coach Barry Collier said on his postgame radio show.

"We don't know where we would have been if Rodney got the ball in. But Rodney felt that pass to Cookie (Belcher) was too risky and the count was quicker than he thought it would be."

Tech then came up with a big basket following the whistle when junior center Andy Ellis scored with 4.2 seconds remaining.

"We needed to rotate and collapse quicker," Collier said of the Ellis hoop. "He just made a good move and powered his way to the basket."

NU still had a good chance to win the game when junior guard John Robinson broke free down the court after a Husker timeout. But Robinson's 15-foot runner bounced off the front of the rim and gave the win to the Red Raiders.

The game's turns and twists in the final seconds were much like the flow of the entire game.

NU spotted the Raiders an 11-4 lead to start the game, but the Huskers went on a 27-14 run to take a six-point lead before Tech mounted another run

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Scott McClurg/DN

Husker Shahidrah Roberts drives to the basket past Kansas forward Brooke Reves as the Huskers put down the Jayhawks 49-46 on Wednesday evening at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

## NU comeback downs Kansas

While the game was not pretty, a defensive second-half push propelled the Huskers.

BY LINCOLN ARNEAL

The Nebraska women's basketball team was in a common situation against Kansas on Wednesday night, trailing by double digits in the second half.

Then the Cornhuskers did an uncommon thing — they came back.

Down 13, Nebraska used a 23-5 run to catch and defeat Kansas 49-46.

Sophomore Steph Jones said the key in the run was NU's offense but its defense.

"Usually when (opponents) go on a big run, we collapse on defense, and we don't fight back," she said. "But tonight we played tremendous defense, which allowed us in the second half to come back and score more and keep us in the game."

The win gave the Huskers (12-15, 4-10 Big 12) its first consecutive victories since wins over East Carolina and Brigham

Young in early January.

"Somebody asked me what it was like to win back-to-back (games)," NU Coach Paul Sanderford said. "It's been so long it's hard to remember."

The win also gave the Huskers a season sweep against Kansas schools, as they went a combined 4-0 against Kansas and Kansas State.

Jones said the reason for NU's success was the team's unity.

"We are really coming together as a team right now," the 6-foot-2 forward said. "It's our second win in a row. We haven't had the most successful season recordwise, but now it is just that we are really coming together and playing off of each other."

The road to the win was not the prettiest, as the Huskers struggled offensively in the first half. Nebraska shot a dismal 24 percent from the floor.

Because of its poor shooting, Nebraska trailed 24-19 at half, but Sanderford said they could have easily been leading.

"The first half we counted eight layoffs or chippers that we

missed," he said. "If we make half of those, we're up at half time instead of down."

KU (10-15, 4-10 Big 12) stretched its lead to 32-19 after the break before Nebraska called a time-out to regroup.

Sanderford told his team there was still a lot of game left, and they would have to work to get back into the game.

"Basically, I was telling them you got to hang in there, it is a 40 minute ball game ... Last time I checked, there were no 13-point baskets, so you have to do it one at a time," he said.

The Huskers responded and took a five-point lead at 42-37 before Kansas rallied and tied the game at 42. But Jones finished off the Jayhawks as she scored six of her team-high 12 points down the stretch.

Sanderford said although the execution was not always good, he liked how his team played.

"To sweep (Kansas) this year with our young team, I am proud of getting the 'W,'" he said. "I am proud of being able to put two really good efforts back-to-back."

Nebraska senior gymnast Jason Hardabura, the 1999 NCAA all-around champion, is back from an injury that sidelined him last year and is expected to contend for the 2001 all-around title.



David Clasen/DN

## Hardabura finds new life at NU

After having injuries and a disgust with gymnastics, the Husker senior has found his niche at Nebraska.

BY KRISTEN WATERS

In the 1995 World Gymnastics Championships, Canada finished 14th, allowing only its top three gymnasts to compete in the 1996 Olympics. Jason Hardabura was fourth on the Canadian national team, which meant no trip to Atlanta, no Olympic glory.

Five years later, Husker senior Hardabura is Nebraska's best gymnast, maybe the best collegiate gymnast in the country.

Then, though, he was just a frustrated

21-year-old with no Olympic ticket, a fact he blamed on Canadian gymnastics.

Without sufficient funding, Hardabura said he felt like he and other Canadian gymnasts were competing at a huge disadvantage.

"I felt like I was training for nothing," Hardabura said. "I always said I would do gymnastics until I stopped liking it, and I was at the point where I stopped liking it."

So he quit. Then, a year later, he changed his mind, a lucky break for Francis Allen and his Husker gymnastics team. It was a decision that allowed Hardabura to take his gymnastics career to new heights.

Fate may have been in the air at the

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