

National Signing Day Update

By Tony Kohanek

February 3rd, 2016 was just another Wednesday in many people's minds. However, for many promising young athletes, fans of college sports, and coaches, that day was National Signing day. This is the start of the period, when high school players can sign their National Letter of Intent (NLI) with a college to play football. Although all college sports have a signing day the most widely followed by fans, is the signing day for college football.

A NLI is a binding agreement between a prospective student-athlete and a school. By signing this document the athlete agrees to attend the school full-time for one year and the school agrees to provide athletics and financial aid for one year. If the student does not fulfill his agreement, then he forfeits one year of eligibility in all sports. This agreement also prohibits recruitment after a student has signed his letter of intent. No school can contact the student after he has signed his letter of intent to play for another school.

Concordia University's football team held two different national signing day parties on February 3rd to celebrate the signing of 14 new recruits for the 2016 fall season. Of the 14, six are from Minnesota, two from Florida, two from Wisconsin, one from Illinois, one from Nevada,

one from Texas, and one of the recruit's name and location has yet to be disclosed. Out of the 14 recruits, nine will be offensive players (1 QB, 1 RB, 2 WR, 4 OL), and five will be defensive players (2 DL, 3 DB). The recruitment class consists mostly of prep recruits with one transfer, St. Paul native, Ricardo

Johnson III, who transferred at the semester break from Ohio Northern. He played his prep ball at Cretin-Derham Hall. According to Head Coach Shannon Currier, "The class is highlighted by four incoming offensive linemen that will add competition, depth and potentially early playing time. We also have two big, long defensive linemen who are very athletic and good interior linemen that we are very excited about. You can never have enough of those guys and those six guys add a lot of size to our roster, which we need. We were also able to get a couple of skilled receivers who came through in the end, added a couple cornerbacks, and overall some other pieces of the puzzle we think are valuable. But we know we're not done."

Golden Bears Season Highlighted by Home Success

By Cole Schuessler

"There's no place like home." This well-known saying has been especially true for this year's Concordia St. Paul men's basketball team. With some of the team's biggest wins of the season coming at their home, and the team struggling to pick up victories on the road, playing well at home was one of the team's most important keys to success.

Arguably the team's most signature win came on January 29th in St. Paul at the Gangelhoff Center. The Golden Bears were facing #3 ranked MSU Moorhead, a team that came into the game with a 21-2 record. The Golden Bears meanwhile had lost their previous three games. However, on that night the Bears went against all odds and defeated, the NSIC North leader Moorhead by a score of 98-97 in double overtime. Their five starters who all scored double-digit points led Concordia, but on that night it was two freshman bench players who combined for the biggest basket of the game. After not being available at the start of the game due to a leg injury, OC Omoregie was forced to come off the bench as four of Concordia's players had fouled out. Omoregie drove down the right side and dished the ball to freshman Steven Kragt, who laid it in with 2.4 seconds to go to give the Golden Bears the game-winning basket and a one point lead.

Along with the big upset against Moorhead, many of the Golden Bears other significant wins have come at the Gangelhoff Center. Their first win of the year was at home against St. Olaf on November 11th, a 73-63 win for the Bears. The largest margin of victory also took place at Concordia, as the squad beat St. John's 88-54 on December 30.

After having a rough start to the conference season, the men also won their first conference game at home by a score of 69-64 against Wayne State. This started a three-game win streak, including home victories over Minnesota Crookston and Bemidji State. They also beat Northern State on January 30, a team in the top half of the NSIC that went on to beat #1 Augustana a game later.

While the home hardwood has certainly provided some sweet victories for the Bears, opposing gyms have not been so kind to this year's men's basketball team. After a November 24th victory at Bemidji State, the team would not win another road game until early February. However, the Bears improved their play as the season came to a close, and that translated to the few wins away from home, as well. Concordia won their last three regular season away games, with victories at U-Mary, Upper Iowa, and Winona State.

With the Bears playing better down the stretch, they have used a balanced scoring attack from their starters: freshman Bryndan Matthews, freshman Matt Ambriz, and seniors Mike Yanke, Shea Mandli, and Cole Olstad, with Diallo Powell also contributing off the bench. Olstad especially has been ramping up his game in the closing weeks, as he has increased his team leading scoring average to 15 points a game. He is also no slouch in the classroom as he was named CoSIDA Academic All-District® for the second year in a row. He will go down as one of the best players the university has seen, as he finished the season third on Concordia's career scoring list.



Photo by Maria Cruz