

SPORTS

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SPORTS OPINION



Mitch Sherman

Father and son fulfill dreams with signing

BELLEVUE — Wednesday morning across the nation, years of dreaming came true.

Thousands of football players signed national letters of intent, becoming a part of the world of college football.

Willie Miller, one of 18 high school seniors to sign with Nebraska, sat near the front desk of Bellevue West High School at 9:15 a.m., opening the official documents shipped from Lincoln. His father, Willie Miller Sr., looked on, his face beaming with pride.

The elder Miller never played high school football. As a student at Mossport (Miss.) High School, his parents wouldn't let him participate because a player at the school suffered a broken neck before Willie Miller Sr. had a chance to go out for the team.

"I really feel like I would have been a heck of a football player," he said, "but instead I watch Willie and see myself through him."

A retired major in the U.S. Air Force, Willie Miller Sr. lives in Mississippi, hundreds of miles from his son, two daughters and wife, Doris. In July 1992, he moved away from his family to run a drug-infested, low-income apartment complex owned by Doris' parents.

Doris' father is suffering from Alzheimer's disease, and her mother has grown too old to collect rent from the unreliable tenants. Because Doris is a nurse, her parents moved to Bellevue to live with her, and Maj. Miller left his family to take care of the apartments.

"I felt like I wasn't doing the things that I should do for my son," Willie Miller Sr. said. "But under the conditions, I really didn't have much of a choice. I had to realize that it's something that would benefit the family."

The elder Miller returned to Nebraska every Thursday during the football season last fall. At his son's games, he paced nervously behind the fence that separated the sidelines from the bleachers.

On more than one occasion, he hopped the fence and ran onto the field to congratulate his son after a touchdown.

"Sometimes even the coach had to come over and hold me back," Willie Miller Sr. said, "but I couldn't help it. My adrenaline was pumping. If he scored a touchdown, I'd want to go out there and let him know I was proud of him."

On Wednesday morning, Willie Miller Jr. scored big. His father was on hand to watch his dream come true, and over the next few years, he'll see his son play in a Cornhusker uniform.

Maybe this time, he'll be able to stay in the stands.

Sherman is a junior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

NU falls short in comeback bid

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

COLUMBIA, Mo. — The Nebraska basketball team showed it still has a heartbeat.

Trailing by 20 points with 12:01 remaining, the Cornhuskers' pulse began to rise as they mounted a furious comeback, eventually taking a 98-97 lead with 12.4 seconds left.

But the Tigers hushed the heartbeat momentarily, pulling out a hard-fought 99-98 win in front

of a crowd of 13,300 fans at the Hearn Center on Wednesday night.

Despite five players scoring in double figures and shooting a season-high 59.7 percent from the field, Nebraska dropped to 15-9 overall and 3-

5 in the Big Eight and lost its fourth straight game.

The Huskers were led by a 20-point effort from Jaron Boone that included him making 4-of-5 3-pointers. Tom Wald added 11 points, 10 of which came in the second half.

Missouri improved to 14-8 and 4-4 in the conference.

"We kept playing ourselves back into it," Nebraska coach Danny Nee said. "We were playing very resilient, but losing by one point is not a moral victory."

Nebraska took its first lead since the first half of the Jan. 31 game at Kansas State when Wald made a 3-pointer to give the Huskers a 98-97 lead.

But that lead lasted only 5.4 seconds.

Missouri's Kendrick Moore was

fouled by Bernard Garner with seven seconds remaining as Moore was driving to the basket.

Then Wald tried to revive the Huskers. He took the inbounds pass from Venson Hamilton and dribbled the length of the floor, but as Wald drove through the lane, his jump shot bounced off the backboard and fell off the rim.

Hamilton was there and had a chance to win the game with a tip, but it fell short as time expired.

"We had two balls on the rim, and if either of them go in, we walk out of here happy," Nee said.

Wald wasn't happy.

"I had a good shot at the basket, and I should have hit it. That's all there is to it," Wald said. "It was a

layup. I don't know what more you could ask for."

Nebraska was whistled for a season-high 34 fouls, and Mikki Moore, Tyrone Lue, Erick Strickland and Terrance Badgett all fouled out of the game.

Missouri guard Jason Sutherland made 14-of-14 free throws, extending his school-record streak to 32 straight successful free-throw attempts. Those 14 points from the line were half of Sutherland's game-high 28 points.

In the first half, Missouri made 20-of-23 free-throw attempts, and for the game, it converted 40-of-47, 85.1 percent.

"We showed in the second half that we can still play," Moore said. "We don't give up. The old Nebraska is back and the rest of the Big Eight better look out."



Scott Bruhn/DN

Nebraska recruit J.R. Edwards signs his letter of intent Wednesday afternoon at his home in Lincoln. Edwards' mother, Janet Banks watches. Edwards, from Lincoln Southeast, was one of 18 high school seniors to sign with Nebraska.

Huskers sign 18 recruits

By David Wilson
Staff Reporter

Eighteen of the nation's top high school seniors signed letters of intent on Wednesday to become members of the Nebraska football team.

Despite having to abide by the stricter academic requirements, Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said he did not feel the quality of his team's recruiting class had dropped. The new academic requirements, Osborne said, eliminated

about one-third of the Division-I players this year.

"It was just a little harder and took a little longer," Osborne said of recruiting this year. "But I don't think that will slow us down any."

Osborne said he did not agree with

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1996 Nebraska football signees

Name	Hometown	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Daniel Alexander	Wentzville, Mo.	6-1	230	FB
Sasho Becvarovski	Crown Point, Ind.	6-5	255	OL
Mike Brown	Scottsdale, Ariz.	6-0	190	DB
Ralph Brown	Walnut, Calif.	5-11	175	DB
J.R. Edwards	Lincoln Southeast	6-2	175	WR
DeAngelo Evans	Wichita, Kan.	5-9	210	RB
Justin Ferrell	McAllen, Texas	6-4	290	OL
Clint Finley	Cuero, Texas	6-1	190	QB
John Gibson	Papillion-LaVista	6-0	185	WR
George Guidry	Lake Charles, La.	6-3	225	DE
Russ Hochstetler	Hartington Cedar Catholic	6-4	240	OL
Loran Kaiser	St. Paul	6-5	220	DL
Willie Miller	Bellevue West	6-1	225	FB
Carlos Polk	Rockford, Ill.	6-2	220	LB
Robert Pollard	Orange Park, Fla.	6-2	205	RB
Khari Reynolds	Mays Landing, N.J.	5-11	170	WR
Steve Warren	Springfield, Mo.	6-3	275	DL
David Webber	St. Louis, Mo.	6-3	275	OL

Tampa Bay offers job to Brown

By Mike Kluck
Senior Reporter

Nebraska receivers coach Ron Brown was offered an assistant coaching position with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Wednesday.

Brown met and interviewed with Tampa Bay coach Tony Dungy for about six hours at One Buccaneer Place, the Tampa Bay Bucs' headquarters.

Dungy, who will take over for Sam Wyche next season, said in a phone interview Wednesday night from his hotel room at the Tampa Bay Airport Marriott that he and Brown decided to take a few days to think about their meeting before making a decision.

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