

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Tilson named to postseason all-star team

Wilmette native plays in Texas League for Cardinals

STAFF REPORT

Charlie Tilson, of Wilmette, has been named to the Texas League Postseason All-Star team. The exclusive Postseason All-Star Team is made up of the league's top players from both divisions, consisting of only 10 spots for position players and nine for pitchers. Tilson had also been named to the Texas League Midseason All-Stars.

Tilson, 22, has had one of the best overall offensive seasons of any player in the league this year, hitting .293 with four home runs, 15 doubles, five triples and 31 RBIs through 122 games. Tilson currently leads the league with 43 stolen bases, is tied for second with 143 hits, tied for third with 77 runs, ninth with a .293 batting average and fourth with 8.34 plate appearances per strikeout.

With his career-high 43 swipes, Tilson has set the Springfield all-time record for most single season steals and most career steals (53). Currently on an 11-game hitting streak, Tilson previously tied the Springfield record with an 18-game hitting streak from July 8-26. Ranked by MLB.com as the Cardinals No. 8 prospect, Tilson was selected by St. Louis in the 2nd round of the 2011 June Draft out of New Trier.

Junior Trevians led by kin of Bears legends

ALAN P. HENRY, Staff Writer

When the Junior Trevians 8th grade heavyweight football team suits up for their season opener later this month, their offense will be anchored by the kin of two NFL Hall of Fame inductees and Chicago Bears legends.

Quarterback Brian Dolby is the grandson of Brian Piccolo, a gritty running back for the Bears from 1966-1969, whose friendship with Gale Sayers and death from cancer at age 26 the following year was the subject of the 1971 movie classic "Brian's Song."

"I love the competitiveness, the tackling, the physical part of it. It's a great way to get on the field and it's a great team sport," said Dolby, a Winnetka resident who attends Washburne Junior High.

"He's a natural athlete," said Jack Smeeton, one of the team's volunteer coaches. "He's got the genes."

Whenever he is asked about his famous grandfather, Dolby prefers to low key it. "I try not to bring it up. I focus on my game," he said.

In addition to Dolby, the Junior Trevians backfield features tailback Charlie Finks, the nephew of Jim Finks, who as general manager helped transform the Chicago Bears, Minnesota Vikings, New Orleans Saints and Chicago Cubs into championship caliber teams

during a three-decade career.

"He's a great, multi-sport athlete," said coach John Kelly of the Wilmette Junior High student. "He pays attention to detail and he is very coachable."

Finks' football bloodlines are readily apparent, Kelly added. "He is a natural team leader."

Finks has also been quick to progress, said Kelly. "He has only played football for two years, and last year he was a starter on both sides of the ball. This year he picked up where he left off at a higher level of football, where he is quicker and more aggressive."

Dolby and Finks are part of a local youth football program that has had a drop-off in numbers in recent years, as more boys opt for sports like hockey and lacrosse that require a nearly year-round commitment. Also, some parents have become concerned that football is less safe than other sports.

That's an incorrect assumption, said Bruce Lewis, a cardiologist and Junior Trevians coach.

"I share time in an office with a neurology colleague and he reminds me that this game is safer than cheerleading, gymnastics and youth soccer. The statistics would bear that out. Our kids are protected and in some of the other sports they are not. The gear, when used properly, does provide protective shelter."

Lewis said the Junior Trevians teach the new "heads up" blocking and tackling techniques that allow them to play the game more safely. "The rules of the game have evolved to make the game safer, and to take those more dangerous plays out of the game," he said. "We teach the kids to tackle in an entirely different way than we did 30 years ago."

To be sure, said Dan Moriarty, head of the youth football program, football is a physical sport and a collision sport. "But in every sport there are collisions. Every sport is becoming more physical. Kids are becoming bigger, stronger, faster. What we are trying to teach in the game is proper techniques and fundamentals to reduce the safety risk. We've had some nicks and some knacks, but those are bumps and bruises we face every year and you would face in every sport." Coaches, he said, have been through a safety training program.

He also noted that one recent study on concussions, classifying sports by hours played, showed that football produced one concussion for every 2000 hours played, while girls soccer, for instance, produced a concussion every 500 hours. "And we are not playing 2000 hours of football," he said.

The issue of injuries and general safety aside, football remains a superior way to impart the kind of life



Brian Dolby, grandson of Chicago Bears legend Brian Piccolo, will be quarterback the Junior Trevians 8th grade heavyweight football team. ALAN P. HENRY/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

lessons that help transform young boys into confident, successful young men, said the Junior Trevians coaches.

"Football is the ultimate team game, and there is nothing more important in life than working together with other people," said Smeeton, who was a running back at Northwestern in the late 1960s. "We teach them to play for each other. It is like the Marines. You are there for your brothers. You put out all the time, because if one breaks down,

the whole unit breaks down. It's all about being there for your teammates."

"Football is a game of trust and discipline," said Rijab "Pac Man" Pekmez, a former inspirational team leader at New Trier who works with the Junior Trevians linemen. "Trusting the guy next to you is key to a successful football team. And you need to be a well disciplined player in order to succeed. And when you combine discipline and trust, it is success. Simple as that."

FOOTBALL

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ing the home team to New Trier's 5-yard line.

But Warren shot themselves in the foot again, mishandling a snap for a loss of five. Then, on second down, defensive end Devin Mur-

phy tallied a key sack for a loss of seven. On fourth and goal, a desperation heave into the end zone was picked off by speedy junior safety Eric Nicholas, one of five turnovers the Trevians defense collected on the night (two fumble recoveries, three interceptions).

Two drives later, the visitors capped the first half with a 7-play drive starting deep in Warren territory, finished by a Fay 6-yard toss sweep to the left side.

With the win, the Trevians moved to 2-0 on the season, and await meeting against Maine West — whom the

Trevs did not face in 2014 — next Friday, Sept. 11, in Des Plaines.

Maine West moved to 2-0 with a 42-7 thumping of Elmwood Park the same night. In order to have home field advantage in the playoffs, Doll said it's important for them to start 3-0. The game next

week, in Des Plaines, will also be New Trier's first of the season on grass, which will be an adjustment, he said.

"[Maine West] is a team we don't know a lot about," Doll said. "It's important for us obviously to do a lot of studying and understanding of what they're good at."