

2001 WIAC Football Headlines

Beckham Drafted By Tennessee Titans In Fourth Round

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. - UW-Stout all-America defensive back Tony Beckham (Sr, Ocala, Fla) became the first UW-Stout football player drafted in more than 30 years when he was picked by the Tennessee Titans as the 115th pick (fourth round) in the NFL draft, Sunday, April 21.

Beckham was the first NCAA Division III player chosen in the 2002 draft and was picked five slots behind Wisconsin Badger cornerback Mike Echols, who Beckham worked out with in Madison. Echols was also picked by the Titans. The 2002 draft saw 261 players selected.

Beckham, who was tabbed by NFL Draft guru Mel Kiper as the 10th ranked cornerback in the draft, was the first Blue Devil drafted in the NFL Draft since the early 1970s. Three other Blue Devils have been drafted, but none of them played in the NFL: center Dick Erickson, 1967, Kansas City Chiefs; tackle Gary Inskeep, 1970, New York Giants (Inskeep went on to a solid career in the Canadian Football League); and defensive back Reggie Holmes, 1971, Minnesota Vikings.

The speedy defensive back from Ocala, Fla., ran one of the top 40's at the NFL combines in Indianapolis, Ind., in March and had solid games at both the Blue-Gray Classic on Christmas Day and again at the Rotary Gridiron Classic in January.

Two former Stout players have played in the NFL. Bob McRoberts played with the Boston Redskins in 1944 and defensive lineman Jeff Hazuga played last season with the Minnesota Vikings, where he signed as a free agent.

Beckham attracted considerable pre-draft attention in the media. The Blue Devil coaching staff has fielded calls from nearly all NFL teams and the sports information office has handled requests from coast-to-coast.

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Stout's Tony Beckham To Compete In All-Star Game

RELEASED: Monday, January 21, 2002

MENOMONIE - Former Green Bay Packer head coach Lindy Infante will coach Team Florida, the team UW-Stout standout defensive back Tony Beckham (Sr, Ocala, Fla) will play for, in the Fourth Annual Rotary Gridiron Classic, Saturday, Jan. 26 at the Citrus Bowl in Florida.

The Rotary Gridiron Classic presented by Tyco will be played on January 26 at 2 p.m. EST at the Florida Citrus Bowl. The game will be televised on ESPN and broadcast on the Pacific West Radio Network. The Rotary Gridiron Classic matches the best players from Florida's football playing universities and homegrown stars (Team Florida) versus the best of the U.S. (Team USA).

Former Oklahoma Sooners and Dallas Cowboys head coach Barry Switzer will lead Team USA.

More than 250 players that have appeared in the Rotary Gridiron Classic have appeared on NFL rosters,

The official web site for the game is: <http://www.pcsports.org/gic/main.html>

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WIAC Football Players Earn D3football.com, Football Gazette All-America Honors

RELEASED: Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Madison, Wis.--Ten Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) football players have been named to the 2001 D3football.com and Football Gazette All-America Teams.

Platteville's Brad Abraham earned second team honors from both publications. The senior punter from Cedarburg, Wis., holds the Pioneer record for career average at 40.85 per punt. Abraham averaged 40.7 yards per kick this year, second-best in school history only to his 41.9 average last year. He has been nationally ranked in punting for the last three seasons.

Eau Claire's Bob Schmidt and Stevens Point's Paul Schmitt earned second team honors from D3football.com and were third team selections to the Football Gazette squad.

Schmidt, a senior offensive lineman from Eau Claire, Wis. (Memorial H.S.), has started 29 games over the last three seasons. He is a three-time All-WIAC selection and was also named the WIAC's Max Sparger Football Co-Scholar-Athlete this season.

Schmitt, a senior defensive lineman from Stratford, Wis., was the 2001 WIAC Co-Player of the Year. He tied a school record with 15 sacks this season, including eight sacks over the final four games of the regular season and four in the Division III playoffs. He also had 24 tackles for loss, including 12 over the last four games and six in the playoffs. Overall, he totaled 58 tackles, including 40 solo stops.

Stout's Eric Moe and Tony Beckham earned second team honors from D3football.com and Football Gazette, respectively.

Moe, a junior defensive back from Hixton, Wis. (Whitehall H.S.) is tied with Jack Voigt (1972-75) for the school career record for interceptions. He has 15 interceptions in his career and had a conference leading eight thefts this season. Moe averaged 18.9 yards per interception return and returned one 88 yards for a score in the season opener. He had an interception in all but one game.

Beckham, a senior defensive back from Ocala, Fla. (Forest H.S.), finished the 2001 season with 29 solo tackles and 14 assists. He had one interception for 35 yards and this year diversified his game. Beckham led the league with 22.4 yards per kickoff return and returned one 89 yards for a score. He has been chosen to play in the Blue Gray All-Star Football Classic on Christmas Day and the Rotary Gridiron Classic in January.

La Crosse's Jeremy Unertl was a third team selection to the D3football.com squad, while Eau Claire's Jay Hoyord was a third team pick on the Football Gazette squad.

Unertl, a senior defensive back from Theresa, Wis. (Lomira H.S.), recorded 72 tackles this season. He tied for the team lead with five interceptions and had one fumble recovery, which he returned 34 yards for a touchdown. Unertl finished his career with 16 interceptions (15 in regular season), fifth on La Crosse's all-time list.

Hoyord, a senior defensive back from Scandinavia, Wis. (Iola-Scandinavia H.S.), led the Blugolds with 101 total tackles, six interceptions and three fumble recoveries, while finishing second with 13 passes defended.

Eau Claire's Austin Crow received honorable mention from D3football.com, while his teammate, Brad Newton, and Stevens Point's Dillon Maney were named honorable mention by Football Gazette.

Crow, a sophomore defensive lineman from Woodbury, Minn., finished first in the conference with 20 tackles for loss and four forced fumbles, while finishing second with 12 sacks. He also compiled 69 total tackles, four passes defended and two fumble recoveries.

Newton, a junior tight end from Baldwin, Wis. (Baldwin-Woodville H.S.), caught a team-high 35 receptions for 474 yards and two touchdowns while blocking for the conference's leading rusher in Darrell Souhrada.

Maney, a junior defensive back from Three Lakes, Wis., had a team-high six interceptions, including three pickoffs in the team's WIAC title-clinching victory over UW-Eau Claire. He ranked third on the team with 75 tackles.

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Six Earn Hewlett-Packard Football All-America Honors

RELEASED: Friday, December 14, 2001

Madison, Wis.--Six Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) football players have been named to the 2001 Hewlett-Packard NCAA Division III All-America Team. Eau Claire's Jay Hoyord and Stevens Point's Paul Schmitt were named to the second team. Platteville's Brad Abraham, Stevens Point's Paul Steffek and Stout's Eric Baker earned third team honors, while Eau Claire's Bob Schmidt earned honorable mention recognition.

Hoyord, a senior defensive back from Scandinavia, Wis. (Iola-Scandinavia H.S.), was a unanimous selection to the All-WIAC team this season. Starting 43 games in his Blugold career, he totaled 324 tackles, 14 interceptions, 40 passes defended and 5 fumble recoveries.

Schmitt, a senior defensive lineman from Stratford, Wis., was the 2001 WIAC Co-Player of the Year. He tied a school record with 15 sacks this season, including eight sacks over the final four games of the regular season and four in the Division III playoffs. He also had 24 tackles for loss, including 12 over the last four games and six in the playoffs. Overall, he totaled 58 tackles, including 40 solo stops.

Abraham, a senior punter from Cedarburg, Wis., holds the Pioneer record for career average at 40.85 per punt. Abraham averaged 40.7 yards per kick this year, second-best in school history only to his 41.9 average last year. He has been nationally ranked in punting for the last three seasons.

Steffek, a senior offensive lineman from Amherst, Wis., helped the Pointers gain 217.6 yards per contest on the ground and also combined with his teammates to surrender just 14 sacks in 11 games this season. He was a First Team All-WIAC selection during the 2001 campaign.

Eric Baker, a senior fullback from Sarona, Wis. (Spooner H.S.), collected 230 yards on the ground two rushing touchdowns this season. He also hauled in 16 passes for 197 yards and a touchdown and finished with 20 points. Baker was a First Team All-WIAC selection this season.

Schmidt, a senior offensive lineman from Eau Claire, Wis. (Memorial H.S.), has started 29 games over the last three seasons. He is a three-time All-WIAC selection and was also named the WIAC's Max Sparger Football Co-Scholar-Athlete this season.

The Division III All-America Football Team was founded in 1978 and is sponsored by Hewlett-Packard. A panel of 30 sports information directors, representing the four playoff regions in Division III, selected first-, second- and third-teams with honorable mentions.

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Stout's Beckham Selected American Football Coaches All-America

RELEASED: Monday, December 10, 2001

MENOMONIE - University of Wisconsin-Stout defensive back Tony Beckham (Sr, Ocala, Fla/Forest) was named to the 2001 American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Division III Coaches All-America Team.

Beckham was the only Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) player named to the team, which is the only All-America team selected solely by coaches. Beckham is also the second consecutive Blue Devil named to the team. Defensive lineman Jeff Hazuga, who now plays for the Minnesota Vikings, was named to the 2000 team.

Beckham, a two-time first team all-WIAC selection, has been chosen to play in the Blue Gray All-Star Football Classic on Christmas Day and the Rotary Gridiron Classic in January. He was also a first team All-West Region selection.

Beckham finished with 29 solo tackles and 14 assists. He had one interception for 35 yards and this year diversified his game. A speedy runner, Beckham excelled at kickoff returns where he led the league with 22.4 yards per return and returned one 89 yards for a score. Beckham was utilized as a wide receiver and hauled in seven passes for 183 yards and three touchdowns. In the first game of the season, Beckham caught two passes - both for touchdowns - and returned a kickoff for a score.

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Bestul, Katz Named Football Academic All-Americans

RELEASED: Monday, December 10, 2001

Madison, Wis.--The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's Mike Bestul and UW-Whitewater's Peter Katz have been named to the 2001 Verizon/CoSIDA Academic All-America College Division Football First Team.

Bestul, a junior offensive lineman from Chippewa Falls, Wis. (Chi-Hi HS), is majoring in kinesiology with a 3.93 grade point average. He is the third football player in school history to earn Academic All-America recognition. Mike Zeihen earned First Team honors during the 1980-81 season and Jon Sylte was a Second Team selection for the 1989-90 school year.

Bestul becomes the 16th Blugold to be named an Academic All-America since the program was created in 1952. Nine Blugolds have received First Team honors, while six have been named to the Second Team and five received Third Team recognition.

Bestul has started 20 games over the last two seasons and was an intricate part of a Blugold offensive line that ranked second in the conference in scoring during the 2001 campaign, averaging 28.0 points per game. The Blugolds also averaged 361.9 yards per game and 5.2 yards per play this season.

Katz, a senior defensive lineman from Manitowoc, Wis. (Roncalli HS), earned First Team All-Academic honor for the second consecutive season. He is majoring in biology with a minor in chemistry and carries a 3.98 grade point average. Katz posted the second-highest grade point average on the 12-member defensive squad.

Katz is the second Warhawk football player to receive First Team Academic All-America recognition. Scott Hawig was selected to the First Team in 1995.

Earlier this season, Katz was named the WIAC's Max Sparger Football co-Scholar-Athlete. He has already been accepted into the Medical College of Wisconsin after graduation from Whitewater.

On the field, Katz earned First Team All-WIAC honors in 2001 after second team recognition in 2000 and first team honors as a sophomore. During the 2001 campaign, he led the Warhawks with five quarterback sacks, was second on the team in tackles with 78 (24 solo) and had eight tackles for loss.

The Academic All-America program is sponsored by Verizon under an agreement with CoSIDA since 1985. The college division of the Academic All-America Team includes players from National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II and III teams, as well as players from National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics affiliated schools.

To be nominated as an Academic All-American, a student-athlete must maintain a minimum 3.20 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, be a starter or a key reserve on a varsity team and have reached sophomore athletic and academic standing at their respective institution.

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Stout's Beckham To Play In Blue Gray Game

Menomonie, Wis.--UW-Stout cornerback Tony Beckham (Sr, Ocala, Fla) has accepted an invitation to play in the annual Blue Gray All-Star Football Classic on Christmas Day in Montgomery, Ala.

Beckham, a two-time first team all-Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) choice, is one of a few NCAA Division III athletes to receive an invitation and is believed to be the first WIAC athlete to receive an invitation since Tom Newberry of UW-La Crosse played in the classic in the mid-1980s. Newberry went on to a long career in the NFL.

"Playing on Christmas day, that's the Lord's birthday," Beckham said. "I am excited to just be playing ball. I will get a chance to play against the best. A lot of my friends (from Florida) are playing Division I. Now I get my chance."

The Blue Gray game is considered one of the more prestigious college all-star games, made up of predominately Division I players from teams that do not receive bowl bids. The game will be nationally televised on ABC and generally receives high ratings.

Beckham finished the 2001 season with 29 solo tackles and 14 assisted tackles, as well as one interception for 35 yards. Beckham averaged 22.4 yards per kickoff return - a league best. Beckham also lined up as a wide receiver,

grabbing seven passes for 183 yards and three touchdowns.

Beckham also received invitations to Aztec Bowl and the Rotary Gridiron Classic. Beckham declined the Aztec Bowl invitation, which pits Division III all-stars against Mexican all-stars, because the game fell on the same day as Stout's graduation date. Beckham will graduate Dec. 15 with a degree in psychology, posting a 3.1 grade point average.

A native of Florida, Beckham will play for Team Florida in the Gridiron Classic Jan. 26 in Orlando, Fla. The NFL Players Association's official all-star game matches the top players from Florida with top players from around the country. The game will be held in the Citrus Bowl.

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Ten Named To Academic All-District Football Team

RELEASED: Tuesday, November 20, 2001

Madison, Wis.--Ten Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) football student-athletes have been named to the 2001 Verizon/CoSIDA Academic All-District V Team. Seven athletes were named to the First Team, while two were named Third Team and one earned Second Team honors.

Eau Claire's Mike Bestul and Bob Schmidt, La Crosse's Kurt Schmidt, Oshkosh's David Gaulke and Kris Johnson, Stevens Point's Nick Van Cuyk and Whitewater's Peter Katz all received First Team honors.

Bestul, a junior offensive lineman from Chippewa Falls, Wis. (Chi-Hi HS), is majoring in kinesiology with a 3.93 grade point average. Bob Schmidt, a senior offensive lineman from Eau Claire, Wis. (Memorial HS), is majoring in physical education with a 3.61 grade point average. He was named the 2001 WIAC Max Sparger Co-Scholar-Athlete earlier this season.

Gaulke, a senior kicker from New Berlin, Wis. (Eisenhower HS), carries a 3.70 grade point average in finance, while Johnson, a junior punter from Florence, Wis., is majoring in physical education with a 3.70 grade point average.

Kurt Schmidt, a senior linebacker from Cresco, Iowa (Crestwood HS), is majoring in exercise science with a 3.85 grade point average.

Van Cuyk, a senior offensive lineman from Kimberly, Wis., has a 3.74 grade point average in paper science.

Katz, a senior defensive lineman from Manitowoc, Wis. (Roncalli HS), has a 3.98 grade point average in biology (pre-med). He was named the 2001 WIAC Max Sparger Co-Scholar-Athlete earlier this season. Last year, he received First Team Academic All-America and All-District honors.

Eau Claire's Josh Stieler earned Second Team honors as a running back. Stieler, a senior from Albert Lea, Minn., is majoring in finance with a 3.76 grade point average.

Oshkosh landed a pair of Third Team honorees. Lucas Koenecke, a sophomore offensive lineman from Reedsburg, Wis., is majoring in exercise fitness with a 3.32 grade point average. He was one of three sophomores named to the third team. Keith Kamps, a senior defensive back from Crivitz, Wis., has a 3.30 grade point average in fitness.

Athletes named to the First Team will represent the district on the national ballot.

The Verizon/CoSIDA Academic All-District V team is comprised of all non-Division I student-athletes from Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Minnesota.

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Katz, Schmidt Share Football Scholar-Athlete Award

RELEASED: Thursday, November 15, 2001

Madison, Wis.--University of Wisconsin-Whitewater's Peter Katz and UW-Eau Claire's Bob Schmidt have been named 2001 Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) Max Sparger Football Co-Scholar-Athletes, it was announced recently by WIAC Commissioner Gary Karner.

Katz, a senior from Manitowoc, Wis. (Roncalli HS), is majoring in pre-med with a 3.98 grade point average. He was named to the CoSIDA Academic All-America First Team last season and is a two-time member of the Academic All-District squad. Katz is a three-time member of the WIAC Scholastic Honor Roll. He has also earned numerous academic scholarships throughout his coursework, including the Lakehead Pipeline Scholarship, which is given to the outstanding student in the sciences.

Katz, a team captain this season, was recently named to the All-WIAC First Team after registering 78 tackles, including eight for loss and five sacks in the 2001 campaign. He was named All-WIAC Second Team last season after earning First Team honors in 1999.

Schmidt, a senior from Eau Claire, Wis. (Memorial HS), is majoring in kinesiology with a physical education teaching emphasis and carries a 3.62 grade point average. He is a three-time member of the WIAC Scholastic Honor Roll and has earned Academic Distinction at UW-Eau Claire in six semesters.

Schmidt helped the Blugolds to a share of the 2001 WIAC championship and was named All-WIAC First Team the past two seasons, being a unanimous selection both years. He was named Second Team All-America by USA Football last season and also earned All-America Honorable Mention honors from D3football.com. In addition, he earned All-WIAC Honorable Mention honors in 1999.

Also nominated for the scholar-athlete award were: Eau Claire's Jonathan Polasky and Josh Stieler, La Crosse's Josh Boraas and Kurt Schmidt and River Falls' Taylor Hall.

The WIAC Scholar-Athlete Award is sponsored by Culver's. In order to be nominated for the scholar-athlete award, a student-athlete must have a minimum 3.25 grade point average, be in their last year of competition, or on schedule to graduate this academic year, and have competed for a minimum of two years.

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Stevens Point To Host NCAA Football First Round Game

RELEASED: Sunday, November 11, 2001

Madison, Wis.--For the third time in UW-Stevens Point history and first time since 1987, the Pointer football team will play at home in the postseason.

UW-Stevens Point will host Bethel (Minn.) in the first round of the NCAA Division III playoffs Saturday at Noon at Goerke Field. It is the Pointers' third appearance in the NCAA playoffs and their first-ever NCAA home playoff game.

The previous two postseason home games were both in the 1987 NAIA playoffs when the Pointers hosted Westmar (Iowa) and Geneva (Pa.). UW-Stevens Point won both of those games.

The Pointers earned the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference's automatic bid to the playoffs by virtue of Saturday's 30-27 double overtime victory over UW-Eau Claire. The Blugolds and Pointers tied for the WIAC title with 5-2 records, but UW-Eau Claire was not selected to the field, despite its 8-2 overall record.

Bethel is 9-1 overall and tied with St. John's for the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference title. The Royals, however, needed an at-large berth to make the field, having suffered their only loss to St. John's in a 34-0 defeat on Oct. 27.

UW-Stevens Point and Bethel have played once in school history with the Pointers winning 30-17 in the 1983 season opener at Stevens Point.

The Pointers also appeared in the NCAA playoffs in 1986 and 1999, playing Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference foes in the first round both times. UW-Stevens Point lost to Concordia-Moorhead (Minn.) 24-15 in 1986 and lost to St. John's 23-10 in 1999. The Pointers are making their sixth all-time postseason appearance, having also qualified for the NAIA playoffs in 1977 and 1989.

The winner of the UW-Stevens Point-Bethel game will play the winner of a first round game between St. Norbert and St. John's.

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UW-Platteville's Lewis Serves Internship With Defense Department

--By Michelle Muller, UWP Public Relations, with assistance from Paul Erickson, UWP Sports Information

Ramifications of Tuesday's terrorists attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are reaching throughout the country. The University of Wisconsin-Platteville football team is no exception.

A little over a month ago, UW-Platteville student-athlete Tony Lewis was working for the Defense Department in Washington, D.C. He designed software for the United State's Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). The DIA is the "Combat Support Agency" of the Department of Defense and provides military intelligence to the armed forces as well as to the decision makers of the United States Department of Defense and the United States Government.

While Lewis's main office was not in the Pentagon, but rather minutes away, he has been in the Pentagon, and many of his coworkers and supervisors were frequently in the Pentagon. One of the officers Lewis worked with contacted him Tuesday after the attack.

"I got an e-mail from one of the officers I worked with, and what I got from him was that everything was just chaos around there," Lewis said. "He said that he himself and everyone I worked with this summer were OK. They weren't at the Pentagon when it happened."

Lewis said he believed that many people from the DIA were killed or at the Pentagon when the hijacked plane was flown into the west side of the structure, killing hundreds and injuring more.

Lewis's older brother Matt, a graduate student at the University of Maryland, first contacted Lewis with the news.

"I was absolutely shocked and couldn't believe it," Lewis said. "My brother was downtown near those government buildings just the other day, and he had previously interned at the World Trade Center and knew people who worked there."

Lewis's role in the Defense Department was, for a student, somewhat surprisingly for its importance to the nation.

"This past summer I worked for the DIA which is part of the Defense Department," the software engineering major said. "I interned with a technology assessment group. My main project was developing a database to analyze foreign military equipment."

Lewis worked with a group that projects foreign military equipment buildup over a 20-year period.

"My main project was to develop a tool, as a database, that they would use to assess foreign military levels down to the battalion level," he said. "Rather than them looking at the top levels and basing projections on the equipment, the database I designed is a bottom-up build where they can enter 'x' number of equipment in a battalion and how many battalions are in a regiment so they can project their numbers that way."

Lewis's prototype will be used by some of the service centers, such as the National Ground Intelligence Center and the National Air Intelligence Center.

"My last day of work, I finished it and turned it into my mentor, and the systems engineer who will be the one contracted to implement it," Lewis said. "They were pretty pleased with what I did. From what it sounds like, it has received good response from the service centers."

Lewis said he had some help from the system engineer, but the main design was his. Pretty heady stuff from a college student who hails from small Brodhead, Wis.

"When I was there and working with them, I felt a part of it," he said. "I never felt like just an intern. I was a coworker with them, and they made me feel like one. It did make me feel pretty important for them to give me this responsibility and let me go on my own and come up with whatever was going to be the best idea. It made me

appreciate all the things they do and made me confident in what I can do."

On the football field, the two-time all-conference leader is being asked to do more this year as well. Lewis, the Pioneers' leading tackler last year with 87, has switched from linebacker to free safety, allowing the Pioneers to take advantage of his big-play ability and ferocious tackling. That is not the only switch for Lewis.

"My whole attitude towards football as a senior is different than it was two years ago," Lewis said. "My life used to be centered on football and now I am keeping it in perspective. I am going to enjoy it while I have it."

Lewis and his teammates enjoyed the season-opener, a 64-0 win over Mount Senario. Lewis not only helped pitch the school's first shutout since 1995, he watched younger brother Adam intercept two passes, taking one 46 yards for a touchdown.

"That game was certainly one I will remember for a long, long time," Lewis said.

Lewis and the Pioneers play at Augustana (Ill.) Saturday.