

# Trevian O-Lineman Palmer headed to WMU

by Charlie Clarke

On the heels of a successful 2014 football season, there seemed to be no doubt that the 10-2 record would carry into some players' future football endeavors.

Senior Jack Palmer is no exception, as he is headed to Western Michigan University to play on the Broncos' offensive line.

"Playing at a Division I school, there's just nothing that can beat that," said Palmer.

Most high school football players would consider playing Division I football the ultimate dream, and while it's now a reality for Palmer, the game at the D-I level is very different from the Central Suburban League.

According to Palmer, college training can be a big transition. Players lift heavier weights, teams simply have better players, and you get to work with more experienced coaches.

"It's definitely going to be really intense. I'm welcoming the challenge, I've seen the guys, I've seen their weight room, I've seen what they do in practice. It's looking

to be really fun, but it's also going to be really difficult," said Palmer.

The process begins on Jul. 6 when summer training starts, and while this might be intimidating for some players, Palmer is ready to meet his new team and bring his football skills to the next level.

Going from one of the best and most experienced on the New Trier football team to a newcomer on Western Michigan's team is also a big transition. However, like anything else, Palmer is embracing the change.

Also, because training starts so early in the summer, he will have plenty of time to get to know his new teammates and coaches before the school year even begins.

"With football you build relationships pretty quickly," said Palmer. "Even if it's just a day camp, when you're playing with and against these guys something happens and you just become friends."

Palmer also credited the Trevians' 10-2 season with providing him Division I exposure.

"I think the fact that we did really well helped, colleges always want kids who are winners and who play on good teams," said Palmer.



Palmer anchored the offensive line all season, making an impact through both the passing and running game | Palmer

"But I've sent some really good tapes to schools and made a lot of relationships with teams, so I think I could have gotten there even if we didn't do as great as we did this year."

As one of the standout performers on the team, the odds were in Palmer's favor to play at the next level. He is also not only one of the best players on the team, but one

of the most respected players well. Teammates had nothing but great things to say about Palmer.

"He always brought so much to the team, whether it was during a game or after in the locker room, he always got us excited about being able to play football," said teammate Fuzz Coan, a senior.

While Palmer said that the football team and facilities are

the main reason he committed to the Broncos, who finished their 2014-15 season 8-5 and 6-2 in their conference, the MAC, he is also excited about the academic side of Western Michigan. He was admitted to its Haworth College of Business.

If his play and reputation is any indication, Palmer is looking at a very successful four years of college football ahead of him at Kalamazoo.

## The calm before the madness

Continued from pg. 8

Regardless of what future NBA starter has the ball, Kentucky will burn you. Their nine-man rotation has eight players playing over 20 minutes per game.

No one averages more than 12 points per contest. There are no standouts on paper, but once they hit the court, everyone is a superstar. Seven of their current players are projected to be drafted next year, with four of them being almost first round locks.

It goes without saying that the 34-0 Wildcats are the number one overall seed, followed by Villanova, Duke, and Wisconsin. Kentucky aside, only three or four other teams have a foreseeable shot at the title.

Duke, Wisconsin, and Arizona are widely considered the next top teams, with Villanova and Virginia right behind them. The former two feature big men who may also be the two best players in college basketball.

Jahlil Okafor is a near-7-foot beast in the post for the Blue Devils. The true freshman and Whitney Young graduate averages nearly 18 points per game along with 9 rebounds.

If teammates Quinn Cook and Justise Winslow can score enough and point guard Tyus Jones can keep the offense moving, don't be surprised if the Dukies blow through their seemingly manageable side of the bracket to make a deep run into early April.

Frank Kaminsky is the center of attention for the finely tuned Wisconsin Badgers. The Big Ten champions boast a 31-3 record with perhaps the most impressive resume in the nation outside of Kentucky. With two of the three losses coming to top 15 teams, the Badgers have proven they can play with anyone.

While the Badgers aren't as deep as some as their competition, the presence of Kaminsky is enough to put them in a great position to win any game they play.

Kaminsky will need help from co-star Sam Dekker, along with versatile sophomore Nigel Hayes, the shooting of senior Josh Gasser, and the terrific play from freshman guard

Bronson Koenig, for the Badgers to make a run.

The potential return of veteran point guard Traevon Jackson will play a factor in Wisconsin's tournament run. The Badgers have fared well without their senior, and although he has been cleared to play, they have kept him out of the rotation. How they continue to handle his situation will be something to watch throughout the tournament.

As far as Cinderellas go, this year's team is as big a mystery as ever. Certainly Harvard has been a fan favorite in the past. In fact, the Crimson have won their first game of the tournament in upset fashion the past two seasons.

Lawrence Alexander and the Bison of North Dakota State are back for more, too. The Bison handled #5 Oklahoma in overtime last year and look to repeat history. The one problem for them, is they face the 2 seed Gonzaga. 15 seeds seldom defeat 2 seeds.

That is, until Norfolk State and Lehigh did so in 2012, and Florida Gulf Coast in 2013. If you are the type of person who dreams big and hopes to see an upset of epic proportions, look no further than NDSU. Number 15 seeds won last year, and very recent history suggests the sport is in store for one this time around.

Whether David or another Goliath is more appealing, whether Kentucky truly cannot be beaten or whether you believe this is the year of upsets, a successful bracket is made by going with your heart. There will be no perfect bracket in all likelihood—the unofficial odds are 1 in 9 quintillion according to USA Today.

Maybe this is the year we see a 16 seed finally beat a 1 seed, or maybe this is the year history will be rewritten and Kentucky is the first undefeated team in almost 40 years. There is no way of knowing until it's all over.

The excitement of filling out a bracket before it begins, the final buzzer on championship night and everything in between is what makes March filled with madness.

## The demise of Illinois basketball

by Martin Oppegaard

The beauty of the NCAA Tournament is that it lets teams from across the country play one another. At 68 campuses across America, students, players, and fans celebrated the best day in college basketball: Selection Sunday.

But Illinois did not celebrate. Instead, we mourned the death of big-time college basketball in our home state with every college staying home for a consecutive year. However, it's not an issue of talent, or lack thereof, coming from Illinois.

Chicago is known as a basketball hotbed, consistently one of the best cities in the country at producing talent. Stars Derrick Rose, Anthony Davis, Dwyane Wade, Jabari Parker, and Jahlil Okafor all grew up in Chicago, yet none of these five players went to college in Illinois, decisions that have all worked out.

However, it is true that Illinois basketball has never been one of the best states for college hoops. The only college from the state to win an NCAA Championship is Loyola, who beat Cincinnati in 1963. Since their march to the championship game in 2005, University of Illinois has struggled recently missing the tournament the past two years. Recruiting, or lackthereof, has played a big role in their regression.

The Illini have missed out on recruiting the top players from Illinois to Champagne. At his college announcement, Cliff Alexander, the number 2 recruit per ESPN for the class of 2014, even picked up an Illini hat in mockery before placing it down for a Kansas one. This was just the latest miss for the Illini in recruiting.

"Illinois should be owning the city in recruiting," said diehard Illini fan and senior Landon Wilneff. "But if you have the opportunity to go to a Kentucky or a Kansas, a program with a coach who has sent multiple players to the NBA and you know you'll be one of the best teams in the country, why would you come to Illinois and have to compete for an NCAA Tournament bid?"

Wilneff elaborates that players

could come to Illinois or other schools in Illinois to be "the guy", but they would rather choose the path that ensures an NBA future.

And he's right. The one and done rule allows players to go to school for just one year, and they pass through simply as mercenaries, paying their dues at college for a year before they cash in their first round paycheck. Where has the loyalty to

However, would be unfair to go through this article by just mentioning Illinois and Northwestern.

DePaul was a lock for the tournament throughout the 80's, though their last appearance was in 2004.

Senior Dante Chakravorti grew up going to DePaul games, which he says were often the highlight of his winter.



The days of Illinois' Dee Brown and Luther Head celebrating their victory over Arizona in the Elite 8 in 2005 seem like a distant memory | AP Images

your college gone? It has become all about the NBA.

Basketball beyond college plays a huge role in recruits' decisions in where to attend college. This was seen in star Stevenson guard and the best player in Illinois, Jalen Brunson and his commitment to Villanova. Senior Kevin Fortin has been a lifelong Wildcats fan and has even attended a few of Brunson's biggest games this year.

"He likes the family environment of the Villanova program and the staff," Fortin said. "Of course what [head coach] Jay Wright has done in the past with guards helped contribute to Brunson's commitment, whether it be with Randy Foye, Scottie Reynolds, or Kyle Lowry."

When Brunson chose Villanova over a host of schools, including Kansas, Michigan State, and Illinois, he kept his NBA future in mind.

And this is impossible for a team like Northwestern to compete with, as the Wildcats are the only power conference team to never make the NCAA Tournament.

"I think the problem with DePaul basketball in recent years stems from a complete breakdown in tradition," he said.

DePaul was hit hard by their lack of recruiting as colleges from across the country reached into their backyard, Chicago, to recruit some of the best talent. Chakravorti can't blame these kids for leaving.

"It's tough to recruit kids to play for a school who was playing in the Big East when it was arguably the best conference in basketball and DePaul was getting walked on night in and night out," he added.

Besides DePaul, Illinois State, Bradley, Loyola, Eastern Illinois, UIC, Northern Illinois, and Southern Illinois have all been absent from the tournament the past 8 years.

This all surmounts to quite a drought for Illinois college basketball, and one that will not be broken this year. And as more and more top recruits from Chicago leave the state for other top colleges, it's a trend that we are tired of seeing but will likely continue.