

# Michigan lands top class

(AP) - Even in the recruiting wars, Michigan had to share the title for the top class of 1998.

A month after settling for a national championship with Nebraska, the Wolverines got two votes for the No. 1 collection of recruits, while a third recruiting guru went for UCLA, with Michigan a close second.

"Give the nod to Michigan," Bobby Burton of The National Recruiting Advisor said Wednesday, the first day high school seniors were able to sign letters of intent.

"I can't remember a team signing so many gifted offensive players in a single class. Michigan is the clear-cut winner, but UCLA had a great class, too."

Michigan Coach Lloyd Carr took full advantage of his team's first national title in 50 years as the Wolverines signed six Parade high school All-Americans.

"From top to bottom, Michigan has a great class," Tom Lemming, of Prep Football Report, said.

Burton and Lemming both went with UCLA second, while Allen Wallace of SuperPrep had UCLA ahead of the Wolverines.

"UCLA probably had the most well-rounded class," Burton said. "They basically beat the pants off USC, which was one of the big disappointments."

Notre Dame was back in top recruiting form under second-year coach Bob Davie. The Irish, who closed the season strong to get into a bowl game, had a fast finish in recruiting, too.

Davie signed David Givens, a 6-foot-2, 205-pound wide receiver, from Humble, Texas (rated the No. 1 player in the country by Wallace); USA Today All-American running back Mike McNair of Corona del Mar, Calif.; and wide receiver Javin Hunter of Orchard Lake, Mich.

"Lou Holtz didn't do a good job recruiting his last two years at Notre Dame," Burton said. "Bob Davie made recruiting a top priority this year, and that's made all the difference."

As usual, Florida State Coach Bobby Bowden made a late swing through the country and came away with an impressive class.

In addition to UCLA's ascent, Georgia also made major strides under third-year coach Jim Donnan. A victory over Florida didn't hurt,

either. "No team in the Southeast in the 1990s dominated its state the way Georgia did this year," Burton said. "Donnan has succeeded in putting up a border around the state."

Other Southeastern Conference schools on the top 10 lists of Burton, Lemming and Wallace were Alabama and Florida.

LSU and Tennessee made two top 10 lists, while the Cornhuskers made only one top 10 list - No. 10 by Burton.

"Nebraska did not do as well as people thought," Lemming said, although the Huskers did better than USC, another major school which made a coaching change this season.

"The changes were made so much smoother at Nebraska, and it paid off in recruiting," Burton said.

The Cornhuskers signed 20 high school athletes, including nine from Nebraska.

Other surprise teams included Pittsburgh and Purdue, both of which made it to bowl games this season, with Auburn rated among the disappointments.

Penn State just missed the top 10, while Texas was rated 10th by SuperPrep.

# Solich pleased with first recruiting class

RECRUITS from page 9

eventually contribute on either side of the ball.

"We have strong overall numbers," Solich said. "It is unbalanced toward the defensive side, but that's where some of those players wanted to start."

"There are several players that if they wanted to start out at running back, we certainly would have taken them there."

On the offensive side of the ball, NU signed two offensive linemen, two tight ends, two wide receivers and two running backs.

Solich said Dahrnan Diedrick could have an immediate impact in the backfield. Diedrick - who enrolled in December and joined NU for winter conditioning this month - credited Solich for bringing him to Nebraska.

"It wasn't like I had to dig something up on him," Solich said. "He was widely publicized and he was our top guy coming out of Canada. He could be a guy who plays linebacker. He's a tough, aggressive, hard-nosed guy."

Defensively, the Huskers captured several top recruits. Rush end Demoin Adams of Pine Bluff, Ark., and defensive backs DeJuan Groce (Garfield Heights, Ohio) and Keyuo Craver (Harleton, Texas) could become standouts for NU.

"DeJuan Groce was the top speed guy in Ohio," Solich said. "A lot of teams in the Big Ten offered him a scholarship last year, so we are very pleased to get him."

One conspicuous omission from NU's list was Derrick

"For the most part, people stayed with us. And these are good people who wanted to be here."

FRANK SOLICH  
NU head coach

Harmon. The defensive back from Memphis, Tenn., verbally committed to Nebraska on Tuesday but signed with Memphis Wednesday.

Two other players whom the Huskers were also in the running for - highly touted recruits Jason Thomas (quarterback) and Larry Foote (defensive back) - did not sign with NU. Thomas committed to Southern California and Foote to Michigan.

The Huskers did not sign a quarterback and signed only two offensive linemen. But NU's failure to do so does not worry Solich.

"We've met all our needs," Solich said. "I know when you're the coach you're supposed to say that, but I honestly feel good about this class."

"There are other tremendous players we would have taken if they would have come. But these are guys we identified early and many can be considered among the best at their position in the country."

# NU drops another thriller in Columbia

THRILLER from page 8

Coach Danny Nee said. "The home-court advantage is probably the difference in the game."

The Tigers improved to 11-1 at home as Nebraska fell to 2-7 on the road. The Huskers return to the Bob Devaney Sports Center Saturday to face Kansas State at 12:45 p.m. NU is 10-1 at home this season.

"We go home," Nee said, "and I don't have to come back to Columbia for another year."

Wednesday night marked Nebraska's first overtime game of

the season. NU played four overtime games last year - including three on the road.

In Columbia last season, the Huskers fell 75-74 to the Tigers, but NU didn't go down without a fight.

With 1:33 on the clock, point guard Tyrone Lue drained a 3-pointer to give NU a 72-71 lead. But Missouri battled back with a jumper and hit 3 of 4 free throws to take a 75-74 lead.

NU guard Cookie Belcher fouled on an offensive rebound and went to the line for a chance to tie the game. But he missed the first

shot of a one-and-one opportunity, and the Tigers won the game.

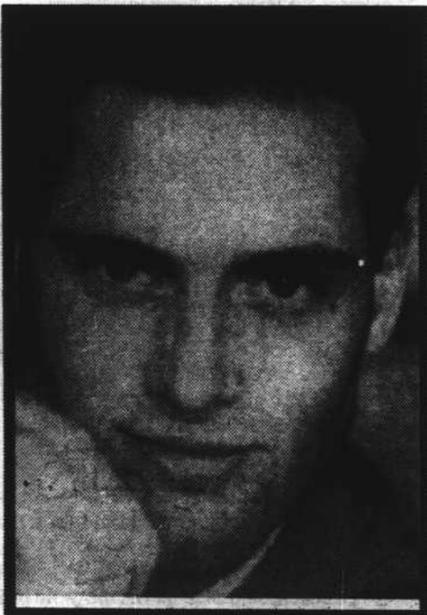
The situation in Columbia was a little different this season, but the suspense was still there. NU freshman Chad Johnson tied the game with 39 seconds remaining which eventually sent the game into overtime.

Missouri outscored the Huskers 13-8 in overtime, but the Huskers lacked three of their biggest players.

"We had three big guys foul out," Lue said. "We had two freshman in the game. They did what they could. That's all we could ask for."

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