

Rams land local hoops standout

Musselman's Morgan McDonald signs with Shepherd

By NATE MACZUZAK
JOURNAL SPORTSWRITER

INWOOD — Shepherd dipped into the local pool of basketball talent and landed a big fish.

The Journal's 2009-10 Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Morgan McDonald of Musselman, recently signed his national letter-of-intent to play for the Rams next season.

In what has been an exodus of the Eastern Panhandle's most talented basketball players over the past few years, highlighted by

former Martinsburg player Isaac Thornton and Jefferson's Ryland Newman heading to the Rams' West Virginia Conference rival Fairmont,

Shepherd managed to keep one of the biggest stars from the 2009-10 season local.

"I think Shepherd is really aware of talent in our area," Musselman coach Derek Basile said. "It's a program that is trying to build. I think they do that with local talent. It's a good step to land the area's

player of the year." Basile expects McDonald to contribute immediately for the Rams.

"He can come in and give them great minutes in the paint next year," Basile said of the 6-foot-6, forward.

McDonald's size and shooting ability gave him a noticeable advantage in just about every phase of high school.

"Morgan does have a lot of versatility," Basile said. "He rebounds well, especial-

ly on the offensive end. He gets a lot of put backs.

"Something he really didn't show until this year is that he's a real good shooter. He led us this past season in 3-point shooting, while averaging a double-double in scoring and rebounding."

Shepherd coach Justin Namolik feels that with the right weight program and guidance, McDonald can be an integral factor in turning the Rams into a West Virginia Conference title contender.

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McDonald

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"With Morgan, who's The Journal player of the year and was named second team all-state, I think he'll develop into solid contributor once he matures physically and improves defensively," Namolik said. "He's got the frame to really put on muscle."

"We're really happy he's in the

program." McDonald helped the Applemen to their first Class AAA state tournament appearance in 2009.

"He has been a real big part of the success of our team for the past three years," Basile said. "He led us in rebounds and field-goal percentage last season. The last two years,

he's led us in scoring. He's been a real big part."

"I think Shepherd is a good situation for Morgan. They are a little lean at (center/power forward). He has a good chance to play right away."

"He really is a winner. He elevated everyone's game around him.

He's a real competitor. I think he'll bring that to Shepherd. It'll serve him well at the next level."

"I think it'll be up to him as to how he develops," Namolik said. "We'll try him at power forward and the center spot. See which he fits best. Has skill to fit in both spots."

"He was somebody I wanted in our program to see how he develops with us. Didn't want to lose him and see him develop with someone else."

— Nate Maczuzak can be reached at 304-263-8931, ext. 131 or nmaczuzak@journal-news.net

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Run Shepherd run; when it did wins piled high

BOB MARSHALL Sports Editor

When Shepherd fell off to 5-5 in the 2008 football season, it had no one with the flair or the brute strength of the school's three "W's" — Wayne Wilson, Gregg Warfield or Devron Wallace.

And when the 2009 season ended with a regionally televised loss at Glenville, there was no Shepherd running back that could approximate the yardage or touchdowns supplied by Damian Beane, Bill Adams, Dolevon Smith or Anthony Crenshaw.

The loss to Glenville left the Rams with a 6-4 record.

Neither of the past two football seasons featured a to-be-trusted running game. At least not

like the ground-based offenses that gave coach Monte Cater and company back-to-back unbeaten seasons... and WVIAC-winning years when Beane, Smith and Wallace were seen with weekly rushing totals of from 120 to over 300 yards.

Wilson, Crenshaw and Warfield were runners when coach Walter Barr was relying heavily on his rushers to get him to the NAIA playoffs.

Beane, Wallace, Smith, and Adams were 1,000-plus-yard or 2,000-plus-yard rushers whose weekly exploits pointed the Rams toward one WVIAC championship after another.

Warfield, a squarely built inside-runner who ran more than 30 times a game when Barr thought it necessary, was the only full-back in the group of seven that was gleaned for this article from a much larger corps Shepherd backs.

In his four years (1975-78), Warfield played on teams that combined for 34 wins in 44 games. Shepherd won 19 of its 24 conference games in those four years. And Warfield rushed for 3,244 yards on 936 carries in his four seasons, ranking him fifth on the school's career rushing yards list. When his grass-clipping Saturdays had ended at Rams Stadium, Warfield had 37 touchdowns.

Wilson has been Shepherd's only player to have an NFL career — playing for Houston, New Orleans, Minnesota and one finishing season with Washington.

Oddly enough, Wilson's career spanned 1975-78, the same four years that Warfield was at Shepherd.

Wilson had only 512 carries, but gained 2,333 yards for a 4.6 average and eighth-place on the career yards list at the school.

There weren't often many passes thrown by the Rams if Barr's teams were successful in grinding down the resolve of an opponent. Wilson caught almost every Barr-ordered pass that went to a running back.

Another of Barr's reliable backs was the quicksilver, outside threat, Anthony Crenshaw.

While Crenshaw played only two seasons (1983-84), he had 404 carries and gained 2,395 yards for a 5.9 average (the second-best yards-per-carry figure among these seven backs). He scored 21 times.

The two teams Crenshaw ran

for compiled a 16-5 record and went into the NAIA playoffs after going 8-0-0 in the WVIAC in 1983.

Adams, a Shepherd Hall of Fame member, was the first of Cater's clutch runners used in this story. He played in 1988 and again from 1991-93. For his 1,042 carries, Adams amassed 4,367 yards and scored 39 rushing touchdowns.

He played on teams that had a combined 28-15 record and won three conference championships. Two of those teams were invited to the NAIA playoffs.

The last three of these runners all had one record-setting season after another.

While he was with Cater for only two seasons, Dolevon Smith

had almost unparalleled success. His 295 carries gave him 2,165 yards and a 7.3 yards per carry average — the best of these seven all-time-best Shepherd backs.

In 1999, Smith was the best runner in the WVIAC as Shepherd went through the league with a 6-0-0 mark and joined the NCAA playoffs with a 9-1 regular season record. The next year, the Rams were 7-3 overall and won still another league championship.

Smith had come from a junior college in California and made an indelible mark on the Shepherd record book.

Damian Beane held most of the ground-game records when his final game was finished.

His career charted four years, 1996-1999.

He was an All-WVIAC selection in each of those four seasons.

The Shepherd record in his four seasons at tailback was 33-8 and there were three conference championships while he was the league's most prolific runner.

Beane had 1,150 rushing attempts, gained 6,768 yards, and scored 60 touchdowns on the ground. His career showed him with 37 games where he gained at least 100 yards.

He was a four-year all-WVIAC performer and received All-America mention.

With his 6,768 rushing yards, Beane is Shepherd's all-time ground-gaining leader.

Devron Wallace was with Shepherd for only three years after transferring from West Virginia State.

He made the most of his three seasons, rushing for a career total of 4,827 yards and setting the single season record of 2,138 yards in 2007.

Wallace is the only Shepherd player to ever rush for over 300 yards in a game. And he had three games where he rushed for over 200 yards.

The 5-foot-8 waterbug had 67 rushing touchdowns, the most in school history.

In his three seasons (2005-07), Wallace played on teams with a combined of 32-4-0. Three of the four losses were in NCAA playoff games to C. W. Post, Bloomsburg and California.

Wallace's years saw the Rams lose one regular season game and register two unbeaten regular seasons.

When Shepherd could run, Shepherd rarely lost.

When Shepherd could only do fairly well with its rushing offense, it has registered recent records of 5-5 and 6-4 the past two seasons.

Wallace, Wilson, Warfield.

Beane, Crenshaw, Smith, Adams.

There is more than the "run to daylight" axiom. It's more like "run successfully and win games in bunches."



Bill Adams



Wayne Wilson



Devron Wallace



Anthony Crenshaw



Gregg Warfield



Dalevon Smith



Damian Beane

Shepherd hoops have local flavor

Rams announce 2010-11 recruiting class

By NATE MACZUZAK
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — For the past few years, the Shepherd Rams basketball program has hit the local recruiting circuit pretty hard. It's starting to pay off.

Shepherd coach Justin Namolik announced the Rams 2010-11 recruiting class Wednesday, and in addition to a pair of rising sophomore local athletes already on the roster (Jefferson graduate Justin Bryan and Handley, Va., grad Chad Moore), the Rams added two more area standouts to put the finishing touches on a group that has Namolik buzzing.

"I am excited about this class," he said. "The one thing that I failed to get this year was a big guy. We



lost out to two to other schools, but we're still working on other prospects.

"Our weakness is where is our leadership going to come from. It is a void for us. Our two seniors, Jonathan Motichka and Dave Karl-

son, have to find a way to develop into leaders.

"This year, these are all my guys. One of the big things that will help us this year will be depth. We will be able to hold guys accountable."

Starting with The Journal's Boys Basketball Player of the Year Morgan McDonald of Musselman, Namolik announced the addition of five student athletes, including locally Charles Yates of Washington High School.

McDonald is a 6-foot-6 forward, who averaged 19.0 points and 14.9 rebounds for the Applemen last season en route to earning The Journal's top honor and being named second-team all-state.

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Journal file photo by Ron Agne

Shepherd sophomore Justin Bryan, right, who is formerly of Jefferson, is one of four local players the Rams have on the roster this season.

Shepherd

FROM PAGE D1

"Morgan led his team in every statistical category," Namolik said. "He will develop into a solid contributor for us as he gets stronger and improves defensively."

Charles Yates, who is a 6-1 guard that averaged 13.3 points, 5.4 rebounds, 3.9 assists and 4.5 steals last season also will make his Shepherd debut this season.

"I have never seen Charles force anything on the court," Namolik said. "Getting stronger and improving his 3-point shot will make him a complete player."

Joining the pair of local's is Bishop McNamara's Marcus Pilgrim. Pilgrim is a 6-0 guard who averaged 9.0 points, 2.5 rebounds, 3.0 assists and 1.5 steals last season.

Pilgrim, who made 44 3-pointers this past season for McNamara, also earned honorable mention honors in the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference.

"Marcus is one of the best defenders I have ever recruited," Namolik said. "He improved his shooting tremendously this past season, making him a very good all-around guard."

In addition to these three student-athletes, two more Rams will make their debut

next season.

Sophomore Malik Dauda will take the court after sitting out last season by NCAA requirement. Dauda is a 6-4 guard who gained honorable mention honors in the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference by averaging nine points and 8.5 rebounds per game for the Lions.

"It was disappointing that Malik couldn't compete for us this year because he definitely would have helped us," Namolik said.

"He is a very good all-around player who can drive to the basket, rebound, and defend."

Freshman Brantley Osborne redshirted for the Rams this past season. During the 6-2 guard's senior high school season at Shikellamy, Pa., he averaged 18 points per game for the Braves and garnered first-team Heartland Athletic Conference and first-team Daily-Item All-Star honors.

"Brantley had a very good redshirt year," Namolik said. "He's a lights-out shooter who worked extremely hard in practice this past season on improving defensively."

"For the second year in a row, I think we have put together a strong recruiting class. The freshmen and

sophomores on our team next year will be a solid core group of players for us for the next three years."

The Rams will begin play on Nov. 12 in the Clarion Hotel Conference Challenge against Slippery Rock, Pa.

Last season, Shepherd went 9-19 overall and 9-13 in the West Virginia Conference to finish in 10th place.

Although there are only two losses this season to graduation, neither will be easy to replace as a pair of leaders in Tyrone Roach and Derek Gallagher depart.

Roach was the Rams' leading scorer with a 16.9 average, and Gallagher served an invaluable on-court inspiration.

Moore showed he's more than capable of picking up some of the slack, however. He returns as the Rams' leading scorer, tossing in 14 points per game as a freshman. He also led the Rams in field-goal percentage (52 percent) and rebounding average (8.9).

Moore posted a season high of 28 points against Concord, and a team and season high 14 rebounds four times — all in conference contests — against West Liberty, Charleston, Glenville State, Fairmont State.

Bryant, McDonald and

Yates are all pretty familiar with each other, serving as a solid foundation upon which to build. Bryant and Yates played together at Jefferson before Yates made the move to then newly-formed Washington High School.

Bryant missed the opportunity to play against his former

teammate the next season due to an injury. All three players have faced each other several times during some of the most intense and heated years of basketball competition between local schools in the Eastern Panhandle.

With the all the local fla-

vor on the Rams roster, it should be interesting for area fans to see them come together and mature over the next few seasons.

— Nate Maczuzak can be reached at 304-263-89321, ext. 131, or nmaczuzak@journal-news.net