

Area grid stars make their picks

By Brad Emmons
staff writer

The highly sought-after Alex Marshall of Bedford Blahop Borgers made a verbal commitment Tuesday to play football for the University of Michigan.

He will sign a national letter of intent Wednesday, Feb. 11.

Other recruiting prospects in the state's 6-foot-2, 225-pound, tight end/defensive end may wind up playing outside linebacker for the Wolverines, according to his high school coach, Dan Henry.

"I talked to Bo (Schembechler) on Saturday, and he thinks Alex is best suited for outside linebacker because he can run and cover a lot of ground," said the Borgers coach.

Marshall, who carries a 3.3 grade-point average, plans to play a year of football and legal studies. His choice was narrowed down to Michigan and Michigan State although he did make visits to the College and Indiana.

"The people were great at both universities (U-M and MSU)," Marshall said. "I liked both very much, but it was just a feeling. I just had a stronger feeling at Michigan."

MARSHALL ALSO indicated that former Westland John Glenn coach Lloyd Carter, now one of Bo Schembechler's top assistants, was instrumental in his recruitment along with another U-M assistant, Gary Moeller.

Ironically, Henry served as an assistant under Carter while he was at Glenn.

"I didn't talk to Alex, but I'm sure he knew how I felt all along," said the Borgers coach. "It was a difficult decision because (Westland) was a good job recruiting him. But I think Alex's family wanted him to go to Michigan and that was a factor, but I feel he still made up his own mind."

Michigan State did land North Farmington's All-State running back Scott Scherzer, who committed early last week to the Spartans.

Several other All-Observer performers made commitments this week, including four off a Glenn team that reached the semifinals of the state Class A playoffs last season.

Wide receiver and defensive back Mike Hammontree visited Toledo and Central Michigan but decided on Eastern Michigan because he'll get the opportunity to play both baseball (he's a catcher) and football.

HAMMONTREE'S TEAM — Matt 6-foot-4, 180-pounder — and Harlan Ladd — will also be playing in the Mid-American Conference. He's made a verbal commitment to Toledo.

Glenn coach Chuck Gordon also reported Tuesday that All-Area linebacker Doug Sirch, a 6-1, 240-pounder, is headed for Grand Valley State and two-time All-Area kicker Tony Svaluto is going to Ferris State.

Redford Catholic Central coach Tom Moshimer Monday that 6-foot-4, 220-pound tackle Tom Victory, who was hampered this season by shoulder and knee problems, will decide sometime this week between Central Michigan, Toledo or Miami of Ohio.

All-Area linebacker Matt Fras is also considering Miami but reportedly is leaning toward Holy Cross.

Although he was ignored in the All-Area balloting last fall by Oberon coach Kevin Litch, Redford St. Agnes will sign Wednesday with Central Michigan. The All-Catholic League pick and Class

football

CAll-State also considered Eastern Michigan.

"I liked the idea of getting a little bit farther away from home," said the Livonian. "I just liked the atmosphere."

Rich, who is starring on the Agape basketball team, is a 2.8 student who plans to major in either business-finance or marketing.

WITH DIVISION I schools forced to cut 10 or more scholarships under new NCAA guidelines, several area players are still awaiting word on potential offers.

With the Big 10 schools forced to cut back from 85 to 80 scholarships, the Macc and Division II Great Lakes Conference are getting a better pick of the litter this season.

But that is creating hardship for some area players who have to sit out in a disappointing position with no scholarships. One area coach reported one of his players visited a MAC school, but was then told he was not wanted. Another area high school coach said his player visited a MAC school, but was told he had to make a decision by Friday (Jan. 30) or the scholarship would be offered to another recruit. Other players are awaiting ACT and SAT test results, which may qualify them to play at the Division II level.

Those All-Area players expected to sign by Wednesday, but who have not verbally committed (as of Tuesday) include Livonia Franklin defensive back/wide receiver Sean Darkins, Borgers defensive back Zipp Holliday and Wayne running back Darren Tatum.

Jouppi gets passed over

Joe Jouppi, the All-Area linebacker from Plymouth Salem, may be a victim of the NCAA's ruling to reduce the number of Division I football scholarships from 95 to 85 per school.

At one point, Miami of Ohio, Eastern Michigan and Central Michigan were eager to sign Jouppi — an aggressive, hard-hitting player who was the mold of former Salem star Scott Jurek, currently a starter at Eastern.

But all three Mid-American Conference schools have given Jouppi the cold shoulder.

"I've been at this a long time," said Salem coach Tom Moshimer. "If he's not at least a MAC-level player then I don't know who he is."

With 10 fewer scholarships, major Division I schools like the University of Michigan and Michigan State are being extra selective in their recruiting process. U-M or MSU could afford to gamble on a borderline player. Now many borderline players will end up in a MAC-level program. The effect of the NCAA ruling trickles down to Division II and Division III levels as well.

Jouppi visited Hillsdale last week and is likely to end up at a Division II school.

"What it means is somebody is going to get a steal. This kid is a player," Moshimer said.

— Chris McClosky

St. Mary's tumbles

Balanced scoring was the good news for St. Mary's College's basketball team in Monday's game at Aquinas College of Grand Rapids. The bad news was Aquinas had six players score in double figures, and they accounted for a lot more points and a 103-84 victory.

The loss ended St. Mary's modest two-game win streak, which dropped to 10-14. Aquinas, an NAIA District 23 rival, is 10-12.

Five Eagles reached double figures in scoring led by Theo Pearson's 13 points (and a team-high seven rebounds). Jon Bow, Bob Bringsman and Lance Davis all came off the bench to net 12 points apiece. Brad Turner added 10.

Aquinas got 23 points from Corey Branch and 21 from Rich Wilson. The winners' victory margin was accumulated as the free throw line, as they hit 48-of-57 foul shots. St. Mary's was 14-of-21.

ON JAN. 27, the Eagles soared to a 23-point halftime lead (52-29) but had to survive a furious second-half rally to post an 83-80 triumph at Concordia College.

St. Mary's went from hot to cold in the space of a halftime intermission, allowing Concordia to come back and eventually tie the game at 78-78. Davis was the difference for the Es-

OU fouled out up north

There's no going back, is there, Bob Taylor?

Taylor, remember, left his coaching job at Lake Superior State to return to the same position at Oakland University this season. On Saturday he returned to his former place of employment, but it was hardly a happy homecoming.

His Lady Pioneers team battled back but had too few bodies left by game's end to pull off the upset in a 95-84 overtime loss.

For years, coaches from the lower peninsula Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) have talked about the dreaded upper peninsula road trip, where visiting often seems slanted toward the home club.

Slanted would not be sufficiently descriptive Saturday's contest. OU shot 17 free throws, making 10. LSS put up an incredible 53 foul shots, canning 41. Both are GLIAC records. So is Gwen Wilkie's 18 attempts from the stripe; she hit 14 and finished with a game-high 24 points.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, five OU players — starters Sojia Pearson, Celeste Sarior, Sarah Knuth and Kim Klein, and reserve Leah Fenwick — fouled out. The Lady Pioneers were whistled for a GLIAC record 35 personals; LSS got only 15.

Despite the lopsided foul factor, OU fought its way back from a 43-30

halftime deficit to tie it at 70 with 2:01 left on a Knuth jumper. Vicki Hill's two free throws with 26 seconds remaining put LSS up 104-97, but the Lady Pioneers scored back again.

Margaret Boyle scored on a drive to the hoop and, after an OU timeout, Knuth stole the ball and scored with seven seconds left to tie it at 107.

The Lady Pioneers were running low on players by this time. Still, they limited LSS to two overtime baskets, but the Lady Lakers shot 16 free throws, making 15, to outscore OU 18-12.

Knuth finished with 18 points and seven rebounds. Boyle had 17 points, 10 assists and three steals and defensively limited LSS' Erica Ledy to seven points while forcing five turnovers. Klein pitched in 15 points for OU.

Teresa Watwood scored 22 for LSS (18-2 overall, 6-1 in the GLIAC).

ON THURSDAY, OU pulled away from Michigan Tech with a 19-2 run in the second half to post a 78-59 triumph at Tech.

Klein's eight points — she finished with 15 — sparked the surge, which carried the Lady Pioneers from a 38-37 lead with 17:38 left to a 57-59 advantage with 11:15 to go. Tech (4-13 overall, 0-8 in the GLIAC) never got within 10 afterwards.

Knuth's 17 points paced OU. Boyle added 14 points and 10 assists. Mary Fisher had 11 for Tech, with Janette Lutz contributing 10.

OU now 14-6 overall and 5-4 in the GLIAC, hosts Grand Valley State Thursday and Saginaw Valley State Saturday.

Pioneer men upended

The opportunity was there. All Oakland University's men basketball team needed to do was win at Lake Superior State Saturday. Combined with Wayne State's loss at Michigan Tech, the Pioneers would have been within a game of first place in the GLIAC. Instead, the Lady Pioneers were running low on players by this time. Still, they limited LSS to two overtime baskets, but the Lady Lakers shot 16 free throws, making 15, to outscore OU 18-12.

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