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SCHMIDT'S SEVENTH SIGNING CLASS BRINGS IN REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL TALENT

Aberdeen, S.D. – Northern State University head football coach Mike Schmidt announced the additions to his 2026 roster today, including six collegiate transfers as well as 40 incoming freshmen. The full group hails from 16 states, including 18 student-athletes from South Dakota, as well as one international player. In addition, 15 signees won high school state championships, while 33 earned all-conference or all-region honors, including six player of the year selections, and 18 were named to all-state teams.

The six collegiate transfers who found their home with the Wolves during the spring semester include Max Anum (Concord, Calif.), James Behan (Aberdeen, S.D.), Ty Englehart (Indialantic, Fla.), Dreavin Hodge (Sioux Falls, S.D.), Jack Kendrick (Hoover, Ala.), and Marques Monroe (Bloomington, Minn.).

“The number one question I’ve been asked since the season ended has been, ‘Have we signed a QB?’,” explained Schmidt. “We signed a great one. Ty is everything we were looking for. He’s a perfect match for our offense and for our team. He’s the guy we were searching for. ”



Ty Englehart – QB, 6-4, 205, Indialantic, Fla. / Melbourne HS / Presbyterian College

Ty Englehart is a 6-foot-4, 205-pound quarterback out of Melbourne High School and Presbyterian College. As a prep, he set the single season touchdown record and earned offensive player of the year honors. Englehart appeared in 26 contests for the Blue Hose of PC, throwing for 1,146 yards with 11 touchdowns. In addition, he added 510 yards rushing with eight touchdowns. He is the son of Steven and Carrie Englehart.

Moving to the trenches, Schmidt noted, “anytime you can upgrade your offensive line from a group that just rushed for 6.6 yards per carry, you’ve added a great player. Max makes us better front. We have huge holes to fill at guard, but Max is certainly capable.”



Max Anum – OL, 6-3, 320, Concord, Calif. / Northgate HS / Adams State

Max Anum is a 6-foot-3, 320-pound offensive lineman out of Northgate High School and Adams State. In his senior prep season, Anum tallied 50 tackles on the defensive line. Anum was a 3-time all-league selection. He appeared in 21 games in his two seasons at Adams State playing defensive and offensive line. In the fall of 2024, Anum recorded 27 total tackles for the Grizzlies. He is the son of Kelechi and Emmanuelle Anum.



James Behan – WR, 6-0, 185, Aberdeen, S.D. / Roncalli HS / Liberty U

James Behan is a 6-foot, 185-pound wide receiver out of Roncalli High School and Liberty University. As a prep, Behan recorded 720 yards receiving with eight touchdowns for the Cavaliers. He was an all-conference selection on both offense and defense. He is the son of Pamela Behan.

“We have a huge hole to fill at running back with Wyatt Block graduating and Hank coming back from injury,” added Schmidt. “Dre is a guy we really liked coming out of high school. We’re excited to get him bouncing out of USD.”

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Dreavin Hodge – RB, 6-0, 195, Sioux Falls, S.D. / Lincoln HS / South Dakota

Dreavin Hodge is a 6-foot, 195-pound running back out of Lincoln High School and the University of South Dakota. As a prep, Hodge tallied 635 yards rushing with nine touchdowns his senior year. He was a 2-time all-conference pick and all-state honoree. LHS won the South Dakota State Championship in his senior year. Hodge redshirted for the Coyotes in the fall of 2024. He is the son of Kylie and Rasheed Hodge.

Closing out the transfer additions, Schmidt said, "We needed help in the secondary and signing two safeties makes us very versatile for next year. Marques and Jack are two players with good experience."



Jack Kendrick – DB, 6-0, 195, Hoover, Ala. / Spain Park HS / Tennessee Tech

Jack Kendrick is a 6-foot, 195-pound defensive back out of Spain Park High School and Tennessee Tech. As a prep, Kendrick started three seasons for the Jaguars, recording 82 tackles as a senior. He was an All-South Metro, All-County, Birmingham All-Region, and Coaches All-Region selection. Kendrick appeared in three games for the TT Golden Eagles. He is the son of Blake and Susan Kendrick.



Marques Monroe – DB, 6-2, 200, Bloomington, Minn. / Bloomington Kennedy / Winona State

Marques Monroe is a 6-foot-2, 200-pound wide receiver out of Bloomington Kennedy and Winona State. As a prep, Monroe recorded 258 career tackles and 16 interceptions for the Eagles. He appeared in 13 games for the Warriors from 2024-25, recording 27 total tackles. He is the son of Jessica Hoium and Maurice Monroe.

Looking to the host of incoming freshman, Schmidt commented, "I am really proud of the work our coaches put into the 2026 signing class. Signing this many players out of high school means we really liked the talent of the players we were finding. We built great relationships with each of them. We went out looking for 'Northern Guys'- guys who are smart, tough, physical, violent on the field, and love the weight room. This class fits the bill. They are tremendous fits for Aberdeen and NSU football."

The full 2026 class includes Edly Amaro Jr. (Yankton, S.D.), Israel Bauer (West Fargo, N.D.), Jesiah Baum (Aberdeen, S.D.), Will Becker (St. Francis, Minn.), Jack Bertsch (Aberdeen, S.D.), Marek Bollig (Greeley, Colo.), Karson Borge (Aberdeen, S.D.), Andrew Brandhorst (Ankeny, Iowa), Joey Dallmann (Aberdeen, S.D.), Matthew Danninger (Marion, La.), Nico Delamora (Sparks, Nev.), Josh Elder (Rapid City, S.D.), Colby Flowers (Wessington Springs, S.D.), Jacob Ford (Yelm, Wash.), Kolte Garry (Hartford, S.D.), Drace Gaskins (Yankton, S.D.), Corbin Gerkin (Palmer, Alaska), Maximus Glab (Grafton, Wis.), Felipe Gonzalez (Aberdeen, S.D.), Alshamon Gunter (Avon, S.D.), Landon Hulst (Huron, S.D.), Benson Jerry (Abuja, Nigeria), Tony Johnson (Lakeville, Minn.), Riley Kerner (Wall, S.D.), Connor Kreger (Mukwonago, Wis.), Wilmot Matadi (Fargo, N.D.), Colten Meyer (Tucson, Ariz.), Landon Michlig (West Salem, Wis.), Cooper Milligan (Sparks, Nev.), Brady Moon (Green Bay, Wis.), Matthew Mount (Webster, S.D.), Miles Muilenburg (Grafton, Wis.), Nolan Pudwill (Brandon, S.D.), Brenden Ruth (Malcom, Neb.), Jojo Smith (Anna, Texas), Kolten Tesch (Fargo, N.D.), Westyn Thorpe (Frederick, S.D.), Adrian Wilson (Bellevue, Neb.), Edward Witkiewicz IV (Sun Prairie, Wis.), and AJ Wright (Edwardsburg, Mich.).

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Northern has continued to be a hub for local talent, welcoming the best and brightest from Northeastern South Dakota. Schmidt highlighted that, saying "We signed the very best from our region and hometown. The four Aberdeen Central guys needed to stay home, and we had to get Jesiah. We couldn't let those guys leave the region. I'm so excited to keep the best local talent home to play in Dacotah Bank Stadium. Signing 16 South Dakota high school guys is crucial to our program development."

"This class has everything we need offensively," said Schmidt. "They match great with the group we brought in last year. We signed a great quarterback, a strong offensive line, and marvelous playmakers. Offensively, the class always starts up front. We really like this group of offensive linemen. We got bigger and meaner with those guys. That group will be really good down the road."



Marek Bollig – OL, 6-2, 275, Greeley, Colo. / Severance HS

Marek Bollig is a 6-foot-2, 275-pound offensive lineman out of Severance High School. He was a 3-year starter for the Silver Knights under the direction of head coach Martin McVicker. Bollig earned first team all-conference, all-state, and academic all-state twice in his prep career. He is the son of Craig and Liberty Bollig.



Drace Gaskins – OL, 6-4, 280, Yankton, S.D. / Yankton HS

Drace Gaskins is a 6-foot-4, 280-pound offensive lineman out of Yankton High School. He was a starter for the Bucks under the direction of head coach Brady Muth. Gaskins was an all-state honoree in 2025 as Yankton won the Eastern South Dakota Conference and finished second at the South Dakota State Tournament. He is the son of Dana Dracy and Zeth and Sherry Gaskins.



Riley Kerner – OL, 6-4, 320, Wall, S.D. / Wall HS

Riley Kerner is a 6-foot-4, 320-pound offensive lineman out of Wall High School. He was a 4-year starter for the Eagles under the direction of head coach Lex Heathershaw. Wall went 12-0 in 2025, winning the South Dakota State Championship. Kerner was a 2-time all-conference and all-state selection. He totaled 127 pancake blocks without giving up a sack in his final two seasons. He is the son of Kim and Kelly Kerner.



Edward Witkiewicz IV – OL, 6-4, 310, Sun Prairie, Wis. / Sun Prairie East HS

Edward Witkiewicz IV is a 6-foot-4, 310-pound offensive lineman out of Sun Prairie East High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Cardinals under direction of head coach Brian Kaminski. Witkiewicz earned back-to-back all-conference honors and was an all-region selection in 2025. SPEHS reached the Wisconsin State Tournament in 2023, 2024, and 2025. He is the son of Emily and Edward Witkiewicz.



AJ Wright – OL, 6-3, 285, Edwardsburg, Mich. / Edwardsburg HS

AJ Wright is a 6-foot-3, 285-pound offensive lineman out of Edwardsburg High School. He was a 2-year starter for the Eddies under the direction of head coach Dan Purlee. EHS reached the Michigan State Tournament in 2024 and 2025. He is the son of Troy and Marcy Wright.

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He continued, "leading the class on offense is the quarterback position. Colten Meyer is everything we want in that position. Strong arm, accuracy, elusiveness, and leadership. He has grown up playing at a very high level of competition. He will be ready to play early in his career."



Colten Meyer – QB, 6-0, 200, Tucson, Ariz. / Marana HS

Colten Meyer is a 6-foot, 200-pound quarterback out of Marana High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Tigers under the direction of head coach Phillip Steward. Meyer tallied a 25-4 record overall as a starter, throwing for over 9,000 yards with 85 touchdowns. He led the state of Arizona as a senior in total passing yards and completion percentage. In the fall of 2024, Meyer was the 5A Quarterback and Offensive Player of the Year, earning the Ed Dorothy Award. As a senior, he earned 5A first team honors and was the 5A Player of the Year. He is the Marana High School all-time leader for passing yards. He is the son of Stephanie and Cameron Meyer.

Northern adds five 'feet on the ground' heading into 2026 with a group that racked up more than 9,500 high school rushing yards and 158 touchdowns, including a familiar face to NSU. "Brady Moon is an elite running back from Wisconsin. He obviously has ties to Northern as he grew up in Aberdeen and around NSU Athletics," said Schmidt. "It's so much more than that. He is a fantastic player and the kind of leader you need in your program."



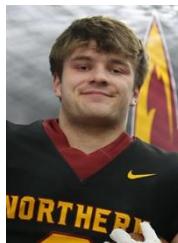
Brady Moon – RB, 5-9, 180, Green Bay, Wis. / Bay Port HS

Brady Moon is a 5-foot-9, 180-pound running back out of Bay Port High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Pirates under the direction of head coach Steven Jorgensen. As a senior, Moon tallied 2,198 yards rushing and 435 yards receiving with 40 total touchdowns. He averaged 8.1 yards per carry in 2025. He was a 3-time all-conference selection, all-region honoree, all-state pick, and the FRCC Back of the Year in 2025. Bay Port won the Wisconsin State Championship in 2024 and finished as the state runner-up in 2025, posting a 23-5 record in those two seasons. He is the son of former Northern State Director of Athletics Josh Moon and NSU School of Education professor Andria Moon.



Jesiah Baum – RB, 5-10, 165, Aberdeen, S.D. / Warner HS

Jesiah Baum is a 5-foot-10, 165-pound running back out of Warner High School. He was a 4-year starter and team captain for the Monarchs under the direction of head coach Derek Hoellein. Baum recorded 2,587 yards rushing, 1,462 yards receiving, and 70 touchdowns in his career. As a senior, he rushed for nearly 1000 yards and recorded 33 touchdowns scored. Baum was a 3-time all-conference selection, 2-time all-state honoree, the 2024 Lake Region Conference MVP, and a member of the South Dakota Elite 60 team. Warner won the South Dakota State Championship in 2023 and finished as the state runner-up in 2022. He is the son of Derek and Lindsay Baum.



Landon Hulst – RB, 5-11, 205, Huron, S.D. / Huron HS

Landon Hulst is a 5-foot-11, 205-pound running back out of Huron High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Tigers under the direction of head coach Dru Strand. Hulst recorded over 1,500 career rushing yards, including 1,149 in 2025. He added 11 touchdowns in two seasons. Hulst was an all-conference, all-state, and all-academic selection as a senior. He is the son of Rick and Whitney Hulst.

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Cooper Milligan – RB, 5-11, 180, Sparks, Nev. / Spanish Springs HS

Cooper Milligan is a 5-foot-11, 180-pound running back out of Spanish Springs High School. He was a 4-year starter for the Cougars under the direction of head coach Rob Hummel. Milligan rushed for 1,921 yards and 18 touchdowns in his final three seasons. He was a 2-time all-region performer at both running back and punter. SSHS won the Northern Nevada Regional Championship and Nevada State Championship in the fall of 2025, going a perfect 13-0. He is the son of Mike and Maggie Milligan.



Kolten Tesch – ATH, 5-8, 175, Fargo, N.D. / Fargo Davies HS

Kolten Tesch is a 5-foot-8, 175-pound athlete out of Fargo Davies High School. He was a 3-year starter for the Eagles under the direction of head coach Wayne Werremeyer. As a senior, Tesch rushed for 1,533 yards with 19 touchdowns, averaging 11.4 yards per carry. On defense in 2024 and 2025, he recorded 132 tackles, five interceptions, four forced fumbles, three fumble recoveries, and four blocked PATs. Tesch is a 2-time all-conference selection, all-state honoree, and academic all-state recipient, as well as the 2025 ND Max Preps Player of the Year, and player of the game for the North Dakota State Championship. FDHS won the North Dakota State Championship in 2025 and finished as the state runner-up in 2024. He is the son of Jennifer Tesch.

Closing out the offensive core, Schmidt touched on the playmakers in the group, “the wide receivers and tight ends that signed are elite. They have speed, size, and winning pedigrees. They all played for great high school programs and against great competition. We really liked all of them at camps and see great developmental potential in all of them.” This group tallied over 7,500 yards receiving and 82 touchdowns in their prep careers.



Israel Bauer – WR, 5-11, 180, West Fargo, N.D. / Horace HS

Israel Bauer is a 5-foot-11, 180-pound wide receiver out of Horace High School. He was a 4-year starter and team captain for the Hawks under the direction of head coach Harvey Mcmahin. Bauer totaled over 1,700 receiving yards and 18 touchdowns in his prep career. He was a 3-time all-conference performer and earned the state championship MVP award in 2024. Horace won the North Dakota State Championship in the fall of 2024. He is the son of Tempestt Bauer.



Karson Borge – WR, 6-1, 170, Aberdeen, S.D. / Central HS

Karson Borge is a 6-foot-1, 170-pound wide receiver out of Central High School. He was a 3-year starter for the Golden Eagles under the direction of head coach Justin Briese. Borge tallied over 1,000 all-purpose yards as a prep, leading the team in receiving yards and total yards in 2025. He finished the 2025 season, ranked top-3 in receiving yards in the state. He is the son of Eric and Amber Borge.



Andrew Brandhorst – WR, 6-2, 200, Ankeny, Iowa / Ankeny HS

Andrew Brandhorst is a 6-foot-2, 200-pound wide receiver out of Ankeny High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Hawks under the direction of head coach Jeff Bauer. Brandhorst recorded 1,322 yards receiving with 16 touchdowns in his prep career, finishing third in career receptions, third in receiving yards, and second in touchdowns at Ankeny. He was a 3-time CIML All-Academic recipient, 2-time all-district honoree, and academic all-state selection. AHS reached the playoffs in his first three seasons, finishing as the Iowa State runner-up in 2023. He is the son of Chad and Janell Brandhorst.

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Colby Flowers – TE, 6-5, 210, Wessington Springs, S.D. / Wessington HS

Colby Flowers is a 6-foot-5, 210-pound tight end out of Wessington High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Spartans under the direction of head coach Micheal Schmitz. Flowers recorded 1,359 all-purpose yards and 15 touchdowns in his career on offense, adding 274 tackles, 29.5 sacks, and eight interceptions on defense. He was a 2-time all-conference honoree and all-state selection. WHS won the SESD Championship in the fall of 2025. He is the son of Kandy and Doug Flowers.



Jacob Ford – WR, 5-8, 170, Yelm, Wash. / Yelm HS

Jacob Ford is a 5-foot-8, 170-pound wide receiver out of Yelm High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Tornadoes under the direction of head coach Jason Ronquillo. Ford tallied 2,281 all-purpose yards, including 1,856 yards receiving, and 25 touchdowns in his prep career. He earned SPSL all-league honors his last two seasons. Yelm High School was a 2-time qualifier for the state tournament, winning the Washington State Championship in 2022. He is the son of Cory and Averie Ford.



Kolte Garry – TE, 6-3, 230, Hartford, S.D. / West Central HS

Kolte Garry is a 6-foot-3, 230-pound tight end out of West Central High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Trojans under the direction of head coach Matt Thorson. As a senior, Garry recorded 400 yards receiving and eight touchdowns, averaging 14.8 yards per catch. He was a first team all-conference and first team all-state selection, as well as a member of the Sioux Falls Live 25 team and SoDak Select 60 team. WCHS finished as the South Dakota State Runner-up in 2022 and 2023. He is the son of Patrick and Amber Garry.

Under Schmidt's leadership, Northern State University football has produced four defensive All-Americans and consistently ranked in the top-5 of the NSIC in multiple defensive categories, including leading the league in pass defense in 2024 and scoring defense in 2022. "This defensive group is a dream," Schmidt described. "I'm honestly speechless in regard to how good this class is. The linebackers who signed are incredible. There are a bunch of instant contributors in that position. We needed to get better and bigger at defensive line and this class certainly addressed those needs. They are long, athletic, and proven winners. Our secondary class is spectacular. There are a few guys who will push to play early in their careers at NSU."

Coming up through the defensive coaching ranks, Schmidt has put an emphasis on strong defensive talents year in and year out; pinpointing the student-athletes that fit the Northern State mold. "This defensive line position class is elite," raved Schmidt. "Will Becker is a monster. A true 'Northern Guy'. Al and Edly have tremendous length and ability. Landon and Miles played big time football in Wisconsin. Nico won a state championship in Nevada. Felipe and Jack are staying home! Benson is such a wild story; coming to Aberdeen from Nigeria is a storyline to follow while he's here." The group combined makes up over 400 career tackles, including 136.5 tackles for a loss and 51.5 sacks.



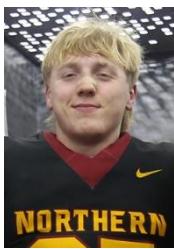
Edly Amaro Jr. – DL, 6-4, 225, Yankton, S.D. / Yankton HS

Edly Amaro Jr. is a 6-foot-4, 225-pound defensive lineman out of Yankton High School. He was a 3-year starter for the Bucks under the direction of head coach Brady Muth. Amaro recorded 66 tackles in his career, including 32.0 tackles for a loss and 26.0 sacks. He was an all-conference and all-state selection. YHS finished as the South Dakota State runner-up in the fall of 2023. He is the son of Sol Amaro.

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Will Becker – DL, 6-5, 250, St. Francis, Minn. / St. Francis HS

Will Becker is a 6-foot-5, 250-pound defensive lineman out of St. Francis High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Saints under the direction of head coach Tracy Torson. Becker tallied 48 tackles, including 10.5 tackles for a loss and 2.5 sacks. He is the son of Sarah and Ryan Becker.



Jack Bertsch – DL, 6-5, 220, Aberdeen, S.D. / Central HS

Jack Bertsch is a 6-foot-5, 220-pound defensive lineman out of Central High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Golden Eagles under the direction of head coach Justin Briese. Bertsch led CHS in sacks in 2025, earning the Spirit of the Eagle Award. He is the son of Jed and Amy Bertsch.



Nico Delamora – DL, 5-11, 290, Sparks, Nev. / Spanish Springs HS

Nico Delamora is a 5-foot-11, 290-pound defensive lineman out of Spanish Springs High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Cougars under the direction of head coach Robert Hummel. In his final two seasons, Delamora notched 84 total tackles, including 21.0 tackles for a loss and 5.0 sacks, as well as eight forced fumbles. He was a 2-time all-region performer, earning first team accolades in 2025. Spanish Springs won regional and state championships in the fall of 2025 with a 13-0 record. He is the son of Melissa and Hugo Delamora.



Felipe Gonzalez – DL, 6-3, 295, Aberdeen, S.D. / Central HS

Felipe Gonzalez is a 6-foot-3, 295-pound defensive lineman out of Central High School. He is a 3-year starter and team captain for the Golden Eagles under the direction of head coach Justin Briese. In his final two seasons, Gonzalez recorded 63 tackles, including 11.0 tackles for a loss. He was an all-conference and all-state honoree, as well as an Argus Leader Elite 45 team member. He is the son of Berta Venegas and Marco Gonzalez.



Alshamon Gunter – DL, 6-6, 230, Avon, S.D. / Avon HS

Alshamon Gunter is a 6-foot-6, 230-pound defensive lineman out of Avon High School. He was a 4-year starter and team captain for the Pirates under the direction of head coach Justyn Lukkes. Avon went 33-11 in his four seasons, winning the South Dakota State Championship in 2023 and finishing as the runner-up in 2025. He is the son of Jamey Meyer.



Benson Jerry – DL, 6-4, 240, Abuja, Nigeria / NFL Academy (England)

Benson Jerry is a 6-foot-4, 240-pound defensive lineman out of Abuja, Nigeria and the NFL Academy in England. In his lone season at the NFL Academy, Jerry was a starter under the direction of head coach Steven Hagen. He recorded ten tackles, 5.0 tackles for a loss, 2.0 sacks, a forced fumble, and a fumble recovery. He is the son of Ignatius Jerry.

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***Landon Michlig – DL, 6-4, 240, West Salem, Wis. / West Salem HS***

Landon Michlig is a 6-foot-4, 240-pound defensive lineman out of West Salem High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Panthers under the direction of head coach Ryan Olson. In those three seasons, Michlig recorded 98 career tackles, including 41.0 tackles for a loss. In addition, he notched 10.5 sacks, six forced fumbles, and four fumble recoveries. As a member of the special teams core, Michlig notched over 1,600 yards punting, averaging 41.9 yards per punt in 2025. He was a 3-time all-conference performer, earning accolades on the defensive line, as a punter, and as a tight end. Finally, Michlig was a member of the All-Supernova first team in 2024 and 2025 and all-region team in 2025. He is the son of Greg and Stacy Michlig.

***Miles Muilenburg – DL, 6-1, 265, Grafton, Wis. / Grafton HS***

Miles Muilenburg is a 6-foot-1, 265-pound defensive lineman out of Grafton High School. He was a 3-year starter for the Blackhawks under the direction of head coach Jim Norris. Muilenburg notched 73 career tackles, including 16.0 tackles for a loss and 5.5 sacks. He was a 3-time all-conference selection, all-region honoree, and the Woodland Conference Lineman of the Year. GHS won the Wisconsin State Championship in the fall of 2025, going a perfect 14-0. He is the son of Deirdre Muilenburg.

Schmidt continued, “the linebackers are incredible. Getting late commitments from Wilmot and Max changes the entire complexion of this class. Those two are the cherries on top. Max was one of the most dominant players in Wisconsin this year and led his team to a state championship with a state record ten tackles for a loss in the semi-final game alone. Those two added with Corbin coming from Alaska and Connor makes this group so good.” The core of seven student-athletes accounts for 910 career tackles and three state championships.

***Joey Dallmann – LB, 6-1, 215, Aberdeen, S.D. / Central HS***

Joey Dallmann is a 6-foot-1, 215-pound linebacker out of Central High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Golden Eagles under the direction of head coach Justin Briese. As a senior, Dallmann recorded 44 tackles, including 6.0 tackles for a loss and 2.5 sacks. He was an all-conference, all-state, and academic all-state honoree. He is the son of Ryan Dallmann and Jennifer Johnson.

***Josh Elder – LB, 6-0, 240, Rapid City, S.D. / St. Thomas More***

Josh Elder is a 6-foot, 240-pound linebacker out of St. Thomas More. He was a 4-year starter and team captain for the Cavaliers under the direction of head coach Austin Hagen. In his final two seasons, Elder tallied 148 total tackles, including 76 solo stops, as well as 911 yards rushing with 13 touchdowns. He was a 2-time all-conference selection and academic all-state honoree. St. Thomas More won the first South Dakota State Championship in school history in 2025, going a perfect 12-0. He is the son of Eric and Jill Elder.

***Corbin Gerkin – LB, 6-2, 205, Palmer, Alaska / Palmer HS***

Corbin Gerkin is a 6-foot-2, 205-pound linebacker out of Palmer High School. He was a 4-year starter and team captain for the Moose under the direction of head coach Tim Popowski. In the fall of 2025, Gerkin recorded 85 tackles, 2,400 all-purpose yards, and 19 touchdowns. He was a first team all-conference selection and academic award recipient in 2025. He is the son of Brooke and Justin Gerkin.

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Maximus Glab – LB, 6-3, 215, Grafton, Wis. / Grafton HS

Maximus Glab is a 6-foot-3, 215-pound linebacker out of Grafton High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Blackhawks under the direction of head coach Jim Norris. Glab set the single game state record recording 10.0 tackles for a loss in 2025. He was an all-conference, all-region, and all-state selection, as well as the Defensive Lineman of the Year. GHS won the Wisconsin State Championship with a perfect 14-0 this season. He is the son of Jessica and Andy Glab.



Connor Kreger – LB, 6-2, 220, Mukwonago, Wis. / Mukwonago HS

Connor Kreger is a 6-foot-2, 220-pound linebacker out of Mukwonago High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Indians under the direction of head coach Mike Gnewuch. Kreger racked up 163 total tackles, including 80 solo stops and 7.0 sacks in his high school career. He was a 2-time all-conference and all-region selection, earning first team honors in both seasons. He is the son of Adam and Rachel Kreger.



Wilmot Matadi – LB, 6-1, 240, Fargo, N.D. / Fargo Davies HS

Wilmot Matadi is a 6-foot-1, 240-pound linebacker out of Fargo Davies High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Eagles under the direction of head coach Wayne Werremeyer. In his final two seasons, Matadi recorded 157 tackles, four forced fumbles, and two fumble recoveries. He was a 2-time all-conference and all-state selection. FDHS won the North Dakota State Championship in 2025 and finished as the runner-up in 2024. In addition, the Eagles tallied a conference championship in 2025, going 11-1 on the year. He is the son of Helen and Kpah Matadi.



Matthew Mount – LB, 6-0, 225, Webster, S.D. / Webster Area HS

Matthew Mount is a 6-foot, 225-pound linebacker out of Webster Area High School. He was a 4-year starter and team captain for the Bearcats under the direction of head coach Tyler Wagner. Mount tallied 313 career tackles, including 21.0 tackles for a loss and seven sacks. He was a 3-time all-conference selection and 2025 all-state honoree. He is the son of Randy and Stacy Mount.

The second largest position group in the class, the Wolves secondary adds seven heading into 2026. “Nolan Pudwill and Matthew Danninger are two of the most explosive players we have recruited here at NSU,” explained Schmidt. “They pop off the screen when you watch their film. Putting those two at corner and playing with JoJo, Tony, and Adrian is huge.”



Matthew Danninger – DB, 5-10, 185, Marion, Iowa / Marion HS

Matthew Danninger is a 5-foot-10, 185-pound defensive back out of Marion High School. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Wolves under the direction of head coach Michael Joyner. In the fall of 2025, Danninger recorded 11.5 tackles, eight pass break-ups, three interceptions, and one forced fumble. In addition, he added over 900 yards on offense in his final two seasons, scoring eight touchdowns. Danninger was selected to the all-district, all-metro, all-conference, and academic all-conference teams. He is the son of Jay and Gail Danninger.

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***Tony Johnson – DB, 6-3, 185, Lakeville, Minn. / Lakeville North HS***

Tony Johnson is a 6-foot-3, 185-pound defensive back out of Lakeville North High School. He was a 2-year starter for the Panthers under the direction of head coach Brian Vossen. Johnson recorded 103 total tackles, as well as four interceptions and ten pass break-ups in his career. He was a 2-time all-metro selection. He is the son of Harvey and Yvonne Johnson.

***Nolan Pudwill – DB, 6-1, 175, Brandon, S.D. / Brandon Valley HS***

Nolan Pudwill is a 6-foot-1, 175-pound defensive back out of Brandon Valley High School. He was a 3-year starter for the Lynx under the direction of head coach Matt Christensen. Pudwill notched 108 career tackles with seven interceptions. In addition, he averaged 30 yards per kick return. Pudwill was a 2-time all-conference and all-state selection, and an honoree on the Sioux Falls Live 25 team and Select 60 South Dakota team. Brandon Valley won the South Dakota State Championship in 2025, following a runner-up finish in 2024. He is the son of Allan and

Andrea Pudwill.

***Brenden Ruth – DB, 6-0, 185, Malcom, Neb. / Skutt Catholic***

Brenden Ruth is a 6-foot, 185-pound defensive back out of Skutt Catholic. He was a 3-year starter for the Skyhawks under the direction of head coach Matt Turman. Ruth tallied 144 career tackles, including 54 in his senior season. He added ten touchdowns and three interceptions. He was a 3-time all-state honorable mention selection, 2-time All-Omaha Area and all-district-pick, and a 2-time academic all-district recipient. In addition, Skutt Catholic won the Nebraska State Championship in the fall of 2024. He is the son of Royce and Jennifer Ruth.

***Jojo Smith – DB, 6-0, 175, Anna, Texas / Anna HS***

Jojo Smith is a 6-foot, 175-pound defensive back out of Anna High School. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Coyotes under the direction of head coach Seth Parr. Smith recorded 180 career tackles, including 9.0 tackles for a loss, six interceptions, nine pass break-ups, and four forced fumbles. He led AHS in kick return yards, tackles, and interceptions in 2024 and interceptions in 2025. Smith was a 2-time academic all-district selection and all-district first team honoree. AHS won the Texas State Championship in 2023 and earned area championships in 2024 and 2025. He is the son of Chris and Jennifer Smith.

***Westyn Thorpe – DB, 5-11, 170, Frederick, S.D. / Frederick Area***

Westyn Thorpe is a 5-foot-11, 170-pound defensive back out of Frederick Area. He was a 3-year starter and team captain for the Titans under the direction of head coach Jeff Kosters. Thorpe recorded 198 career tackles in his four seasons, as well as nine interceptions. Playing on both sides of the ball, he added 1,578 yards rushing. Thorpe was a 2-time all-conference honoree, academic all-state selection, and all-state pick. He is the son of Bryson and Greta Thorpe.

***Adrian Wilson – DB, 6-3, 185, Bellevue, Neb. / Bellevue West Senior High***

Adrian Wilson is a 6-foot-3, 185-pound defensive back out of Bellevue West Senior High. He was a 2-year starter and team captain for the Thunderbirds under the direction of head coach Michael Huffman. Wilson tallied 135 career tackles, as well as four fumble recoveries, two interceptions, and three defensive touchdowns. As a senior, Wilson earned all-district and all-state honors, while also being named to the Best Upper Class team. He is the son of Derrus and Kristian Wilson.

Wolves

The class of 40 incoming freshmen and six transfers will join a Wolves roster heading into its seventh season under the direction of Mike Schmidt. The 2025 Wolves went 7-4 overall and 6-4 in the Northern Sun, recording an upset victory over No. 10 Minnesota Duluth and big home victories over the Bulldogs and MSU Moorhead Dragons from the confines of Dacotah Bank Stadium. Northern heads into 2026 with 46 new faces, as well as new look on offensive with recently promoted offensive coordinator Kiefer Price at the helm. The Wolves return a handful of NSIC All-Conference performers in Jake Adams, Gabe Gutierrez, Elijah Jopp, Cooper Logan, and Javonnee Szymanski, as well as key contributors and potential breakout players Kegan Mountain, Hank Kraft, Zach Kraft, Noah Draeger, Paden Johnson, and Ross Rowland. Stay tuned to nsuwolves.com for the 2026 football schedule release and Wolves football news.

THE VISUAL BREAKDOWN

