

Sports

Baker’s Sam McCauley wins \$1,000 scholarship

■ He plans to play baseball at Dordt University in Iowa

By **Corey Kirk**
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When he wasn’t on the football field or the baseball diamond, Baker senior Sam McCauley was shining in the classroom.

And McCauley, a co-valedictorian in the BHS Class of 2020, was rewarded for his academic achievements with a \$1,000 scholarship from the Oregon chapter of the National Football Foundation.

“I was very surprised and I was a little speechless because I didn’t know what to say,” McCauley said. “I was very honored and thankful.”

But McCauley’s selection was no surprise to Buell Gonzales Jr., the Baker School District’s athletic director.

“It gives you a sense of pride, Sam shows up every day, works hard and does his best,” Gonzales said.

McCauley was a two-sport athlete during his career with the Bulldogs, playing both football and baseball, mostly on the varsity level.

His final baseball season was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

McCauley, whose parents, Alan and Michele, are both teachers, said he knew he needed to be as diligent as a student as he was as an athlete.

“I put a lot of focus, definitely a lot of hard work, and tried my hardest to learn what was in the classroom,” McCauley said.

That’s a focus the district seeks to instill in all students, who have to keep their grades up to be allowed to compete.

“You have to be on course to graduate, you have to show up every day to school, you have to be in good standing with no referrals so you have to be a model of appropriate behavior,” Gonzales said.

Gonzales, who was hired as athletic director last summer, said he has gotten to know McCauley and been impressed by the senior.

“He puts up consistent effort not only in the classroom, but in the hallways,” Gonzales said. “His teammates and coaches love him.”



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald file photo-2018

Sam McCauley was a top pitcher for the Baker Bulldogs.



McCauley said he started applying for scholarships many months before he was set to graduate.

“I’ve pretty much applied to anything that was offered, that I have seen or found out about,” McCauley said. “This scholarship was a little surprising, I didn’t think I was getting it but it was nice to receive this scholarship.”

He has also signed a letter of intent to play baseball at Dordt University in Sioux Center, Iowa.

As he prepares to pitch for the Defenders this fall, McCauley is also ready for the rigors of being a college student. He’s still mulling his options for a major.

“I am always going to stay up on academics, and it is going to be nice to focus on one sport,” McCauley said. “It is going to be different, but I think I will make the

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— **Sam McCauley, describing his feelings on learning he had won a \$1,000 scholarship**

transition.”

As he waits to hear from all the other scholarships he has applied for, McCauley would tell others on the cusp of going to college to put as much effort into the process of applying.

“Apply for everything, because especially with how expensive college is now or depending on where you want to go,” McCauley said.

Gonzales hopes that other student-athletes within Bulldog athletics see the success that McCauley has now obtained through applying for scholarships, and they take the initiative when they begin to look into college.

“Things like this are hard work, and if you aren’t chosen for the scholarship it doesn’t mean that you quit,” Gonzales said. “You got to improve, you have to ask questions, and it doesn’t stop.”

Seahawks choose Texas Tech linebacker in the first round

By **Tim Booth**
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE — It was falling into place as Seattle Seahawks general manager John Schneider wanted. A trade was on the verge of being finalized that would land the Seahawks more selections and likely still allow them to get the player they wanted.

Then it was gone, thanks to a better offer from elsewhere. It left Schneider and the Seahawks in the position of doing something they hadn’t done since 2011 — make a selection with their original first-round pick.

The Seahawks selected Texas Tech linebacker Jordyn Brooks with the No. 27 pick Thursday night.

The shock was in Seattle’s decision to make a pick in the first round without making moves to acquire additional picks later in the draft.

“We always need to get faster and get tougher on defense no matter what spot we’re talking about,” Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. “Jordan fit that perfectly.”

While defensive line was considered the top priority for the Seahawks, they instead went with a speedy linebacker who led Texas Tech in tackles in three of his four seasons in Lubbock. Brooks was a second-team AP All-American last season after posting 108 tackles and three sacks in just 11 starts. Brooks ran a 4.54 40-yard dash at the NFL combine.

Brooks said he wasn’t surprised to hear his named called in the first round, but was

surprised that it was Seattle making the call. “I hadn’t talked to them since the combine,” Brooks said.

The question will be his position in Seattle. The Seahawks are already set at middle linebacker with All-Pro Bobby Wagner. But veteran K.J. Wright is entering the final year of the two-year contract extension and Seattle’s other starter last season, Mychal Kendricks, suffered a serious knee injury late in the season.

Brooks said that during his first three years at Texas Tech he played a hybrid position that shifted against formations and he often found himself playing an outside linebacker spot in the Red Raiders defense. His senior season, Brooks played more of a traditional middle linebacker position.

“I feel comfortable playing any position,” Brooks said.

Carroll and Schneider agreed that his versatility will give Brooks a chance to contribute early. He has size and speed similar to Kendricks’ and can play on the line of scrimmage. But his speed might best be highlighted playing off the ball.

Brooks was coached his senior year at Texas Tech by Matt Wells, who also coached Wagner at Utah State. Brooks was projected to be a second- or third-round selection and was slowed at times in college by shoulder problems.

Carroll said the defensive scheme Brooks played in last season highlighted his skills.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DRAFT



Luis Sinco / Los AngelesTimes-TNS

Oregon quarterback Justin Herbert (10) stiff-arms Wisconsin linebacker Jack Sanborn on a 30-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter during the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2020.

Herbert to Chargers

By **Joe Reedy**
AP Sports Writer

COSTA MESA, Calif. — Tom Telesco is hoping Justin Herbert can be just as good as the last quarterback the Chargers drafted out of Oregon.

Los Angeles selected Herbert with the No. 6 pick of the NFL draft Thursday night. He is the first Ducks QB taken by the Chargers since they took Dan Fouts in the third round in 1973. Fouts led the franchise to four playoff trips and three division titles in a 15-year Hall of Fame career.

“This is a special opportunity. Words can’t describe how excited and thrilled and fired up I am for this,” Herbert said.

Telesco was not content with only one first-round pick, however. The general manager traded the team’s second- and third-round picks to New England to move up to the 23rd spot to take Oklahoma linebacker Kenneth Murray. It is the first time since 2005 that the Chargers have had multiple first-round selections.

“We had talks with different teams in front of and behind us (when they were picking sixth),” Telesco said. “We got a player we really liked with Justin but also had some ammunition to move up and get

Kenneth. All in all, it was a very rewarding day.”

The Chargers were in the market to take a quarterback in the first round for the fourth time since 1967 after they announced in early February that they would not re-sign Philip Rivers, who started 235 consecutive regular-season and playoff games over the past 14 seasons.

Herbert started 42 games at Oregon, compiling a 29-13 record with 10,541 passing yards and 108 total touchdowns. He led the Ducks to the Pac-12 championship last season and a win over Wisconsin in the Rose Bowl, where he ran for three touchdowns and was named the offensive MVP. He threw for 32 touchdowns and only six interceptions in 14 games.

Herbert has shown the ability to excel in play action, but questions remain about his decision-making and accuracy. He boosted his stock at the Senior Bowl, completing 9 of 12 passes for 83 yards and a touchdown.

Herbert said he has been trying to refine his mechanics leading up to the draft.

Telesco has had his eye on Herbert for a while. He was at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on Nov. 2 when Herbert went 21 of 26 for 225 yards and three touchdowns in a 56-24 win over Southern California.

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