

Senior lineman set to play at next level

By Logan Callison

Around this time next year, Durant’s own Joe Lilienthal could be walking onto Jack Trice Field at Iowa State University to kick off his college football career. The real question, however, is what jersey Durant fans will be seeing him in.

The senior left tackle and defensive end is a four-year varsity football starter and has been recruited by several Division I schools. Two of these schools include The University of South Dakota and Iowa State University. What makes this interesting is that these two teams will be facing each other to start the 2020 season.

Lilienthal has verbally committed to play at South Dakota, but nothing has been set in stone. Iowa State, who has also shown interest in Lilienthal, has offered him as a PWO (Preferred Walk On). As a junior, Lilienthal was invited to stand on the sidelines at a few Iowa State games.

Lilienthal hopes to make a positive impact at whichever school he decides to attend.

“I want to make as much of an impact as soon as possible,” he said.

Lilienthal gets very excited when talking about his college plans, but he still has some unfinished business for his senior year at Durant High School. Some of Joe’s

goals for this season are having a winning record at the end of the season and repeating as the Offensive Line MVP in the district.

Even though Lilienthal is one of Durant’s top prospects, he knows that he can still continue to get better. Lilienthal has put a lot of time in the weight room and training facilities in order to improve his play.

While on the football field, Lilienthal does a great job of opening up holes as well as protecting the blind side of the quarterback. In the first game of the season, Durant beat Wilton 24-0 behind over 300 yards of rushing.

Senior running back Drew Delong and junior quarterback Keagen Head gave a lot of credit to Lilienthal for the team’s success.

“I know I can always count on him to make that block for me and for anyone else carrying the ball,” said Delong.

First-year quarterback Head is also very glad to have Lilienthal protecting him this season.

Lilienthal is being looked at for offensive line, but he is also a good defensive player for the Cats. The 6’8, 310-pound lineman had 34.5 tackles last year for the Cats, proving that he can do much more than just protect the quarterback’s blind side.



Photo by Timothy Junis

Durant senior lineman Joe Lilienthal attempts to block a pass play against Wilton in the season opener at Wilton on August 30. The Wildcats defeated the Beavers for the first time in 20 years. Lilienthal was instrumental in the ground game blocking for running backs Drew and Nolan DeLong. Lilienthal had four total tackles in the victory. The senior has committed to play at the University of South Dakota next fall, but Iowa State University has also expressed an interest in Lilienthal.

Head coach builds relationships on and off field

By Ally Happ

Coach Joel Diederichs continues to balance his jobs as Durant High School principal and varsity football head coach as the 2019-2020 school year begins.

This is Coach Diederichs’s third year of being football head coach and principal at the same time. Coach Diederichs has coached at multiple schools before coming to Durant. His most recent coaching position was at Highland Riverside for four years where he was the football assistant coach and middle school principal. This is his first time ever being head coach and principal at the same time.

“I thought it [football head coach position] was a great opportunity because I get a chance to work with the athletes outside of the school walls,” Coach Diederichs said.

“So they don’t just think of the principal as the guy that sits behind the desk.”

At a high school with only 218 students, building relationships is important. Coach Diederichs has emphasized those relationships in both of his positions. He recognizes the kids in the hallways and also learns to know his athletes.

“It builds a deeper sense,” he said, noting the conversations between the coaches and players become more personal, and that strong relationship then carries over into the hallways.

Time can often be an issue for Coach Diederichs. Being principal comes with requirements that often happen at night, taking him away from coaching his players.

“You have to learn how to balance everything,” Coach Diederichs said.

Gamedays can feel busy but never to Coach Diederichs.

“Game days are always special to me,” said Coach Diederichs. “School days drag by because I’m excited. I feel ready to go finish the job.”

When he received the position of head coach, Coach Diederichs started a new tradition. Football players on game days must dress up in formal attire.

Pep rallies are always more exciting as well. As principal, Coach Diederichs has to ignite our school spirit but Coach Diederichs goes to the next level of excitement because this is not only his school, but it’s his team as well.

Wide receiver Tony Dillabough said that Coach Diederichs is a good motivator on and off the field.

“I think Diederichs does a good job of pushing us on the field and in the weight room, but he pushes us harder to get our school work done so we can be on the field Friday night,” Dillabough said.

Starting quarterback Keagen Head echoed Dillabough’s comments.

“He does a really good job of being the principal and coach at the same time,” Head said. “He is a great leader that handles both jobs well. He is perfect for the jobs.”

Last year, Coach Diederichs brought the team to the state playoffs. He is excited to see what the season holds for the team. The team comes off of a 7-3 record last year. All eight juniors last year return as hungry seniors. Diederichs also ended a 20-year drought when his Wildcats defeated Wilton 24-0 in the first game of the season.

Softball team copes with heart-breaking loss to end season

By Lucas Callison

The Durant softball team lost to Beckman Catholic 4-2 on Monday, July 15, at Durant High School in the Class 2A Regional Final game. For the second year in a row, the Wildcats failed in making it

to the state tournament in Fort Dodge. The shocked Wildcats were heartbroken after being ranked at the top of 2A softball for the past two years.

“We sat in the locker room for an hour and 30 minutes just sitting as a team for

one last time, crying,” said returning senior and outfielder Kira Schult.

The Wildcats had their share of opportunities to win the game but were halted by several base-running and fielding errors. The Wildcats had seven hits on the night but

were unable to string them together.

Schult also said the team just “couldn’t figure out how to get the bat on the ball.”

Center fielder and returning freshman Ally Happ dove for a tough ball in the fifth inning, but as she hit the ground, the ball popped out of her glove and Beckman Catholic scored two more runs. Happ’s teammates were quick to support her, and little did they know she had broken her pinky finger on the play, which was scored as a hit.

“The team just wasn’t having a good night altogether... we were all on edge about losing last year,” said Kylie Schult, the sister of Kira Schult and a returning sophomore. After losing senior pitchers Kamryn Meyer and Jenna Lawson, the Wildcats will look to Kylie Schult for pitching in the upcoming season.

“The team before left a very big mark on the team talent-wise,” she said. The Wildcats lose a total of seven senior players. Coach Kevin Kaalberg, in his second year coaching at Durant, knows that he will need the younger players to step up and fill those roles.

“Some of us were used to the old coach’s philosophy and everything he did but (we) are very excited about the new coaching staff,” the younger Schult sister said.

Tinted Vintage Iowa’s volleyball player of the month



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Kira Schult is a senior on the Durant High School varsity volleyball team. With the season already here, Kira has been constantly working hard on the court. With eight kills in the first match, Kira led the team in a game against Riverdale. Good luck to Kira for the rest of the season!



Schult

Wilton Cafe’s football player of the month



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Joe Lilienthal, Durant senior and varsity football lineman, recorded four total tackles to help Durant win its season opener 24-0 against the Wilton Beavers Aug. 30. Lilienthal has also verbally committed to play football next year at the University of South Dakota. We wish him the best of luck the rest of the season.



Lilienthal

Special Tees’s cross country runner of the month



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Sophomore runner Drake Shelangoski was the lead Wildcat at the first boys’ cross country meet Sept. 3 at Clinton. He ran the 5K course in a time of 19:44, placing 17th overall in the opening meet. Good luck for the rest of the season.



Shelangoski