

Would Iowa put Schulte at tight end?

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 03 November 2016 04:55 -



When Bryce Schulte attended the University of Iowa football camp this past summer, he was not auditioning for the Hawkeyes as one of the top high school quarterbacks in the state.

Schulte went to the camp as a tight end, even though he has never played the position in his life.

"That was the first time putting my hand on the ground. It was fun," said Schulte, who is a star quarterback for the Xavier Saints and a versatile athlete.

"The tight end coach (LeVar Woods) is really good at what he does. It was fun being physical with other kids at the camp and going up against them one-on-one. And it was fun catching balls, too, because I'm not used to that either."

From all accounts, Schulte performed very well as a tight end as a blocker and receiver at the UI camp. And if he doesn't get any offers to play quarterback at a major college, he'd gladly accept a chance to change positions if a major college would give him a chance.

"I would go for tight end," he said without hesitation. "Play as high as I can. I would play any position for my team, basically. I want to play Division I and that would be pretty cool."

Schulte has the size and athletic ability to play tight end at 6-foot-3 and 215 pounds. In addition to playing football at Xavier, he's an all-conference baseball player and was a key reserve on the Xavier basketball team that captured the Class 3A state title last winter.

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Schulte attended the Iowa football camp in 2015 as a quarterback, but UI assistant coach Reese Morgan suggested Schulte attend this year's camp as a tight end or linebacker. Morgan told Schulte that the Hawkeyes are recruiting other quarterbacks and they wanted to see what he could do at another position.

Schulte has been starting in the defensive backfield for the Saints all season and has really enjoyed being on the field for an entire game. He practiced with the defense as a sophomore and junior, but this is the first year that he's been playing on both sides of the ball.

"It's definitely fun," he said. "I enjoy playing it with my teammates. I've always wanted to play it. I just really enjoy it.

"I definitely feel more loose, more active," he said. "It keeps you a little more focused, a little more competitive."

Schulte has done a good job for the Saints in the defensive backfield, forming a cohesive unit with Josh Gerke, Nolan Butkowski and his brother Quinn Schulte. He has 16 tackles this year, including four solo tackles for losses.

Schulte is best known as a star quarterback, however. He's completed 69.6 percent of his passes for the second-ranked Saints, who host Waverly-Shell Rock in the quarterfinals of the Class 3A playoffs Friday night. His accuracy has been uncanny, with 19 touchdown passes and only one interception in 10 games.

Xavier Coach Duane Schulte said his son was not to blame for that lone interception.

"That was my fault. I never should have made that call," the coach remarked. "I'm not joking."

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Bryce Schulte has broken almost all of his brother Reggie's career passing records at Xavier with 55 touchdown passes, 270 completions and 4,061 passing yards. He's accounted for 30 touchdowns in 10 games this season, with 19 TD passes and 11 touchdowns on running plays.

Schulte has received some correspondence from college coaches about next year, but nothing serious.

"Nothing too major," he said. "Not too much right now."

Duane Schulte thinks his son can succeed as a quarterback at a major college, if given a chance.

"I think he can play at the highest level, if the right eyes are looking at him and use him the right way," he said. "I think he's that good of an athlete, he's that good of a student and he's that good of a kid. He's really all you can ask for in a student-athlete."

Bryce Schulte plans to worry about his college prospects once the high school football season is over. He was willing to talk about college football for a few minutes on Tuesday, but otherwise his attention is fully focused on trying to defeat Waverly-Shell Rock Friday night.

The Saints blanked the Go-Hawks, 42-0, in a district game during the regular season, but they expect a much stiffer challenge in the rematch in the playoffs.

"We're not taking them lightly," Bryce Schulte vowed.

The Saints got off to a quick start against the Go-Hawks in Waverly and kept going from there, but the playoffs can be a different animal.

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"We're not trying to put too much into the fact that we beat them," said Coach Schulte. "And we're not trying to put too much into the fact that they're out for revenge. We're just trying to win the game."

If the Saints defeat Waverly-Shell Rock, they'll advance to the Class 3A semifinals next Thursday at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls against top-ranked Pella or seventh-ranked Solon.