

Ex-husker Graham's star rising in Arizona

By Vince D'Adamo
Staff Writer

The shoe is now on the other foot for former Nebraska Cornhusker All-American center Aaron Graham.

The previous two years, Graham was the ringleader of a legendary offensive line that helped pave the way for two national championships at Nebraska.

The Arizona Cardinals spent a fourth-round draft choice on Graham last April.

Unlike Nebraska, the Cardinals have a tradition for the wrong reasons. The Cards have not posted a winning season since 1984, and last won a play-off game in 1948.

Arizona picked up the rear in the NFC East last year with a 4-12 record.

"At Nebraska, when we practiced, we knew we were the best team and everyone was gunning for us," Graham said. "In the pros, there are no easy guarantees. It's a contest, that's why you see so many games come down to a field goal."

A new era dawned in the "Valley of the Sun" during the off-season when the Cardinals hired Vince Tobin as the new head coach. Tobin was a defensive coordinator for the Indianapolis Colts last year.

Tobin is determined to change what has not been a good tradition in Arizona. Graham said a new attitude is the first step in that direction.

"We're trying to establish an attitude of 'Why not the Cardinals in

1996?'" Graham said. "Instead of just assuming we'll be 4-12 again."

"We've got some talented players on this team and that's what we're trying to focus on."

Graham had already noticed some other differences from college to the National Football League.

"It's like going to a job everyday," Graham said. "Everyone's got their own job to do, whereas in college everyone leans on one another."

"They're looking to see if you can go out and do what they ask you to do."

Graham has wasted no time impressing the Cardinal coaching staff. He is listed as the second-team center on the depth chart. In addition, Graham is working as the team's long snapper.

"I'm trying not to make mental mistakes and play smart football," Graham said. "The coaches understand there will be physical mistakes. They won't spend much time on the mental aspect because they expect you to know that already."

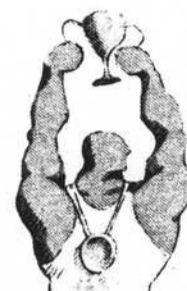
"It's tough for any offensive lineman to come in and take over from the get-go."

The offensive line is one area the Cardinals must get better at in order to rise in an already rugged NFC East division that includes Dallas, Philadelphia and an improving Washington team.

The Cardinals allowed 53 sacks last year.

Graham exceeded pre-draft expectations; scouts projected him as a fifth- or sixth-round choice. The Cards took a flier on Graham in the fourth round.

"I went about where I thought I'd go," Graham said. "So I don't feel like I got robbed."



Athletics



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Members of the Schramm alumni gather together for dinner at La Paloma in the Haymarket Saturday night. Clockwise from center bottom Kurt Klanderud, Denver, Toni McNeff, Lincoln, Tim Hindman, Hay Springs, Tony Karth, Gretna, Roger Aden, Lancaster, Iowa, and Todd Wolverton, Chariton, Iowa.

Come together UNL alums still tight after 12 years

By Lori Robison
Staff Writer

After years of pulling all-nighters, working to pay the bills, and sitting bleary-eyed through classes, it's been hard for some former students not to feel a tug on the heartstrings when reminiscing about college days.

And for a group of guys that used to share the sixth floor of Schramm Hall during their first two years at UNL, those tugs have helped to keep them together 12 years after graduation.

Every year, between the 4th of July and Labor Day, the Schramm alumni, their wives and children gather at the home of one of

the graduates to play golf, eat burgers and hot dogs and generally have an all-around good time.

"Group members start showing up around Thursday," Tim Hindman, a former mechanical engineering major, said, "and, depending on how far they have to travel back, stay until Sunday."

They come from various states around the country, including Ohio, Kansas, and Minnesota, with career areas ranging from communications to construction management. Members of this alumni crew include Roger Aden, Jeff Biaer, Tim Hindman, Jon Johnston, Tony Karth, Kurt Klanderud, Geoff McMurtry, Alan Weeder and Todd Wolverton. Getting together is great, Hindman said. He said everybody always has a good time.

But these former students are about more than just roasting hot dogs and playing golf.

Their allegiance and gratitude to

the institution that enabled them to achieve success, still runs deep and helps to keep the group bound together year after year.

Hindman explained that it was this love for their old alma mater that motivated the group to offer something in return to their beloved institution.

"We've reached a point in our lives when we needed to start giving back to the university," Hindman said.

That's why these alumni will soon be offering a partial scholarship for UNL seniors and graduate students.

Although still undecided about all of the requirements and the date of availability, Hindman did say that the \$250 scholarship will be need-based for students with a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

"We've all gone and established ourselves in our careers," Hindman said. "This (scholarship) will be a way that we can give something back to the students."



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