

Kelsay turns childhood dream into reality

KELSAY from page 9

Young children admired Kelsay, and high school friends cheered him.

But when Kelsay arrived at Nebraska, reality sunk in. Kelsay, who was considered small for a rush end at 6-3, 230 pounds, began practice behind NU greats Jared Tomich and Grant Wistrom.

"Everyone was bigger, faster and better than I had ever thought," Kelsay said. "The fast pace hits you the first week. It freaks you out a little.

"But the first time I ever set foot on the football field here, Grant came up to me and kind of took me under his wing. He said, 'If you go out there and give it 100 percent on every play and work hard and don't get lazy, you're going to play.' He was right."

Earning respect

Over the next two years, Kelsay listened to Wistrom's advice and built a reputation as one of the hardest working players on the team. Kelsay's teammates twice voted him a finalist for NU's Lifter of the Year, an award he won in 1998. He often arrives at practice early and leaves the weight room late.

"You don't ever have to tell him to get to the front of the line," Rush Ends Coach Nelson Barnes said. "Everyone respects that. If you're really going to be that leader, you have to be at the front in effort, and at the front in attitude. That's where Chad always is. He is an example. Whatever you ask, he will do, and he will do it with a little extra something."

Jackie said she and her husband, Steve, encouraged their three children to be independent, and Kelsay credits his parents for instilling a strong work ethic in him. Kelsay was forced to use persistence and hard work to overcome a slight physical disadvantage. He measures 3 inches shorter than his counterpart, right rush end Mike Rucker.

"The way I've been raised is to give 100 percent all of the time in everything I do," Kelsay said. "I don't want to be called lazy on the football field or anywhere else. A lot of guys have more athletic talent than I do, and I definitely don't have the physique. I'm not very tall, and I'm not big or very strong. But I work hard in practice, and I have an aggressive attitude."

Because of the examples they have set, Kelsay and Rucker have stepped into the leadership void left by former

Lombardi award winner Wistrom and first-team All-American Jason Peter. Kelsay's brother Chris joined the young group of rush ends as a freshman during summer workouts.

Chris's presence has pushed Chad, who also volunteers at Lincoln Public Schools and the People's City Mission, to work even harder. The oldest Kelsay wants to set a good example for his younger brother. The two lived together this summer while participating in summer conditioning workouts.

"Everyone kind of gave Grant some crap last year when Tracy came in, saying Grant was looking out for his brother," Chad said. "And I don't want to hear that stuff, but it's true.

"Chris is different to me than any other freshman. I'm proud of him. It's a tradition at Nebraska that younger brothers follow the older ones. There was Grant and Tracy, the Peters (Christian and Jason) and the Bookers (Michael and Dion). I would have been a little disappointed if he hadn't come here."

Still a dream

Jackie and Steve expected nothing else from Chris, who, just like Chad, grew up dreaming of playing for the

Huskers one day. The Kelsays feel blessed to have not one, but two sons competing for Nebraska. Chris may be one of only six or seven freshmen who contributes immediately this fall.

As for Chad, Barnes predicts great things for the small-town player in his final season.

"When I came in during the spring, I really began to notice the similarities between him and Grant, and it really excited me," Barnes said. "The first thing I noticed was how well he plays away from the ball. He's very quick. He's every bit as fast as Grant, and he flies to the ball when he isn't in the play. Chad has gotten quicker every year he has been here."

Kelsay smiles at the compliment. He expects one more national title before he's done at Nebraska and hopes for a shot at the NFL after his days with the Huskers are over.

He shakes his head when recalling his successes over the last three years. He has lived a life he sometimes allowed himself to dream about as a high school student at Auburn. But that was long ago, when he knew that Memorial Stadium was only 75 miles northeast of Auburn yet still so far away. It was long before he ever ran

The Kelsay File Career Totals

34 games
10 games started
77 tackles
13 tackles for loss
7.5 sacks
25 QB hurries

JON FRANK/DN

through the tunnel at the southwest end of Tom Osborne Field, the pride of Auburn stepping on the field with him.

"It's my senior year, and every time I walk through that tunnel, it feels like the first time," Kelsay said. "It never changes. It's overwhelming. I can't explain it with words. It's the crowd and the music. There's so much tradition. You see the schedules lined up on the walls, and you feel like a part of something bigger."

"We have guys here from all over the country on our team, but there's a certain pride that those of us from Nebraska feel, and I think it means much more."

Nebraska still confident despite jitters for opener

By DAVID WILSON
Senior staff writer

Expect some tossing and turning in beds across Lincoln Friday night.

Maybe Frank Solich, who will coach his first game at the helm of the Nebraska football program Saturday at 3:08 p.m. against Louisiana Tech, will have trouble sleeping.

Or possibly Bobby Newcombe will have a restless night.

"I'm definitely sure we'll both be nervous, and we probably won't be able to sleep too well before the game," Newcombe said. "We're both coming in with a lot of nerves, but we both have a lot of confidence in the team as a whole."

Four offensive linemen and sophomore I-back Correll Buckhalter will also be making their first collegiate starts Saturday.

Nerves will no doubt be rattling deep in the guts of Solich and those six first-time offensive starters, but most said they expect to relax quickly once they have that first play under their belts.

Josh Heskew, NU's lone returning starter on the offensive line, said the four offensive linemen will become veterans after their first offensive series.

"I don't think there's many questions," Heskew said, "but I think after

the first game, they will be answered.

"We know we have to carry on a tradition. We plan on being just as good or even better."

Newcombe said that belief showed in the offensive line during fall camp.

"I think the offensive line is ready to prove to themselves, and the people that are watching, that they can get the job done," Newcombe said.

Even with an injury to DeAngelo Evans and an inexperienced offensive line, the I-backs, too, are confident.

"I see the I-backs having a lot of confidence in themselves," Newcombe said. "When you have a lot of confidence in yourself, and you put a lot of work into it, sometimes that's a little better than a lot of experience."

But Newcombe knows not every play will work out as planned.

"Everybody out there is going to make mistakes - including myself," Newcombe said. "If someone messes up or screws up, I'm going to let them know. But I'm not going to chew on somebody or belittle them in any way."

Solich, too, said he felt confident in himself and his first-time starters.

But that doesn't necessarily mean he'll sleep soundly Friday night.

"I'll probably do a little tossing and turning," Solich said. "But I feel prepared, and I believe our team will be prepared."

Humidity, competition make for tiring preseason

PROGRAM from page 9

a vertical jump test, pro-agility run and an all-out 40-yard dash. The second and most dreaded run was the Cooper test. This is a test where you run for 12 minutes as far and as fast as you can.

The results of the testing left the team in a lot of pain, yet feeling good because the physical prowess of our team was immediately obvious. And although the grueling 12-minute run I had dreaded all summer was over, I felt what was ahead of me that afternoon was going to be an even truer test of what each person could bring to our team.

After a short break, we were back at it again. This would mark the beginning of double days, practicing at 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. I lay in my bed during our time off in anticipation of what I would expect. I learned this week of crazy double days was supposed to be the hottest week of the summer.

Well, it felt like it, too. I lost more

than 5 pounds of water weight, and it had only been the first practice, with nine more to come.

After Jackie Erdkamp, our goal keeper, cramped up so badly, and they had to put two bags of IV fluid into her, we switched to early morning and evening practices. Aside from some extremely hard fitness sessions and weather elements to overcome, our team was quickly taking shape, and we seemed to have talented players at every position.

The intra-squad scrimmages proved to be our toughest challenge of the week. Each player fought for her individual position, leaving everything each of us had on the field.

A short friendly game against Bellevue University to end training camp reflected how hard we had been working all week. We beat them 10-0. Most notable were the contributions of the freshmen, leaving us much promise and high hope for the upcoming game on Wednesday against Park College.

BOWLERS!

JOIN THE FUN

The Welcome Back Special:

50¢ per game.

w/ Student I.D.

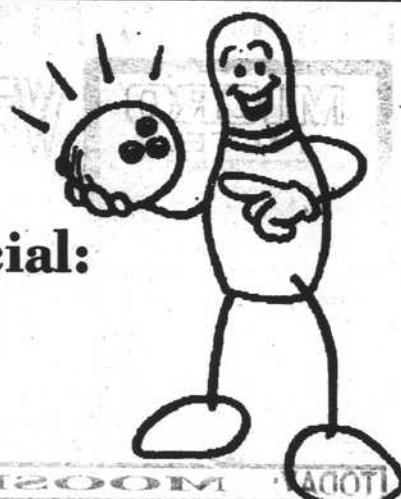
August 24-30.



For More Information, Contact:

Lanes N Games

472-1751



WOMEN EARN \$1,130

ASSIST MEDICAL RESEARCH

You can earn **\$1,130** by participating in a medical research study at MDS Harris. If you are in good medical condition and meet the criteria below, call us at **474-PAYS** to find out more.

- women
- 19 to 45 years old
- smokers and nonsmokers
- availability four days

Harris testing pays. Call **474-PAYS** today!

BE PART OF THE CURE
MDS Harris