

NU nabs 3 commitments

■ Younger Kelsay heads Nebraska's list of summer recruits.

BY DAVID WILSON
Senior Reporter

Nebraska's June football camp resulted in three verbal commitments from high school seniors.

Rush end Chris Kelsay, offensive lineman Nate Kolterman and running back DeAntae Grixby all gave commitments to join the Cornhuskers for the 1998 season. High school seniors cannot sign letters of intent until February.

Kelsay, who gave NU its first verbal commitment on June 13, led Auburn High School with 95 tackles and 250 yards receiving as a junior last season. Auburn finished 10-2 and fourth in Class C-1.

The 6-foot-4½, 235-pounder said he benches 335 pounds, squats 450 pounds and has a 34-inch vertical jump. Kelsay ran a 4.9-second electronic 40-yard-dash at the third session of Nebraska's camp, but Auburn coach Dave Carlson said he's hand-timed Kelsay at 4.65 seconds.

"He's got all the tools that you

could ever ask for," Carlson said after Kelsay committed. "His potential is just unlimited."

Kelsay, who has qualified academically, will follow in the footsteps of his older brother, Chad, who is a junior rush end for the Huskers.

Kolterman, who attended the first session of NU's camp, was offered a scholarship from Nebraska while attending Texas A&M's football camp. The 6-foot-4, 310-pounder gave his word on his way back to Seward.

"He's a very, very motivated football player," Seward coach Greg Welch said after Kolterman's commitment. "He's a muscular big kid — a body-builder-type kid. He's had to learn to play between the whistles and just control himself in a positive way. He's a very intense individual."

An all-state selection as a defensive lineman last season, Kolterman helped Seward to a 5-5 record while blocking for the leading rusher in Class B. Kolterman also paved the path for Class B's leading rusher his sophomore season.

"We've had the top running back at the end of the season two years in a row," Welch said. "That's a great indication of the quality of your line. We're even hoping for bigger things this year."

Kolterman benches 355 pounds

and squats 505 pounds, but his one weakness, Welch said, is his speed. At Nebraska's camp, Kolterman ran a 6.0-second electronic 40-yard dash. A week later at Texas A&M's camp, he was clocked at 5.6 seconds.

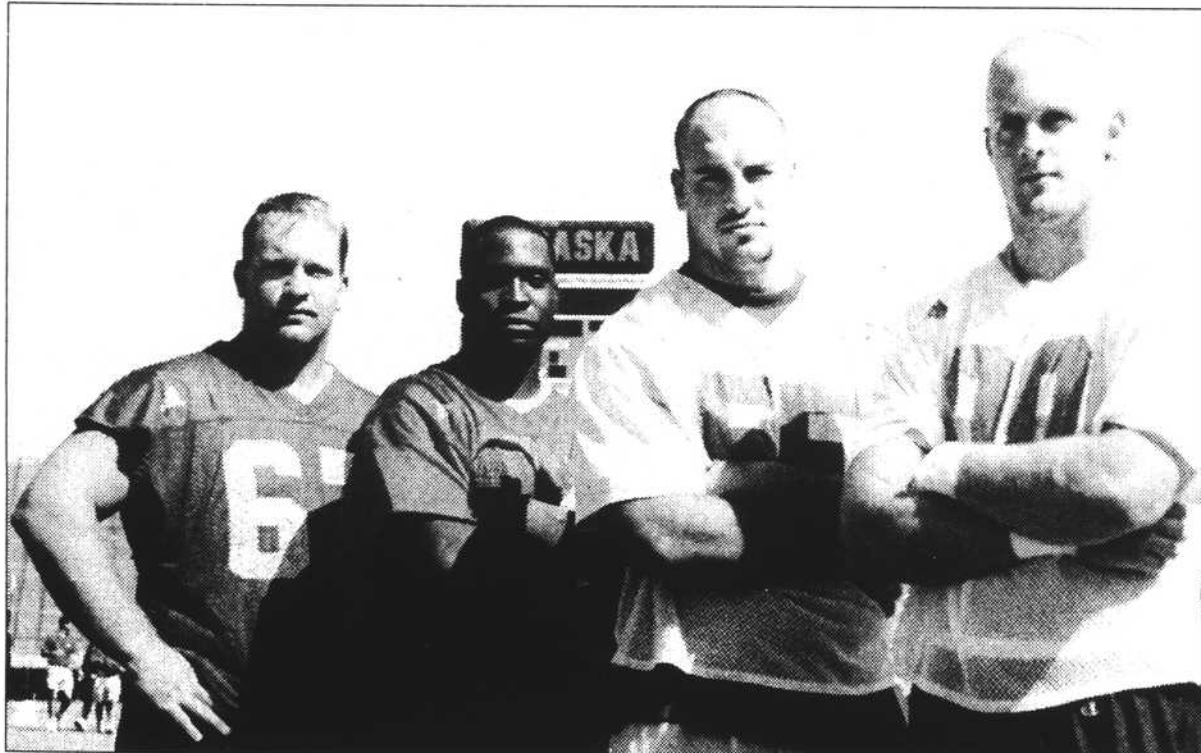
Welch said he expects Kolterman — who has qualified academically — to be ready to play Division I football.

"He's going to come in physically as strong as anyone that comes in," Welch said. "But their system of how they teach offensive linemen is a growing process."

Kolterman may eventually get the chance to block for Grixby, an I-back from Omaha Central. Grixby, who attended the third session of Nebraska's camp, committed on June 24.

Grixby, who ran a 4.67-second electronic 40-yard-dash at Nebraska's camp, benches 275 pounds, squats 455 pounds and has a 35-inch vertical jump. As a junior last season, he rushed for 1,240 yards on 151 carries.

The 5-foot-9, 190-pounder will follow in the footsteps of former Huskers Leodis Flowers, Calvin Jones and current NU I-Back Ahman Green — all former Central backs who went on to star for the Huskers.



NEBRASKA'S 1997 football captains, from left: Aaron Taylor, Vershan Jackson, Jason Peter and Grant Wistrom. DANIEL LUEDERT/DN

Huskers pick four captains

BY SAM MCKEWON
Staff Reporter

The four captains selected for the 1997 Nebraska football team come with extensive experience in trench warfare.

Seniors Grant Wistrom, Jason Peter, Aaron Taylor and Vershan Jackson all play pivotal roles in the interior lines. Wistrom and Peter play rush end and defensive tackle, respectively, while Taylor will play offensive guard this season after playing center last season.

Jackson, a tight end who had 12 receptions last season, will be the only one of the four who will routinely touch the ball this season, but that won't make a difference, Taylor said.

"Vershan is basically an offensive lineman, too," Taylor said. "All tight ends at Nebraska are linemen."

The four captains were announced Saturday.

By selecting four players from the front lines to be the captains, Taylor said, the team sent a message.

"As an offensive lineman, I believe that's where the game is won," he said. "If both lines go hard in every game and in every practice, then good things are going to happen."

Coach Tom Osborne said the newly elected captains were also the leaders of

the summer voluntary workouts.

"These guys pretty much ramrodded the team to get through summer workouts," Osborne said. "Sometimes, guys might resent that, but here they appreciated it."

Wistrom has been a consensus preseason All-America selection this season. He has also been mentioned as a possible candidate for the Lombardi and Outland trophies, which honor the nation's best interior lineman.

What may have made the biggest difference among Wistrom's teammates in him being selected as a captain was his decision to return to Nebraska for his senior season.

Peter follows in his brother Christian's footsteps as the third brother combination to be captains at Nebraska, joining Erik and Zach Wiegert and Mike and Andy Keeler. Christian Peter was a captain on the 1995 national championship team.

Jason Peter said he intends to take many of the qualities his brother used during his stint as captain.

"Christian was a great captain in a lot of ways," Jason Peter said. "He was really good at getting the team up for the game and getting the team emotionally ready to play. After Christian talked, everybody was fired up."

Taylor, also a preseason All-

America candidate, anchors an offensive line that figures to be among the best in the nation this season.

"The other younger guys look up to you and look to you to make the plays on the field," Taylor said. "We've got to set that example for the rest of the team in practice and in the game."

Jackson's selection as a Husker captain may have surprised some, considering the preseason accolades surrounding the other three captains.

All four captains said they understand the responsibility that goes along with being an NU captain.

"We know that guys will be watching us and looking to us to see if practice went well and things like that," Peter said. "We have to show we're confident."

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