

Schulte welcomes new role with Saints

Written by Jim Ecker

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Bryce Schulte established himself as Xavier's top quarterback two years ago when he was only a sophomore, but now he's excited about playing an even bigger role with the Saints this season as a senior.

Schulte has been getting a good look in preseason drills as a "rover" on defense, working as a hybrid strong safety and linebacker in certain situations.

"We're going to put him where we need him, and that includes defense," Xavier Coach Duane Schulte said Friday night after the Saints had a scrimmage with Western Dubuque.

The Saints host Iowa City Regina in the season opener Friday night at 7 in a battle of Catholic school powers.

Bryce Schulte, the head coach's son, welcomes the opportunity to play defense in his final year at Xavier.

"The past two years I've practiced defense before the first week of the season," he said. "Last year I played on one drive versus Assumption and then I got pulled. And I went in a couple times over the year when guys got hurt."

His playing time on defense figures to jump significantly this year.

Schulte is a big, strong athlete who moves well on a football field. He's not afraid of contact and

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has good hand-eye coordination, making him ideal for making big plays on defense.

He's already proven himself as a major weapon on offense. He's passed for 2,749 yards and 36 touchdowns during his high school career, with only eight interceptions along the way. He saw spot duty with the varsity as a freshman, then became the starting quarterback for his sophomore year in 2014.

Schulte passed for 1,151 yards and 14 touchdowns as a sophomore, then improved those numbers to 1,561 yards and 20 TD passes last year.

Schulte made the circuit of college football camps this summer, looking to improve his technique and possibly catch the eye of a college recruiter. He attended camps at Iowa, Iowa State, Northern Iowa, Minnesota State, Central Missouri and South Dakota, but as of Friday night there were no scholarship offers on the table.

"I'd just like to play anywhere," he remarked.

Schulte said he's been working on his footwork and release, in addition to all the other skills needed to be a successful quarterback. He also worked this summer with Xavier teammates on the passing game and one of his new receivers this year could be his younger brother Quinn, a sophomore who has been working exclusively with the varsity in preseason camp.

Quinn Schulte is also a quarterback and could become the third Schulte brother to run the Saints next year, following Reggie (now at UNI) and Bryce. But for now, his primary role could be catching the ball.

"It's fun throwing to him," said Bryce. "He knows what's expected of him and I think we'll have a fun year."

Coach Schulte deferred comment on the latest member of his family to join the varsity. "Right

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now he's got some earning to do," the coach remarked.

The Saints could be nicely balanced again this year with their passing and running attacks. Maliki Wilson, who ran for 1,273 yards and 12 touchdowns last season, is back for his senior year after averaging seven yards per carry.

Max Johnson, Ryan Jasper and Sam Meyers are experienced offensive linemen for Xavier. Zach Barish and Lucas Miller return at defensive tackle and John Rocca is another experienced hand on defense.

"I like how we're working, trying to be tough, trying to get into the flow of things, getting everybody used to what it's like coming into next week," Bryce Schulte said Friday.

Iowa City Regina has won six state titles in a row heading into the 2016 campaign.