



Fox Valley all-area football team

By John Radtke and Jerry Fitzpatrick | Daily Herald Staff

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Matt Van Acker, Burlington Central

Burlington Central's 6-foot-3, 230-pound offensive tackle spent the last two years paving the way for the Rockets' option offense to make it to the playoffs both years. A two-time all-Big Northern East player, Van Acker set a standard for future BC linemen to strive for. "He's been an anchor at the offensive tackle spot for us for two years," said Rockets' assistant coach Scot Sutherland. "He's just a very good blocker who was quick off the ball getting to linebackers. He was one of our four captains and he did a good job with senior leadership for us this year."

Matt Ardiente, St. Edward

Ardiente isn't the biggest player on the all-area team, but definitely one of the toughest. This 5-foot-4 senior played on both sides of the ball for the third straight season in his tireless effort to resurrect a varsity football program that had fallen on hard times when he was an underclassman. As a running back Ardiente finished third on his team with 527 yards rushing on 62 carries for an average of 8.5 yards per attempt. He also made 17 receptions for 186 yards and a score. Defensively, this hard-nosed linebacker finished second on his team with 44 tackles, 26 of them solo. "I have so much respect and admiration for this young man," said Green Wave coach Mike Rolando. "He accepted the challenge of rebuilding this program from the ground up. He's one of the hardest working people I've ever been around. We didn't have as much success on the field as he wanted, but it sure wasn't from a lack of effort or leadership on Matt's part."

Pat Bauers, Bartlett

The Bartlett attack set records this season with 326 points scored and 3,725 total yards, largely because the team's talented skill-position players were given room to operate. A two-year starter at left guard, Bauers graded out as Bartlett's top lineman this season. This 5-foot-11, 240-pound senior helped pave the way for over 2,100 yards gained by Bartlett running backs. Not a player to draw attention to himself, Upstate Eight Conference coaches lavished praise on him by naming him to the all-UEC first team. "He's a very, very quiet kid who did his talking on the field," Bartlett coach Tom Meaney said. "I'm sure defensive linemen had nightmares trying to get around him and make plays."

Nick Bee, Larkin

Most thought former Larkin wide receiver Bryan Whitehead's school record of 1,036 yards set in 2006 would stand for several years. It didn't last one. Bee broke Whitehead's record for receiving yards with 1,076, a feat accomplished in one less game. The senior wide receiver caught his share of bombs from quarterback Cam Kinley, but this unusually strong receiver was also a master of gaining yards after the catch. His best game of the year came against Elgin when he made 8 receptions for 212 yards and a single-game school record of 5 touchdowns. Bee made 50 receptions this season, 13 of which went for touchdowns. "Nick's big-play potential was phenomenal for us," Larkin coach Dave Bierman said. "He had so many big plays that changed momentum. He understood the concepts of the offense and called out routes he thought would work. He had a great head for the game." An all-Upstate Eight Conference pick, Bee finished with an astonishing average of 21.5 yards per catch.

Bryan Bradshaw, Prairie Ridge

Most fans remember Cullen Fahey's 42-yard field goal as time expired as the play that ended Cary-Grove's 29-game regular-season winning streak back in Week 2. But without the heroics of this all-Fox Valley Conference quarterback, Fahey never sees the field. A junior, Bradshaw played like a seasoned veteran in guiding the Wolves 45 yards in 1:20 to set up the game winning field goal. He put Prairie Ridge in scoring position by converting a 4th-and-14 situation with a 15-yard pass to the Cary-Grove 20-yard line with 3 seconds to play. "Talk about pressure situations and being able to make plays," marveled Prairie Ridge coach Chris Schremp. "Bryan always kept his composure. He's a smart kid and he really matured into the quarterback position, learning the offense, learning what his reads were, learning the progressions of it." In his second varsity campaign Bradshaw completed 85 of 155 pass attempts (55 percent) for 1,376 yards and 13 touchdowns. He also rushed for 292 yards and 10 touchdowns on 55 carries for an average gain of 5.3 yards.

T.J. Burzak, Hampshire

When opposing defensive coordinators schemed to stop the Hampshire offense, they built their game plan around limiting the effectiveness of the Whip-Purs' senior tight end. A tough player for a high school defensive back to match up against at 6-foot-4, 205 pounds, Burzak thrived despite constant double teaming and the occasional triple team. "He had a very good senior season," Hampshire coach Dan Cavanaugh said. "He was a great target to throw to, and he was a key figure for us on both sides of the ball." Burzak was the fifth-leading receiver in the area, the top tight end. He finished the season with 29 receptions for 574 yards and 7 touchdowns. Burzak was just as effective, if not moreso, as a linebacker for the Hampshire defense. He led the Whips with 42 solo tackles and 40 assists.

Sam Campbell, Prairie Ridge

If scoring touchdowns was a crime, Sam Campbell would have been jailed by midseason. This senior running back led the Prairie Ridge football program to its first undefeated regular season and its second state quarterfinal appearance by scoring more than twice as many points (208) as any player in the area. He dented the end zone 27 times while rushing for a school record of 1,790 yards, an average of 149 yards per game. He finished tied for the team lead with 27 receptions for 495 yards and 7 more touchdowns. The third-year varsity starter also scored on a kickoff return in a playoff game against Lemont, threw a 57-yard touchdown pass in a regular-season game against Huntley and even kicked two points after touchdowns. Amazingly, this two-time all-FVC running back was also the team's long snapper on punts. "No matter what you asked of Sam, he got the job done," Prairie Ridge coach Chris Schremp said. "If you needed a big run, a long kickoff return or a big catch to convert a third down, he would deliver."

Brad Foote, Jacobs

The anchor of the Golden Eagles' offensive line for two seasons, this senior center was the foundation of a Jacobs offensive attack that rushed for 2,557 yards and averaged 6.1 yards per attempt this season. Also a defensive lineman used in limited duty, Foote made 4 solo tackles and recorded a sack. "He has been a really consistent performer for us for two years and we would not have been as good on offense without him there," Jacobs coach Dean Schlueter said. "He really is a top performer. He would have been our best defensive lineman if I would have let him just go one way and we had someone else who could play center at a high level. But he was so good at center we needed him there."

Dan Hagberg, Burlington Central

Burlington Central's 6-foot, 170-pound senior quarterback led the Rockets back to the playoffs after taking over the signal-calling spot for the graduated Justin Lee. Also a state hurdles qualifier in track, Hagberg picked up 821 yards on 118 carries (7.1 average) in BC's option offense and scored 12 rushing touchdowns. Also threw for 143 yards. "In our offense, we usually put the best combination of athleticism and brains at the quarterback spot and Danny has both," said BC coach Aaron Wichman. "Even though he wasn't all that experienced at the position, the summer helped him and then when he got the pads on and got used to

contact, he just went from there and he did a good job for us. He's a very carefree and easy-going person. He's definitely our leader but he leads by example more than vocally. He listens, he processes and he leads."

A.J. Hoger, Cary-Grove

How good a football player is A.J. Hoger? This senior spent his junior season playing strong safety for the Trojans while taking limited reps as quarterback Bill Meyer's understudy. But the job of directing Cary-Grove's complicated triple-option offense fell to Hoger this year. He responded to the switch by rushing for 820 yards and 11 touchdowns and passing for 564 yards and 8 more scores. "He had an outstanding season," Cary-Grove coach Bruce Kay said. "He studied film in the off-season, worked on his passing and he came through in the clutch every time. His ability to run put continuous pressure on the defense and he ran the option extremely well." Hoger had never completed a varsity pass until late in a Week 2 game against Prairie Ridge, when he went 3-for-3, including a 9-yard touchdown pass that capped a 75-yard drive and gave the Trojans a late lead.

Ryan Javan, Bartlett

One of only two returning starters on the defensive side of the ball for Bartlett and the only returning senior, Javan provided the Hawks not only with his leadership but his run-stopping penchant. He was named first-team all-Upstate Eight Conference for his efforts. An inside linebacker Javan finished second on his team in tackles. "He was a leader on defense and really did a great job in the middle of the field. He got better every single week. He was our run stopper up the middle. He was able to stuff a lot of

Ryan Kelley, Crystal Lake South

Few football players possess the stamina, strength and ability to play on both sides of the ball against top competition for a full season, let alone excel. That's precisely what Kelley accomplished this season by playing defensive back and wide receiver for the Gators, who were ranked in the top 10 in Class 7A most of this season. This senior led CL South with 19 receptions for 292 yards and 2 touchdowns. As a key member of CL South's secondary, he helped the Gators limit their opponents to 88 yards passing per game, finishing with 15 solo tackles, 9 assists and 1 interception. "He was obviously a very, very big part of our team this year," said Gators coach Jim Stuglis.

Cam Kinley, Larkin

This quarterback could just plain chuck it. A 6-foot-3 senior, Kinley passed for a school best 2,894 yards on 174-of-278 passing in coach Dave Bierman's spread offense. Kinley's yardage total ranks 25th all-time among single-season passers in IHSA history, his 34 touchdown throws in a single season place him in a tie for 18th all time, his average of 321.6 yards per game ranks fourth best in state history in a single season and only 9 quarterbacks have finished a season with a higher completion rate than his 62.6 percent. In all, Kinley set 5 single-season school records and two career marks, yet success never went to his head. "Cam was one of the most level-headed kids I ever coached," Larkin coach Dave Bierman said. "At times he might get a little frustrated, but he never got rattled. He stayed in his game all season long." Kinley was named offensive MVP of the Upstate Eight Conference.

Vinnie Libreri, Bartlett

Bartlett reached the playoffs for the eighth straight year, thanks in large part to the dependable ground attack this unbreakable senior running back provided. Libreri finished the season with 1,364 yards rushing for an average of 136 per game. He also scored a team-high 15 touchdowns en route to being named all-Upstate Eight Conference. "Vinnie isn't a big kid, but he's hard-nosed," Bartlett coach Tom Meaney said. "It seemed like every time he was running the ball, he'd always gain yards. He was always going forward and was able to bounce off tackles and make people miss him. He was a heck of a scatback for us."

Mike Lukowski, Dundee-Crown

They don't come any tougher than Dundee-Crown's two-year captain, a player who has toiled in the

trenches for the Chargers on both sides of the line for three varsity seasons. This year he played guard on offense and tackle on defense. He even filled in briefly this season at linebacker when needed. Also a top wrestler, Lukowski was named to the all-Fox Valley Conference team this season. "Mike earned everything he's gotten," Dundee-Crown coach Mike Davis said. "He played hard. I wish we had a whole bunch of him because the way he plays is the way you win games." Lukowski finished the season with 31 total tackles, 3 tackles for a loss, 1 fumble recovery and 3 quarterback pressures.

Casey Macko, Crystal Lake South

Macko was a pillar of strength for a Crystal Lake South defense that held opponents to averages of 208 yards and 17 points per game. Despite the fact he was playing in pain for most of the season with an injured shoulder, this inside linebacker toughed it out by leading the Gators in tackles with 39 solos and 42 assists, including 7.5 tackles for a loss. He also forced 1 forced fumble and was credited with a pass breakup. "He didn't have the year he wanted to, but he was still pretty darn good," Crystal Lake South coach Jim Stuglis said. "He's had MRIs on both shoulders since the season ended and he's just a mess. Macko is a two-time all-Fox Valley Conference selection and a repeat Daily Herald All-Area pick.

Kyle Magnuson, Jacobs

Named program MVP this season, this team captain made a position switch to quarterback after his junior season and still managed to direct Jacobs' tricky Wing-T offense to over 3,100 yards gained in his senior season. He rushed 103 times for 501 yards and 6 touchdowns in addition to throwing for 445 yards and 2 scores. Magnuson was at his best in late September, when he guided Jacobs to its second straight win over Valley Division rival Crystal Lake South by rushing for 89 yards on 16 carries, including scoring runs of 37 and 3 yards. "Mags was a really consistent performer and a gutsy performer all season for us," Jacobs coach Dean Schlueter said. "He was a threat every time he had the ball in his hands. He made good decisions. If we didn't have him, things would have been a whole lot different."

Jordan Neukirch, Huntley

It's hard to imagine how Huntley would have fared without this athletic junior, who played both ways for the Red Raiders this season. As a linebacker in his second year of varsity competition, Neukirch led the team in solo tackles (32) and assisted tackles (58). As a running back he finished second on the team in rushing with 656 yards in 83 attempts for a whopping 7.9 yards-per-carry average. "Jordan had a good year for us at linebacker," Huntley coach Steve Graves said, "but his biggest improvement was at running back. He got stronger in the second half of the season as our offensive line started making some holes for him later in the year." Neukirch also caught 4 passes for 44 yards.

Paul Rands, Cary-Grove

The backbone of Cary-Grove's magnificent defense for three seasons, this linebacker possesses an understanding of the game beyond his age. A player with a nose for the ball, Rands was a leader in every sense of the word while powering the Trojans to their fourth consecutive undefeated title in the Fox Valley Conference. "He's the classic role model for all high school kids to follow in terms of his character, integrity and work ethic," Cary-Grove coach Bruce Kay said. "His physical capabilities and his competitive nature were second to none. He has that rare combination of instinct and power that make him such a great defensive player." Rands led a defense that held teams to an average of 9.2 points per game. He made a team-best 52.5 tackles, including 37 solo takedowns. He also posted 7.5 tackles for a loss, forced 1 fumble and recorded a sack.

Pete Scaffidi, South Elgin

This senior quarterback demonstrated marked improvement from his junior year to his senior season. After throwing for 18 interceptions and 9 touchdowns in South Elgin's senior-less first season in 2006, Scaffidi reversed those numbers by throwing for 19 touchdowns and just 5 interceptions this year. He did so despite losing his No. 1 receiver in Week 2 and his No. 2 receiver at midseason. Scaffidi simply adjusted and made the remaining corps of pass catchers better. "Pete didn't have the lines other quarterbacks had or the

receivers some other quarterbacks had, but he still put up some great numbers and was effective," said South Elgin coach Dale Schabert. "I'm extremely proud of how he went from being a quiet leader to a leader on the field both emotionally and physically." South Elgin receivers dropped quite a few passes this season, but Scaffidi still completed 150-of-284 pass attempts for 1,601 yards. He added 223 rushing yards and 4 touchdowns on the ground.

Terrell Walker, Elgin

Elgin's most consistent disruptor of offenses was this athletic nose guard, a player who used his formidable wrestling skills and athletic endurance to out-muscle, out-think and outplay opposing offensive linemen all season long. "Terrell is the hardest working kid we have in the program and is pound-for-pound our strongest and toughest kid," Elgin coach Tom Kim said. "Every game he took on double teams and forced the splits between the guard and center to shrink to zero. We knew he'd be tough, and he had a great year." Walker finished his senior season with 23 solo tackles, 4 sacks, 4 forced fumbles, 1 fumble recovery and 5 tackles for a loss. Also asked to run the ball on occasion, this change-of-pace back rushed 24 times, gaining 117 yards and caught 3 passes for 71 yards.

Kenny Williams, Elgin

The face of Elgin football for three varsity seasons, Williams was a more versatile all-around contributor this year than ever before. Known for his offensive capabilities, Williams also started this season at linebacker for the Maroons, where he made 16 solo tackles and 8 assists, notched 2 sacks and recorded 3 tackles for a loss. Offensively, Williams led the Maroons in both rushing and receiving. Despite the fact opposing defenses devised their game plans around containing this senior, he still managed 1,324 total yards. He rushed for 884 yards in 136 attempts, an average of 6.5 yards per carry, and scored 11 touchdowns on the ground. Elgin kept teams guessing by throwing to Williams more often this year, a strategy that resulted in 17 receptions for 440 yards and 3 more scores. "He had a great year on offense and defense," Elgin coach Tom Kim said. "He averaged over 20 yards per reception and nearly 7 yards a rush. I'm proud of the way he played."

Mike Yocius, Cary-Grove

This third-year varsity performer was too good not to run behind, so the Trojans did. Often. "We wanted to run behind him as much as possible," said Cary-Grove coach Bruce Kay of this weak-side guard. He was a constant leader with the offensive linemen and very consistent with his blocking. He worked very hard in the off-season, which showed his determination to be the best he can be." A player destined to play on Saturdays at the college level, Yocius lost weight and gained strength between his juniors and senior seasons and became one of the most devastating blockers in the Fox Valley Conference for an offense that gained 2,936 rushing yards and 3,519 yards overall.

Zack Zuidema, Prairie Ridge

This inside linebacker was the leader of a defense that allowed 92 fewer points than it had the previous season despite playing one more game in 2007. This three-year varsity starter led by example, in-season and out. "He would take kids aside and tell them to come lift with him," Prairie Ridge coach Chris Schremp said. "The example he set really left an impression on a lot of the kids in the program. On the field he was very consistent for us." For the second straight season this all-Fox Valley Conference pick led the Wolves in tackles. He improved upon his 32 solo tackles in 2006 with 37 solos this year, not to mention 41 assists and 5 tackles for a loss. He also recovered 1 fumble and made 1 interception.

2007 All-Area Roster

Mat VanAcker, Burlington Central, OL, Sr.

Matt Ardiente, St. Edward, RB/LB, Sr.

Pat Bauers, Bartlett, G, Sr.

Nick Bee, Larkin, WR, Sr.

Bryan Bradshaw, Prairie Ridge, QB, Jr.

T.J. Burzak, Hampshire, TE/LB, Sr.

*Sam Campbell, Prairie Ridge, RB, Sr.

Brad Foote, Jacobs, C, Sr

Dan Hagberg, Burlington Central, QB/FS, Sr.

A.J. Hoger, Cary-Grove, QB, Sr.

Ryan Javan, Bartlett, LB, Sr.

Ryan Kelley, Crystal Lake South, DB/WR, Sr.

*Cam Kinley, Larkin, QB, Sr.

Vinnie Libreri, Bartlett, RB, Sr.

Mike Lukowski, Dundee-Crown, OL/DL/LB, Sr.

Casey Macko, Crystal Lake South, LB, Sr.

Kyle Magnuson, Jacobs, QB, Sr.

Jordan Neukirch, Huntley, RB/LB, Jr.

Paul Rands, Cary-Grove, LB, Sr.

Pete Scaffidi, South Elgin, QB, Sr.

Terrell Walker, Elgin, NT/RB, Sr

Kenny Williams, Elgin, RB/LB, Sr.

Mike Yocius, Cary-Grove, G, Sr.

Zack Zuidema, Prairie Ridge, LB, Sr.

*honorary co-captain

Honorable Mention

Bartlett --Mark Alagna (Sr., OL/DL), Cory Brown (Jr., WR/DB), Josh Hasenberg (Jr., QB), Greg Partyka (Jr., TE), Kyle Zelinsky (Jr., LB)

Burlington Central -- Tim Maroder (Fr., RB/DB), Curt Mastio (Sr., LB), Jason Wagner (Sr., RB/LB)

Cary-Grove -- John Carroll (Sr., OT), Eric Chandler (So., RB), Alex Hembrey (So., FS/KR), Dan McCall (Sr., SE), Max Timmins (Sr., LB),

Crystal Lake South -- Ian Ormseth (Sr., QB), Colin Masterson (So., RB), Derek Mortensen (Jr., FB), Richie Schumacher (Sr., SS/WR)

Dundee-Crown -- Matt Cutinello (Sr., RB/LB), Ryan Horcher (Sr., CB/WR), Tim Blume (Sr., OL)

Elgin -- Ben Harris (Sr., LB), Robert Hayes (Sr., LB/RB), Tom Roth (Jr., QB)

Hampshire -- Joe Moore (Jr., FB/LB), Trace Teboda (Sr., QB)

Huntley -- Austin Drougas (Sr., QB)

Jacobs -- Darius Bowers (Sr., RB), Bobby Molinaro (Sr., FB)

Larkin -- Jake Kane (Sr., WR/DB), Ryan Shriver (Sr., WR)

Prairie Ridge -- Brad Knipfel (Sr., DL), Will Mack (Jr. S), Peter Shimp (Sr. TE), Joe Timmer (Sr., OL), Brad Young (Jr., LB), Ryan Wise (Sr., OL)

St. Edward -- Ryan Eigenhauser (Jr., OL/DE), Moises Quiroga (Jr. RB/LB)

South Elgin -- Dane Lundeen (Sr., LB), Sean Kolber (So., LB), Nate Van Metre (Jr., OL)

Captian's Honor Roll

1995 -- Eric Miquelon (Larkin)

1996 -- Vince Webber (Larkin)

1997 -- Vince Webber (Larkin)

1998 -- Matt Schabert (Larkin) and Kevin Kaplan (Cary-Grove)

1999 -- Matt Schabert (Larkin), Travann Hayes (Larkin) and Clint Reames (Jacobs)

2000 -- Dan Sheldon (Burlington Central) and Colin Williams (Elgin)

2001 -- Brett Borchart (Huntley) and Eric Kramer (Bartlett)

2002 -- Brad Podge (Bartlett) and Trent Steckel (Crystal Lake South)

2003 -- Doug Sanders (St. Edward) and Averill Sutchar (Bartlett)

2004 -- Kent Martin (Bartlett) and Brian Mitz (Cary-Grove)

2005 -- Jake Goebbert (Hampshire) and Alex Kube (Cary-Grove)

2006 -- Andrew Lorman (Cary-Grove) and Paul Duyckinck (Burlington Central)

2007 -- Cam Kinley (Larkin) and Sam Campbell (Prairie Ridge)