

SHAQUILLE ASH *Marian* **6-0 215 OLB**

Named All-MSFA Mideast First Team. Finishes career fourth on the Marian all-time tackles list with 272 and ranks fourth in career sacks with 18. 2016: Appeared in 11 games, made 61 total tackles, including 29 solos, recorded two sacks and 3.5 tackles for loss. Recovered a fumble in the final game of the season and also recorded a pass breakup. Made season-high 12 tackles Nov. 26 against No. 9 Eastern Oregon.

RASHAD BAKER *Peru State* **6-1 230 OLB**

All-Heart Second Team. Quick, strong linebacker who gets behind the line of scrimmage with regularity. 2016 Stats: 58 tackles, 15 TFLs, 7.5 sacks, FR,

TREY BARNES *Concordia (Neb.)* **6-2 255 OLB**

A two-time All-American, Barnes collected first team all-conference accolades as both a defensive lineman and punter this fall. In his final collegiate season, Barnes totaled 68 tackles, 22 tackles for loss, nine sacks, two forced fumbles, an interception and a fumble return for a touchdown. He led the nation in stops in the backfield per game (2.2). As a punter, Barnes topped the conference with an average of 40.7. After the final week of the season, he was also named GPAC special teams player of the week after a career day punting the football.

JEFF BRANCH *Presentation* **6-2 250 OLB**

Finished his ten game senior season with 63 tackles, 15 sacks for 102.5 yards, 18.5 tackles for loss for 100 yards, two pass break-ups, two interceptions which included a touchdown, recovered two fumbles, and forced six fumbles. Branch finished the 2016 season being ranked in numerous categories across the NSAA and NAIA for his defensive efforts which include the following: North Star Athletic Association: 1st: Sacks/Game (1.5), 1st: Sacks (15), 1st: Fumbles Forced/Game (.500), 2nd: Tackles for Loss (18.5), 2nd: Tackles for Loss/Game (1.9), NAIA: 1st: Fumbles Forced per Game (.500), 1st: Sacks per Game (1.5), 2nd: Total Sacks (15), 7th: Tackles for Loss per Game (1.9), 16th: Total Tackles for Loss (18.5). To add to his impressive senior campaign, Branch was named NSAA All-Conference First Team Defense and to the AFCA Coaches' All-American Defense First Team, which was the first ever Saint to receive this prestigious honor.

CALVIN BRAYBOY *St. Francis (IL)* **6-4 230 OLB DE**

College DE. Two-time MSFA All-Midwest League Second Team. Led USF with seven sacks and produced 14.5 tackles-for-loss, good for second-most on the club.

AARON COOPER *Kentucky Christian* **6-4 233 OLB ILB**

Talk about under the radar, you can't even get info on Cooper from the school's website. Yet, he was the 2016 NAIA National Football Player of the Year Nominee from the Mid-South Conference East Division. He was was the lone student-athlete from the MSC to repeat as an AFCA-NAIA All-American. He was also one of seven players in the NAIA on both the 2015 and 2016 All-American lists. Cooper led the Mid-South and ranked sixth in the NAIA averaging 11.8 tackles per game. He finished the season with 130 total tackles to lead the MSC, while forcing five fumbles, which is tied for the most in the conference and second most in the NAIA. Cooper led his team with 12 tackles for loss and ranks 10th in the conference. Has length and speed. Athletic with a great motor.

AKIM FRANCIS Baker 6-2 235 OLB

First Team All-Conference. The team leader in tackles with 112 and has supplied Baker with 14.5 tackles for loss, two sacks and two interceptions and 5 PBU's.

LUKE GROOTERS Morningside 5-11 220 OLB

All-GPAC linebacker was the Mustangs' leading tackler with 23 solos and 41 assists for 64 total tackles, including six tackles behind the line of scrimmage for losses of 20 yards, and a quarterback sack.

CAMERON HAJOK Benedictine (KS) 6-3 230 OLB

First Team All-Conference as a DE. Finished the season ranked eighth in the Heart with 5.5 sacks while leading the team in tackles for a loss with 9.5. He finished with a total of 44 tackles this season.

MICHAEL HEDLUND Concordia (Neb.) 6-1 215 OLB

Moved up the ranks the 1st Team after a second team all-conference honor as a junior in 2015. Hedlund led all GPAC players with 107 tackles in 2016. It was the second-straight 100-tackle campaign for him. Hedlund also picked off three passes this season. He concluded his career with a Winter-era high of 261 tackles. In addition, he recorded 11.5 tackles for loss and nine interceptions over his career.

KENNY HERSHBERGER Benedictine (KS) 6-1 232 OLB

First Team All-Conference was the Ravens third-leading tackler with 68. That included six tackles for a loss and one sack.

LEVI HUNEKE Ottawa (KS) 6-0 225 OLB ILB

Earned Second Team All-KCAC honors after being named Honorable Mention All-KCAC last season. He was second on the team in tackles, finishing with 67 (32 UT/35AT). Huneke had 6.5 tackles for loss, one sack, three interceptions, two pass breakups, and two fumble recoveries. He is ranked 48th in the NAIA in total interceptions (3).

WILL JOHNSON Arizona Christian 6-0 230 OLB

Transfer from Malone. CSFL Honorable Mention. 2016 Stats: 49 tackles, 5.5 TFLs, 2 sacks.

DONTAYE JOHNSON Robert Morris(IL) 6-0 230 OLB ILB

Was selected as the MSFA Midwest League Defensive Player of the Year after leading the Eagles with 85 tackles during the 2016 campaign. The linebacker also led the team with 15 ½ tackles for a loss and was third on the team with four sacks, while also forcing two fumbles and intercepting one pass.

JAKE KONEN *Carroll* **6-3 230 OLB**

Moved from strongside outside linebacker to the weakside. A really good LB. Overcame injuries and had a productive 2016. 2016 Stats: 40 tackles, 7TFLs, 4.5 sacks, INT, 5 PBUs, FF

BRADY MUDDER *Dakota Wesleyan* **6-3 230 OLB**

GPAC First Team as a DE. Started in all 11 games for the Tigers as a senior, while recording 57 tackles, 9.5 sacks and 17.5 tackles for loss. Mudder ranks No. 9 in the NAIA in total sacks this season. Mudder ends his Tiger career with 177 total tackles.

MATT MURILLO *Benedictine (KS)* **6-3 240 OLB DE**

Became a two-time all-conference selection as a DE on the defense. He finished the year with 46 tackles which included 7.5 for a loss and 3.5 sacks.

DARION OFFICE *Dakota State* **6-3 235 OLB**

Honorable Mention All-North Star. Office played in all 10 games this season for DSU, collecting a total of 65 tackles (29 solo). He also registered 10.5 tackles-for-loss of 37.3 yards, including four quarterback sacks for 18 yards loss. Office recorded three pass break-ups, two blocked kicks and a forced fumble.

COLE POTTER *Dakota State* **6-2 215 OLB**

Potter was selected to the NSAA Football All-Conference First-Team as a terribly undersized DE for the third straight year for Dakota State. He concluded his amazing career as he broke the DSU school record for single-game quarterback sacks with 4.5 sacks (old record was 4 sacks set by Potter himself in 2014 and Paul Naughton in 1991) in Trojans' 24-10 road victory at Presentation (S.D.), earning his second NSAA Football Defensive Player-of-the-Week and NAIA Football National Defensive Player-of-the-Week honors on Nov. 7. He ranks first in the NAIA in tackles-for-loss per game with an average of 2.2 tackles-for-loss. He is also second in the nation in total tackles-for-loss of 22.0. Potter led the Trojans with 95 tackles (50 solo) in 2016, including 22.0 tackles-for-loss of 94.5 yards. He also registered seven quarterback sacks for 30.5 yards loss for DSU. Potter was just half sack short of tying the Dakota State career sacks record, recording 26.5 sacks (DSU school record is 27 sacks by Ben Button from 1991-94). He finished his career with 258 tackles and 67 tackles-for-loss of 304.9 yards. Potter had four pass break-ups, two fumble recoveries and a forced fumble.

ALVIN REELS, JR. *Dakota State* **6-1 225 OLB**

Honorable Mention All-North Star. Reels, Jr. posted the third most tackles on the Trojan Football team, recording 70 tackles (32 solo). He also had three tackles-for-loss of eight yards. Reels, Jr. had an interception return of 55 yards, a pass break-up and forced a fumble.

THOMAS ROMACK *Dakota State* **6-0 220 OLB**

2nd Team All-North Star Defense. Romack finished as the second-most tackles on the Trojans' defense team, amassing a total of 81 tackles (34 solo) in 2016. He also had 8.0 tackles-for-loss of 24.7 yards, including three quarterback sacks for 8.5 yards loss. Romack had an interception and returned it for five yards. He recorded a forced fumble, fumble recovery and a pass break-up. He finished his career with a total of 114 tackles (53 solo).

WYATT ROSS *Ottawa (KS)* **6-1 230 OLB**

Was named Honorable Mention All-KCAC. He finished the season with 40 tackles (14 UT/26 AT). Ross had five tackles for loss, 2.5 sacks, and two fumble recoveries.

BEAU SHIELDS *Marian* **6-1 225 OLB**

Named All-MSFA Mideast First Team (2016). Finishes career ranked 10th in tackles with 190.

2016: Appeared in 11 games, made 56 total tackles, including 28 solos, recorded 2.5 tackles for loss and one sack, forced one fumble and recovered another, while tallying a pass breakup and quarterback hit. Made season-high 11 tackles Sept. 10 at UIndy. Transfer from Indiana State.

BO SILBERG *Jamestown* **6-4 235 OLB**

All-Conference as a DE, was third in the NSAA with his 16 tackles for loss, and his six sacks also ranked third. His 62 tackles was fourth-highest on the team.

TIM SMITH *St. Francis (IL)* **6-3 245 OLB DE**

College DE. Ranked 19th in the NAIA with 16 tackles-for-loss and ranked second on the team with six sacks this past season. Named NAIA Second-Team All-American and MSFA Midwest League Defensive Player of the Year IN 2015.

KyRANDALL SMITH *St. Mary* **6-0 227 OLB**

KCAC Defensive Player of the Year, tallied 116 tackles in 2016, with 12.5 tackles for loss, 3.5 sacks, 2 forced fumbles, 2 fumble recoveries, and a touchdown to lead the Spire defense that finished first in the KCAC in Scoring Defense. Smith is the first Spire to ever win the Defensive Player of the Year award for the conference.

LUCAS SPARKS *St. Francis (IN)* **6-1 239 OLB DE**

College DE, voted 2016 Mid-States Football Association Mideast League Defensive Player of the Year. Finished ninth in NAIA regular season sacks with 11. The senior has 15 tackles for loss, 26th in NAIA, and averaged 1.0 sacks per game, ninth in NAIA. He ranked No. 10 in MSFA tackles with 74. 2015 (Jr.): All-MSFA Defensive Lineman 1st Team.

NATE YELOUSHAN *Siena Heights* **6-2 230 OLB**

Only playing in seven games for SHU due to a season-ending injury, Yeloushan ranks third in the Saints defense with 56 total tackles, 31 solo and 25 assisted. He managed 1.5 sacks for a loss of 10 total yards and 5.5 tackles for a loss of 17 total yards. Yeloushan also added four pass breakups and two interceptions.