

# Harding excited for new beginning at Truman State



It has been a crazy summer for Garrett Harding and one that he is not likely to forget anytime soon.

Even despite losing the last two months of his senior year and having his high school graduation in late July, the Louisburg graduate was in the process of trying to find his next home – his home to play football that is.

Harding was talking to a couple colleges, but when COVID-19 hit, his recruitment slowed down a little bit. Still, one school made sure to stay in touch all along and he was able to find the fit he was looking for.

Harding made it official in late June to sign with Truman State University, a Division II program in Kirksville, Mo. It was a relief to get the process over with and he is excited for what is to come.

“I’m very excited to play football at a higher level and ever since I was a little kid I’ve wanted to play football or baseball in college or even beyond,” Harding said. “I decided on Truman State because of the high academic standards and when I visited campus I knew it was the place for me. I had multiple other options, but Truman was the best fit for me.”

The weirdness hasn’t seemed to slow down for Harding, however.

The Great Lakes Conference, which Truman State is a member,

voted to move football from the fall to the spring, in hopes the spread of COVID-19 has slowed down. It will certainly be a different experience for him, but he is trying to find the positive in all this.

“I was disappointed that I couldn’t start playing right off the bat but I also understood the conditions why they did it,” Harding said. “The only changes that it will do to me is give me more time to condition myself, to be more fit and learn more about the program.”



Louisburg’s Garrett Harding made his decision official in late June when he signed with Truman State to play football. Harding is seated next to his parents Dennis and Cara Harding, along with his sister Carina. Standing is Louisburg assistant football coaches Pete Skakal and Alex Gentges.

Extra time could be useful for Harding, and not only because he is an incoming freshman, but also because he is going to make a position change.

Harding has spent the last few years as a fixture on the Louisburg offensive line and performed at a high level. This past season, Harding was a first team All-Frontier League offensive lineman and earned second team honors on defense.

He was also a first-team All-Class 4A selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal and also played in the Kansas Shrine Bowl a month ago.

Still, the Truman State staff has a different role for Harding. They are going to try him out as a fullback or middle linebacker as they feel he can help the team in that area.

“I’m very excited to get back to my old positions and see what I can do again,” Harding said. “I used to play middle linebacker on Top City Crush, Olathe Pride and FBU so I don’t believe the transition back to it will be as rough as first learning it. I enjoyed playing middle linebacker for Coach Kelly on the Top City Crush who has coached at multiple high levels above high school.”

Although football has been moved to the spring for Harding, he is still planning to continue to work out when he reports for classes soon.

“For the first couple weeks, we won’t be allowed to do anything but if all goes well and there are no Coronavirus spikes, then we will start having conditioning and lifting with restrictions,” Harding said. “After that, if all is still going well, then we may have a few practices in October/November.”

Despite the different start to his collegiate football career, Harding is still looking forward to making a mark in a game that he wasn’t even sure he was going to play past high school.

“I am going in open-minded, due to entering the recruiting portal late,” Harding said. “My thought was to play college baseball, however I changed very late in the recruiting process for football. We are taking this in stride because we are not sure how the current situation will play out because of the Coronavirus.

“The reputation of Truman being one of the most highly accredited universities in the country and having a very successful football program drew me in. Once I visited campus ,I just knew it was the place for me. The coaches have been great through this whole thing especially since the virus shut down in-person communications. They call me often, email me and share information on Hudl to help prepare me for the season.”