

Spartan Football Trio Sign National Letters of Intent

By Ron Holt

Three talented Bixby Spartan senior football players – Cord Nolan, Braeden Presley and Emory Snyder - signed National Letters of Intent with a trio of Big 12 Conference schools during signing ceremonies at the Home of the Spartans locker room Wednesday afternoon.

Nolan, a multi-purpose contributor for the Spartans, signed with the Texas Tech Red Raiders; Presley, a defensive back/wide receiver/returner, signed with the Oklahoma State Cowboys, and Snyder, also a defensive back/wide receiver, inked with the West Virginia Mountaineers.

In the future these Bixby teammates will likely play against each other in college.

Spartan head coach Loren Montgomery introduced each player, who were joined for the signing by their parents, grandparents and other family members.

Montgomery noted that each player contributed numerous big plays during their varsity careers, each playing key roles in Spartan state championship efforts in recent seasons.

Here's a look at each signee:

Cord Nolan, 6-0, 214-pound Senior LB/TE Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Nolan made an appearance on the Spartan varsity team as a freshman and has been a vital part of the Spartans' success the past three seasons.

During the top-ranked Spartans 12-0 run to the state championship game, Nolan was credited with 74 total tackles, 43 unassisted stops, 16 tackles for loss and four sacks. Offensively, he's rushed for 18 yards and one touchdown while also catching seven passes for 127 yards and three TDs.

The culture developed by fourth-year Red Raider head coach Joey McGuire and a family connection were reasons Nolan chose Texas Tech. He has numerous other collegiate opportunities.

"They've got a good culture ... coach McGuire has established a good culture there," Nolan said following the ceremony. "Coach (Lance) Barilow, the strength coach, is a good dude and they're good at developing people well.

"And coach (Shiel) Wood, the linebacker coach and DC (defensive coordinator) is a good guy who will coach me hard. I really liked him a lot. They've been winning games so that's good. And my grandparents went there so the opportunity to follow them is going to be awesome," he added.

Nolan, the son of Wendall and Michelle Nolan, felt a connection with Texas Tech from the start of the recruiting process and, despite receiving offers from other universities, never reconsidered his commitment to join the Red Raiders.

"When they offered me, I knew that would be the place for me. Nobody tried to get me after I committed and I'm happy about my decision," he said. "This makes it official and makes it real. Nobody can change my mind now.

"When I was younger everybody told me I'd be able to play college football, but I never really believed it until my first offer came. I started believing it then and started working even harder."

Texas Tech plans to play Nolan at the middle linebacker position and he'll be graduating early and leaving for Lubbock on January 10.

With the pressure of recruitment behind him, Nolan is focused on Friday's Class 6A-I state championship game against Owasso in Edmond. "Now it's time to prove ourselves as a team," he said.

**Braeden Presley, 6-1, 196-pound WR/DB/KR
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater**

Presley becomes the third member of his family to play football at Oklahoma State. Older brother Brennan, who graduated last year, became OSU's leading pass receiver, while Braylin started at O-State before transferring to the University of Tulsa.

Familiarity with the school and program and input from Brennan helped Presley remain committed despite the firing of head coach Mike Gundy after three games.

"It helped early that I knew the coaches a little and knew the place so well. That definitely played a big part in my decision," Presley said. "I feel like the fans and the atmosphere really set it apart. Game day is something special ... it doesn't compare anywhere else.

"He did talk to me a little, just because he went there and he wanted me to there. He thought that would be great," Presley said of Brennan's input on his decision. "But he said it was really up to me.

"I was just hanging in there and seeing what happened," he said of the coaching outlook. "They got Eric Morris ... so they brought in a great coach, and I think he's going to build the program back up and we'll be back where we were a few years ago.

"Coach Morris recruited me when he was at North Texas so with me knowing him already helped a lot. I'm going to play defense. I'll probably miss the other side a little, but I've always loved defense."

Presley, the son of Arthur and Tia Presley, plans to graduate early and begin attending classes at OSU in January.

For unbeaten Bixby this season, Presley is 1-for-1 passing for 43 yards and a touchdown, he's rushed once for 43 yards and caught 21 passes for 497 yards and five TDs. From the secondary, he is credited with 31 tackles, 28 unassisted, and has five pass interceptions.

With the signing finalized, Presley also sets his sights on winning another state championship.

"We've only got one thing to think about now," he said.

**Emory Snyder, 6-3, 202-pound senior WR/DB
West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia**

Snyder emerged on the Spartan scene last season and has steadily improved throughout his varsity career at Bixby on both sides of the ball. A growth spurt early in his career sparked the idea that he might get an opportunity to play college football.

"It was probably after my sophomore year. I went from 170 pounds to 200 pounds and got taller. I had a growth spurt and matured and that's when it got real for me," Snyder said following the signing.

"It was really the coaches," Snyder said of his decision to sign with the Mountaineers. "Coach (Henry) Weinreich is the one who originally recruited me, he's been there from the start. I just really believed in him and what coach Rich Rodriguez and coach (Zac) Alley, the defensive coordinator, have going.

"The only other teams I was looking at were Washington and Coastal Carolina. I went to other schools, but they didn't match the West Virginia campus. When I was on the West Virginia campus it really felt like home.

"I'd never been there (Morgantown) before I visited ... it's an actual college town. There is nothing else in West Virginia but West Virginia football, so you have the whole state behind you," he added.

Snyder, the son of Marshall and Elena Snyder, said he'll be playing nickel back in West Virginia's defensive scheme. He will graduate early and leave for Morgantown in mid-January. In Bixby's 12 games this season, Snyder has 19 pass receptions for 329 yards and three touchdowns while being credited with 59 tackles, 39 unassisted, four tackles for loss and two pass interceptions.

"It definitely feels good to finally sign. The recruiting process is officially over for me so it's good to just focus now on the state championship game," he said.