

## SPORTS

C

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1993

## Hixon's hard work gets results



Doug Brzezinski



Nick Kallias

## CC linemen commit early

BY BRAD EMONS  
STAFF WRITER

Redford Catholic Central High has become fertile ground for college football recruiters and this year is no exception.

The Shamrocks' two top interior linemen made verbal commitments last week.

Livonian Doug Brzezinski, a 6-foot-5, 275-pound two-way starter, is headed for Boston College, while Canton Township's Nick Kallias, a 6-5, 230-pound defensive tackle, is sold on Iowa.

## FOOTBALL

The two join a long list of recent CC linemen who have gone on to the Division I ranks including Ryan Bell (Vanderbilt), Tolly Henton (Michigan State), Erik Knuth (Michigan) and Mark Messner (Michigan).

Brzezinski turned down a chance to play for Notre Dame after a visit Dec. 11 to Chesham Hill, Mass.

"It was a tough decision," Brzezinski said. "You have to understand that Notre Dame is the best in the country, but I felt more at home at Boston College. I liked the atmosphere and the players at B.C. I met a lot of the faculty people and I had a great time. It's a nice campus."

See CC LINEMEN, 2C

Wayne Memorial's Pierre Hixon is a unique athlete. The hard-working defensive back was rewarded for his efforts by recently being named honorable mention All-American by United Press International.

BY BRAD EMONS  
STAFF WRITER

The shoe that fits Pierre Hixon best is Reebok.

He certainly knows first-hand from his own personal experience that "Life is Short, Play Hard."

Maybe that's why Hixon, a Wayne Memorial High product, was so driven as he entered his final season as a starting defensive back for Western Michigan University's football team.

"We never had to push Pierre, he did it on his own," WMU defensive coordinator Larry Edlund said. "He's self-motivated, the hardest worker on our football team, bar none. He's just a great leader, but he does it by example. He's always in the front of the line for everything."

The 5-foot-11, 180-pound Hixon was voted first-team All Mid-American Conference, but recently learned of a more prestigious honor.

## UPI All-American

United Press International named him honorable mention All-American.

As a senior, Hixon made 70 tackles, including four for minus yards; and also topped the Broncos in pass deflections (10) and interceptions (5). Western, which ranked second nationally in pass defense, finished the year 7-3-1 overall and 6-1-1 in the MAC.

Hixon also ranks ninth all-time on the school list in interceptions (10). He tied a school record for deflections in one game (4).

Taking a cue from fellow Western DE Paul Davis, Hixon stuck around Kalamazoo during the summer for

the first time and put himself through a rigorous regimen.

The decision paid dividends in more ways than one.

## Summer dividends

"I saw the improvement Paul made when he came in for his senior year," Hixon recalled. "For me to be better, I had to do the same thing."

After taking classes in the spring, Hixon worked seven days, 54 hours per week doing physical labor in two different warehouses.

But that was only part of his day.

"The strength coach had some nice workouts," Hixon said. "And I usually ran until I puked. It was day-in and day-out. I didn't miss any workouts. I had only three days vacation."

Hixon was able to drop his 40-yard dash time to 4.46.

"He got his 40 time down on his own effort," Edlund said. "He was totally dedicated this year. He also spent a lot of time at night studying films."

Midway through the season, Hixon strained a ligament in his knee, forcing him to miss the Eastern Michigan game.

## Big game at Army

Although still hampered by the injury, Hixon played through the pain the next week in a memorable victory at Army.

He enjoyed his best game of his career, making seven tackles to go along with an interception and a forced fumble. Hixon was honored as MAC Player of the Week.

See HIXON, 2C



All-American: Pierre Hixon had a "monster year" in the defensive secondary for the Western Michigan University Broncos.

## Lake Shore whips Shamrocks

BY BRAD EMONS  
STAFF WRITER

St. Clair Shores Lake Shore pulled quite a heist in Wednesday's nonleague basketball battle at Redford Catholic Central.

The Shamrocks, led by Michigan signee Travis Conlan, a game-high 27 points, proved to be adept pickpockets, robbing the Shamrocks blind in a 60-48 victory.

CC, which slipped to 2-2 overall, committed 24 turnovers, 17 in the first half alone. Needless to say, Lake Shore's suffocating and pressure defense also had something to do with CC shooting a paltry 33 percent from the floor (18 of 54).

"We sell our team on defense," said Lake Shore coach Greg Ester, whose team is 4-0 overall. "We've been giving up less than 40 points per game. Tonight we had to make it a game between the hush marks, 28 feet and out. We tried to make them beat us by bringing it down the court because they (CC) are in the post."

The cat-quick Conlan, a 6-foot-3 senior point-guard with dribble-handling and passing skills, drove the Shamrocks nuts with his penetration moves to the basket.

## BASKETBALL

"You try and double team him, but then he can read the split instantly," said CC coach Bernie Holowicki, whose career win total remained on hand at 597. "We had a defensive scheme, but you never know it, it (Conlan) would read it, give it up and get the ball back in his hands."

CC stayed close for most of three quarters before Lake Shore went on a 9-0 run. Two straight, dribble-drive layups by Conlan at 6:01 and 4:55 of the final period gave the Shamrocks a 51-35 advantage.

CC would never recover.

"Travis has great vision of the floor," Ester said. "And he's so hard to guard. We wanted him to take the ball to the basket because they crowded him out top. When he goes to the basket, good things happen. Michigan got a great one in him. I think he's the best point-guard in the state."

Carlo Sesta and Jeff Poultu contributed 11 and nine points, respectively, for the Shamrocks, who finished 26-1 a year ago before being bounced by eventual

state Class B champion Saginaw Buena Vista in the state semifinals.

Joe Daly, a 6-7 center, paced CC with 18 points. Sean Gallagher chipped in with 12.

But the Shamrocks' Andy Slankster and Andy Kummer, two of the team's top three scorers, combined for only 13 points (on four of 22 shooting).

"We didn't play smart," Holowicki said. "They changed defenses, and we didn't do a good job of recognizing that."

"Our individual defense was OK, but our team defense was not. Our help defense was nonexistent. Number 21 (Conlan) was nonexistent."

Holowicki's team is off for the holidays before resuming their season Tuesday, Jan. 4, at Redford Bishop Borgess in the Catholic League Central Division opener.

"Our first game back is with Borgess and they're a more talented team than they (Lake Shore) are," Holowicki said. "We have to improve on bringing the ball down the court and setting a tone. We have to play more disciplined. Tonight they (Lake Shore) dictated the tempo."

## Abraham wears 2 hats at Madonna

BY CHRIS MCCOSKY  
STAFF WRITER

He has taken the Madonna volleyball program from obscurity to be national arena. Now his challenge is to do the same with the Madonna softball program.

Jerry Abraham, whose volleyball team placed eighth at the NAIA Nationals earlier this month, has been hired to replace Dave Racer as softball coach at Madonna, athletic director Ray Summers confirmed on Monday.

"I was very excited when Ray presented me with this opportunity," Abraham said. "I like the challenge of doing for Madonna softball what we've done with volleyball. And I see a lot of potential. Observers are rich in softball talent, always has been, and many of those girls don't get the opportunity to continue their softball careers."

Abraham brings impressive credentials to the softball program. He coached softball at Red-

## SOFTBALL

ford Bishop Borgess in 1984 and 1985 and won the Catholic League championship in 1984. From 1988 to the present, he has been the head coach at Taylor Center, where he has compiled a 132-49 record with four Tri-River League titles. He was coach of the year in the Tri-River four times and took his team to the state semifinals in 1989 and 1990.

Abraham said he hasn't decided whether to resign the Taylor Center post or coach both programs. There would be a two-week overlap.

"I take the same approach that I do in any sport," Abraham said. "We will work hard, be disciplined and very team-oriented. My goal is to build the best team and teach them to believe and teach them to win."

Racer, who resigned for personal reasons after last season, hardly left the cupboard bare. Returning are top pitchers Dawn Terras and Linda Wiebel, infielders Amanda Armstrong, Jill Burt, Michelle Birchmeier, catcher Jennifer Pinter and outfielder and team leader Holly Jondra.

Abraham is also hopeful of getting three of his spikers onto the team. Veronica Ronco, an infielder/outfielder who played two seasons at Wayne State before transferring.

"With the nucleus of people coming back and the interest that has been expressed throughout the area, I really believe we will field a competitive team next spring," he said.

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