



For Immediate Release  
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**NORTHERN ILLINOIS' KILL SIGNS 13 PLAYERS TO NATIONAL LETTERS OF INTENT**

*First Recruiting Class for New Huskie Coach Features Speed and Athleticism*

DeKALB, Ill. – Thirteen players have signed National Letters of Intent to play football for the Northern Illinois Huskies and new head coach Jerry Kill, Kill announced on Wednesday, national football signing day.

With a relatively small number of scholarships to award for 2008, Kill filled his first Huskie class with athletes at every position. With an eye toward filling holes on the 2008 roster while improving NIU's overall team speed, Kill and his coaching staff scoured Chicagoland, the Midwest and beyond to sign the 13 players that make up the 2008 Northern Illinois recruiting class.

Kill was pleased with the group of players he introduced as the newest Huskies on Wednesday.

"As a staff, we feel that we were able to fill some specific needs with this class," Kill said. "We like the speed in this class and the kids we recruited are a good fit for our program. We have some playmakers, and student-athletes that really want to be here at Northern Illinois."

Northern Illinois signees include eight players who earned all-state honors during their prep careers, and speed and athleticism throughout the roster, according to Kill.

"We did put an emphasis on recruiting speed," Kill said. "We have that in this class, and even the big guys that we signed can run and are very athletic. This is an athletic class with players that will help our football program in some key areas."

Though small in number, Kill's first Huskie signing class is rich in diversity, with players at nine different positions from nine different states as well as Washington, D.C. The Huskies signed seven defensive players, including three defensive linemen, five offensive players and one "athlete" with several of the new recruits also slated to compete for punt and kickoff return duties. Despite getting a late start in filling out the class following Kill's hiring on Dec. 13, Northern Illinois inked three players from Illinois, two from Florida and one each from Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Washington, D.C.

"Our emphasis on recruiting Chicagoland will not change," Kill said. "We will continue to focus our recruiting there, as well as in Minnesota, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa. We've got five coaches assigned to Chicagoland, and we have spent most of our time in our short tenure here recruiting juniors as well as this year's seniors. In the meantime, we used 24 years of coaching experience and contacts in five or six other states to help us put this class together."

Two players in the 13-man class – linebacker Darnell Bolding and defensive back Kiaree (KY-Ree) Daniels – were signed after participating for one year in junior colleges in Kansas and will be sophomores for the Huskies in 2008. Bolding and freshman wide receiver Chase Mejia, an early graduate out of Rock Bridge High School in Columbia, Mo., began classes at NIU in January and will take part in spring drills beginning in March.

The Huskies lost only eight seniors off the 2007 squad, including only four who saw significant playing time for NIU last season. Kill and his Northern Illinois team will start spring practices March 24 with the Annual Spring Game slated for April 26, 2008 at Huskie Stadium.

-- complete list of 2008 signees and bios attached --



## 2008 NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOTBALL SIGNEES (13)

Name	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Cl.	Hometown (High School/Junior College)
Darnell Bolding	LB	6-2	215	So.	Washington, D.C. (Bowie HS/Coffeyville C.C.)
Meco Brown	RB	5-7	185	Fr.	Moss Point, Miss. (Moss Point HS)
Adam Coleman	DT	6-3	259	Fr.	Bettendorf, Iowa (Bettendorf HS)
Maurice Coon	DE	6-1	238	Fr.	Lakeland, Fla. (George Jenkins HS)
Kiaree Daniels	DB	5-10	195	So.	Kissimmee, Fla. (Osceola HS/Highland J.C.)
Tommy Davis	ATH	5-11	180	Fr.	East St. Louis, Ill. (Althoff Catholic HS)
Dan Edem	TE	6-2	220	Fr.	Apple Valley, Minn. (Eastview HS)
Brian Lawson	DL	6-3	260	Fr.	Park Forest, Ill. (Rich East HS)
Chase Mejia	WR	5-8	170	Fr.	Columbia, Mo. (Rock Bridge HS)
Logan Pegram	OL	6-3	298	Fr.	Silver Lake, Kansas (Silver Lake HS)
Brandon Rogers	QB	6-2	210	Fr.	Broken Arrow, Okla. (Tulsa Union HS)
Kevin Sabock	LB	6-2	203	Fr.	Sycamore, Ill. (Sycamore HS)
Jody Van Laanen	S	6-0	205	Fr.	Green Bay, Wisc. (Ashwaubenon HS)

### CLASS BREAKDOWN

#### By Position

Defensive Line .....	3
Defensive Back .....	2
Linebacker.....	2
Quarterback.....	1
Offensive Line .....	1
Athlete.....	1
Tight End.....	1
Running Back .....	1
Wide Receiver .....	1

#### By State

Illinois.....	3
Florida .....	2
Kansas.....	1
Missouri .....	1
Iowa.....	1
Minnesota .....	1
Wisconsin.....	1
Oklahoma .....	1
Mississippi.....	1
Washington, D.C.....	1

## 2008 Northern Illinois Football Signees Bios

### **Darnell Bolding, 6-2, 215, LB, So., Washington, D.C. (Bowie HS/Coffeyville C.C.)**

Earned all-conference first team and all-area second team honors as a senior at Bowie High School... *Maryland County Newspapers'* All-County Second Team member made 97 tackles (63 solo), recorded three sacks and forced three fumbles in his final season with the Bulldogs... received Big School All-State Honorable Mention accolades from *MDVarsity.com*... redshirted his first season at Coffeyville Community College... enrolled at NIU in January and will participate in spring drills.

### **Meco Brown, 5-7, 185, RB, Fr., Moss Point, Miss. (Moss Point HS)**

Member of the Mississippi All-Star Classic Team... named the 2007 Class 4A Region 7 Most Valuable Player... as a senior, rushed for 1,331 yards, tallied 317 receiving yards and scored 20 touchdowns... earned Mississippi Coaches Association Second Team All-State recognition as a junior, when he gained over 2,400 all-purpose yards and scored 18 total touchdowns... honored as the 2006 Class 5A Region 4 Player of the Year... scored five career touchdowns on punt returns... helped the Tigers go 12-2 and advance to the Mississippi Class 4A State semifinals, where the team lost in the final minute to eventual champion Laurel... Tigers also made the state playoffs during his junior season... first name is pronounced MEE-coe.

### **Adam Coleman, 6-3, 259, DT, Fr., Bettendorf, Iowa (Bettendorf HS)**

Ranked eighth in the *Rivals.com* Iowa Top 10... as a senior, was recognized by the *Des Moines Register* on its Elite All-State Team and on the *Iowa Newspaper Association* All-State First Team... garnered All-Mississippi Athletic Conference Defensive Player of the Year honors for his part in Bettendorf's 13-0 record and Iowa Class 4A state championship... earned a bevy of all-state accolades from the *Iowa High School Association* (first team), *Des Moines Register* (second team), and *Iowa Newspaper Association* (third team)... recorded 82 tackles (38 solo), as well as 10 TFLs and seven sacks... as a junior, totaled 77 tackles (40 solo), including 16 for loss and seven sacks, on Bettendorf's 10-2 squad... received Iowa Class 4A Academic All-State honors for both football and track and field... threw shot put and discus, for which he was a state qualifier... uncle Spin Williams played tight end at Northern Iowa, was a pitching coach for the Pittsburgh Pirates for 28 years and is currently the player development and scouting pitching advisor for the Washington Nationals... father played basketball at Saint Ambrose.

### **Maurice Coon, 6-1, 238, DE, Fr., Lakeland, Fla. (George Jenkins HS)**

Captured all-county honorable mention honors as a senior and third-team all-state accolades as a sophomore... slowed by injury during his junior season... in his career, totaled 70 tackles and nine sacks as a defender while gaining 1,050 all-purpose yards and three touchdowns on offense and special teams... saw action at defensive end, tailback, and returned punts and kicks... played for two-time district champion Kathleen before transferring to George Jenkins as a senior... lettered in track and field, placing fifth in the shot put and seventh in the discus at the Florida Class 3A State Championships.

### **Kiaree Daniels, 5-10, 195, DB, So., Kissimmee, Fla. (Osceola HS/Highland J.C.)**

*Osceola News-Gazette's* Player of the Year led the county with 122 tackles and also had three interceptions... received *Orlando Sentinel* All-State honors and played in the Central Florida High School East vs. West All-Star Game... recorded 48 tackles (26 solo) at Highland Junior College in Highland, Kansas as a freshman... earned third-team all-state recognition as a junior... garnered *Florida Sun* All-County Weightlifting Team accolades... participated in track and field at Osceola as a sprinter... first name is pronounced KY-ree.

## 2008 Northern Illinois Football Signees Bios – 2-2-2

### **Tommy Davis, 5-11, 180, ATH, Fr., East St. Louis, Ill. (Althoff Catholic HS)**

Earned first-team all-conference recognition as both a defensive back and a wide receiver as a senior... named the city's most valuable player and earned second team all-metro honors at wide receiver... collected 27 receptions for 470 yards, made 52 tackles and returned three kicks for touchdowns in his final season... grabbed 40 catches for 390 yards as a junior... participated in track, competing in jumps and sprints... father was a running back at Iowa State... cousin Peerless Price plays wide receiver for the Buffalo Bills.

### **Dan Edem, 6-2, 220, TE, Fr., Apple Valley, Minn. (Eastview HS)**

Garnered *Star Tribune* All-Metro Third Team honors playing for 11-2 Eastview... earned all-state honorable mention notice from the *Associated Press* in 2007... caught 14 passes for 226 yards and four touchdowns as a senior... caught eight passes for 117 yards as a junior... started for the Lightning on the defensive line, where he totaled six career sacks and forced three fumbles... helped the Lightning to a sectional title and to the Class 5A state semifinal... played lacrosse at Eastview, where his team advanced to the Class 5A state semifinals.

### **Brian Lawson, 6-3, 260, DL, Fr., Park Forest, Ill. (Rich East HS)**

Named an Illinois High School Football Coaches Association All-State performer as a senior... received recognition as an all-area and all-conference performer all three seasons... recorded 67 tackles (35 solo), 10 sacks, 18 tackles for loss, forced 10 fumbles and blocked three field goals in his final season with the Rockets... as a junior, tallied 50 tackles, 10 tackles for loss, and two sacks... helped the Rockets reach the playoffs in 2005 and 2007... competed in throws, jumps and sprints for the Rich East track and field team... as a wrestler, was a two-time all-conference performer who helped the Rockets to an 18-0 record in his junior season and a 17-1 mark as a senior.

### **Chase Mejia, 5-8, 170, WR, Fr., Columbia, Mo. (Rock Bridge HS)**

Garnered first team recognition at the U.S. National Army Combine, and Kansas City Nike Combine, where he was also the camp's special teams most valuable player... a first team-state all-state and all-league honoree as a senior... as a junior at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School, received all-state, all-county and all-conference accolades... caught 37 passes for 600 yards and five touchdowns as a junior... returned five kicks for touchdowns in his career... graduated early from high school and has already enrolled at NIU... last name is pronounced Muh-HEE-uh.

### **Logan Pegram, 6-3, 298, OL, Fr., Silver Lake, Kansas (Silver Lake HS)**

Named to the *Topeka Capital Journal's* All-State Top 11 as a senior and All-State Top 33 as a junior... played his way onto the 2006 *Kansas-Sports.com* All-State First Team... was a member of the Kansas Shrine Bowl All-Star Team... garnered all-conference honors as an offensive lineman in both his junior and senior seasons... also played defensive tackle compiling 46 tackles (23 solo) as a senior and 37 (21 solo) as a junior... helped lead the Eagles to a 14-0 record and the Kansas Class 3A State Championship as a junior... team finished as the state runner-up in his three other seasons with the program... also started for the Silver Lake basketball team, played and threw the shot put and discus... last name is pronounced PEE-grum.

### **Brandon Rogers, 6-2, 210, QB, Fr., Broken Arrow, Okla. (Tulsa Union HS)**

An Oklahoma Football Coaches Association First Team All-State selection... named to the *Tulsa World* All-Metro First Team... earned Class 6A-3 Most Valuable Player accolades... threw for 2,565 yards and 25 touchdowns his senior year... rushed for 10 touchdowns... helped the Redskins to a 13-1 record and the state championship game... as a junior, completed 119-of-205 passes for 1,586 yards and 18 touchdowns... as a senior, was selected to play in the Texas vs. Oklahoma Oil Bowl and the Oklahoma Football Coaches Association East-West All-Star game... also played guard for the Redskin basketball team.

## **2008 Northern Illinois Football Signees Bios – 3-3-3**

### **Kevin Sabock, 6-2, 203, LB, Fr., Sycamore, Ill. (Sycamore HS)**

Earned a spot on the Western Sun Conference First Team as a senior... tallied 119 tackles (53 solo), knocked down five passes and gathered one interception... helped the Spartans to their first playoff appearance since 2002... as a sophomore, recorded 100 tackles (48 solo)... also competed in track, where he garnered all-conference honors after his junior season as a thrower... son of former Huskie assistant coach Mike Sabock, who spent 24 seasons coaching at NIU.

### **Jody Van Laanen, 6-0, 205, S, Fr., Green Bay, Wisc. (Ashwaubenon HS)**

*Green Bay Press-Gazette's* first team all-conference and all-area honorable mention quarterback... led Ashwaubenon to the second round of the Wisconsin Class 2 state playoffs as a senior... named Fox River Classic Conference Offensive Player of the Year in 2007 after passing for over 1,500 yards and rushing for over 800... Jaguars posted a 9-2 record during his senior season... also wrestled at Ashwaubenon under his father Jody Van Laanen, Sr.... won the state wrestling title as a junior, placed fifth in his sophomore season, and wrestled his way to a sixth-place finish in state as a freshman.