

Tom Lindley named top lineman

William Floyd senior receives offer from Michigan

By JIM FURLONG

Shortly after Thanksgiving, Tom Lindley enjoyed a big surprise.

Soon after that, the senior standout for the William Floyd football program learned that one of the biggest-name college programs wants to recruit him.

Lindley, a three-year starter for the Colonials who helped build a combined 31-1 record and win two Long Island championships during his varsity career, was one of the headliners during the annual awards dinner for the 2008 Suffolk County Football Coaches Association. The 6-foot, 3-inch, 295-pounder was named the winner of the Bob Zellner Award as the best lineman among more than 50 prep teams in the county.

"I am pretty happy," Lindley said. "It was three years of hard work shown."

As he savored the distinction, Lindley soon gained more surprising news. The University of Michigan, one of the winningest schools in college history, contacted him and is offering him the opportunity to join the Wolverines for the 2009 season.

Both Lindley and Floyd head coach Paul Longo confirmed Michigan's offer on Monday night.

"I was very surprised," said Lindley. "I have been a fan of Michigan since I was in the fifth grade. It is like my dream."

The Michigan coaches did not offer a scholarship for 2009, but want Lindley as a "preferred walk-on," he said.

"Michigan called me and said they are very interested in Tom and they want him to play on the team next year," said Longo. "There are no cuts, no try-out. He would have to pay for his first year and then earn a full ride."

Longo sent videos of Lindley's performances to more than a dozen colleges to promote the offensive guard, who is ranked among the top 150 prep linemen in the country by ESPN's recruiting Web site.

C.W. Post and Bryant (R.I.) University have already offered Lindley a full scholarship and Longo predicts several more colleges to contact Lindley before the national signing date in February.

"I expect him to have more choices," said Longo. Lindley has displayed impressive strength, quick

feet and leadership ability. Since Michigan plans to use a spread offense, he has shown the physical attributes needed.

"He can move," Longo said. "I would have to say he is the best lineman I have had. That is fair to say. He is a combination of size, speed and leadership. He made all the (on-the-field) calls for the line (in 2008). He was the only returning starter on the line and I think he showed a lot of leadership with the younger players."

"Tom had very few bad halves. He had a lot of times when he dominated the opponent in front of him. He got a lot more aggressive as the years went by. By his senior year, he was manhandling his opponents."

Mark Mensch, the William Floyd athletic director, has watched the Colonials' teams for about 30 years. He also praised Lindley, a 2008 first-team All-Long Island honoree.

"Tom would be one of the best linemen in Floyd history—certainly the strongest and fastest," Mensch said. "He has the potential to play on the Division I level in college, and would be the first lineman in school history to accomplish that. In addition, he is at the top of his class academically and also excels in the shot put and discus (for the track and field team)."

Lindley contributed as the Colonials extended their Long Island record winning streak to 42 games before losing their 2008 finale in the second round of the county playoffs.

"I think Tom had an incredible run," Longo said. "He was 31-1 as a starter and helped push our streak. He had darn near a perfect career as an individual player and for the team."

Lindley is elated to know Michigan's interest, but he said he will take his time before making his college choice.

Last Sunday, Lindley gained another noteworthy accolade.

He was one of 31 young men named to the 49th annual All-Long Island football team chosen by the *Newsday* sports staff.

Newsday also saluted three other area senior standouts: Jimmy Gordon, a versatile two-player and punter for Patchogue-Medford; Jack Nickla, the quarterback and place kicker-punter for Bellport; and Steve Murphy of William Floyd, who gained the Boomer Award as Suffolk's top quarterback. ■

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Pictured are William Floyd Alumni Association officers Jon Geraci Sr., Joe Barone and Jill (Campbell) Gross greeting alumni at the homecoming game.

William Floyd Alumni Association

Graduates of William Floyd High School are looking to reconnect with their former classmates and alma mater through the formation of the William Floyd Alumni Association.

A membership drive began at William Floyd's Annual Homecoming Day football game beneath the Alumni Association's hospitality tent, where a group of determined alumni have formed an executive board of officers led by President Jon J. Geraci Sr. (Class of 1977). Other board members include: Jill (Campbell) Gross (Class of 1979), vice president; Joe Barone (Class of 1975), treasurer; and Patricia (Marangio) Galang (Class of 1977), secretary.

The goals of the Alumni Association are to: reconnect alumni with students, community and each other; support alumni initiatives including Homecoming, Distinguished Alumni, Athletic Hall of Fame and the Armed Forces Memorial; support community and district initiatives to assist current and future William Floyd students and families; highlight the accomplishments of alumni to raise the esteem of the high school and the district in the community and the region; and to encourage students to raise expectations and aspirations for future accomplishments beyond high school.

The William Floyd Alumni Association serves as the umbrella not-for-profit organization that includes the Athletic Hall of Fame, Distinguished Alumni Program and the Armed Forces Memorial initiatives. Additional information is available online at the district Web site, www.wfsd.k12.ny.us and the William Floyd Alumni Association Web site, www.floydalumni.org. ■



Football awards banquet

Brookhaven Town Majority Leader Timothy P. Mazzei (5th District) joined over 400 members of the Patchogue-Medford Football & Cheerleading Club on Saturday, Dec. 6 at West Lake in Patchogue to celebrate their Annual Award & Luncheon. The club honored Mazzei with a plaque for his years of dedication and service to the league. ■

Pictured from left are League Board Member Sean Fasbach, League President Robert Conroy, League Vice President Marc Negrin and Brookhaven Town Majority Leader Timothy P. Mazzei.