

Schulte poised for next step at Xavier

Written by Jim Ecker

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Bryce Schulte played a little game of catch with his old brother Reggie this summer, but this wasn't like the football games they used to play in the backyard at their home.

This game took place at the University of Northern Iowa, where Reggie Schulte is one of the quarterbacks for the Panthers. Just for fun, they invited Sawyer Kollmorgen, who is UNI's starting quarterback, and they also invited Rashadeem Gray, who is one of UNI's receivers and Reggie Schulte's roommate.

It was quite an experience for Bryce Schulte, a junior at Xavier High School who is getting ready for his second year as the Saints' starting quarterback.

Bryce loved hanging out with his older brother in Cedar Falls.

"It was awesome," he said Monday during a break in practice at Xavier. "He taught me so many things I didn't think about before I went up there. He helped me a lot with my technique and my release and stuff. It was phenomenal."

Reggie Schulte smashed all the passing records during his all-state career at Xavier and is entering his third year at Northern Iowa, hoping to climb the depth chart. Bryce Schulte accounted for 26 touchdowns for the Saints last season as a sophomore - 14 passing and 12 rushing - and is looking for even better things this year after helping Xavier reach the semifinals of the Class 3A playoffs.

"He's definitely gotten better, there's no doubt about it," said Xavier Coach Duane Schulte, who is Bryce's and Reggie's father. "He worked a lot with Reggie this summer. That really seemed to help him."

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Bryce Schulte also attended the major football camps at Iowa, Iowa State and Northern Iowa this summer, despite being busy with the Xavier baseball team.

"It was fun," he said. "I'd never been to a camp before, so it was a good experience going to Iowa first. Then I got a feeling for what UNI and Iowa State would be like, so it was really fun."

Schulte completed 49.7 percent of his passes last season for 1,151 yards and has worked hard on the mechanics of being a quarterback and throwing a football. "If you noticed last year when I went to throw, I had like a dip in my arm," he said. "So I tried to get a quicker release."

Reggie Schulte became a serious student of the game when he was a youngster in the Schulte household, studying the playbook when he was a young kid and absorbing all aspects of the sport. Bryce Schulte also became serious about football at a tender age, but took a slightly different approach.

"Reggie was the kind of kid that was consumed by it," their father said. "And Bryce - I don't want to say he's not consumed by it like Reggie is - but he certainly absorbs it in a different fashion."

Bryce Schulte seemed to have a little extra zip on his passes in practice Monday. He appeared a little more confident, a little more comfortable on the field.

"I think so," he said. "I've been around this my whole life, so I think coming back after a year of being the varsity quarterback, I think I'm really more comfortable."

The Saints have some other experienced weapons on offense with tailback Sean Murphy (479 yards and two touchdowns) and receiver Nick Stark (26 catches for 423 yards). There are 55 players on the varsity this year, down from an all-time high of 86 in 2012 and from 71 a year ago, but the coaches anticipated the dip with smaller class sizes.

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Bryce Schulte thinks the Saints have the earmarks for another competitive club.

"I think we will be, if we keep working hard and get better. I think we could have a really good team and a special season," he remarked.

The Saints open the season next Friday, Aug. 28 with a home game against Dowling Catholic, which is two-time Class 4A state champion. Bryce Schulte made his debut as Xavier's starting quarterback in a loss at Dowling last year. The Saints had trouble moving the ball in that game, but they survived and improved.

"I was pretty nervous going in," he allowed. "I didn't think that Dowling would play that fast. I think I feel more comfortable ging into this year knowing what to expect."

Ryan Boyle, who led Dowling to the 2013 and 2014 state titles, is now a freshman quarterback with the Iowa Hawkeyes, but the Saints expect Dowling to have another strong team. The Saints also play Iowa City Regina, which won the Class 1A state title last season.

The Xavier players welcome the stiff competition.

"We just like to take it game by game," said senior Bryce Charipar, "and if Dowling is our first game, we have to prepare for Dowling. With our coaches, they'll tell us how to prepare for them. We'll prepare like we do for any normal game. We're just trying to get better week by week."

2015 SCHEDULE

8/28 - Dowling Catholic
9/04 - Davenport Assumption
9/11 - at Solon
9/18 - DeWitt Central
9/25 - at Maquoketa

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10/2 - at Western Dubuque

10/9 - Dubuque Wahlert

10/16 - at Iowa City Regina

10/23 - at Marion