

Wilber Adds Seven with First Recruiting Class Leading into 2025-26

Aberdeen, S.D. – Northern State University head coach Matt Wilber announced the additions of seven student-athletes to the 2025-26 men's basketball roster today. Simon Akena (Stockholm, Sweden), Josh Book (Christchurch, New Zealand), Ben Bowen (Highlands Ranch, Colo.), Brendan Phillips (Aberdeen, S.D.), Nelson Reynolds (Peoria, Ill.), Ty Rogers (Aurora, Ill.), and Lane Tietz (Groton, S.D.) will join the Wolves in the fall for their first season under the direction of Wilber and staff.

"We are excited to add this group to the roster of players we are bringing back from last year," said Wilber. "Our process from day one was to recruit the entire roster from last year's group from the available pool of high school grads and transfers. I give a ton of credit to Coach Nelson and Coach Smith for the work they did in the recruiting process. We started with a specific plan for what we wanted the make-up of this recruiting class to look like in our first year and feel good with the early results. We inherited a high-quality level of character from the returners and are adding a number of great people with these additions. Every year is a new start regardless of staff and roster, and this group is excited to get to work and make their mark on the Wolves culture!!"

***Simon Akena – Guard, 6-6, 215, Stockholm, Sweden / Tibble Gymnasium / Westminster***

Simon Akena is a 6-foot-6, 215-pound guard out of Westminster University. He started 26 contests last season for the Griffins, averaging 29.8 minutes per game. Akena shot 47.0% from the floor, averaging 13.2 points and 3.6 rebounds per contest. Akena also played collegiately at McCook Community College and Utah Valley University. He was an All-Region selection at McCook. He is the son of George and Cecilia Akena.

***Josh Book – Guard, 6-4, 190, Christchurch, New Zealand / Christs College / Missouri Western***

Josh Book is a 6-foot-4, 190-pound guard out of Missouri Western State. He averaged 28.0 points, 10.0 rebounds, and 6.0 assists in his final season at Christs College in New Zealand. Book was named the Thompson Trophy Finals MVP and Christs College won the South Island Championship. In 2023-24, his first full season at MoWest, Book shot 51.3% from the floor and 83.3% from the foul line. He tallied 125 points, 45 rebounds, and 39 assists. He is the son of Lisa and Edward Book.

***Ben Bowen – Guard, 6-5, 185, Highlands Ranch, Colo. / Mountain Vista HS / Denver***

Ben Bowen is a 6-foot-5, 185-pound guard out of Mountain Vista High School and the University of Denver. As a prep, Bowen averaged 20.0 points, 6.0 rebounds, and 6.0 assists per game. He was named the Continental League Player of the Year and earned all-state first team recognition. Bowen opened his collegiate career at the University of Wyoming, redshirting during the 2021-22 season. He spent the next three seasons at UD, appearing in 72 games. Bowen shot 47.5% from the floor last season for the Pioneers, appearing in 27 total contests. He

is the son of Ryan and Wendy Bowen.

***Brendan Phillips – Forward, 6-5, 190, Aberdeen, S.D. / Central HS***

Brendan Phillips is a 6-foot-5, 190-pound forward out of Central High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Golden Eagles, averaging 16.6 points, 4.6 rebounds, and 1.5 assists as a senior. Phillips earned the team MVP award in 2024-25 and was honored on the academic all-state team. He is the son of Jennifer and Jake Phillips.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - NORTHERN STATE ATHLETICS

1200 S. JAY ST. • ABERDEEN, SD 57401 • 605-626-3336 • NSUWOLVES.COM



Nelson Reynolds – Guard, 6-2, 190, Peoria, Ill. / Peoria Notre Dame HS / Southeastern

Nelson Reynolds is a 6-foot-2, 190-pound guard out of Peoria Notre Dame High School and Southeastern University. As a prep, Reynolds averaged 15.0 points per game and was a member of the Illinois All-State third team. He averaged 11.1 points per game, shooting 47.3% from the floor last season for the Fire. In addition, Reynolds shot 45.9% from beyond the arc, ranking in the top-5 in SEU single season history. He is the son of Paige Reynolds.



Ty Rogers – Forward, 6-7, 225, Aurora, Ill. / West Aurora HS / UMary

Ty Rogers is a 6-foot-7, 225-pound forward out of West Aurora High School and the University of Mary. As a prep, Rogers was a 4-year starter and team captain for the Blackhawks. He averaged 15.0 points, 6.- rebounds, and 2.0 assists as a senior. Rogers was honored with all-conference, all-state third team, all-district, and all-county accolades. Rogers appeared in 80 games, including starting all 31 last season, in his three years with the Marauders. He averaged a season best 10.3 points and 3.9 rebounds per game last season, shooting 41.5% from the floor. He is the son of Marchel and Sarah Rogers.



Lane Tietz – Guard, 5-11, 180, Groton, S.D. / Groton HS / Dakota State

Lane Tietz is a 5-foot-11, 180-pound guard out of Groton High School and Dakota State. As a prep, Tietz was a 5-year starter and team captain for the Tigers. He scored 1,552 career points and dished out 324 career assists. Tietz was a 4-time NEC All-Conference selection, all-state honoree, and the 2024 Class A Spirit of the Su Award winner. He opened his collegiate career at Dakota State, playing one season for the Trojans. Tietz averaged 11.2 points, 3.6 assists, and 4.0 rebounds per game. He was named the North Star Freshman of the Year following the season.

He is the son of Tom and Lindsey Tietz, and great-great nephew of legendary NSU coach and administrator Clark Swisher.