



# Sports



MSU pitcher Jon Bjelland (left), tossed 7½ innings Saturday to get the win against Nebraska-Omaha. Ben Kaus had a key hit for the Mavericks.

## Mavs battle to reach finals

### MSU split pair at D-II Regionals

**EMPORIA, KAN.** — Jon Bjelland had his best pitching performance of the season, extending Minnesota State's season with a 4-1 victory over Nebraska-Omaha at the NCAA II Central Regional baseball tournament Saturday.

It's the seventh time that the Mavericks faced Nebraska-Omaha this season, with MSU winning six games.

Bjelland, who is 6-1, had his longest outing of the season, pitching 7½ innings with 128 pitches. He allowed one run, which was unearned, on three hits and five walks with four strikeouts, lowering his season earned-run average to 2.86.

Things didn't look good early for the left-hander, who hit the first two batters of the game and then allowed a single to load the bases. But Adam Sudbeck grabbed a liner in left-center and doubled the UNO runner off second, and Dane Allen made a diving play at first

## MAVS: Play No. 1 seed today

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to end the threat.

"(Bjelland) had to come up big today, and he did," Minnesota State coach Dean Bowyer said. "He was a little tight initially, but you have to keep battling. He did, and we made some great plays for him. The first inning was the key."

The Mavericks scored all four runs in bottom of the sixth inning. Pat Ottum and Mark Dolenc both singled, and Scott Kemp reached on a fielder's choice. Sudbeck had an RBI single, and another run scored when Allen's bad-hop grounder was ruled an error. Ben Kaus finished the rally with a two-out, two-run single.

Nebraska-Omaha scored its run in the eighth, but closer

Nick Fellman came on to pitch the final 1½ innings. He allowed no hits with one walk and one strikeout.

"It's sure nice to get Fellman in," Bowyer said. "He gets the rest of the outs, and we win the ballgame."

Dolenc, Sudbeck and Kaus each finished with two hits.

"Kaus had a great day," Bowyer said. "He had that big hit (in the sixth) to give us those runs. It was a great win, the guys really battled."

Earlier in the day, the Mavericks' offense went cold in a 4-0 loss to Emporia State.

The Hornets drew first blood in the bottom of the first inning when the Mavericks committed two errors. A walk and a single helped push two Hornets across the plate for a 2-0 lead.

Emporia State scrapped together another run in the fifth, and left fielder Mark McBratney added a solo homer in the seventh inning.

Matt McMurtry took the loss for Minnesota State, dropping to 10-2 on the season. He gave up two earned runs in eight innings while striking out five and walking four.

The Mavericks (42-12) play in the championship game at 1 p.m. today against Emporia State. If Minnesota State wins, there will be a second game immediately following the first. Dolenc, who is 2-1 with a 5.03 ERA, will start for the Mavericks.

"The guys think we can win it, and I do, too," Bowyer said. "It's a long haul, but I really believe we can win."