

Metamora Redbirds Collect Awards

From the day they start in the Metamora program, the players are taught the value of football as a team sport. But with the 2010 football in the history books, the time has come to acknowledge individual achievements. Metamora, deservingly so, led the way in Central Illinois on individual accolades.

This year the Redbirds placed six members on the first team Mid-Illini All Conference team while adding five to the second team. Metamora tied with Richwoods in having six players make the Large School All-Area team plus the Redbirds added one to the All-State team.

Leading the way for Metamora was quarterback **Michael Fay**. Michael was a team captain and a true leader. He's been the starting quarterback for the Redbirds since he was a sophomore. In his tenure, Michael has led Metamora to a state championship, state runner-up and a state semifinal. He was awarded the most valuable player team award, made first team Mid-Illini All-Conference, first team All-Area, first team All-State and was named Player of the Year in Central Illinois. With Michael as quarterback, the Redbirds were an impressive 35-4 in his three years at the helm. He will no doubt be remembered as one of, if not the best, quarterbacks Metamora has ever seen.

Brennen VanMieghem very well could be the most decorated of all the Redbirds. He's kicking resume includes picking up the varsity special teams duties midway through his freshmen year. Brennen ranks third in the nation among kickers and holds numerous state records. He finishes his high school career by playing in 52 varsity games, holding the state record with 280 PATs and 325 career points. Brennen has the impressive stat of never allowing a return for a touchdown in 320 career kickoffs. He was named to the first team Mid-Illini All-Conference and the All-Area team in 2010. Brennen also picked up the Jim Wiltz team award for recognition of his outstanding achievements. His state and school records will stand for a long time as he moves on to play at the next level.

Senior captain **Brett McKinney** will be remembered for his outstanding defensive skills at safety and the "big play" threat as a receiver. Brett holds the school record in yards per catch. The Fay/McKinney combination was topic of many opposing team film study as they presented a constant deep threat for defenses. Brett was named to the first team Mid-Illini All-Conference as a receiver and named to the All-Area team as defensive back. He was one of two players on this year's Metamora team to be recognized at two different positions. Brett was awarded the Redbird team award for most valuable defensive back and will be remembered for his athleticism on both sides of the ball.

Andrew Jones was one of four Redbirds to start on offense and defense in 2010. Andrew also holds the distinction of recording high honors at two different positions. He was named to the first team Mid-Illini All-Conference for his skills at defensive line while being named to the All-Area team at offensive tight-end. Andrew led the team in quarterback sacks and was the first player in 15 years to record a defensive touchdown. Coach Pat Ryan called Andrew the most improved player from his junior to senior year

and was recognized by his team as the most valuable tight-end/receiver player of the season.

David Tracy holds the peculiar honor being named to the second team Mid-Illini Conference while being awarded first team All-Area. David's All-Area recognition was without a doubt for his excellent play during the 2010 playoff run. David led the Redbirds in a terrific effort in the quarterfinal game against Pontiac. He was a two-way starter for Metamora playing linebacker on defense and offensive running back. David will be remembered for his all out effort, hard hitting and exceptional play at running back the second half of the season. He was awarded the outstanding running back award by his team and coaches.

Preston Butner is another two-way starter for the Redbirds last season. Preston picked up the team award for outstanding defensive lineman. He will be remembered for his consistent play at offensive center and long snapper abilities. Coach Pat Ryan said Preston was one of those players "we could not get off the field" because of his abilities at both positions. He was placed on the Mid-Illini All-Conference first team and All-Area team at center.

Coach Pat Ryan called **Beau Geier** the most unselfish players on the team. Beau started on defense for the 2010 Redbirds at cornerback, a position he had rarely played until this season. Not only did he excel at that position but was awarded to the first team Mid-Illini All-Conference in recognition of his work. Beau was the Redbird's backup quarterback and played receiver. Coach Ryan stated numerous times during the season that Metamora had the luxury of two outstanding quarterbacks on this year's team. He was also recognized by the team with the Jim Wiltz award.

Senior **Tom Bieneman** was a two year starter for Metamora at linebacker. Tom led the team in tackles for 2010 and was recognized his vast improvement from his junior year to this season. Tom picked up the honor of being named to second team Mid-Illini All-Conference. He will be remembered for his quiet demeanor, hard hitting defensive effort and outstanding quickness at the linebacker position. Tom was given the team's most valuable linebacker award in 2010.

Drew Cullett is another defensive lineman to pick up acknowledgment this season. Drew held the distinctive honor of being the player most double-team blocked. Drew played nose guard for the Redbirds this season and was named most valuable defensive lineman by his teammates. Drew was also honored with second team Mid-Illini All-Conference recognition for his effort on defense.

Brandon Freeburg picked up one of the team's most coveted awards. He was recognized for his dedication and outstanding effort as a non-starting senior. To say Brandon was a versatile player is an understatement. He played defensive back, offensive receiver, running back and quarterback. Brandon will be remembered for the famous "Wild Bird" formation installed in the Redbirds offense to highlight his skills at

quarterback. He was a unanimous choice by his teammates for the Michael Keyser award.

Junior **Charlie Nowotnik** was pressed into service as one of the starting running backs this season due to injuries to other players. Charlie did an outstanding job despite a minor ankle injury that bothered him throughout the season. His skills were highlighted in the semifinal playoff game at Rochester as he recorded 9 yards per carry for 117 yards rushing against the state champions. Charlie was recognized for hard work with Mid-Illini All-Conference second team honors.

Lane Mitzelfelt is one of the most improved players on the team. Lane made huge strides from his freshmen year to his outstanding senior season. Lane, at 6' 4" and 315lbs was an imposing force on the offensive line. Despite his large stature, Lane impressed everyone with his ability to pull from his tackle position and maintain his blocking assignments. Lane was recognized with the most valuable offensive lineman award by his team.

If there was an award for perseverance, senior captain **Tyler Burch** would be the number one recipient. Tyler, as a junior, missed the first half the season because of a very serious ankle injury that required surgery. He returned to the team to become a major contributor to the Redbirds state championship team in 2009. This season, Tyler got tangled up in an early season scrimmage and injured his knee. He was able to return to his offensive guard position just as the Redbirds had another player go down with an injury. Coach Ryan stated it took Tyler a couple of games to get back in "game shape". Once he did, Tyler was a force to be reckoned with during the playoff run. Despite missing half the season, Tyler was placed on the Mid-Illini All Conference second team.

Congratulation to 2010 Metamora Redbirds on their outstanding season and to all these young men honored with these prestigious awards.