

## McKenna signs with NU

by Matthew Horvitz



Senior Alec McKenna signing to Northwestern on Nov. 12 | Facebook

After years of hard work, Senior Alec McKenna has committed to wrestle at Northwestern University.

McKenna started wrestling in fifth grade at a summer camp at New Trier, sparking an instant love that has continued till today. McKenna quickly gained attention from varsity head coach Marc Tadelman. Tadelman has known McKenna for seven years and was his coach in the Trevian Wrestling Club.

Tadelman had high praise for McKenna, "He became the most accomplished in the Trevian club. Freshman year, McKenna made the varsity wrestling team. He also earned a starting spot on the team."

Throughout his career, McKenna is a two-time state qualifier and a one-time state placer in the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation (IKWF). McKenna has also broken the New Trier record for most individual wins and he recently won wrestler of the week.

McKenna has worked on his skills to become a smarter and technically sound wrestler. "He's got a lot of attributes that make him great," Tadelman said. "He is confident and has specific moves that he is good at. He has proven that these skills can work at high level competition, and has a good mental attitude."

Senior wrestler Charlie Black, who has wrestled with McKenna since fifth grade, said that McKenna has always been a great wrestler, and

that when he wrestles with him that he always learns something new.

"Alec is always in really good position, which I think is one of the things that have helped him get so good." Tadelman added that Alec has always sought out the best competition and that he has developed into a good leader.

Tadelman said, "Alec leads by example." Said Tadelman. "Other wrestlers can get intimidated by going up against wrestling powerhouses, but Alec has good mental toughness."

One of McKenna's other qualities is that he is a very intelligent wrestler. Quick decisions always have to be made while wrestling. McKenna hates to lose and this determination helps him succeed.

Black believes that McKenna has a good shot at winning state this year, which would make him the first Trevian to do so in over 10 years.

He credits his parents. "My biggest inspirations have to be my parents and coach Tadelman. My parents really kept motivating me and were really great about taking me anywhere there was a tournament with good competition or driving me far away for extra practice."

McKenna added that Tadelman has had a great impact on his wrestling career. "Coach Tadelman was really great with helping me grow as a wrestler and kept pushing me to get better."

Black noted some of the sacrifices that McKenna has made to get to where he is in his wrestling career. "He even stopped playing all of his other sports for wrestling. He sacrificed playing lacrosse after freshman year so he could focus fully on wrestling."

McKenna's top two choices were Northwestern and Michigan. However, he ultimately chose Northwestern because he "felt more comfortable with the coaches and wrestlers."

"I felt that at Northwestern I had a better chance to reach my goals in wrestling and academics," he said. McKenna is planning to redshirt his freshman year and hopes to be in the lineup at either the 133 or 141 weight class.

## College Football Playoff preview

by Blake Sammann

The 2014 college football season has given fans outstanding performances.

Wisconsin running back Melvin Gordon III broke the Football Bowl Subdivision single game rushing record with 409 yards, then Oklahoma running back Samaje Perine broke it the next week with 429 yards.

Or take Florida State quarterback Jameis Winston's quest to be the first two-time Heisman trophy winner since Archie Griffin in 1975.

This is also the first season of the newly elected college football playoff, in which the top four teams in the country duke it out for a spot in the national championship game.

The BCS used to rank the top 25 teams in the nation with a combination of three polls, the Harris Interactive College Football Poll, the USA Today Coaches poll, and a computer ranking system.

In order to get the rankings, the percentage totals of the Harris Interactive Poll, USA Today Poll, and the computer rankings are then averaged. The teams' averages are ranked to produce the BCS Standings.

However, in years leading up to the dismissal of the BCS, there was controversy over whether the two teams playing for the national championship were in fact the two best teams in college football. In 2004, 2006, and 2008, teams that were undefeated in the regular season (Boise State and University of Utah) were snubbed from the national championship game while teams with one or multiple losses played for the national championship.

With such complaints, it was announced on June 20, 2012 that college football would move towards a playoff system for determining who would play for the national championship.

Now, the top twenty five teams in the country are ranked after each week by a committee of 13 rotating individuals, each serving a three year term before being replaced.

Inaugural members of this committee range from University of Wisconsin athletic director Barry



Alabama, Oregon, Florida State, and Ohio State will play to determine the winner of the inaugural College Football Playoff trophy | AP Images

Alvarez, former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, and three time national champion and former Nebraska coach Tom Osborne Gould.

According to collegefootballplayoff.com

Teams are ranked on multiple factors. "When circumstances at the margins indicate that teams are comparable, then the following criteria must be considered: championships won, strength of schedule, head-to-head competition (if it occurred), and comparative outcomes of common opponents (without incurring margin of victory)."

Now that the regular season has ended, the nation knows the four teams competing for a spot in the national championship. 1 seed Alabama will play 4 seed Ohio State in the Sugar Bowl and 2 seed Oregon will play 3 seed Florida State in the Rose Bowl. The winners of these games will play each other in the national championship game on January 6.

This system got off to a roaring start with teams fighting to stay in the top four. The fact that a team had to only be in the top four to have a shot

at the national title has fostered more intense competition than any seen in the days of the BCS.

However, an interesting dilemma arose early in the season. With three out of the top four teams all from the same division [SEC West], the term "SEC bias" began to spread. Some began to believe the new system favored the SEC which is easily the most dominant conference in college football.

By having four teams qualify for a playoff, the SEC would have a greater chance of obtaining a national title.

However, this theory was swiftly debunked by Chris Fowler on College Game Day. Fowler went on a tirade about his disagreements with the term "SEC bias." According to Nick Schwartz of USA Today Sports, Fowler said, "People around the country think that the committee can only operate with an agenda in mind. They don't believe there can be integrity, objectivity in the committee, they think it's all about agendas... What's good for the sport overall, what's good for interest in a playoff and ratings is to have teams from all over the country represented."

## St. Louis Rams players' actions justified

By Martin Oppegard

Amidst the backlash from the grand jury decision not to indict former police officer Darren Wilson in the Ferguson case, the St. Louis Rams were the latest to display their support of protests across the country.

Five players, tight end Jared Cook and wide receivers Kenny Britt, Tavon Austin, Stedman Bailey, and Chris Givens, emerged from the tunnel and walked onto the field with their hands raised above their heads.

This, of course, is the same way some witnesses say 18-year-old Michael Brown was positioned before being fatally shot by Wilson in August.

The Rams players' actions are the kind of peaceful statement that should be part of the public discourse after a wrenching, divisive event.

However, this simple gesture of solidarity with the protestors has left the St. Louis Police Officers Administration fuming.

In an official statement issued by the SLPOA, the officers claimed to be "profoundly disappointed with the members of the St. Louis Rams football team, who chose to ignore

the mountains of evidence released from the St. Louis County Grand Jury this week and engage in a display that police officers around the nation found tasteless, offensive, and inflammatory."

It is ridiculous that this organization feels they have the capability to speak for the population of police officers throughout the United States, especially in a manner that demands punishment and an apology.

This issue spans further than the conflicting opinions of what happened in the death of Michael Brown. It concerns five football players exercising their first amendment rights on a very public scale.

To be criticized for showing solidarity with protesters across the nation is irrational. In fact, other police officers have already commended the actions by the five Rams players.

"We think that their actions were commendable and that they should not be ridiculed, disciplined or punished for taking a stand on this very important issue which is of great concern around the world and



From left to right: Bailey, Austin, Cook, Givens, and Britt | AP Images

especially in the community where these players work," the Ethical Society of Police of St. Louis said in a statement this week.

The group has about 220 members from the city's police force in its ranks, said the society's general counsel, Gloria McCollum. It describes itself as "the primary voice of African-American police officers in St. Louis city."

The statement by the SLPOA goes on to criticize players for taking such a stand at a time when

police were ensuring the safety of the game. The association's business manager, Jeff Roorda, demanded that the players be punished and that the team issue a "very public apology." "I'd remind the NFL and their players that it is not the violent thugs burning down buildings that buy their advertisers' products," says the spokesman. "It's cops and the good people of St. Louis."

Ironically, the St. Louis Police Officers Association has no black officers on its governing board and

"a minimal amount of African-American members," the Ethical Society of Police said.

The Ethical Society of Police goes on to say that the demand for an apology and punishment doesn't represent the views of most African American officers in the city.

The NFL wisely chose not to heed the officers' demand — respecting its players' right to free expression and its audience's ability to formulate their own opinions of the situation.

The Rams players have every right to respond to a national event in their backyard, and to recognize their role as community figures. In the past week, other Rams players have spoken about wanting to support people who have lost businesses to looting and arson in Ferguson, as well as kids who have missed school in the wake of violence.

They're correct that, in times of crisis, sports can serve as an escape and a rallying point. And they should be welcome, as individuals, to lend their voices, and their arms, to the public conversation.