

Meet The Detroit News Dream Team 2017

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(Photo: Bryan Mitchell, Special to The Detroit News)

This is The Detroit News Dream Team for 2017. The Detroit News All-State teams are here:

ENDS

Taj Mustapha, 6-2, 180, Sr., West Bloomfield

Mustapha had a strong senior season, coming through with 64 receptions for 907 yards and six TDs to help West Bloomfield reach the Division 1 state championship game at Ford Field. "Taj had a great year for us, got constant double teams," Coach Ron Bellamy said. "He showed the ability to make big plays for us." Mustapha will play at Wisconsin.

Ty Slazinski, 6-1, 170, Sr., Bloomfield Hills

Slazinski was the big play man for Bloomfield Hills, setting a single-game state record with 22 receptions (211 yards, three TDs) in a 58-39 loss to Oak Park. He finished the season with 80 receptions for 1,012 yards and nine TDs. "What makes Ty special is his

work ethic and attitude,” Coach Dan Loria said. “He wants to be the best he can be and works extremely hard at always getting better.”

Ben VanSumeren, 6-3, 230, Sr., Essexville-Garber

VanSumeren started the season at quarterback before moving to receiver, his natural position, in Week 3 and responded by having 85 receptions for 1,215 yards and 13 TDs. VanSumeren will play linebacker at Iowa.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Anthony Bradford, 6-5, 330, Jr., Muskegon

Bradford was an intimidating presence on the offensive line and dominated opponents to either open holes for La’Darius Jefferson to run through or to give Jefferson enough time to find his receivers during Muskegon’s run to the Division 3 state championship. “He is such an amazing kid, doesn’t show a whole lot of emotion, just loves the game and he plays at one level, which is the highest,” Coach Shane Fairfield said. “He loves to hit people, loves to run block. He is always trying to improve.” Bradford already has offers from Alabama, Georgia, Ohio State, Michigan State, Kentucky and several others.

Devontae Dobbs, 6-5, 290, Jr., Belleville

Dobbs was a dominating two-way player for Belleville, which won the Western Wayne Red Division title and was ranked No. 1 for most of the season. He is the No. 1 ranked offensive tackle in the nation for the 2019 class. “We ran the ball behind him over 70 percent of the time,” Coach Jermaine Crowell said. “He’s an extremely athletic big man with nothing but upside.” Dobbs has dozens of offers, including Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, Ohio State, Auburn, Michigan and Michigan State.

Jalen Mayfield, 6-5, 270, Sr., Grand Rapids Catholic Central

Mayfield was an outstanding two-way player for GRCC, opening holes for Nolan Fugate to help his team repeat as Division 4 state champions. “Jalen’s obviously has a rare skill set and when you’re as big as he is and as athletic as he is; those guys are hard to find. I think his maturity and understanding that he could be a dominant player was important,” Coach Todd Kolster said. “He’s so intelligent, understands what he’s supposed to do so well and adjust so well.” Mayfield will play at Michigan.

Antwan Reed, 6-7, 325, Sr., Muskegon

Reed has started at left tackle the last three years, helping Muskegon to an unbeaten season, culminating with a Division 3 state championship. He is an excellent pass blocker and a solid run blocker. "A.J.'s an excellent left tackle, pass blocker and his weakness, if he had one, was run blocking and he worked hard to become a very good one," Coach Shane Fairfield said. Reed will play at Penn State.

Tyrone Sampson, 6-3, 315, Sr., Detroit East English

Sampson was the premier center in the state, the anchor on an East English offensive line that opened the way for running backs to average 270 yards on the ground to reach the PSL championship game. "Tyrone's a four-year starter who started 54 consecutive games for us," pointed out Coach Rod Oden. "He played all five positions on the offensive line and has been selected to play in the U.S. Army All-American Game." Sampson will play at Syracuse.

QUARTERBACK

Bryce Veasley, 6-4, 230, Sr., West Bloomfield

Veasley used his multiple weapons to help West Bloomfield earn its first district and regional championships in school history while earning its way to Ford Field to play for the Division 1 state championship. He threw for 3,487 yards and 26 TDs, completing 6-of-7 passes during a last-minute 80-yard drive to set up the winning TD in a 28-25 regional final win over Utica Eisenhower. "He played like a veteran quarterback and was a great leader for us," Coach Ron Bellamy said. Veasley will play at Bowling Green.

RUNNING BACKS

Nolan Fugate, 6-1, 210, Sr., Grand Rapids Catholic Central

Fugate rushed for 306 yards (36 carries) and four TDs to help GRCC repeat as Division 4 state champions with a 42-31 victory over Edwardsburg. The 306 yards was just one yard shy of the State Finals rushing record. He finished the season with 3,004 yards, becoming just the second player in state history to run for 3,000 yards. "His ability to do so many different things separates him from the rest," said Coach Todd Kolster. "He can really catch the football, can run the football, can block and has a very good understanding of defenses, what they're trying to do to you. He understands how to get people to commit one way so he can cut back." Fugate is being recruited by Grand Valley, Ferris State and several other DII schools.

Sebastian Toland, 5-8, 175, Sr., Jackson Lumen Christi

Toland was a workhorse for Lumen Christi, rushing for 244 yards (33 carries) and scoring a TD in a 40-34 Division 6 state championship game win over Ithaca to repeat as state champs. He also had an 80-yard TD run called back due to a penalty. He finished the season with 2,188 yards and 23 TDs. “He has great speed, but he’s quicker than he is fast and has great feet, made people miss in space,” noted Lumen Christi coach Herb Brogan of Toland. Toland has offers from GLIAC schools, including Northern Michigan.



La'Darius Jefferson (Photo: Jose Juarez, Special to The Detroit News)

ATHLETE

La'Darius Jefferson, 6-2, 215, Sr., Muskegon

Jefferson was the top dual-threat QB in the state, rushing for 2,095 yards and 33 TDs and throwing for more than 1,200 and 21 TDs. He led Muskegon to its first state title since 2008 when he rushed for 245 yards and four TDs in a 28-10 Division 3 state championship game win over Farmington Hills Harrison. “His will to win, just his desire and passion to win made him special,” Coach Shane Fairfield said. “He led his team and his team believed in him. He was selfless, there were games where we didn’t want him to run a lot, he had to hand it off, there’s times when he threw it and there were times that he didn’t throw it. He just played in the role and did what he had to do to win games.” Jefferson decommitted from Central Florida and has offers from Michigan State and

Indiana, with Georgia Tech also showing interest. He plans to announce his college choice on Christmas Day.

KICKER

Jake Moody, 6-0, 180, Sr., Northville

Moody showed his incredibly strong leg by booming three field goals that went over 50 yards (55, 57, 58). He made 12-of-17 field goals with his misses coming from long range (46, 47, 53, 55, 56). He also converted 27 of 28 PATs, with his lone miss getting blocked. He had 43 of 46 kickoffs being touchbacks and averaged 39.6 yards a punt. "Jake is a phenomenal kicker and an even better person," Coach Matt Ladach said. "He has been invaluable for our program over the past four years." Moody has offers from Central Michigan, Bowling Green, Air Force and Texas State.

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

Ryan Hayes, 6-7, 255, Sr., Traverse City West

Hayes was an impact player as a defensive end and either receiver or tight end for Traverse City West. "He was an incredible player for us. We could put him out as a split end and create matchups on the outside since there wasn't anybody that could single-cover him, so that would help us out in the box. And when we put him at tight end he was a devastating blocker," Coach Tim Wooer said. "Defensively, most teams ran away from him. He was long and athletic player who used his arms really well for separation." Hayes, who will play at Michigan, is a three-sport standout, playing basketball and baseball as a starting pitcher who throws 85 mph.

Aidan Hutchinson, 6-5, 250, Sr., Dearborn Divine Child

Hutchinson played tight end this season in addition to his defensive end duties, getting in on 65 tackles, including 27 for lost yardage while also grabbing 36 passes for 416 yards and eight TDs to help Divine Child win Catholic League and district championships. "Aidan's an exceptional player, very motivated to be the best he can be," Coach John Filiatraut said. "He has great physical attributes and a great motor. He plays hard every play and set an outstanding example for our team with his attitude and toughness." Hutchinson will play at Michigan.

Marquan McCall, 6-4, 325, Sr., Oak Park

McCall had a strong senior season, helping Oak Park reach the Division 2 regional final after missing the majority of his junior year due to a knee injury. He played both ways.

“For a guy his size, 325 pounds, he’s extremely quick and athletic and has great hands,” Coach Greg Carter said. “He’s really, really physical and has a lot of experience, starting as a sophomore for us and he’s just been a dominant player for us ever since. He played defensive tackle and clogged up the middle of the defensive line and I wouldn’t be surprised if that’s where he wound up playing at the next level.” McCall will play at Kentucky.

LINEBACKERS

Lou Baechler, 5-10, 205, Sr., Canton

Baechler made big play after big play to help Canton win the KLAA championship and then district victories over state powers Saline and Belleville. He made 96 tackles and had two interceptions, forced a fumble and recovered another. He scored on a 45-yard interception return in a pre-district win over Saline, then caught a fourth down pass for a TD in the district title game upset victory over No. 1 Belleville while wearing a cast due to a broken arm. “He plays so fast because of his intelligence and football instincts,” said Coach Tim Baechler, also Lou’s father. “He is great at making pre-snap reads and checks for us, then anticipates so well. He avoids and sheds blocks extremely well, a ferocious competitor on every play.”



Ovie Oghoufo (Photo: Jose Juarez, Special to The Detroit News)

Ovie Oghoufo, 6-3, 210, Sr., Farmington Hills Harrison

Oghoufo is known for his tremendous play on defense, but he also became an impact player on offense this season to help Harrison advance to the Division 3 state championship game. He had 32 receptions for 508 yards and five TDs while making 56 tackles, including seven sacks defensively. “Ovie’s played well on both sides of the ball for us this year, being a force on defense while also being able to use his athleticism to

high point the ball to make catches on offense,” Coach John Herrington said. “He’s made a smooth transition from outside linebacker to inside linebacker and he’s been able to go sideline-to-sideline with good athletic skill. He has the desire to be the best.” Oghoufo will play at Notre Dame.

Gino Paese, 6-1, 185, Sr., Clarkston

Paese made his presence felt as an outside linebacker, forcing fumbles and getting to the quarterback to help Clarkston win its third Division 1 state championship in the last five years. He got in on five tackles in the 3-2 state title game win over West Bloomfield, including two for lost yardage. “He really stepped up during the last half of the season and played big for us during the playoffs,” Coach Kurt Richardson said. “He’s a great pass rusher, gets off the ball really quick and takes on bigger guys.”

DeAndre Square, 6-2, 210, Sr., Detroit Cass Tech

Square was a hard-hitting linebacker for Cass Tech, using his speed and strength to go sideline to sideline to make tackles. He had 84 tackles and forced four fumbles to help his team advance to the Division 1 state semifinals. “He’s fast, quick and tough and would do whatever was asked of him without question and then do it at a high level,” Coach Thomas Wilcher said. Square will play at Kentucky.



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Kalon Gervin (Photo: Robin Buckson, The Detroit News)

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Kalon Gervin, 5-11, 180, Sr., Detroit Cass Tech

Gervin showed why he was picked as the state’s top player heading into the season by playing at a high level to help Cass Tech make a deep postseason run. He was in on 45 tackles while breaking up multiple passes and returning an interception for a TD. “Kalon

played well, broke up a lot of passes that came his way,” Coach Thomas Wilcher said. “He’s fast, quick, has great character and is hard worker, always trying to get better.” Gervin will play at Michigan State.

Marvin Grant, 6-2, 205, Jr., Detroit King

Grant is a hard-hitting safety who makes interceptions, forces fumbles and blocks punts or returns blocked punts for TDs, including one blocked punt returned for a TD in a PSL championship game win over Detroit East English. “Marvin did a great job in the back end, making a lot of tackles and a lot of big hits, just controlling the middle,” Coach Tyrone Spencer said of Grant, who had 47 tackles and four interceptions, returning two for TDs. Grant has multiple Power Five offers, including Michigan, Notre Dame, Iowa, Iowa State and Kentucky.

Reggie Pearson, 5-11, 190, Sr., River Rouge

Pearson was a lock-down corner for River Rouge, and when teams dared to go his way he usually made them pay for it by way of pass breakups or interceptions. He had eight interceptions to help River Rouge reach the Division 4 state semifinals. “He’s been the quarterback of our defense for four years, just had an awesome career, he’s seventh in the MHSAA in interceptions all-time,” Coach Corey Parker said. “He brings a load when he comes to tackle you so he just gives you that full combination.” Pearson will play at Wisconsin.

Willie Shanks, 6-2, 180, Sr., Muskegon

Shanks had a nose for the football, getting 10 interceptions and returning four for TDs to help Muskegon win the state championship. “He loves to compete,” said Coach Shane Fairfield. “He locked down DeWitt’s star receiver (Noah Koenigsknecht) and had three interceptions in the game. He’s a part of our defense that allowed just 73 points in 14 games and had seven shutouts, and you have to go back to 1940 for the last time our school had seven shutouts.”

PUNTER

Parker Blust, 6-2, 195, Sr., Lake Orion

Blust made sure opponents would have to have long drives to score, averaging 41.5 yards a punt, placing seven inside the 20. He also made all five of his field goal attempts with a long of 40 and converted all 21 of his PATs.

COACH OF THE YEAR

Mike Giannone, Warren De La Salle

Giannone guided De La Salle to the Catholic League championship, then a run to the Division 2 state championship, defeating Livonia Franklin 41-6 at Ford Field after finishing 4-5 in his first season of leading the program. He also guided Macomb Dakota to consecutive Division 1 state titles in 2006 and 2007.