

Newell excited to grow with South Dakota football program



Louisburg senior Mack Newell recently signed his letter of intent to play football with the University of South Dakota. Newell was an all-league and all-state tight end this past season.

During his sophomore and junior seasons, Mack Newell worked himself into one of the best goalies in the Class 4-1A for the Louisburg soccer team

However, in his final year of high school, Newell wanted to give football a try. So, he took his 6-foot-4, 250-pound frame to the gridiron to help the Louisburg football team.

As it turned out, Newell's gamble on himself paid off and he turned that into a Division I opportunity. During a signing ceremony last month, Newell signed his letter of intent to play football at the University of South Dakota.

Newell will join teammate Jase Hovey, who also signed with South Dakota, on the Vermillion (S.D.) campus this fall.

"Being able to play college football is an absolute blessing," Newell said. "College football wasn't always the ultimate goal of mine. For a while it was baseball, then soccer, but I fell in love with the football when I decided to come out my senior year. There are so many people that helped me better myself throughout my senior season and I can't thank them enough.

"To be honest, it still hasn't really settled in that I'm able to play Division I football, it almost doesn't feel real. From the time I made my mind up I was playing football until now, so much hard work has been put in. It's amazing for me to see that the hard work has truly paid off."

The decision to leave a successful stint wasn't an easy one for Newell. He was an all-league and all-state goalie for the Wildcats, but wanted to try something different.

That came on the football field as a tight end and defensive lineman for the Wildcats as Newell worked his way to all-league and all-state status there as well. That eventually worked its way into several collegiate offers.

"Transitioning from soccer to football wasn't the easiest thing ever," Newell said. "There were many people who doubted me and didn't think I would be successful on the football field. That only fueled my fire and pushed me to work even harder. At times I questioned myself if the decision was right, but I stayed the course and trusted the process. I can't thank my teammates and coaches enough for welcoming me with open arms onto the team and helping me develop into a better player each and everyday. I know this wouldn't have been possible without them."

"This season was by far the most enjoyable season I've ever been apart of. Being able to be crowned Frontier League champs was a goal we were striving for all year. Being able to be recognized as an all league and all state player also helped me out a lot. I have learned so much through just one season and I can't wait to learn more and grow my skill set in the upcoming years."

During the team's Frontier League championship season, Louisburg head coach Drew Harding knows Newell was a big part of the team's undefeated league season.



Louisburg senior Mack Newell signed his letter of intent to play football at South Dakota. Sitting next to Mack is his mother Molly Strubbe and father Wesley Newell. Standing (from left) is Louisburg assistant coach Joel McGhee, head coach Drew Harding and assistants Kade Larson and Jake Hinson.

"I am so glad Mack decided to come back out and play football his senior year," Harding said. "We would not have had the success we did without Mack making that decision. Mack's size and strength were noticeable right away on the football field. With his frame and his strength Mack also had a lot of interests from schools.

"I am so excited for Mack to continue his football career and it is awesome to see him have the opportunity to play at South Dakota after one varsity season. I am excited to see his development over the years and the type of player he turns himself into."

Newell had different options to choose from when it came down where to play college football. However, when made the journey up to South Dakota, it seemed the best fit for him to take the next step in his growth.

He visited with Hovey in late January and both players offered

their commitments up shortly after.

"The second I stepped foot on campus in Vermillion, I knew it was going to be home," Newell said. "The facilities were absolutely amazing, and we also get 24/7 access to those as well. The campus itself was amazing because everything was very close to each other and that makes it very convenient to get to and from classes and practices. The university just did a multi-million dollar renewal to the football dome building. It was really cool to see and that was another aspect that attracted me to the university as well.

"Another thing that drew me towards the school was the fact that I get to play college football with Jase. Not many people can say they got to play Division 1 football with their best friend, and I truly think that is something special that I will hold onto for a long time."

Newell also hopes to improve at the tight end positions and is excited to work under his new coaches.

"The coaches on the staff were amazing as well," he said. "My position coach is a former coach at Cincinnati when they made it to the college football playoff. He was also a coach at West Virginia so I think him having that coaching experience is going to help me so much in growing my game throughout my time at South Dakota.

"They have been really clear about where they see me fitting in the program. I will be continuing playing tight end and they have told me that they think I can come in and compete right away. They don't necessarily have a number one TE in the room right now, and that position is kind of up in the air. There is always a good chance that as a freshman I will redshirt, but I'm going into this year pushing as hard as I can to get playing time as soon as possible."