

Husker family welcomes new teammates to UNL

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The group of defensive backs is led by Danieal Manning, a 6-foot, 180-pound cornerback from Corsicana, Texas. The speedster runs a 4.3 second 40-yard dash and was a second team All-Texas selection.

With the secondary the Huskers possess, Solich said he believes he has the team speed and size combinations that are needed in college football today.

"If you look at the teams we play, they all have speed. We

want to match that speed, or we want to be faster," he said.

Addressing what has become one of the main selling tools for Solich and his staff, the coach said the family atmosphere Nebraska offers to its players seems to be a positive mentioned among its new signees.

"I think if there's been one recurring theme that we get from recruits, it's the theme of closeness that exists among our players," Solich said. "The word family has been used a lot by recruits."



Coach Frank Solich announces Nebraska's latest football recruits in a press conference Wednesday afternoon. Eighteen signees were revealed in the Cornhuskers' 2001 recruiting class.

Huskers gain more than their fair share

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rivals100.com, chose to become a Hawkeye after once saying, "I almost gave Coach Solich my commitment right there."

Theatrics aside, and despite the losses of a few key players, this is Solich's top recruiting class.

You can't win them all, but Nebraska won more than their fair share of recruiting battles. On paper, this is a top-10 class. In the Big 12, they're third right behind

Oklahoma and Texas.

But of all the recruiting gurus, only the future knows how good this newest class of Huskers will be, and that goes for any class. Look at Mack Brown and Texas - a history of great recruits and average teams.

For this group of 18 players, no one knows what the future holds. While the Huskers appear to have an excellent class now, check back in four years.

Then we'll really know.

2001 sees new quarterbacks

■ Mike McLaughlin and Mike Stuntz fill Nebraska's need for a young signal caller.

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

Coming up empty in the two of the last three recruiting classes, Nebraska's goal during the 2001 recruiting season was clear - quarterbacks.

Coach Frank Solich said he feels confident he's met that need by signing Millard North's Mike McLaughlin and Council Bluffs St. Albert's Mike Stuntz. Both are option quarterbacks, molded to fit the Nebraska system.

NU was in dire need of a fresh signal caller because past recruiting classes didn't have any. Sophomore-to-be Jammal Lord was the only scholarship quarterback to sign with the Huskers since Eric Crouch and Bobby Newcombe in 1997.

"It was something we were determined to do," Solich said. "The fact that both of those guys we feel can fit into our system very well made us feel much more comfortable on where we were at with the depth at the quarterback position and really with the future for Nebraska in terms of the quarterback position."

For McLaughlin, the road looks pretty similar to the one his new teammate and fellow Millard North graduate, Crouch, took.

Both quarterbacks were led in high school by a coach known for

his mastery of the option offense, Fred Petito.

In Petito's tenure with the Mustangs, he has made his program a major stepping-stone for creating some of the best option quarterbacks in Nebraska high school history.

McLaughlin said Petito has been the biggest factor in developing his game.

"He's helped me understand the option game and taught me everything I know on option football," he said.

In becoming a Nebraska quarterback from Millard North, McLaughlin said he knows how much pressure comes with it.

The expectations that McLaughlin, Crouch and other Mustang quarterbacks, such as Todd Doxzon, who played at Iowa State and with the Miami Dolphins, are hard to ignore, Petito said.

"The expectations themselves for Nebraska football are off the scale," Petito said. "There's a pattern that's been developed for the Millard North quarterbacks, and if that's the degree of excellence it has, we're willing to stay with it."

"Mike sure did his part in it." Just across the Missouri River at Lewis Central High School is another quarterback similar to McLaughlin.

Stuntz's choice came down to playing a position other than quarterback at another school or playing the position he loves at Nebraska, he said.

Line recruits some of best in NU history

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Iowa State and Tennessee were the other schools Adams toyed with, hanging his talents in front of their noses. The talents, according to his high school coach, Tom Jaworski, include excellent instincts, amazing mobility and a knack to get to the football.

Joining Adams as defensive line recruits are LeKevin Smith from Macon, Ga., and Jared Helming from Springfield, Mo., making the position one of the strongest in NU's 2001 class.

Helming, Missouri's player of the year and a four-year starter in its largest class, is ranked as the 10th best defensive tackle by rivals100.com. Adams and Smith are ranked 13th and 14th respectively at the position.

Solich said in all his years at NU, he couldn't remember a better package of line recruits.

"But I've only been here 22 years," Solich joked. "I can't remember a better group of linemen coming in in terms of size, speed and strength."

Adams represents all three of those categories, especially in his mobility. Asked about his lineman's 40-yard dash time, Jaworski said, "I don't know, but it's fast."

Adams' 40-time is listed at 4.8

seconds, not bad for 285 pounds.

At Nebraska's football camp, Adams showed the coaches just how agile he could be during flag football scrimmages.

"Most guys like Titus would line up and protect the quarterback," Solich said. "But Titus would run post patterns."

The speed that let him run receiver routes at camps also let him run over offensive linemen and alter entire offensive game plans his last two years in high school. Fred Petito, the coach at Omaha's Millard North High School who has seen such talents such as current NU players Eric Crouch and Judd Davies, said Adams has the ability to "really screw a game up."

"You'd better have someone going against him that's very competent and a battler," Petito said. "The way he plays he'll take your will because he's so talented."

Adams should be able to put that skill to use as soon as he's earned the required 17 ACT score to be eligible his freshman year and is awaiting his final semester grades to finalize his eligibility.

He is the third Parade All-American from the storied tradition of Creighton Prep. Tim Ridder and Junior Bryant, both of whom are in the NFL, are the others. Adams, Jaworski said, equals those two in talent and maybe surpasses them in speed.

"He's got great instinct, and he listens well," Jaworski said. "He's so coachable, he's smart. There's no doubt in my mind he'll be successful."

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