

## MINNESOTA STATE TAKES PAIR FROM SMSU



John Gross

Minnesota State's Nick Gonzalez slides into third with a stolen base, and he scored when the baseball got away during the third inning of Game 1 on Tuesday. The Mavericks swept Southwest Minnesota State 10-9 and 14-5.

# Run for the record

## Mavericks inch closer to wins record with doubleheader sweep of Mustangs

By Chad Courrier  
Free Press Staff Writer

**MANKATO** — Last season, the Minnesota State baseball team won a school-record 43 games, won both the North Central Conference regular-season and tournament titles and reached the championship game of the regional tournament.

Yet, expectations were even higher for this season, and with one weekend remaining in the regular season, the Mavericks have a chance to make more history.

"This team could do a lot better," said senior infielder Nick Gonzalez, who belted two home runs for five RBIs in the second game as the Mavericks swept Southwest Minnesota State 10-9 and 14-5 in a nonconference doubleheader at the Minnesota State field Tuesday.

"We're on pace to break the record again. We have a lot of guys who are seniors, have been around

here for four years. We have a lot of guys who work their tails off."

The victories bring Minnesota State's record to 37-7 with five games remaining in the regular season. With the conference tournament coming up May 10-11 at St. Cloud, and possibly NCAA tournament games after that, 44 or more victories seems possible.

"I'm not surprised," coach Dean Bowyer said. "I thought we'd be a little better hitting team, but some of the guys are starting to come around."

The Maverick totaled 24 hits against the Mustangs, with five doubles and four home runs. In the opener, Zach Danelson led off with a home run, and Eric Austvold blasted a grand slam in the third inning.

Patrick Lenton was the winning pitcher, but Nick Fellman, the Mavericks' all-time leading closer, had to strike out the final two bat-

ters for his 14th save, ending a four-run inning and preserving the 10-9 victory.

In the second game, Gonzalez poked two home runs, and Dan Woodall had three hits, scored three runs and drove in two. Austvold, who entered the game in the second inning after Danelson dislocated the ring finger on his left hand diving into home, had two more hits and two RBIs, giving him seven for the doubleheader.

Tyler Sander was the winning pitcher.

"If we can keep our bats hot, and the pitching is strong, we're tough to beat," Gonzalez said. "Guys are starting to come around, and every day, it's a different guy that comes through."

The Mavericks (14-1 in NCC) have four conference games remaining at Nebraska-Omaha on Friday and Saturday. Minnesota State needs a split to win the regular-season title and earn the No. 1 seed for the NCC tournament.

"We control our own destiny," Bowyer said. "If we play well, we win. We don't need any help."