

MSU gains verbal commitments from high school prospects

Summer camp in preparation for the 2008 football season is just around the corner as Midwest scribes head for Chicago and the Big Ten's annual Media Day, but the Spartans got this month's biggest gridiron boost came from a pair of commitments for the class of 2009.

MSU got a pair of verbal commitments from talented high school prospects who can add size and speed to the offense of coach Mark Dantonio's rapidly rising program.

The pair, a 6-5 290-pound offensive lineman, and a 6-2 185-pound wide receiver clocked at 4.36 in the 40-yard dash, recently told Dantonio they plan to pursue their college careers at MSU.

Bennie Fowler, who helped Detroit Country Day advance to the Division 4 state finals before losing to Marine City, announced his intentions to attend Michigan State following an unofficial visit to the East Lansing campus earlier this month, making him the 11th member of the

Spartan class of 2009.

Fowler will join Country Day grad on the MSU roster, red-shirt freshman wide receiver Chris D. Rucker, and follow a third Yellowjacket wide out, fifth-year senior, Deon Curry.

Fowler and Rucker are good friends, but Rucker was not heavily involved in the recruiting.

Fowler described the Dantonio program and MSU as a good fit, one about which both he and his parents feel good.

He was most impressed with the Spartan coaching staff and views MSU as a program on the rise. The proximity to his home provided added incentive.

Ranked by Rivals.com as a two star recruit, observers call Fowler an outstanding athlete with great speed and athletic ability. Performing at an MSU football camp this summer, Fowler was clocked in the 40-yard dash at 4.36.

Fowler had initially planned to make his college choice after his senior season, but his

good feelings about MSU led him to make the commitment earlier. The decision will allow him to focus solely on his final season, one which he hopes will lead to a return to the finals and a second chance at a state crown.

He attracted the attention of most Big Ten schools, had offers from Indiana, Eastern, Central Michigan and Toledo, but settled on the Spartans.

The 10th prospect to declare his intentions to join Dantonio's 2009 recruiting class is Ohio Northwest's Nate Klatt. Klatt is rated fourth among centers by Rivals.com. Quick on his feet with good balance, Klatt is known as an excellent blocker. He's strong, known as a weight room junkie who squats more than 500 pounds.

His high school coach calls him a finisher both at the line of scrimmage and down field.

He selected the Spartans over Kansas and had offers from Indiana, Purdue and several Mid-American Conference schools.

Don't count Drew Neitzel out

By Ernie Boone

It's a big week for former Michigan State University basketball standout, Drew Neitzel. The 6-0 sharp shooter was passed up in the recent NBA draft, but will get an opportunity to show off his skills to the Minnesota Timberwolves and the rest of the NBA franchises this month playing for the Timberwolves in the NBA Summer League in Las Vegas.

Initially projected as a late second round draft pick or a free agent signee after pre-

drat workouts with nine teams, Neitzel was passed up in the draft and was not offered a free agent contract. He has been, however, placed by Minnesota on its summer league roster and will join Timberwolves draftees, Kevin Love, Corey Brewer Chris Richard and others as they play Dallas, the Lakers, Portland Milwaukee and New York.

While not under contract for the season, Neitzel will train with the Timberwolves and play on the Minnesota team, getting the opportunity

to earn a spot in Minnesota or get picked up by another franchise.

The knock on Neitzel has always been his lack of size, quickness and defensive ability.

But the plucky little guard has always made a career of proving such critics wrong. And don't count him out.

Admittedly, it's a long shot, but not out of the question. Who would have predicted that Neitzel would displace Chris Hill, a senior, as a freshman and do so because

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