Rams land local hoops standout

Musselman’s Morgan McDonald signs with Shepherd

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 head- ing to the Rams' West Virginia Conference rival Fairmont, Shepherd managed to keep one of the biggest stars from the 2009-10 season local.

Of this, Shepherd is really aware of talent in our area,” Musselman coach Derek Baisie said. “It’s a program that is trying to build. I think they do that with local talent. It’s a good sign to land the area’s best player of the year.”

Baisie expects McDonald to contribute immediately for the Rams.

“I can come in and give them great minutes in the paint next year,” Baisie 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,” Baisie said. “He rebounds well, especially 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 feels his shot in practice and 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.

McDonald

“With Morgan, who’s The Jour- nal’s player of the year and was named second team all-state, I think he’ll develop into solid contributor because he has a lot of potential 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 led the Applemen in their first Class AAA state tournament appearance in 2009.

“Has been a real big part of the success of our team for the past three years,” Baisie said. “He led us in rebounds and free-throw percentage last season. The last two years, he’s led us in scoring. He’s been a real big part.

“Morgan is a good shooter,” Namolik said. “He’s a good choice to play shooting guard. He really is a winner. He elevates everyone’s game around him.

“He’s a real competitor. I think he’ll bring that to Shepherd. He’ll serve him well at the next level.”

“I think it’s going to 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.

“Of course, I want to see how he develops with us. Didn’t want to lose him and see him develop with someone else.”

— Nate Mazey is the sports writer for The Journal. He can be reached at 304-263-5921, ext. 130 or nmazey@journal-news.net.
When Shepherd fell to 5-5 in the 2008 football season, it had no one with the flair or the team strength of the school's three "W's"—Wayne Wilson, Gregg Wafford or Dervon 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 Dismian Boune, Bill Adams, Dwayne Smith or Anthony Crenshaw.

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

Neither of the past two football seasons featured a lowly-trust-
ed running game. At least not like the ground-based offenses that gave coach Monte Carver and company back-to-back undefeated seasons and WVIAC winning years. When Boune, Smith and Wallace were seen with weekly rushing totals of 200 to 200 yards.

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

Baron, 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.

Wafford, a squarely built inside runner who ran more than 30 times a game when Bar thought it necessary, was the only fullback in the group of seven that was glanced at for this article but a much larger corps Shepherd back.

In his four years (1975-78), Wafford played on teams that combined for 34 wins in 44 games. Shepherd won 19 of its 24 conference games in those four years. And Wafford rushed for 2,541 yards on 646 carries in his four seasons, ranking fifth on the school's career rushing yard list. When his grass- clipping Saturdays had ended at Raw Slidey, Wafford had 49 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 Wafford was at Shepherd.

Wilson had only 532 carries, but gained 2,331 yards for a 4.4 average and eight-game on the career yards list at the school.

There were "extra many passes thrown by the Rams if Burr's hands were successful in grinding down the resolve of an opponent. Wilson caught almost every Bar ordered pass that went to a running back.

Another of Burr's reliable backs was the quicksilver, out-
side threat, Anthony Crenshaw. While Crenshaw played only two seasons (1993-94), he had 404 carries and gained 1,395 yards for a 3.4 average (the second-yard-to-go average figure among these seven backs). He scored 21 times.

The two stars Crenshaw ran for compiled a 16-5 record and went into the NAIA playoffs after going 8-0-0 in the WVIAC in 1993.

Adams, a Shepherd Hall of Fame member, was the first of Crenshaw's catch runners in this story. He played in 1998 and again from 1991-93 for his 1,842 yards. Adams amassed 4,367 yards and scored 35 rushing touchdowns.

He played on teams that had a combined 20-15 record and won three conference championships. Two of those teams were invited to the NAIA playoffs.

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

While he was with Crenshaw for only two seasons, Duvon Smith had almost unparalleled success. His 293 carries gave him 2,162 yards and a 7.3 yards per carry average—far beyond these seven all-time best Shepherd backs.

In 1999, Smith was the top 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.

Dervon Wallace held most of the ground-game records when his first game was finished.

His career chanced four years, 1996-1999.

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

The Shepherd record in his four season tailback was 3,434 yards and there were three conference championships while he was the league's most prolific runner.

Boune had 1,150 rushing at temps, 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-American mention.

With his 4,760 rushing yards, Beene is Shepherd's all-time ground-gaining leader.

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

He made the most of his three seasons, running for a career total of 4,872 yards and setting the single season record of 2,138 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 300 yards.

The 4-foots-8 wide receiver had 67 rushing touchdowns, the most in school history.

In his three seasons (2003-07), Wallace played for Paine with a combined of 32-4-0. Three of the four losses were in NCAA playoffs to C.W. Post, Blooms-
ting and California.

Wallace's years saw the Rams lose one regular season game and register a 4-0 unbeaten regular season.

When Shepherd could only do fairly well with its running of-

cene, it registered recent rec-

Of 5-5 and 6-4 the past two seasons, Wallace, Wilson, Wafford.

Beene, Crenshaw, Smith, Ad-

ms.

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

Rams announce 2010-11 recruiting class

BY NATE MACZUK
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 it includes 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 felt to get this year was a big guy. We lost out to two other schools, but we're still working on other prospects."

"Our weakness is where is our leadership going to come from. It's a void for us. Our two seniors, Jonathan Motchka and Dave Kuhl, 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 additions of five student athletes, including locally Charles Yeates of Washington High School.

Yeates is a 6-10 to 197-pound center, who averaged 19.0 points and 14.9 rebounds for the Apples last season en route to earning The Journal's top honor and being named second-team all-state.

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

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"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 Yeates, who is a 6-2 guard that averaged 13.3 points, 5.4 rebounds, 3.9 assists and 4.3 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 6-3 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 Duda will take the court after sitting out last season by NCAA requirement. Duda 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 to improve 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, losing in 14 points per game as a freshman. He also led the Rams in field-goal percentage (52 percent) and rebounding average (8.9).

Bryant, McDonald and Yeates are all pretty familiar with each other, serving as a solid foundation upon which to build. Bryant and Yeates played together at Jefferson before Yeates 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 basketball competition between local schools in the Eastern Panhandle.

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

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