

ALL-AREA TOP 11 PLAYER CAPSULES

BRIAN BECHARD Sacred Heart

Bechard was the player that made the Sacred Heart offense go this year throwing for 2,505 yards, completing 60.6 percent of his passes and throwing 33 touchdowns against just 14 interceptions. He also ran the ball 85 times for 433 yards and eight touchdowns as the Knights built a 12-1 record.



BECHARD

What was the highlight of your high school football career? I was fortunate to be part of a very talented team. It was great to advance deep into the playoffs and beat our rivals Solomon and Ell-Saline.

Is there an athlete or nonathlete you use as a role model? My brother Steve is one of my role models because he set many standards that I have tried to live up to in athletics and in school. We were both three-sport athletes, and he has given me a lot of encouragement these past three years.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? I am proud to have done well on my college entrance exams and that my grades have allowed me to be involved in student government.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? I am undecided about college plans, but I hope to play baseball or football at a four-year or junior college.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? I enjoy golfing and playing cards with friends.

Coach's Comment (From Jim Wittman): "We, as a staff, knew that if we could give Brian confidence throwing the ball, that he could have a very successful year. We threw the ball a lot this year, and Brian had a very good year. Brian broke almost every passing record at SHHS. This is a tribute to him and his teammates that made him a very successful quarterback."

BEAU BLACKWELL Salina Central

Blackwell was the soul of a Mustang defense that allowed an average of just 10 points per game.

At linebacker, Blackwell was in on 155 tackles — including five sacks — recovered two fumbles, intercepted a pass and blocked a kick as Central rolled to its second straight Class 5A state championship.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? Winning my last game at Salina Stadium against South to go on to repeat as state champions.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? I want to go on and play football somewhere next year, but right now, I'm not sure where.

Coach's Comment (From Marvin Diener): "He was a great leader for us both in action and in spirit. We knew for us to be good this year our defense was going to have to play well, and for our defense to play well (Blackwell) was going to have to play well. I think both of those things happened for us this year."

WES CLARK Pike Valley

Clark averaged more than 8 yards per carry this season for the Panthers and scored 17 touchdowns for a team that had multiple offensive weapons.

With Clark at fullback, the Panthers built an 11-1 record, advancing to the Eight-Man Division I sub-state championship game.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? Being a part of a team that went farther than any other team has ever gone at Pike Valley would be No. 1. The way that the community and cheerleaders supported us this year was awesome.

Is there an athlete or nonathlete you use as a role model? My parents. They have both pushed me to be the best I can be — not only in the sports aspect but also life in general. I know that whatever I

do, they will always be behind me.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? I am proud that I am a member of National Honor Society and also that I am the Student Council President. I am also proud that I was able to come back from knee surgery and have the kind of year I had.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? I am planning to attend a small four-year college to play football. I am planning on majoring in physical therapy.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? I enjoy being outside and camping.

Coach's Comment (From Don Melby): "We was a big-game player. He was very patient against teams we were well ahead of and he might only carry the ball five to 10 times. But in big games he wanted the ball and in several games in his career he carried the ball 40 to 50 times, which is a testament to his durability."

JUSTIN EBERT Salina South

Ebert was undoubtedly the spark plug for Salina South this season, leading the Cougars to a 10-2 record and a berth in the sub-state championship game. Ebert accounted for more than 2,300 yards of total offense with 737 rushing yards and seven touchdowns and 1,601 passing yards and another 19 touchdowns.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? Being a member of the 2000 state championship team and becoming the first outright 1-70 champions at Salina South.

Is there an athlete or nonathlete you use as a role model? I am lucky to have an entire family to use as role models. Each of my family members has had a significant influence on my life.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? Being the best Super Tecmo Bowl player at South.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? I plan to play college football and study Business and Economics.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? Playing Super Tecmo Bowl on the first Nintendo with my friends.

Coach's Comment (From Ken Stonebraker): "Justin is one of the fiercest competitors I have ever coached. He hated to lose, and he would do whatever it took to try and win the game. He was not big in stature, but he played with a lot of heart and he was extremely tough."

LANCE ECK Beloit

Eck was a dominant figure on both sides of the ball this year for the Trojans, helping the squad to a 7-2 record. As a linebacker, Eck recorded 104 total tackles, four sacks and recovered five fumbles. As the Trojans' fullback, Eck ran for 791 yards and scored 81 points, second only to fellow All-Area selection Adam Stephenson in the NCAA.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? My senior year would be my highlight of my football career. Having Jon Bingesser as my head coach, Dallas Cox, Kevin Morozas and Andy Niemczyk as assistant coaches — you couldn't ask for a better group of coaches to get coached by. And playing football with this senior class and winning league this year.

Is there an athlete or nonathlete you use as a role model? My sister, Lindsay Eck. Lindsay has always been a big role model for me. Just watching her dominate in track from her freshman year to her senior year. It was just absolutely mind-boggling to watch her compete. I've tried to follow in her steps of her 12 first-place medals at state. You just can't say enough about Lindsay. She has so many good qualities.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? I am very proud to say that I have completed a very difficult college prep curriculum at Beloit High School. Many athletes do not even get to take

ALL-AREA SECOND 11

Table with 5 columns: PLAYER, SCHOOL, HT., WGT., YR., POS. Lists players like Lee Albers, Travis Armbrister, Jordan Bedore, etc.

ALL-AREA THIRD 11

Table with 5 columns: PLAYER, SCHOOL, HT., WGT., YR., POS. Lists players like Jared Cranston, Jeff Horinek, Jeff Keberlein, etc.

HONORABLE MENTION

Ryan Abell, Lincoln; Evan Anderson, Abilene; Jeff Baier, Chapman; Jordan Barrett, Triplains; Doug Campbell, Hoxie; Clayton Cox, Weskan; Jordy Crimmins, Clay Center; A.J. Garcia, Plainville; Tanner Grief, Waconda East; Curtis Gutsch, Centre; Kody Hazelwood, Smoky Valley; Brandon Hicel, Trego; Cody Hilburn, Logan; Travis Hilt, St. Francis; Bryce Lange, Southern Cloud; Jeremy Lapka, Victoria; Nathan Lindberg, Pike Valley; Preston Mackley, Triplains; Jason Matz, Marion; Sam Mickelson, Ellis; Jesse Miller, Golden Plains; Zac Sheets, Chapman; Jared Shoemaker, Minneapolis; Todd Stahlecker, Centre.

these kinds of classes, and I am proud to say that I have been very successful in each of them. College will become a better experience for me because of my academic experiences at Beloit High School.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? To attend a four-year college and major in pre-medicine or kinesiology. I am undecided about football.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? I enjoy playing the guitar and coyote hunting with Jeff Pruitt in the Dodge.

Coach's Comment (From Jon Bingesser): "Lance is a talented athlete who works very hard to accomplish success. He always gives 110 percent whether its game competition or practice. He is a leader by example, which causes others to work harder and become better."

JARED GOEDERT Concordia

Goedert almost matched his unbelievable junior season this year despite missing the first two games with an injured hand. The Concordia senior threw for 1,807 yards and 13 touchdowns and finished his career with 4,511 passing yards and 36 touchdowns for the Panthers. He also finished the season averaging 37 yards per punt attempt.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? Tying the career school record for touchdown passes with 36 and throwing for over 4,400 yards in 17 games.

Is there an athlete or nonathlete you use as a role model? Coach (Ron) Culwell. I admire him for his work ethic and always having a positive attitude. He

put a lot of emphasis on hard work in the weight room and doing what you need to do to get better, which has helped me out tremendously.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? Maintaining a GPA over 3.7 throughout high school. I will also have 24 college credit hours by the time I graduate.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? I'd like to play either football or baseball in college. I'm undecided on where. I'm just looking for the best opportunity. I'm looking into some type of a business major.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? Hanging out with my buddies. Reading James Patterson and John Grisham books. Watching the TV show 'Friends' and playing PlayStation2 with my brothers.

Coach's Comment (From Ron Culwell): "Jared was tough in all areas — physically tough from being in the weight room to better himself and mentally tough in all situations. He was confident and cool under pressure, which made him a major threat late in close games. He competed hard no matter what I told him to do."

TERRY PETRIE Norton

The Bluejays' Petrie proved to be a big-time weapon no matter how he got his hands on the ball.

Petrie ran for 1,824 yards with 28 touchdowns, added two more touchdowns on kickoff returns and one touchdown on a punt return to help Norton to a 11-1 record.

What was the highlight of your high school football

career? My highlight of my football career was beating Smith Center. It has been over a decade since we've beaten them. We all came together as a team. Our chemistry was great. Our line did a great job. We wanted that win and we got it.

Is there an athlete or nonathlete you use as a role model? Gale Sayers. He is my role model because he is very quick and he has heart, and we're related.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? I made the honor roll this semester, even though it's my hardest year.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? I plan to play football somewhere in state.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? I love to listen to music, sleep and lift weights.

Coach's comment (From Bruce Graber): "Terry has great speed and every defensive coordinator in the country fears that. He has that God-given gift to make people miss even when they had a good angle on him. Everyone in school loves Terry because of who he is, not because he is a good football player — that speaks volumes about this young man."

DANIEL RAINS Hope

Rains was the main cog up front on both sides of the ball this year for the Lions as they made it to the Eight-Man Division II championship game.

Rains finished the season with more than 75 tackles and continually cleared the way up front from his offensive center position.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? The highlight, of course, is making it to the state championship game.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? I haven't accomplished it yet, but when I graduate from college that will be my biggest accomplishment. I will be the first Rains to graduate from college.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? I plan on going to a four-year college. I am still undecided which college I will go to. As of now, I plan to be a physical therapist.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? I really enjoy taking pictures. Photography will probably be my secondary major.

Coach's Comment (from Jeff Hostetter): "His size and toughness made him a tough player to try and block. He could run sideline to sideline. He forced a lot of teams to throw the ball or run outside away from him."

JAKE RICHTER Clay Center

Richter was Clay Center's all-around back with the ability to break away and score any time he touched the ball.

He finished the season with 1,361 rushing yards and 19 touchdowns. He also scored two touchdowns on kickoff returns and averaged 16 yards per punt return.

Perhaps his biggest game of the season came just days after his father suffered a stroke. After juggling trips back and forth to the hospital all week, Richter rolled off 242 yards on 21 carries in the final game of the regular season to lift Clay Center to the district championship.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? My highlight for this year was when we returned to Gardner-Edgerton on Saturday afternoon and beat them. We were down 21-6 on Friday night when we got rained out and drove three and a half hours home only to come back the next day. We ended up dominating the second half and rode home with an important win.

Is there an athlete or nonathlete you use as a role model? I've always respected my parents, and since my dad's stroke, I've seen them as even stronger role models and know how fortunate I am.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? I've always worked hard to keep my grades up, and to this point I have a 3.85 GPA.

What are your future plans for

football and schooling? I plan on playing football for a four-year university. I have no idea where, but I am getting offers that are looking good.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? I enjoy hunting a lot and riding four-wheelers and motorcycles just about every weekend.

Coach's Comment (From Paul Lane): "Jake was a threat every time he touched the ball and was exciting to watch. He could make things happen and could turn a game around with one carry. When he was in the game, the tempo moved up. About three notches. ... I have always professed family first, school second, and football is just a game we are allowed to play. This really hit home this season."

TANNER SCHMIDT Atwood

Schmidt completed one of the most stellar careers by a running back at Atwood High School this year with 2,285 rushing yards on 285 carries and 35 touchdowns. He scored 224 points and had 2,543 all-purpose yards.

Schmidt finished his career with 5,225 rushing yards on 534 carries with 83 touchdowns.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? The highlight of my high school career was scoring seven touchdowns and rushing for 350 yards in one of our playoff games this year, which broke several school records.

Is there an athlete or nonathlete you use as a role model? I use Coach (Dan) Lankas as a role model. He is an example of what hard work and dedication can get you. He has supported me throughout my high school career.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? I am proud of making the A-B Honor Roll all four years of high school.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? I have not decided where I am going to college.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? I enjoy hunting, working on the farm and watching TV.

Coach's Comment (From Dan Lankas): "He loves to run over you, loves to hit and deliver a blow. He has great balance and great determination not to go down. He has the heart to play the game the way it should be played. Nothing surprised me with what Tanner did. He had the heart and attitude to be a great football player."

ADAM STEPHENSON Southeast of Saline

Stephenson burst on to the Trojan scene this year after playing at receiver last year and switching to tailback as a senior. The move certainly paid off as he rolled up 2,166 yards on 271 carries and 20 touchdowns to help Southeast of Saline build a 9-3 record.

What was the highlight of your high school football career? Being a part of a great team that had many wins and having a lot of fun in my senior season.

Is there an athlete or non-athlete you use as a role model? My dad. He has taught me to have a good work ethic and to be grateful for everything good that comes my way.

Is there an accomplishment, other than athletics, you are especially proud of? Having success in forensics, being in school musicals and being a member of my school's singing group.

What are your future plans for football and schooling? Possibly playing football in college, but mostly going to college for school.

Do you have any specific hobbies you enjoy? I enjoy hunting, weightlifting and hanging out with my friends.

Coach's Comment (From Pat Haxton): "Gaining 2,000 yards and scoring 20 touchdowns for a kid who never played tailback is an unbelievable accomplishment. He could carry the ball 20 to 25 times a game, play on all of our special teams, play defense and still run the ball as hard, if not harder, on his 25th carry than his first. That, to me, separates him from most."

— CHRISTIAN D ORR The Salina Journal

Hostetter gets Hope to peak at right time

Lions exceed expectations as team jells, hit stride en route to runner-up finish

By CHRISTIAN D ORR The Salina Journal

Every football coach goes into a season with the goal of having his team improve each week and culminate by playing its best when playoff time rolls around.

For Hope coach Jeff Hostetter that goal became reality in 2002 as he watched his Lions make gradual improvements before kicking things into high gear once postseason began.

"This year the chemistry was

there," said Hostetter, the Salina Journal Coach of the Year after guiding Hope squad to an 11-2 record and a state runner-up finish in Eight-Man Division II.

"When the chemistry is there, it makes it easier coaching and there was less pressure this year. Coming in everyone thought, 'Oh, we're going to be down.'"

But the Lions were anything but down this season.

After losing to Burrton in overtime in the second week of the season, Hope ran off 10 consecutive victories before falling to Hanston in the state championship game.

Following the loss to Burrton, in which the Lions also lost senior end Clint Reed for the season, Hostetter wasn't thinking about any state title games. He was simply hoping the Lions could somehow find a way to complete a winning season and possi-

bly qualify for the playoffs.

"We just got better every week," said Hostetter, who has compiled a 100-44 record in 14 seasons with the Lions. "A lot of years we have had kids with a whole lot of talent, like last year, but we just didn't mesh together as much as we did this year."

Even as the Lions prepared to begin postseason play, they were far from brimming with confidence. Though riding a seven-game winning streak, they had survived a 20-12 scare from White City in the first round of district play and had yet to hit their stride.

They soon did.

The Lions opened with a 64-16 rout of Southern Cloud and moved into a regional contest showdown with Hanover. Hanover came in sporting a decided size advantage and looked to run over the Lions. The Wildcats left with a 52-30 loss.

"Everything just started clicking this year once we hit the playoffs," said Hostetter, whose team avenged its only regular season loss by knocking off Burrton 24-18 in the sub-state championship game.

"Once we beat Hanover ... You know, Hanover was going to come in there and just run all over us and when we won that game our confidence level really went up."

"I just had a lot of kids that really stepped up and started playing well toward the end of the season."

While Hostetter said this year's team didn't feel much pressure throughout the year, that won't be the case when the Lions take the field to kick off the 2003 campaign.

"We have a lot of kids coming back and I think the expectations are already high," he said. "We just need to hit the weights and keep working hard and that has to start right now."

Coaches of the Year

- 1976 — Clayton Williams, Beloit
1977 — Ed Buller, Clyde
1978 — Paul Dennis, Abilene
1979 — Jon Bingesser, Sacred Heart
1980 — Larry Friend, Plainville
1981 — Robert Teeter, Victoria
1982 — Roger Barta, Smith Center
1983 — David Johnson, Osborne
1984 — Jeff Crockett, Minneapolis
1985 — Neil Mellillo, Norton
1986 — Roger Barta, Smith Center
1987 — Chuck Fessenden, Northern Valley
1988 — Gary Sandbo, Smoky Valley
1989 — Dan Lankas, Atwood
1990 — Chuck Fessenden, Northern Valley
1991 — Dan Lankas, Atwood
1992 — Phil Wilson, Stockton
1993 — Marvin Diener, Salina Central
1994 — Jesse Jackson, Kensington
1995 — Monty Bechard, Belleville
1996 — Wayne Olson, Beloit
1997 — Mike Weatherman, Sylvan
1998 — Mike Weatherman, Sylvan
1999 — Ron Culwell, Concordia
2000 — Ken Stonebraker, Salina South
2001 — Marvin Diener, Salina Central
2002 — Jeff Hostetter, Hope

JOURNAL STATE RANKINGS FINAL

Ranking table with 8 columns showing team names and their final state ranking numbers.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES

- 6A: Olathe North 41, Derby 12
5A: Salina Central 14, Topeka West 6
4A: Wellington 21, Fort Scott 14
3A: Conway Springs 27, Silver Lake 19
2-1A: Colgan 29, Clallin 8
8I: St. Paul 26, South Barber 24
8II: Hanston 38, Hope 12