

Jorgensen set to fulfill potential



Northwestern offensive tackle Paul Jorgensen (Chris Sweda/Tribune Photo) (Chris Sweda / Chicago Tribune)

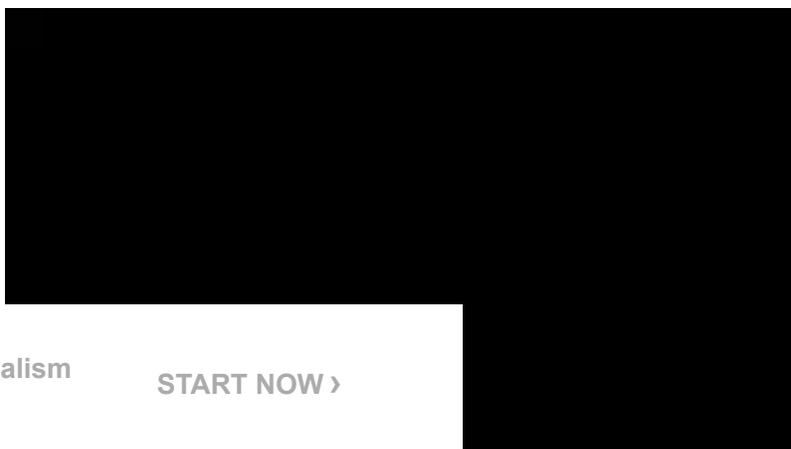
By **Teddy Greenstein, Chicago Tribune reporter**

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Paul Jorgensen not only turned down Stanford to come to Northwestern, he stiff-armed the school he rooted for as a kid, Michigan State. It's where his two brothers went.

"His recruitment was very heated," NU coach **Pat Fitzgerald** said.

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Jorgensen said that as the process went on, "I found out what I really wanted — a great school, an up-and-coming football (program). I found out what I wanted in a coaching staff and, more importantly, guys in the locker room."

It has taken four years, but Jorgensen could fulfill the potential that made him the top offensive line recruit in the state of [Michigan](#) in 2009.

"Paul is playing the best football of his career," offensive line coach **Adam Cushing** said. "He is playing with confidence, aggression and great fundamentals."

Cushing believes the confidence comes from finally getting past a hip injury that required surgery in January and knocked him out of spring ball.

"He always has been a very heady player," Cushing said. "Getting the injury taken care of has, in his own mind, solved some of those (doubts)."

The 6-foot-6, 295-pound Jorgensen is poised to take over at right tackle, with returning starter **Jack Konopka** shifting to the left side. **Brandon Vitabile** is back at center and **Ian Park** and **Geoff Mogus** are heavy favorites to take over at the guard spots.

But even though those were the five offensive linemen who were rested during Saturday's scrimmage at Kenosha, Jorgensen is not getting cocky.

"Nothing is set in stone," the Academic All-Big Ten economics major said. "We know we have 10 solid guys who can play."

On guard: Park originally was slated to back up Vitabile at center, but the redshirt freshman from Pittsburgh wrecked that plan.

"Our philosophy is to get the best five on the field," Cushing said. "We gave him the opportunity (at right guard) and he seized it. He is making the mistakes you expect a young guy to make, but he has some nice physical tools to make up for it. He and **Adam DePietro** will keep battling."

As for Mogus, a redshirt junior from the Cleveland area, Cushing said: "He has been his own worst critic. But by playing fast and giving himself the opportunity to fail, he actually has failed less. He has gotten out of his own way."

er Northwestern quarterback **Dan Persa** to the

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So before a recent practice, they were asked to stand back to back.

"They had us take a picture to see who's taller," the 6-foot Alviti said. "I think I edged him out."

Alviti said the biggest adjustment from Maine South to college ball is the time demand. Fortunately for the players, fall classes won't begin until Sept. 24 because of the school's quarter system.

"We go basically 13 hours a day, and (about) two hours of it is practice," he said. "(The challenge) is to stay focused and learn the playbook."

The closer: Tuesday's practice ended with No. 3 quarterback **Zack Oliver** firing a strike to receiver **Pierre Youngblood-Ary** in the end zone.

Fitzgerald said he was impressed with Ary but added: "Our No. 1 priority is to have the team peak (Aug. 31), not today."

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