

Seniors Wistrom, Peter star in solid defensive front four

By **ANTONE OSEKA**
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska defense has a lot of question marks this season. None of them involve the front four.

Despite the loss of two seniors from last season's team, they should be replaced with two reliable players.

The anchor of the NU defensive front four will be right rush end Grant Wistrom. Wistrom, a returning All-American will be the focus of many NU opponents this season.

Wistrom loses tag-team partner Jared Tomich on the left side, but will benefit from the tandem of Chad Kelsay and Mike Rucker, who will be taking Tomich's place.

Kelsay should start, but Rucker should see significant playing time.

"Chad is a great football player, Mike is a great football player. I don't see much of a dropoff coming," Wistrom said.

Jason Peter returns at defensive tackle. Peter said he hopes he and Wistrom see some double-team blocking early in the season.

"There's a chemistry between the front four guys," he said. "If they double team us, they leave someone else open."

Wistrom said that if he and Peter are

Nebraska Preview Defensive Line

Mike Rucker and Chad Kelsay should split playing time at defensive left end.

Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Tackles	Sacks
Jason Peter	6-5	285	Sr.	58	4
Grant Wistrom	6-5	255	Sr.	75	9.5
Chad Kelsay	6-3	250	Jr.	23	2.5
Mike Rucker	6-6	250	Jr.	32	7
Jason Wiltz	6-3	310	Jr.	20	1
Steve Warren	6-1	295	So.	6	.5



*Statistics are from the 1996 season

getting double teamed, but not making tackles, they will be doing their jobs.

"We're supposed to keep the line-men off the linebackers," Wistrom said. "We're not supposed to make tackles."

Wistrom set a personal record with 15 tackles against Colorado last season. Peter recorded 11 tackles against Arizona State last year, his personal best. Both also recorded touchdowns during the 1996 season. Wistrom intercepted a pass against Michigan State and ran it back nine yards for the score. Peter recovered a fumble in the 1997 FedEx Orange Bowl and ran it back 31 yards for the score.

Kelsay, Rucker and Jason Wiltz, who replaces Jeff Ogard in the middle of

the defensive line, all know the task they have in replacing the players that left.

"With Chad, once you get the starting nod, it's a little different," Peter said.

This whole season is a little different for the defensive line. As a unit, they have one goal, to return to Miami and the Orange Bowl to play for the national championship. To get there, the defense has to win the Big 12 North Division and then win the Big 12 championship game, a game in which the defense was disappointing last season.

"The whole defense was pretty disgusted with ourselves," Peter said. "One game, we let it slip through our fingers. We want a dominant defense and it all starts up front."

Cross country runners aim to win more than meet

By **SAM MCKEON**
Staff Reporter

Mention a golf course to a golfer and thoughts of birdies, bogeys, water hazards, trees and sand will quickly come to mind.

But mention a golf course to a cross country athlete and a totally different picture will come to mind.

The majority of all cross country meets run on golf courses. The national championship this year will be run on the University of South Carolina's golf course.

Running on golf courses is just one of the many aspects that makes cross country a unique sport.

"We mostly run in the rough, not on the fairways," said Nebraska men's and women's cross country coach Jay Dirksen. "Sometimes we'll run around the greens, but not very much."

Cross country is different from the

majority of typical sports because it opts for a system that puts the emphasis on the end of the season instead of winning each meet. Depending on the difficulty of the meet, a team can be among the country's top five and not win a meet all year.

That is a possibility for the NU men's team this season. Last season, NU had two runners, Jonah Kiptarus and Cleophas Boor, finish in the top three at the NCAA Championships, but the Husker cross country team finished seventh overall. National champion Stanford didn't have any runners finish within the top three, but all five of its runners finished within the top 15.

Dirksen said another thing over-

looked about cross country is the physical punishment that an athlete must endure throughout the race.

"You're in so much pain toward the end of the race, that it takes a lot of mental toughness to finish strong," Dirksen said. "Only the best runners are able to hold up through that kind of difficulty."

In the end, though, the goal for cross country runners is the same as any other athlete's - to perform the best they can.

"It doesn't always show up in head-to-head competition, like football," Johnson said, "but you want to go up against the best to measure yourself. That's the only way to know how good you really are."

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