

Black & Gold

Tuscola's Haven Hatfield to play football for University of Indianapolis

By Daniel L. Chamness

Haven Hatfield, a Tuscola senior, not only started with the right tools, he had the right people around him and he simply put in the time to get better.

Those are not the only three reasons the 6-foot-3, 245-pound offensive lineman will continue to play football 76 next year, he will just do it 150 miles away at the University of Indianapolis for the Greyhound football team.

"I met with the coaches and visited the Indianapolis campus three times," said Hatfield, reflecting on why he selected to continue to play football there. The coaches also came to visit me at Tuscola High School. When I thought about it, they were the best fit for me both academically and athletically. They have a great football program and are consistently the conference champions in the Great Lakes Valley Conference."

He had offers from two Division II schools. Other than Indianapolis, he also had an offer to continue his career at McKendree University, which would have rejoined him former teammate Brayden VonLaken. His Division I offers came from Eastern Illinois University and Butler University, also located in Indianapolis.

"Braydo and I are great friends," said Hatfield of his fellow offensive lineman and former teammate. "He was a senior when I was a freshman. He has given me great advice

about college football in the conference and the Division II level. I hope we do get to play against each other, that would be a great experience."

Thus far, besides playing football for four years for the Warriors, he has also played basketball and baseball. This spring, he plans to add track and field to that athletic resume as he will throw shot put and discus for the Warriors and his stepfather, Stan Wienke.

"I am eager to throw for Tuscola for a couple of reasons," said Hatfield. "I think it will help improve my footwork for football. I am really looking forward to throwing for my stepdad. It was definitely on my bucket list to do before I graduated."

Hatfield sees his collegiate position as an offensive lineman, but he is able to play both offense and defense. During his junior and senior year, both of which he was a consistent starter, he helped the Warriors post 2,882 rushing yards and 997 passing yards. Peyton Armstrong, also a member of the Class of 2022, finished with 1,333 rushing yards in seven games in the most recent football season. Fellow senior Patrick Pierce finished with 332 yards.

As a junior, he was able to block for not only Armstrong, but Grant Hardwick as well. Armstrong finished with 611 rushing yards, while Hardwick would finish with 478 yards. With Hatfield one of the five offensive linemen providing



HAVEN HATFIELD POSES with the University of Indianapolis logo. The Tuscola offensive lineman will be attending the school and playing football. He will be wearing the number 76, just like he wore at Tuscola, during his time as a Greyhound. Submitted photo.

protection, the pair accounted for all 10 touchdowns. Armstrong, the quarterback, passed for 454 yards on 43 completions.

"Football has become a part of who I am," said Hatfield. "One of the reasons that I love it so much, is it is a brotherhood. That brotherhood is unmatched in any other sport. It becomes a family and that is very important to me."

As a defensive player, he would finish his senior season with 25 tackles. Of the 25, 10 were solos. The future Grey-

hound would also have three tackles for seven yards of loss. In his final two years, which was limited to just 13 games, he would finish with 45 tackles, 20 of which were solos.

For his play on the football field, the son of Marke Hatfield, who also earned all-state status as a Tuscola Warrior football player in 1987, and Katie Wienke and the stepson of Stan Wienke and Mary Hatfield, has earned Central Illinois Conference all-conference honors and

Prep Red Zone All-State Honors. He will suit up for the final time to play in the Shrine All-State Game at Tucci Field on the campus of Illinois Wesleyan University.

Academically, he plans to major in either Sports Management or Physical Education. He currently carries a grade point average of 3.76 on a 4.00 scale.

"We are so proud of Haven," said Tuscola head coach Andy Romine. "When his career started, I think he was unsure of whether or not he wanted to suit up and play. He was always

a solid player, but when we made the playoffs during his sophomore year, it seemed to motivate him. He got some time in the playoffs and he seemed to switch gears."

The last time the Greyhounds posted a losing season in football was 2009, in either conference play or overall. In the most recent season, Indianapolis finished 7-4 overall and 5-2 in the GLVC. They were second only to Lindenwood University, who finished 9-3 overall and 7-0 in the GLVC.



TREY BOYER TAKES the ball downcourt in a recent Biddy Basketball game in Tuscola. Submitted photo.



EASTON CUNNINGHAM (4) dribbles around MJ Murphy (24) of Warrensburg-Latham during a road game between the two teams. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.

Volunteer Opportunities for Advance Swimmers

The Tuscola Torpedoes Swim Team is looking for advance youth swimmers who would be interested in volunteering as assistant swim coaches, under the training and supervision of experienced swim coaches.

Interested volunteers can send inquires and questions to torpedoesheadcoach@gmail.com.

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