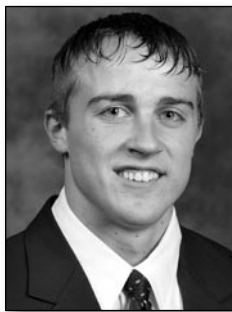


Peetz Follows Family Lead to Make Impact

By Tessa Warner, NU Media Relations

It was an offer Jake Peetz couldn't refuse.

When Peetz was asked if he would like to walk-on as a long-snapper for Nebraska, he immediately accepted. Working with the Husker strength staff, Peetz had his impromptu try-out when a few of the kickers needed to practice and the long-snappers had not arrived on the field yet.



Jake Peetz
Cornerback/Long Snapper

It was the next day when he was offered a spot on the team.

"It didn't take too long to decide what I wanted to do," Peetz said. "I've been coming to games since I was seven years old and it's something you dream about doing as a kid. It was a privilege to work with the guys in the weight room, but it's even more of a privilege to be able to go out there and play with them."

Peetz was especially thrilled for the opportunity not only to play for the Huskers, but also to play alongside his cousin, former Husker Phil Peetz.

The Peetz family, Jake said, has always been known for their athletic abilities. Jake Peetz had originally gone to Arizona to play baseball, but a shoulder injury cut his career short and he soon transferred back home to Nebraska.

His younger brother, Jesse, played golf for Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Neb., for a year while his sister was

recruited to play college basketball.

"The Peetz family is really close and when I started, he really took me under his wing," Jake said of his cousin. "I feel that Phil really is what the Peetz family is all about. Just to be associated with him and being able to make the Peetz family proud is something that will always be special to me."

It was his brother Jesse who also got Jake interested in volunteering. Peetz was always touched by the impact it made when athletes would visit Jesse, who has a rare blood disorder, in the hospital when Jesse was younger. Seeing the way it affected Jesse, Jake knew that if he was given the opportunity to have a similar impact, he would jump at the chance.

As an athlete, Peetz said, he is put in a position to make a difference in a child's life. He has volunteered for Special Olympics, Dads of Kids with Disabilities Program as well as visiting many local hospitals. In 2004 and 2005, he was named to the Brook Berringer Citizenship Team.

One experience that sticks out in Peetz's mind was a Special Olympics bowling trip where he was impressed that many of the participants were better bowlers than him.

"They are just so amazing," Peetz said. "They have something that we, externally, see as a handicap, but to them, they are totally normal. And they are."

Embracing the opportunities that come with playing football at Nebraska, Peetz said the joy of volunteering impacts him the most.

"Being a Husker, you really have the opportunity to affect someone's life in a positive way," Peetz said. "I just want to affect them the way they affected my little brother."

O'Shea Provides Solid Foundation for Others

By Bonnie Ryan, NU Media Relations

The kid from Texas came to Nebraska not sure what to expect. Snow was all he had heard about – snow that would cancel school for days at a time.



Matt O'Shea
Defensive Tackle

Matt O'Shea has found a lot more than snowstorms in his five years as a Husker. He's seen an outlet for his Christian values and been reunited with his brother. He's discovered his life's calling, found a role model and met his fiancée.

O'Shea made the decision to walk on at NU after spurning offers from a host of traditionally-strong Southern schools. Without an extensive knowledge of the Nebraska tradition, O'Shea cited "the way people in

Nebraska treated him" and a recruiting visit by former assistant coach Turner Gill as the factors that attracted him to Lincoln.

Now a fifth-year senior, O'Shea points to his position coach, John Blake, as one who has made a great impact.

"He's a good teacher, especially with our spiritual lives," O'Shea said. "He reads a passage out of the Bible, which is unusual at a university, but we accepted it wholeheartedly."

O'Shea, who is active in his church and the community, has hopes to work in a youth ministry or as a youth football coach. Blake has encouraged him to consider coaching as an outlet for cultivating youth, O'Shea said.

In the meantime, O'Shea keeps busy with the NU outreach

program and TeamMates mentoring. Last fall, volunteering filled his afternoons as an injured O'Shea devoted countless hours to making a solid impression on local youth.

O'Shea's devotion to positively impacting lives has transferred to the football field as well.

"When I first got here, I wanted to run up the depth chart and be a starter. As I've matured, I've realized it takes a lot more to have a winning program than just worrying about yourself," O'Shea said. "I know I'm third on the depth chart. I have my role, and it's not to be a starter as senior; it's to develop the younger guys so they have a chance to be a starter."

This year O'Shea has been reunited on the field with his brother Mark. The duo last played together at Dallas Jesuit Prep before Mark transferred to NU from Iona College.

"I missed having him as a teammate," Matt O'Shea said. "He was always on my teams through middle school and high school. I know when I'm out on the field or in the weight room and he's around, I push myself a little harder."

Whatever his role – older brother, teammate, mentor – O'Shea fulfills it with his life-long Christian philosophies. And once his college football career is complete and his degree is in hand, the kid from Texas will have one more role to tackle – husband. O'Shea is engaged to marry former Husker volleyball player Ally Rebholz, and the couple is planning a wedding for December 2006.

"Your entire life, you go through trials and tribulations, and you need somebody there who you can rely on for help," O'Shea said. "Whatever my role is, I only hope I can be solid as a rock and be that kind of person in other people's lives."