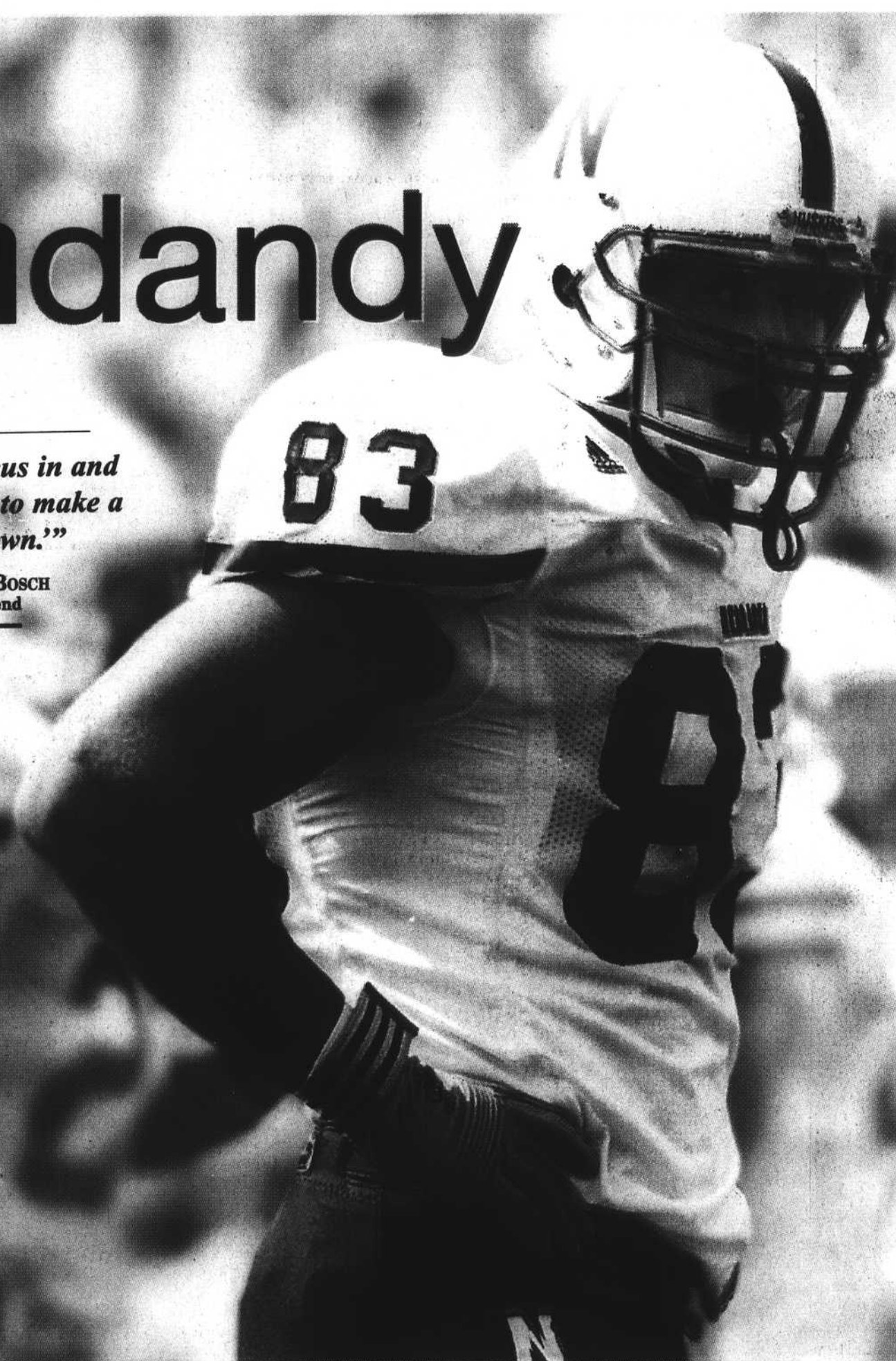


Wandandy

“Every play I focus in and say ‘I am going to make a play this down.’”

KYLE VANDEN BOSCH
junior rush end



Even when the 6-foot-4, 270-pound Kyle Vanden Bosch is among taller and bigger teammates, he has a knack of finding ways to stand out.

And it isn't with words. It is usually through actions.

On the football field, the junior rush end puts bone-crushing hits on opposing quarterbacks and tailbacks. In the classroom, the Larchwood, Iowa, native is near the top in terms of grade point averages. But in the weight room is where he may put on the best show.

As soon as Vanden Bosch, the 1999 University of Nebraska football lifter of the year, and fellow rush end Aaron Wills enter the west stadium weight room, Husker Power staff and Nebraska teammates just step back and watch. Wills and Vanden Bosch trade off on their lifts, pushing one another to lift more weight.

"The two of them are relentless in their workouts," said Boyd Epley, director of athletic performance. "Kyle is very quiet in the weight room. He doesn't require a lot of attention. He is very workman-like. He just comes in and does his program. Kyle makes our job so much easier because he sets such an example. He does everything right. He is a model player."

Vanden Bosch's work in the weight room during high school enabled him to play in all 13 games as a true freshman at NU. The continued hard work in the weight room at Nebraska along with his maturity on the football field have made him an impact player this season for the No. 6 Cornhuskers.

The weight room was where Vanden Bosch made his initial impact at Nebraska, Epley said. But it wasn't in a way that the then 6-foot-4, 255-pound freshman would like to remember.

On the first day of workouts, Vanden Bosch challenged sophomore Julius Jackson to a lifting contest.

"He thought he could outdo me in squats," Jackson said. "He figured he was a big guy, and you look at me and don't think I can lift, so he challenged me. He found out how strong I really am. It was funny. You get a freshman every now and then thinking they are big and bad. We are all freshmen (at one time) and all do it. It was all fun and games."

Vanden Bosch wasn't too upset that Jackson beat him, Epley recalled. He took it as a challenge and told Jackson that it wouldn't be long before he would catch him. Vanden Bosch's attitude left a lasting impression on Epley.

"I knew right then Kyle was going to take this serious," Epley said. "He got in there and competed early on his first day. He hasn't eased up since. He has been on a relentless

path in the weight room. That has carried over to his play on the football field."

In three games this season, Vanden Bosch has made 11 tackles, including two sacks and four tackles for a loss. However, nine of those tackles and both sacks came Saturday against Southern Mississippi. It was the type of game Vanden Bosch expected of himself each time he set foot on the field as a Blackshirt. But it was something that hadn't happened the first two weeks.

"The first couple of games, I didn't make very many plays," Vanden Bosch said. "It seemed like once I got the tape and looked at it, there weren't many opportunities. A lot of the time, they ran the other way or I was fighting through double team blocks. This game there was just an opportunity to make more plays, and I think I reacted a little bit quicker."

A true student of the game, Vanden Bosch had broken down previous game tapes multiple times looking for ways he could get more involved.

Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride admired Vanden Bosch's drive for perfection.

"He is a great football player," McBride said. "That is probably the most important of them all. He studies the game and wants to be the best player possible, and he is always working at it. He is a guy who has improved every week. He takes the game seriously, and he's probably tougher on himself than anyone when he makes mistakes."

The self-criticism and evaluation helped Vanden Bosch develop a new approach to each game — a meaner, nastier and more focused approach that puts a lot more pressure on opposing teams.

"Every play I focus in and say 'I am going to make a play this down,'" said Vanden Bosch, who looks down with his shaved head and goatee. "That way you don't find yourself taking plays off or thinking I am going to ease up so I can play the fourth quarter. It has really helped me to get involved each play."

A high level of involvement is what has been expected out of the rush end spot, Vanden Bosch said. Players such as Mike Rucker, Chad Kelsay, Grant Wistrom, Jared Tomich, Trev Alberts and Deata Jones all made names for themselves at the rush end spot before Vanden Bosch by being high impact players.

McBride and Epley both said Vanden Bosch has the tools and attitude to be as good as those players.

"He's a lot like Tomich," McBride said. "He may even have better speed and be a little taller."

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