

Recruiting Camp Spotlights High School Football Players

Event helps athletes get some exposure

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Todd Goldbeck, owner/president of Xcel Sports Training, served as a physical therapist at the annual NFL combine in Indianapolis. After watching college athletes audition for potential million-dollar contracts, Goldbeck and a staff member decided to offer the same service to high school kids looking not for a big payday but for the exposure and guidance needed to continue football at the college level.

For the past five years, Goldbeck has been running the Xcel Sports Performance and Recruiting Camp, a combine for high school football players. The fifth and final Wisconsin stop of the summer takes place at 9 a.m. Sunday at Homestead High School.

“(We’re going to help) the varsity starter with aspirations to play in college that just hasn’t gotten any looks,” said Goldbeck, who played cornerback at UW-La Crosse. “Let’s be honest: We’re not going to help the Division I blue-chip athlete. As far as getting recruited, this is definitely going to help out the second-tier athlete — Division II, Division III — because there are so many schools out there. Smaller colleges don’t have the recruiting budget or the travel expenditures of the Division I schools. They rely on the information that we give them.”

Attendees start the day with a warm-up and are given tips on how to improve their performance. The athletes then proceed to stations for the 40-yard dash, bench press, vertical jump, broad jump, pro agility shuttle, three-cone shuttle and 60-yard shuttle. All running stations are electronically timed, and all of the results (as well as each athlete’s height, weight, wing span, hand span, and a detailed individual profile) are posted on Xcel Sports’ Web site (www.xcelsportstraining.net).

“(The camp is) great from a standpoint that someone has taken the information and organized it,” said Steve Dinkel, offensive line coach at UW-Whitewater, defending NCAA Division III National Champion. “It’s easy to access and it’s easy to understand. It starts to give you a gauge to measure athletes to other athletes. Todd has done a nice job of trying to help high school athletes promote themselves.”

Added Goldbeck: “(Freshmen) can see first-hand what they need to do to get to the level of a junior or senior. For a high school coach it serves as a motivational tool for their players. It points out the areas that athletes need improvement so they can work on those things. High school coaches have expressed the interest in having them now because it gives kids a chance to test out prior to the start of the season. They’ve worked out all summer, and now they’re going to get their final test before training camp begins.”

The campers end the day with a classroom presentation outlining the recruiting process and what it takes to be a college athlete. The final part of the combine is as much for parents as it is for players.

“When Xcel decided to do high school combines, the biggest difference from the NFL was adding the educational seminar for the parents and the kids,” Goldbeck said. “There is so much misinformation out there regarding the recruiting process that people need to be educated about the basics.”