

NU Baseball responds with mid-week sweep

BY DAVID DIEHL

After going 1-2 this past weekend against an upstart Missouri club, 15th-ranked Nebraska knew that a little more would be demanded of it in its doubleheader against Wisconsin-Milwaukee on Wednesday.

After putting up just four runs in its two losses to close the Mizzou series, the Cornhusker bats responded to torch eight UWM pitchers for 32 runs in the Husker sweep.

Nebraska (19-7) used a seven-run second inning in the opener with the Panthers (9-7) to blitz UWM 16-2. In the nightcap, NU limped to a 16-10 victory after building an early 10-run lead.

Since NU dropped its last two games against Missouri, Nebraska Coach Dave Van Horn said he had talked a little to his players about how important it was to respond against the Panthers, which came into

the day riding a nine-game winning streak.

"I was very concerned about this doubleheader," Van Horn said.

NU freshman pitcher Jason Burch started NU off on the right foot in the second game by tossing four scoreless innings, allowing NU a 10-0 lead. Then in the sixth, with NU leading 10-1, UWM dropped in six runs on the Papillion-LaVista graduate, only two earned, to close the gap to 10-7.

Afterward, Van Horn admitted he may have left Burch in an inning too long but only did so because of NU's large cushion. Overall, Van Horn said he was pleased with Burch (1-0), who picked up his first career win, pitching five and two-thirds innings and striking out six.

"I thought he did a great job," Van Horn said. "He was around the plate and had a lot of movement on his pitches."



Adam Stern tries to steal a base during the second game of a doubleheader with Wisconsin-Milwaukee on Wednesday. Stern was tagged out on the play.

David Casen/DN

NU's best lifter wants to see field

BY JOHN GASKINS

Ryon Bingham wanted to get a leg up on his peers on the football field. He figured the best way to do that was get stronger.

And so he did. Using his football genetics and encouragement from his father, a former defensive end at Weber State, and prodding from his older brother, who is now a defensive end at Southern Utah, Bingham worked himself to the bone.

He hit the weights, hard. He wrestled with his brother constantly. He started working his body to Hulkamania proportions.

And that was just when he was in the sixth grade.

"I've always prided myself on outworking everybody else," Bingham said.

The hard work paid off so well that Bingham earned Cornhusker football scholarship. Even at Nebraska, where strength coach Boyd Epley has turned body building in football into the standard, Bingham's Atlas-like physique opened plenty of eyes and sparked oohs and aahs. Coach Frank Solich's pants could fit snugly around his neck.

At 6-foot-3, 275 pounds and carrying virtually zero body fat, it is no secret why Bingham was a finalist for last year's Powerlifter of the Year award and why his presence makes a strong first impression.

"He is Mr. Weight Room," said fellow nose tackle Jon Clanton, who, as one of the Huskers' Performance Index champions of 2001, is no physical slouch himself.

Except when compared to Bingham.

"He takes everything so seriously," said Clanton. "I just kind of eat whatever, you know. I'm fat. He doesn't eat anything with any fat. It's all nutrition crap."

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Jon Clanton

NU nose tackle on Ryon Bingham

"You don't find too many people, if any, working in the weight room harder than he does. He's one of the hardest workers on the team."

But lately, work has never been so hard for Bingham. A highly-touted recruit from Sandy, Utah, who said he was "within seconds" several times in his red-shirt year of 1999 from seeing game action, Bingham was limited to doing just about anything football-related last season with a stress fracture in his foot.

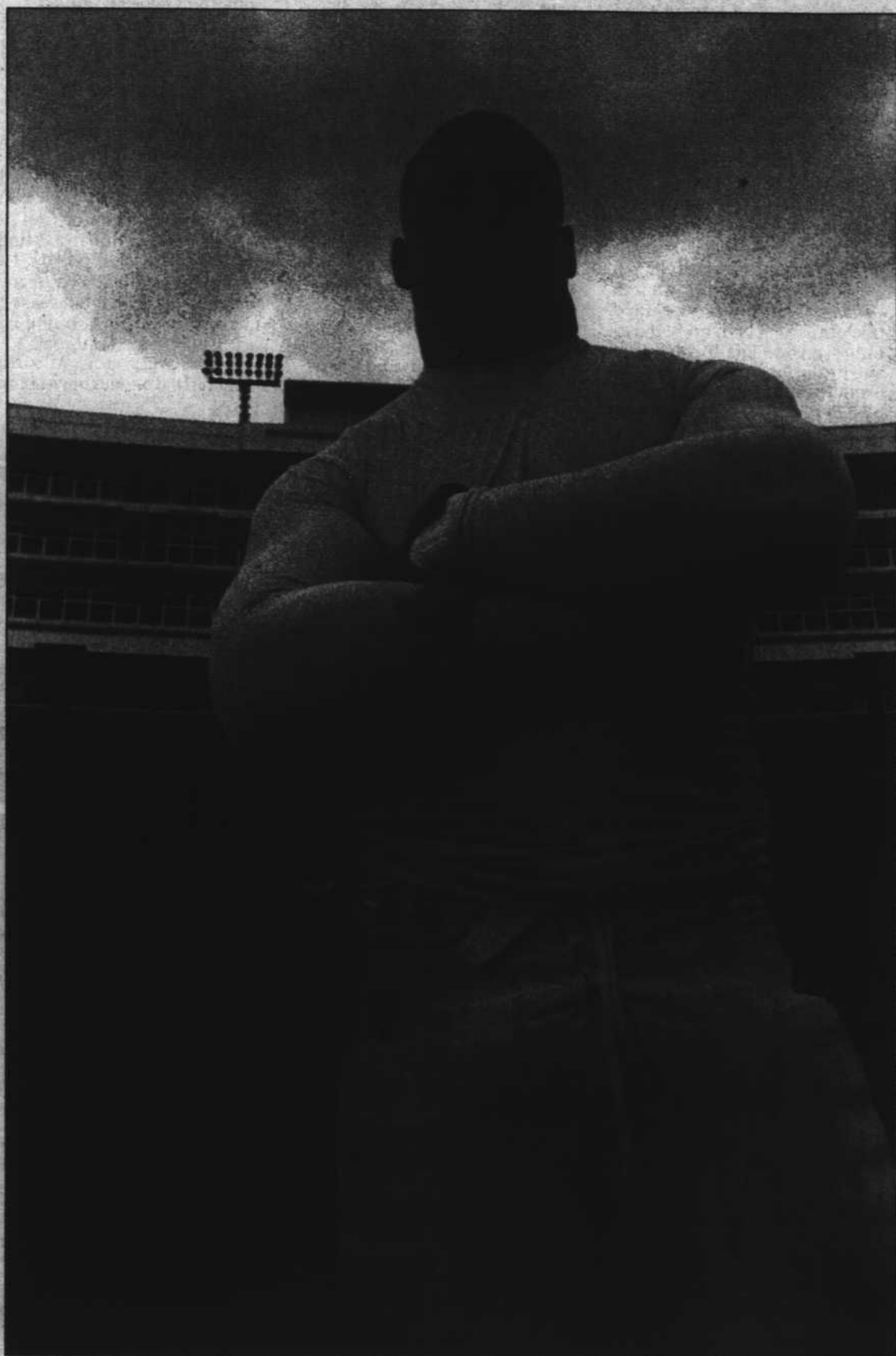
That included playing, running and lifting in his lower body.

The result from all this was that Bingham, who was whispered to be good enough to be that rare true freshman to earn a Blackshirt, never got the chance to move up the depth chart. He returns this spring as the No. 4 nose tackle, behind senior Jason Lohr, junior Clanton and fellow sophomore Junior Tagoa'i.

For someone who has quietly and persistently labored since the sixth grade to get where he's at, the lack of action didn't sit well. Already known as someone whose personality wasn't nearly as imposing as his size and football ability, Bingham went into an even deeper shell.

"He was really depressed all year," Clanton said. "He got real quiet. He kept to himself. You could tell it pained him because you knew he wanted to be out there so bad. He didn't say much."

Bingham said he was most



David Casen/DN

Like he did in building his imposing physique, nose tackle Ryon Bingham is working hard to battle back from last year's season-ending foot injury.

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Golf team finally gets outdoors

While the lack of outdoor practice isn't a major concern, top golfer Sarah Sasse's back is.

BY LINCOLN ARNEAL

At long last, this week marked the end of the women's golf team's extended hibernation.

For the first time this season, the Huskers emerged from their indoor practice facility at the Bob Devaney Sports Center to work in the warmer spring temperatures.

Dwelling indoors hasn't hurt the team as much as top golfer Sarah Sasse expected.

"With what we've been able to do without outside practice, it is kind of amazing," the junior said. "We shot our second best score of the year last week. It can only get better."

The Huskers will see if the outdoor practice will pay off in the four-day Liz Murphy Invitational starting today in Athens, Ga.

Sasse said it had been refreshing to get outside to play in elements that can't be simulated indoors, such as wind.

After one of the longest winters in recent times, Coach Robin Krapfl said the delay will help the Huskers in the long run.

"Not being outside will help with freshness," she said. "We won't have those long practices, and come the Big 12 regionals and national championships, we will be fresh and working hard."

However ready they are come May, NU's amount of success will still fall on Sasse's back, literally.

Sasse has been fighting problems with her back for several weeks. Although her condition has improved with treatment, she has yet to test it by carrying a golf bag for 18 holes.

"I am anxious to see how it goes," Sasse said. "I have never had an injury in my career, so I don't know how it will respond."

While Sasse said her back hasn't bothered her in the first day of multiple-day tournaments, the pain has flared in the latter stages of those tournaments.

She was in fourth place at the Midwest Classic but dropped to 14th in the last round. In the Betsy Rawls Invitational, she fell from first to a tie for fourth after shooting a 78 following her score of 70 in the second round.

Krapfl said she thinks the team will be able to have success if Sasse doesn't perform at her top level.

"We don't have to count on our number one player," she said. "I think we have enough depth to counter."

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Sarah Sasse
NU golfer

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Vaunted NU opponents gearing up during spring

Fighting Irish quarterback spot up for grabs

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

Players on the Notre Dame football team are placed under one of the biggest microscopes around when it comes to on- and off-the-field activity.

The attention increases twofold if a player is fortunate enough to become the starting quarterback of the Fighting Irish.

Welcome to the world of sophomore-to-be Matt LovVecchio.

All the freshman did last season was step in for the injured Arnaz Battle after the Nebraska game and play a big part in guiding the Irish to a berth in the Fiesta Bowl.

In the eyes of many, that wasn't good enough. Notre Dame got waxed by Oregon State 41-9 in the BCS bowl, and Bob Davie's team was left struggling to explain a 9-3 finish.

But Davie contends that type of experience was good for his team and for LovVecchio.

"Part of becoming a successful team or successful quarterback is to get your butt kicked a little bit," Davie said. "Certainly we had it, and he had it in the Fiesta Bowl. That's got to be worth



DN File Photo

Notre Dame's Arnaz Battle, last year's starting quarterback before a wrist injury ended his season, is one of the few Irish quarterbacks not battling for the starting job this year.

something. It is in my mind."

Still, Davie has left the quarterback position open this spring, hoping LovVecchio or fellow sophomores Carlyle Holiday and Jared Clark will step up and take the job.

Battle won't be competing for the spot - last year's starter has

been moved to wide receiver.

ND's early road schedule, which includes a road opener at Nebraska and later dates at Purdue and Texas A&M in the first four weeks of the season, makes

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Coming off title, Oklahoma looking to sustain success

BY DIRK CHATELAIN

"Sooner Magic" is officially back.

And the momentum from last year's national championship joy ride isn't fading.

Following the 2000 dream season that saw Oklahoma dominate Big 12 powerhouses Texas, Kansas State and Nebraska, Bob Stoops' Sooners shut down high-powered Florida State in the Orange Bowl.

But OU didn't stop there. Somewhere between a Sears Trophy presentation and a White House visit, the Sooners managed to rack up a top-five recruiting class.

With spring practice starting Wednesday, the excitement surrounding Sooner football is the highest it's been in at least a decade.

"There are a lot of Oklahoma football fans right now," said Stoops, who was named AP Coach of the Year in 2000.

With the resurrection comes expectations that OU hasn't seen since a guy named Barry Switzer

stormed the sidelines. Stoops said he welcomes the pressure.

"We'll expect to be in a position to challenge for a Big 12 championship and national championship," Stoops said. "After winning both last year, it would be a step backwards to expect anything else."

In order to repeat, a replacement for Heisman Trophy runner-up Josh Heupel must be found. The most prolific passer in Sooners' history, Heupel was perhaps the biggest key to the OU turnaround. Just two seasons ago, Oklahoma was a mediocre 5-6.

The leading candidate to succeed Heupel is Georgia transfer Nate Hybl. After sitting out last season, the strong-armed junior is expected to step into the starting spot for the season opener against North Carolina.

Stoops noted that while Heupel may be the "most noticeable vacancy," finding new bodies to fill in for Orange Bowl MVP line-backer Torrance Marshall and All-

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