



Shane Bird

Coach looks at teaching degree

By JIM MERRIOTT
Shane Bird has been hired as assistant varsity football coach and junior high wrestling coach at Decatur Community High. Bird, a Plainville native, is a student at Fort Hays State University, working on a teaching degree, but is taking the fall semester off. This will be the first opportunity

for Bird, a four-time state placer and one-time champion in the 130-pound division in Class 3-2-1A wrestling, to get his feet wet as a junior high coach. Bird is the defensive backfield coach with the Oberlin football team under Coach Trevor Williams. "I am excited to be here," said

Bird. "Currently, I am working for Lee Gilliam during the day at Creative Dimensions building cabinets. I am taking off the fall semester to coach and will be taking on-line courses in the spring semester so I can finish with a teaching degree. I hope I do a good enough job because I would like to teach and coach here."

Bird said he played quarterback and defensive back during his high school career. He enjoys upland game bird hunting and fishing, fantasy football and Play Station 2. He says his favorite football teams are the Atlanta Falcons and the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

Fantasy football available

Fans can pick favorite players

By JIM MERRIOTT
Do you like to have fun? Do you like money? Have you ever heard that if it sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam? Well this isn't a scam and there is a chance you could win \$2,500 playing NFL Fantasy football on-line, and it is free. There is no charge to sign up and join a league. If you are a football junkie like me, then this is the place for you. Go on-line and sign up for a league at nfl.com or espn.com. You can become a team "owner," name the team and choose a league. You decide if you want to draft your team live or have it done by the computer. You have 14 rounds to pick the players you want. After each week's games, you find your players' statistics on-line or in the paper. Players with the best performance each week are given points which help you rack up the points needed to win your league. An "owner" can spend as little as five minutes on their team, or as long as they want. It's fun and you can chat to other football fans that have the same interests you do. For instance, let's say you are a Kansas City Chiefs fan. It is possible to form a league with people who like the Chiefs as much as you do. During and after the draft, you can chat with other team owners about your favorite team, kind of like an armchair quarterback. Discuss what went good and what went bad that week. It is cool ... C-O-O-L, cool. What makes it great is you don't have to spend a cent. The deadline to sign up is Oct. 7, but the season starts Sept. 10, so you'd better get on the stick. Good luck and have a good time.

Devils ready to roll

Sainty in town this Friday

By JIM MERRIOTT
The table has been set for Friday night's football showdown between the St. Francis Indians and the Decatur Community High Red Devils here in Oberlin. The 25th annual Soap Scrimmage is over and now it is time for the Red Devils to get serious. "This is what it is all about, it's going to be a battle," said senior Garrit Peters. "We are prepared and confident we can get the job done." After Thursday evening's scrimmage, Coach Trevor Williams said the offensive front line had been set. Senior No. 58 Riley Cochran will start at center, senior No. 54 Regan Badsky at right guard, senior No. 59 Nolan May at right tackle, senior No. 55 Brock Euhus at left guard, and junior No. 52 Colt Diederich at left tackle. "We will not make any other decisions on starting positions until the scrimmage film has been studied," Coach Williams said. Game time is 7 p.m. Friday at Smick Field. The Last Indian Raid Museum will sponsor a tailgate hamburger cookout in the park just northwest of the school parking lot prior to the game, starting at 6 p.m.



SOPHOMORE TAILBACK LUCAS JUENEMANN (left) turned the corner on a toss sweep during the Soap Scrimmage on Thursday. Junior defensive end Jared Marcuson (right) followed in fast pursuit. — Herald staff photo by Jim Merriott

Fans get first sight of runners, football

By JIM MERRIOTT
Over 200 dedicated fans braved mosquitoes and low-90s heat to see the 25th annual Decatur Community High Soap Scrimmage and cross country run on Thursday at Smick Field. Fans got an up-close look at the 2006 edition of the fall outdoor sports teams. The cross country runners were introduced to the crowd

before the football scrimmage and just prior to their run. They started with a lap around the track, then headed out of the stadium north on Marks Avenue to Commercial, then west to Penn, south down to Hall Street and east on Hall to the stadium track, where the girls finished with one lap around the track and the boys did two. "We have a young team with a lot

of heart this season," said Coach Dick Ahlberg, who is entering his 30th year as cross country coach. "I expect to see them raise a few eyebrows once competition begins Thursday in Norton." The football scrimmage covered about 50 offensive plays, with the varsity running a scripted 30 plays and the junior varsity 20. "The scrimmage indicated to the

coaching staff what areas we need to work on and fine tune prior to our opening game versus St. Francis this Friday," said Coach Trevor Williams. Friday evening, Oberlin fans were treated to the opening day of the Lady Devils' volleyball season, with matches against Grainfield and Hoxie.

Press boxes offer great fun

Uncle Walter took me to the Notre Dame/Oklahoma game on Nov. 16, 1957, as a present for my upcoming 10th birthday. It was the first time I had ever seen a football game, and I didn't know a first down from a touchdown. Little did I know it would be one of the most famous games ever played. That was back when Bud Wilkinson was setting a record 47-game college football winning streak. Those were the days. After that, I always wondered what went on in the press box during the game. As I grew up just east of Lawrence, I attended University of Kansas football games each year with dreams of some day playing college football, just like every kid. At those games I would see men in the press box, scurrying back and forth like ants. I would hear the announcer call out names over the loud speaker and listen to the game on my transistor radio while we watched. Finally in 1972, I had the chance to work on the sideline as a runner for Jay Randolph, who broadcast the games for WIBW out of Topeka. It was an exciting time. I was young, full of energy and thrilled with all the up-close action. My job was to phone information to the press box from the sideline whenever a player was injured. I would report to the athletic trainer, look at what the trainers were doing to the injured athlete, then call it up to Randolph in the press box. It was my first sports-media job. I was paid \$5 and got to see the game for free from one of the best "seats" in the house. I met players who later went on to become famous National Football League starters, like former running back Gale Sayers who returned for the homecoming game, and quarterbacks Steve Renko, Bobby Douglas and David Jaynes, to name a few Jayhawks, and lot of other Big Eight players. My dream was to some day work in the big glass box atop the stadium. I only worked the sidelines at KU for two seasons, but I was fortunate to meet some great people who inspired me to never give up on my dream. At one game I was handing out press releases in the press box when a smaller guy bumped into me. It



The Jayhawker

By Jim Merriott
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was Bob Hope. I couldn't believe my eyes; I was speechless. Another time I met Bill Cosby, who for a moment made me feel like I had known him all my life. At that point, I was bound and determined to make this dream of mine work. Over the past 40 years, I have become a press box rat. I can understand why a lot of sports writers, announcers and broadcasters are single. They spend hours away from home hunting stories, working in shark-infested waters where every reporter is out to bring the biggest bone home. In the press box, depending on the importance of the game, anywhere from 50-200 sports writers are bumping into each other, looking for the angle that might sell. There is no yelling or screaming. Reporters must maintain their composure during critical parts of the game, showing little or no emotion while reporting what has happened. Today, notebook computers are everywhere and cell phones must be turned off so there are no distractions during play. Reporters are issued media guides, rosters and any last-minute information to help them. One of the benefits of being a reporter is free food. That might be hot dogs, chicken wings, cold cuts, sloppy joes, chili, veggie plates, cookies, and soda at a junior college or major college game. In the professional ranks prime rib, barbecue sandwiches and ribs might join the menu, so a writer never goes hungry. The sports information staff hands out sideline passes at the press table for photographers. They are only allowed to take pictures between the end of the coaching box and the end zone. In some instances, including pro football, photographers are not allowed passed the 20. There is a separate area for the radio booths, and in some stadiums the radio booth is above the press box so there isn't any confusion between the writers and the announc-

ers. Each reporter is assigned a seat. If they have season credentials, reporters or beat writers have a permanent seat for each game. No one is allowed to bring a friend along unless they have credentials issued by the sports information director. Reporters mingle with each other and great friendships develop over a period of years, but reporting is a business and conducted so. I have been fortunate over the years to meet announcers such as Charlie Jones, Curt Gowdy, Keith Jackson, Ron Franklin, Brad Nessler, Bob Greise, Brent Musburger, Sean McDonough, Larry Zimmer, Dave Logan, Max Falkenstein and Wyatt Thompson. The sports writer I admired most was the late Bob Hentzen, a Kansas Sports Hall of Fame member who wrote for the *Topeka Daily Capital*. Mr. Hentzen helped give me a burning desire to give my readers the best possible sports coverage. About two minutes before the game is over, reporters are escorted to the interview staging area for the post-game press conference, called "the war room." Here, reporters get to grill coaches and players. Writers scratch information with pencils and note pads and audio tape players record at full speed. Television cameras, with their hot, bright lights, fill the area along with dozens of reporters capturing every word and breath of coaches and key players. The assistant information director finds players whom reporters want to interview after the conference. Long after the stadium empties and the lights dim, reporters funnel back to the press box for final statistics. Stories are e-mailed back to newspapers and post-game wrap-up shows come to an end. Reporters filter their way through the darkened stadium to the nearly empty parking lot. All that is left in the press box are rows of empty soda cups and the clean-up crew.

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Listen to the live action of the Oberlin Red Devils vs the St. Francis Indians on Friday September 1 Pigskin Preview 6 P.M. Pregame 6:30 P.M. GAME TIME 7 P.M. Head Coach - Trevor Williams

