

# Albuquerque native hopes for success with Huskers

By Mike McCarthy

Phil Trent left family, friends, boosters and most of life's memories hanging in the dry lands of Albuquerque, N.M., where success may have come easier.

Instead, Trent packed his bags 11 days ago and hopped a plane to Lincoln in one of the paramount decisions of his life. He said he had to prove a point by taking the hard route.

A highly recruited back out of Sandia High School in Albuquerque, Trent is now on the UNL campus with about 185 other talented gridders who also are trying to prove their point—making the Husker team.

Trent, however, seems to have other objectives when putting his body through grinding two-a-day workouts at Memorial Stadium the past week. That ulterior motive had its beginning in February when Trent had to sign the national letter of intent.

### Down to the line

"It was the last day to sign," Trent recalls. "It was Feb. 14 and I had it down to Arizona State, New Mexico and Nebraska."

"At first, I didn't want to come here," Trent added. "I thought I wouldn't get a shot to play until I was a senior. But at a little school, there isn't as much recognition or a chance to go pro."

"I figured I'd go big time. You only go once in life."

Trent's decision to attend UNL was treated with coldness by some University of New Mexico (UNM) alumni.

"They were mad at me," Trent said. "Now, they act like they don't know me. It was getting ridiculous."

Trent said the UNM boosters had promised him a summer job before the sign-

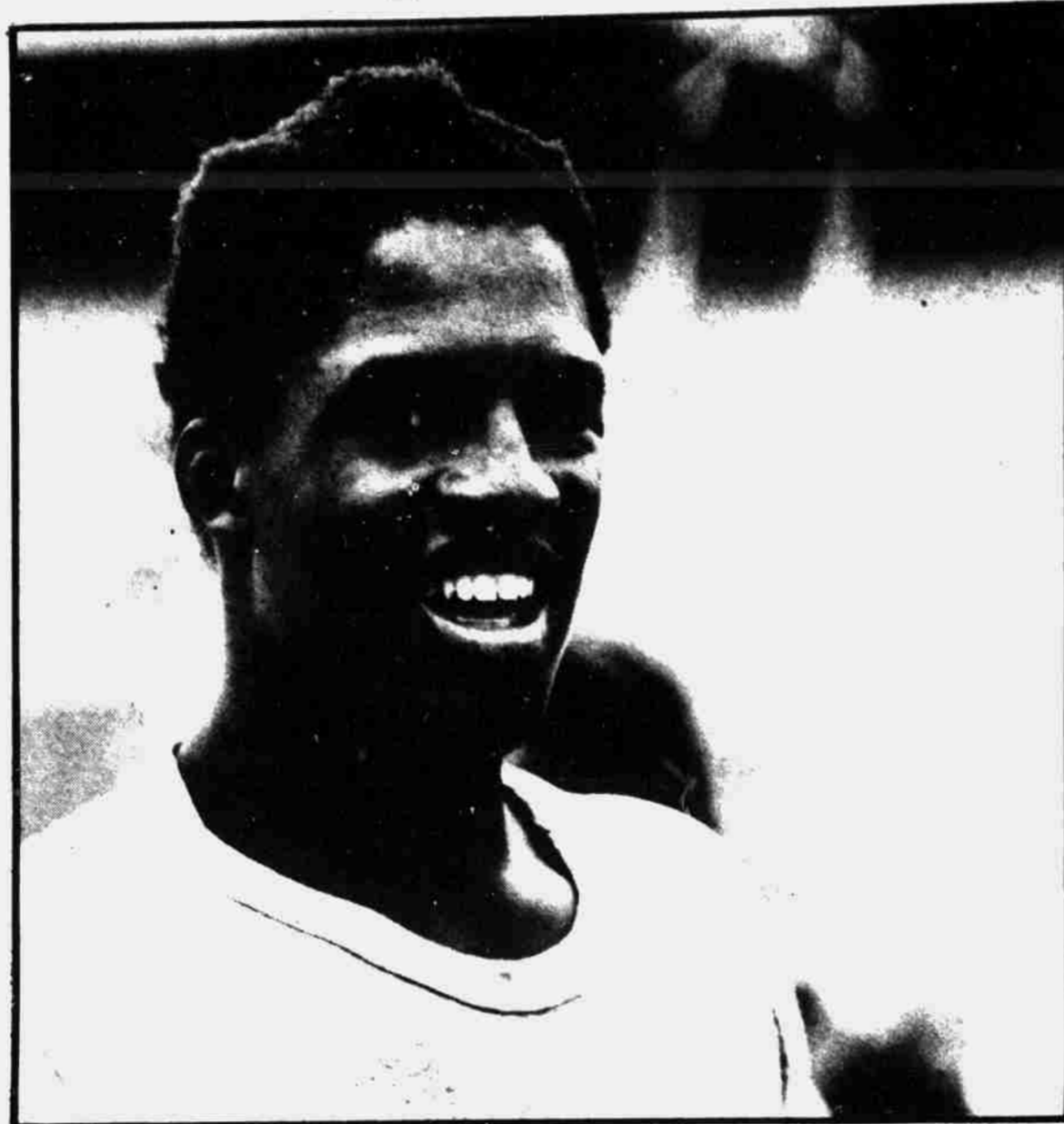


Photo by Bob Pearson

Freshman Phil Trent from Albuquerque, N.M., joins the Husker team as one of the fastest and youngest ever to join.

ing date, but after that, they said "forget it." Later, he found work with a transfer storage company.

### Voted Most Valuable Player

The athletic interest schools showed in Trent is understandable—one day before he flew to Lincoln, the 6-foot-1 speedster was voted the Most Valuable Player on defense in New Mexico's All-Star football game.

Perhaps the youngest Husker ever,

Trent also may be the fastest. Although he won't turn 18 until Nov. 10, Trent has churned times of 9.4 seconds in the 100-yard dash and below 4.5 seconds in the 40-yard sprint.

"First, I want to prove to myself that I came to the right place," Trent said. "Some people back home said I shouldn't have come here, that I'll only be a number. I want to prove to them I made the right decision."

When he first arrived in Lincoln, Trent had second doubts about coming to UNL.

"When I first got off the plane I called home," Trent explained. I shouldn't have done it. I talked to my mom and little sister wanted to know if she could sleep in my bed. I was homesick and that only made things worse."

### Hipp was helpful

Meeting players like Husker I-Back I.M. Hipp has helped ease the transitional pain for Trent.

"I've talked to him (Hipp) quite a bit," Trent added. "He's helped me out in blocking drills and during the film session he points out things to me."

Although he's not about to unseed Hipp during the first weeks of fall practice, Trent has varsity aspirations. And with his speed, Husker coaches are likely to notice.

Says Guy Ingles, UNL's frosh mentor, about Trent: "He's got a lot of speed. He's looking pretty good."

Trent said his speed "comes in handy when I'm being chased by a 250-pound lineman."

While he waits for fall classes to start, Trent spends most of his idle hours studying Husker plays, writing his girlfriend in Albuquerque and getting to know Lincoln.

### Making the 'big time'

And although adversities on the and off the field sometimes makes it hard for Trent to prove his point to himself and to folks back home, he says he knows when it's time to make "the big time."

Trent says he made "the big time" by signing with UNL. His next move is to crack the varsity line-up.

"I'm always thinking about going big time," Trent said. "But you don't go up there (varsity) and make a fool of yourself."

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