

SPORTS

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Father confirms Davis will sign with NU

■ Tony Davis says his son, Josh, will sign letter of intent despite criminal charges.

By BRANDON SCHULTE
Staff writer

While some key Nebraska football recruiting targets have chosen to go elsewhere, another long-time commitment whose status with the Huskers had been uncertain will sign with NU today.

Josh Davis, a 6-foot, 195-pound

running back from Loveland, Colo., will sign a letter of intent with Nebraska on Wednesday, his father, Tony Davis, said Tuesday.

"Josh will sign at 10 a.m. Wednesday and he'll do it at the high school," Tony Davis said.

Josh Davis, a high school All-American, was arrested on criminal charges Jan. 21 for allegedly stealing a Sony PlayStation from a Loveland residence. Davis was charged with second-degree burglary and with providing false information to a pawnbroker.

If convicted, Davis could face a minimum of five years in prison and/or

\$4,000 in fines. His father, who played for NU from 1973-75, would not comment on the allegations against his son, nor would he comment on his feelings about them.

"Don't ask me questions about anything but football," Tony Davis said. "I can't comment on the rest of it."

It was unknown whether or not media will be present at the signing, Tony Davis said. He also wasn't sure whether his son would respond to any questions concerning the allegations at his signing or if NU Coach Frank Solich will make any statement at his press conference, either. Solich's press

conference is scheduled for 3 p.m. at South Stadium on Wednesday.

Solich has been in contact with the Davis family in the last few days, Tony Davis said, and has assured them that NU will not revoke the scholarship offer.

Nebraska coaches are generally not allowed to talk about recruits until they have received a letter of intent from the athlete.

Davis will sign Wednesday, but several other prospects have decided to commit at other schools. Onterrio Smith, a highly touted running back from Sacramento, Calif., picked

Tennessee over Nebraska, Oregon and Southern California according to Bobby Burton of the National Recruiting Advisor. Smith has a former high school teammate at UT, which played a big factor in his decision.

Both Chris Masseys have decided to go elsewhere, as well. Chris Massey, the quarterback, has narrowed his choices to Arkansas and Oklahoma State according to the National Recruiting Advisor. The publication also reports Chris Massey, the defensive back, has chosen Washington over

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"HE'S GOT THE WHOLE PACKAGE. HE'S GOT THE POTENTIAL TO BE A NATIONAL CHAMPION - THIS YEAR."



NU GYMNAST JASON HARDABURA traded in packed powder for chalk powder about two years ago. Now, Head Coach Francis Allen said Hardabura has the talent to be the national all-around champion this season.

FROM SKI TO JUMP GYM RAT

STORY BY JOHN GASKINS
PHOTO BY MATT MILLER

Hardabura left slopes for future at NU

Jason Hardabura could be a ski bum in British Columbia right now, and that would be OK with him.

Instead, he's a world-class gymnast in Nebraska and having the time of his life.

The sophomore from Toronto said the turning point that got him here was when he barely missed competing for the Canadian National Team in the 1996 Olympics.

"I was at a crossroads in my life, and gymnastics was definitely not going to pay the bills," Hardabura said.

"So I kind of took some time off and lived in Whistler, B.C., and worked at a ski resort with my friends and pretty much did nothing for a couple of months. Then I went home and I thought, geez, I was either going to stay in Whistler and become a ski bum, or go to school.

"I thought if school didn't work out, I could go back to Whistler, but if I didn't give school a chance, I was screwed."

So, Hardabura talked to Nebraska Head Coach Francis Allen, a renowned international coach for USA national teams who had seen Hardabura compete in international events for Canada. Allen told Hardabura to call him if he wanted to go to school.

Hardabura made that call, and his teammates are thrilled he's not skiing right now.

Ask fellow Canadian, freshman Martin Fournier, a

Quebec native, who followed Hardabura to the United States this year.

"Oh, man, he's fun to be around. It's just one joke after the other," a laughing Fournier said with wide eyes and a thick French accent. Fournier said that having a fellow foreigner on team helped him feel more comfortable.

"He's the kind of guy, when we're practicing really hard and getting serious, he's always the one to make a joke and make you laugh."

Hardabura brings a lot more than humor to the No. 4 Huskers. Allen's first foreign team member of his coaching career at Nebraska brings years of international experience and loads of talent.

"He's got the whole package," Allen said. "He's got the potential to be a national champion - this year."

Those are strong words, but Allen can back them up. Hardabura was the top freshman in the nation last year, placing ninth in the all-around at the NCAA Championships.

This past weekend, he finished third in the all-around at the Rocky Mountain Open, with wins on the rings and the high bar.

"The guy is amazing. He's a natural talent," Fournier said.

"But he likes the competition. I felt so nervous, the pres-

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