

Black & Gold



MAKING IT OFFICIAL: Flanked by their parents, Peyton Armstrong and Haven Hatfield ink their National Letters of Intent to play college football next year. Armstrong will play at Arizona Christian University, while Hatfield will play at University of Indianapolis. From left to right are: Marke Hatfield, Katie Wienke, Haven Hatfield, Peyton Armstrong, David Armstrong and Latricia Armstrong. Standing also witnessing the signing are Hatfield's step parents, Mary Hatfield and Stan Wienke. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.

Tuscola skill player to suit up for Arizona Christian University

By Daniel L. Chamness
Peyton Armstrong had a chance to continue his athletic and academic career to the south, the east or the west.

In the end the 5-foot-11, 185-pound skill player, who can not only throw the ball, but showed he can run very well also, will continue his education and his football career at Arizona Christian University in Phoenix, Arizona. He becomes the second member of the 2021 team that will play in college. He follows Haven Hatfield, who verbally committed to University of Indianapolis and made it official on the same day that Armstrong did.

"I loved the atmosphere at Arizona Christian and it's strong Christian background," said Armstrong. "As far as football, I love everything about the game, both mentally and physically. I love the mental as-

pect from the angle that everyone has to work together and play their role to be successful as a team. Having the opportunity to play college football is a blessing. Every since peewee football and my first game as a child, I knew I wanted to continue to play as long as I possibly could."

Armstrong chose Arizona Christian over Culver Stockton College, Indiana Wesleyan University and Ottawa University. Arizona Christian plays in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, commonly known as the NAIA, and the Sooner Athletic Conference. There are 12 total schools in the SAC.

As a senior, Armstrong had 1,333 rushing yards on 286 carries to lead the Warrior football team. The Warriors would finish the 2021 campaign with a 4-3 record and barely missed the playoffs. As a

quarterback, he competed 38-of-81 passes for 543 yards. He rushed for a team-high 18 touchdowns and passed for another four touchdowns.

On defense, he finished with 11 solo tackles and eight assisted tackles. Of his tackles, three for were for 12 yards of loss. His performance on the field, not only earned his all-conference status in the Central Illinois Conference, but it also earned him all-area status.

"Had we had a nine game schedule, Peyton would have earned our rushing record for a single season," said Andy Romine, Tuscola's head coach. "Peyton was a true workhorse of the football team. He is a really tough athlete and a leader, but extremely quiet. He leads with his effort and simply a grinder. I know he loves the sport of football and made

this football team better. He also made this school a better place."

The senior started playing varsity football and made an impact as early as his sophomore season. From there it was a very quick buildup to his senior year. The Tuscola three-sport athlete, who has also played basketball and baseball for the Warriors, rushed for over 200 yards as a sophomore and then almost 800 as a junior. He would finish his three years of varsity football with 2,354 rushing yards on 458 carries. Thirty one of his carries were touchdown totes. While he did throw one completion as a sophomore, he really developed his passing as a junior. After competing 1-of-3 aeriels for eight yards as a sophomore, as a junior he competed 47-of-83 passes for 513 yards. He passed for nine touchdowns as a junior.

During his career, he also filled several other roles on special teams. He punted eight times as a junior for 164 yards. As a sophomore, he had five kickoff returns for 79 yards and a fumble recovery.

Defensively, he finished with 23 solo tackles and 12 assisted tackles. He finished with four tackles for 35 yards of loss.

"I see myself as a running back in college," said Armstrong. "I like offense best of all. I will miss almost everything about Tuscola. The community is so supportive of the athletic teams here. I love the school from the teachers, classmates, coaches, teammates and janitors. I wake up everyday and I am genuinely excited to go to school. I have a little bit of senioritis right now, but I know when I am no longer at the school everyday, I will miss it."

The son of Latricia and David Armstrong of Tuscola has yet to decide on a major.

By picking Arizona Christian, he has picked a school that has posted a winning record every year since 2015, both overall and in the two different conferences. Prior to being in the Sooner Athletic Conference, they were members of the Central States Football League. During the 2021 season, they were 8-2 overall and 7-2 in the SAC. They had two skill players that finished with over 600 rushing yards. One returns, the other is listed as a senior.

"My long term goals are to earn a role as a starter and win a conference title/ring," said Armstrong. "I believe to make this happen, I will have to trust the process and try to succeed in whatever is thrown my way."

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