

SPORTS

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INSIDE:
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The Monroe Evening News

All-Region football 2008

DEFENSE



DEREK BAKER
Airport, 5-10, 150,
senior, defensive back
He was rock-solid with
three interceptions and
good pass coverage. "He
made all the coverage
calls. I don't think from the
first game on we ever had
to put on a coverage call.
He did it," Airport coach
Eric Redmond said.



JON BITZ
Monroe, 5-10, 155,
senior, defensive back
The first-team All-Mega
Red selection had 51
tackles and three in-
terceptions for the 5-4
Trojans. He made five
sacks and three other
tackles behind the line.



GREG BRANNAN
Carlson, 6-2, 225,
senior, linebacker
An All-Region choice on
both offense and defense,
Brannan had 101 tackles
and coach Kent Sikora
called him Carlson's best
defensive player. "He's
an emotional leader and
the quarterback of our
defense," Sikora said.



GARRISON DIEHL
SMCC, 5-8, 190,
senior, lineman
"He's the strongest
kid on the team. He's
tough and quick off the
ball," SMCC coach Jack
Giarmo said. Diehl was
used at tackle and nose
tackle and earned first-
team All-League honors.



JAKE DUFFEY
Monroe, 5-6, 182,
senior, linebacker
He topped the 100-tackle
mark for the second
straight season with 109.
In the running for Player
of the Year honors. "You
take Jake out of there and
we're not the same team,"
Monroe coach Steve Pol-
lizzie said.



JAKE ELLISON
Jefferson, 6-0, 185,
senior, linebacker
Jefferson's leading tackler
with 76. He had six tackles
for loss and blocked two
passes. "He got better
and better as the year
progressed," Jefferson
coach Marc Cisco said.



TYLER GLASS
Summerfield, 6-1, 185,
senior, DB-punter
He made the All-Region
team at two positions.
He led the Region with 7
interceptions and knocked
down 7 passes. He aver-
aged 35.9 as a punter, put-
ting five kicks inside the 20
and three inside the 10.



MATT GRUNOW
Flat Rock, 5-7, 165,
senior, linebacker
"He's small, but he's got
a lot of heart," Flat Rock
coach Joe Pruchnicki
said. Grunow had 114
tackles and averaged
almost 13 per game
while earning first-team
all-league honors.



NATE GONYEA
SMCC, 5-10, 175,
senior, linebacker
"He didn't play defense last
year but has improved a
lot and calls our defensive
signals. He does a good job
of reading and reacting,"
SMCC coach Jack Giarmo
said. Gonyea is SMCC's
second-leading tackler.



CHRIS GOOCH
Summerfield, 6-1, 200,
senior, lineman
He had some lofty tackle
totals, making 91, includ-
ing 56 first hits. "He played
strong-side and we had
him crashing a lot. Those
are some phenomenal
numbers ..." Summerfield
coach Erik Johnson said.



NIC JOBE
Ida, 6-1, 215,
senior, defensive back
The safety made 65
tackles and was Ida's
top All-Region nominee
on defense. "He's prob-
ably the only Division 1
athlete in our league,"
Dundee coach Ryan
Irwin said.



STEPHEN JOZEFOWICZ
Erie Mason, 6-1, 215,
senior, linebacker
He plans to continue his
career at St. Joseph's
College. Jozefowicz had
132 tackles. "He was our
captain on defense and
made a lot of adjustments
on the fly," Erie Mason
coach Brent Orr said.



DEMETRIES LOVE
Milan, 6-0, 166,
senior, linebacker
"He has a nose for
the ball and is always
where the action is,"
Milan coach Steve
Robb said. Love made
106 tackles, including
20 in the Airport game.



CRAIG MILLER
Jefferson, 6-3, 260,
senior, lineman
All-Region choice on both
offense and defense, had 8
tackles for a loss and named
the Huron League's Co-De-
fensive Player of the Year
"Miller and (David) Box are
two of the best defensive
players I've seen in a long
time," Jack Giarmo said.



MICHAEL PANNONE
SMCC, 5-7, 155,
sophomore,
defensive back
He might be on the small
size, but Pannone more
than doubled the second-
leading tackler on SMCC's
team. "He's very aggres-
sive and in your face. He's
around the ball all the
time," Jack Giarmo said.



JOHN RIOPELLE
Airport, 5-10, 190,
senior, linebacker
After missing most of
last season because of a
concussion, Riopelle rang
up 101 tackles. "He gets to
the ball-carrier and they're
going down," Airport coach
Eric Redmond said.



MARTELLIS SIMON
SMCC, 5-10, 179,
senior, kick-returner
No one in the Region can
come close to his
kick-return numbers. He
scored 6 touchdowns,
three on punt returns
and three on kickoff
returns. He averaged
42.6 on kickoff returns
and 29.6 on punts.



KYLE STRUBE
Jefferson, 6-1, 185,
senior, defensive back
Strube had three inter-
ceptions and three tack-
les for loss. "He probably
improved as much this
year as any defensive
back I've coached,"
said Marc Cisco, who
completed his 43rd year
at Jefferson.



NICK WHITENBURG
Bedford, 6-3, 195,
senior, lineman
The defensive end had
70 tackles and five sacks
while making the All-
Southeastern Conference
team. Whitenburg also
is a wrestling standout.
He won 54 matches and
placed seventh in the state
meet last year.



**JUSTIN VANDER
VLUCHT**
Ida, 5-11, 170,
junior, linebacker
He started the season as
a backup, earned a start-
ing job when someone
was hurt and ended up as
leading tackler with 82.
"What a tough little kid.
He blitzes hard," Dundee
coach Ryan Irwin said.



COLTON ZIMMERMAN
Monroe, 6-3, 240,
senior, lineman
Monroe's best defensive
lineman had 54 tackles.
He put good pressure on
quarterbacks with eight
sacks and five hurries.

Player of the Year: David Box

BY RON MONTRI
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His high school football career
has ended. But no matter where
David Box's career takes him,
he will never forget Friday
nights at Milan.

"It's a tradition. It's a
great feeling to be part of
something like this in a
town that loves football,"
Box said. "To run out on
that field and run
through that flag,
knowing how
many have
done it before
you, repre-
senting your
town is the
greatest feeling
in the world.
I'm extremely
thankful for the
opportunity."
Box has repre-

sented Milan well. The defensive
lineman had 65 tackles, 6 sacks, 7
tackles for loss, caused 3 fumbles
and recovered 3.

He has been named the
Region Defensive Player of
the Year in voting by The
Evening News sports staff.
Jake Duffey of Monroe
and Craig Miller of Jeffer-
son also were considered,
but Box is a unanimous
choice.

"He's the best
defensive line-
men we've had
in my 23 years
here," Milan
coach Steve
Robb said. "He's
an intimidating
force. He drew
double-teams
from almost
everybody. He's

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FOOTBALL BANQUET

The Southern Michigan Timberwolves and The Evening News will have a banquet for the All-Region football team at 6 p.m. Nov. 30 at the VFW Hall in Monroe. It is located at 400 Jones Ave., across from Navarre Field.

All-Region players and the Coach of the Year will be admitted free. Others are welcome to attend for a fee of \$12 apiece, which can be paid at the door the night of the banquet.

Reservations are required by Nov. 24 by calling 242-1100, ext. 321 or by e-mail at rmontri@monroenews.com

Special mention defense

Linemen: Anthony Kitts, Airport; Cody St. Bernard, Ida; John Yinger, Erie Mason; Jake Ritzenthaler, Whiteford; Scott Mayes, Flat Rock; Tom Trevarrow, Jefferson; Brent Faber, Airport.

Linebackers: Dane Stritt, Monroe; Kenny Barrett, Milan; Ben Notario, Monroe; Tayler Glass, Summerfield; Steve Rowland, Bedford; Joe Hoffman, Dundee; Brandon Franklin, Carlson; Aaron Straub, Milan; Drew Nava, Airport; Nathan Kanaby, Carlson; Tyler Smith, Bed-

ford; Mark Brannan, Carlson; Jacob Gilstorff, Summerfield; Benn Frazier, Whiteford; Tyler Weclowski, Huron.
Defensive backs: Josh Sedlar, Bedford; Jared Locke, Ida; Larry Frederick, Carlson; Will

Frazier, Whiteford; Jake Behrik, Airport.
Punters: Jared Locke, Ida; Steve Sprinkles, Airport; Joe Martin, Bedford.
Kick-returners: Paul Irwin, Milan; Jared Locke, Ida.