

# Koechner to continue journey at Garden City



Louisburg High School senior Mason Koechner signed his letter of intent Wednesday to play football at Garden City Community College. Sitting next to Mason are his parents Scott and Beth Koechner. Standing (from left) are Louisburg football coaches Robert Ebenstein, Gary Griffin and Zach Livingston.

Playing at the highest level college football has to offer has always intrigued Mason Koechner.

The Louisburg High School senior has his sights set on competing at the Division I level – one day. His journey to reaching that goal is still ongoing, but Koechner took the next step Wednesday when he signed his letter of intent to play at Garden City Community College.

Koechner believes the junior college route will allow him to grow and get better at the game he loves.

“I am not ready right out of high school to play Division I, but I really think this will be a great stepping stone for me to get me where I want to go,” Koechner said. “Hopefully I can spend one or two years at Garden City and then be ready for bigger and better things.

“I really liked their coaching staff. They are really good guys and the campus itself is really nice. The coaches talked

to me and convinced me that they can get me to the next level and that is really what I want to do. I hope to play well at Garden City and then see what happens.”

Koechner, who was a Class 4A first-team all-state player on both sides of the ball, was a pivotal part of the Louisburg football team that finished the season with a regional championship. He played tackle on an offensive line that accounted for nearly 4,000 yards of total offense and led the Wildcats on the defensive side with 67 tackles, including a pair of sacks.



**Mason Koechner (right) will be ready to take on a new challenge with Garden City this coming fall.**

However, it is the offensive side he will continue to improve on in college. Koechner, who stands at 6-foot-2, is undersized to play the tackle position in college, so the Garden City

coaches have a different idea for him.

“For my size, the coaches want to put me at center since I am not as tall so that will be different since I played tackle in high school,” Koechner said. “If I want to go somewhere bigger, I won’t be able to do that as a tackle, but playing center I can get away with only being 6-foot-2 and they think that will be a great fit for me.”

Mason has also had a wealth of knowledge in his corner during the recruiting process – his brother Jared. Jared, also an LHS graduate, went the junior college route before eventually signing with a Division I program in the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

Jared has been there to guide Mason through it all and give him some words of wisdom when he has needed it.

“Jared is probably the one who has helped me the most with my decision,” Mason said. “He has been with me every step of the way. I am glad he has been there and he has helped me with what questions to ask and how it all works. He has been a big help for sure.”

However, football isn’t Mason’s only passion. He is currently the No. 2 ranked heavyweight in Class 4A and has a 30-1 record on the season for the Wildcat wrestling team.

Wrestling and football have worked hand-in-hand in helping Mason become a better all-around athlete.

“In wrestling, I know how to you use my body and other people’s bodies against them,” Mason said. “I have gone up against guys bigger and stronger than me, but I can still handle them. Wrestling teaches you a lot of mental toughness, which is really helpful when it comes to football. The coaches all say that they love recruiting wrestlers because there is a mental toughness about them and they know how to use their body in their favor.”

Although he will be preparing for college soon, Mason will not forget the time he spent in Louisburg and all those times under the Friday night lights.

“It is crazy,” he said. “I started playing in fifth grade, but time has gone by so fast. It feels a little weird signing for college, but it doesn’t seem like it should be here yet. I am ready to take this next step though.

“I have many awesome memories of this place. I wouldn’t want to grow up anywhere else than here in Louisburg. It is the best place to grow up and play football.”