

# Lincoln duo chooses to remain close to home

Swiney, Kollmorgen chose NU after successful high school careers with Rockets and Knights.

By SAM MCKEYON  
Staff Reporter

With the stroke of a pen, two Lincoln high school football standouts officially became Nebraska football players Wednesday morning.

Lincoln Southeast offensive lineman Kyle Kollmorgen and Lincoln Northeast wide receiver/defensive back Erwin Swiney both signed a national letter of intent to play for the Cornhuskers next fall.

"It's a dream to play football there," Swiney said. "It feels good to play with the best."

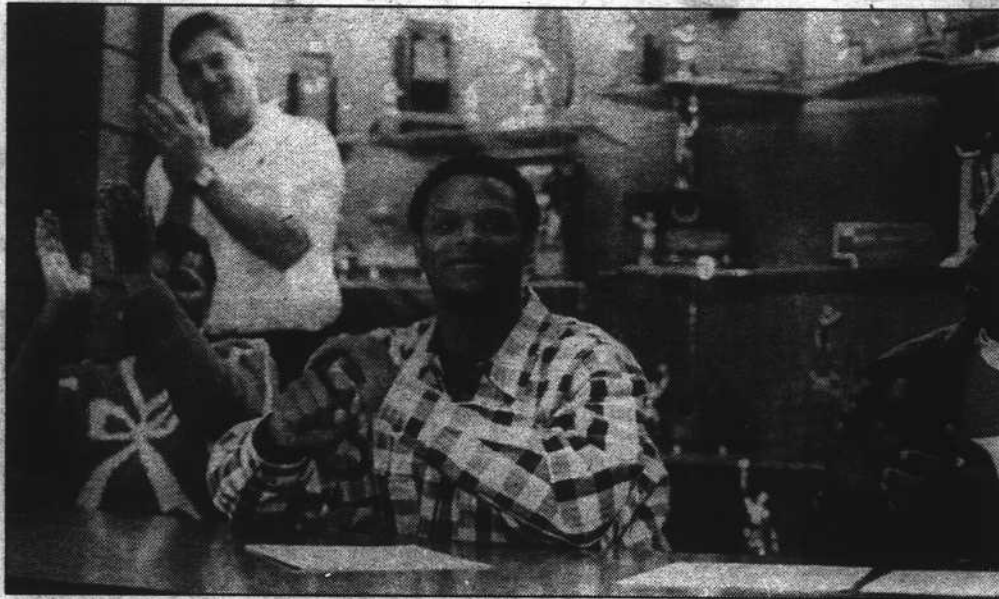
Swiney, a 6-foot, 175-pounder moved from Dallas, Texas, to Lincoln two years ago. Upon arriving in Lincoln, he flourished in the Rockets' system. He finished his All-State senior season with 25 catches for 635 yards and six touchdowns. His 25.4 yards per catch average is the highest of any Husker recruit.

Swiney picked NU early in the recruiting process before his high school season began.

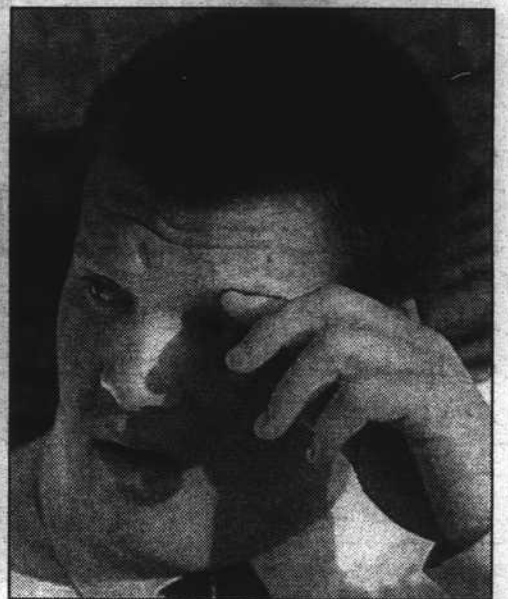
"In my situation," Swiney said, "picking Nebraska was the best decision for me. It feels like home."

Swiney said he talked with two of the Huskers' younger wide receivers — freshmen John Gibson and J.R. Edwards — so he knows what it takes to play in the Nebraska program.

"You have to go up there and work hard," Swiney said. "If I go up there and do that I



ERWIN SWINEY signs his letter of intent Wednesday at Northeast High School as his mother Gayle shows her approval. Swiney was one of two players from Lincoln to sign with Nebraska.



KYLE KOLLMORGEN signed with NU Wednesday.

think I'll be all right." Lincoln Northeast Coach Mark King said he has no doubts that Swiney will be a success wearing a Husker uniform.

"He's the best athlete we've had here in a long time," King said. "He's going to go to Nebraska and do real well there."

Kollmorgen, a 6-4, 270-pound offensive lineman, followed a similar path toward becoming a Husker. A member of the SuperPrep All-Midwest team, Kollmorgen helped the Knights to a 9-3 record and a berth in the Class A state football semifinals.

He said he narrowed his list to NU and Kansas State before choosing the Huskers. While he was interested in the Wildcats, Kollmorgen said the KSU coaching staff didn't exactly return the favor.

"When I went down there, Coach (Bill) Snyder hadn't really seen how I had performed in the Nebraska football camp," Kollmorgen said. "I got the impression that Nebraska really wanted me more."

With a lot of hard work ahead of him, Kollmorgen said, he is optimistic about seeing

playing time for a national power.

"It's a great opportunity all-around," Kollmorgen said. "I get to work on a lot of things and learn a lot at the same time."

"I just want to go in and do to the best of my ability. How I'll compare with everybody else down there, we'll find out."

Both players look forward to the prospect of playing for the Big 12 Conference and a national title.

"It'll feel good," Swiney said. "Everybody wants to play for a national title."

## Recruiting class pleases Osborne

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lesser-known players.

"We've got a huge logistics problem," he said. "To try to filter all the information is very difficult. Just identifying the players is the first thing, and then we've got to get them here."

It also doesn't hurt to have a brother in the program.

Cornerback Dion Booker followed his brother Michael — an NU senior last season — to Lincoln; tight end Tracey Wistrom will join older brother Grant at Nebraska next fall; and linebacker Mark Vedral follows in the footsteps of Jon, a senior last fall, and Mike, who lettered at NU from 1990 through 1992.

In addition, linebacker Jamie Bur-

row signed with the Huskers 22 years after his father, Jim, left Nebraska. University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Before hitting the recruiting trail, Osborne said, Husker coaches pegged cornerback and I-back as areas of need. Despite losing junior-college star Kevin Brooks to South Carolina last month, Nebraska still picked up three cornerbacks — Booker, Harrison and Joe Walker, who signed last year with Baylor but did not qualify academically.

At the I-back spot, NU failed to sign top targets Jamal Lewis and Travis Minor, but Osborne said Buckhalter, a 6-foot-2, 210-pounder, ranks among the top five backs in the nation. Osborne said he also sees great potential for I-back Dan White, who committed to NU last month while in the state for a recruiting trip to the

In the next few months, the coach said he would also like to finalize college plans for up to 20 walk-ons.

"That's almost like having another five to eight scholarship players," Osborne said. "We unabashedly do that. It's been one way that we've been able to survive against the Florida schools."

As many as 17 players already have informed Husker coaches of plans to walk on next fall, Osborne said.

"If we didn't have the walk-ons come here," he said, "I think it wouldn't be long before we became a second-rate program. They're very, very important to us."

### Football Signees

The following players have signed to play football at Nebraska next fall.

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown
Steve Alistaci	OL	6-6	270	Fort Calhoun
Dion Booker	CB	6-2	200	Oceanside (Calif.) El Camino
Combl Buchhalter	RB	6-2	210	Collins, Miss.
Jamie Burrow	LB	6-2	240	Ames, Iowa
Ben Cornelisen	WB	5-11	175	Shawnee Mission (Kan.) NW
Eric Crouch	QB	6-0	190	Millard North
Matt Davison	WR	6-1	175	Tacumseh
Chris Gustafson	LB	6-2	205	Gallup (N.M.)
Brandon Hanson	CB	6-0	170	Blinn (Texas) JC
Kyle Kollmorgen	OL	6-4	275	Lincoln Southeast
Glen Matthews	DL	6-3	305	N.D. School of Science
Bobby Newcombe	QB	6-0	185	Albuquerque (N.M.) Highland
Dominic Palola	OL	6-3	300	Honolulu St. Louis
Jon Rutherford	OL	6-3	270	Midwest City, Okla.
Erwin Swiney	WR	6-1	180	Lincoln Northeast
Kyle Vanden Bosch	DB	6-4	235	Inwood (Iowa) West Lyon
Mark Vedral	LB	6-1	205	Gregory, S.D.
Dave Volk	OL	6-5	275	Battle Creek
Joe Walker	CB	5-11	185	Arlington (Texas) Lamar
Dan White	RB	5-9	185	Green Bay, (Wis.) Ashwaubenon
J.P. Wichmann	LB	6-5	220	Shawnee Mission (Kan.) NW
Tracey Wistrom	TE	6-5	205	Webb City, Mo.

• Walker and Matthews signed letters of intent and enrolled at NU. They are currently working out with the team.

## NU signs versatile players

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-side hitter/middle blocker is one of the top athletes in the country, Pettit said.

"Angie's very strong and just a great athlete," Pettit said. "She has great technical skills and could play any position."

Oxley was named an honorable mention All-American by Volleyball Magazine following her senior season, and she led Class B Ogallala to state runner-up finishes in 1994 and 1995.

Despite the strength of NU's three scholarship athletes, its best recruit might possibly be a walk-on.

Behrends from Class D-1 Chappell High School surprised the college volleyball world when she turned down offers from several nationally prominent programs to play for the Huskers without a scholarship.

NU offered Behrends a scholarship early in the recruiting season, but the 6-foot outside hitter turned it down, opting instead to visit other interested schools before making a decision.

Unfortunately for Behrends, by the time she made up her mind in October, the Huskers had offered

all of their available scholarships, forcing her to walk on.

"Volleyball Monthly featured her as the national runner-up to player of the year," Pettit said. "That's not just hype either. She's that level of player. She knows we wanted her from day one. She probably hits the ball as hard as any high school player in the country."

A four-time Class D-1 all-state selection, Behrends set the Class D-1 state record for career kills (1,643) and single season kills (525).

Pettit said NU's current players were instrumental in helping sign members of this year's class. All four recruits have participated in camps with nine of Nebraska's current players.

"We're attracting a lot of kids who know each other," Pettit said. "The program attracts like-minded people. We've gotten high achievers who are familiar with us."

Not coincidentally, each member of the class is from the Midwest, a trend that pleases Pettit.

"We have tremendous loyalty from our state and great relationships with surrounding states," Pettit said. "I'm not sure that there's anywhere else in the country that has that kind of relationship going right now."

## Crouch anxious to play for NU

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decision and you get stressed out."

But Crouch wasn't the only one hounded in the recruiting process.

Mustang Coach Fred Petito — who also coached Iowa State quarterback Todd Doxzon — said he dealt with calls from many reporters about Crouch's decision.

"It was interesting," Petito said.

Crouch said his early commitment took pressure off his final season.

"I think it led me to have a better senior season," Crouch said.

Last fall, Crouch was hampered by an ankle injury, but he still ran for 1,300 yards and threw for 600. Despite missing three games, Crouch was named the USA Today Nebraska Player of the year while also earning SuperPrep All-American honors.

His early decision, he said, didn't affect his play last fall.

"It ran through my head a little bit," Crouch said. "But I couldn't really think about that too much. That's for me to think about right now. Now that I'm done playing for Millard North."

Crouch said he is comfortable running the Mustangs option-based "wingbone" offense, which he said is similar to Nebraska's offense.

"We're option based, and we do a lot of play-pass," Crouch said. "I think

“It feels great knowing I'm going to be a Husker.”

ERIC CROUCH  
NU quarterback

that's the main reason they're similar. The style of option that we run is similar to option-type schemes that Nebraska would do."

NU Coach Tom Osborne said he is impressed with Crouch's abilities at quarterback.

"Eric Crouch is one of the better option quarterbacks we've come across in many years," Osborne said. "He handled the option very well."

Crouch didn't have the opportunity to pass a lot in the Mustangs' style of offense, but Osborne was confident in Crouch's ability to throw the ball.

"We think he can throw it," Osborne said. "We saw him in our football camp. He's got a very good arm. I think he is a good passer."

Crouch made his official visit to NU the weekend of Jan. 21, where he was introduced to Husker quarterback Scott Frost.

At quarterback, the Huskers return

Frost, a senior-to-be next season, along with junior Monte Christo, and sophomores Frankie London and Jeff Perino. Freshman Bobby Newcombe, who also signed a letter of intent Wednesday, will also be given a chance to play.

Crouch said he will not redshirt next fall if he is among the top three quarterbacks on the depth chart before the season starts. After his graduation in May, Crouch said he plans to work out with the Huskers four times a week.

"Hopefully I'll be working with the first team," Crouch said. "That would be nice."

Petito was confident that his former signal caller would do well in Lincoln.

"This is an accumulation of three or four years of hard work," Petito said. "He's got tremendous ability, and he has great work habits."