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Concordia's Kenny Zoeller was chosen as a first-team AFCA All-American.

FOOTBALL

Bulldogs could always count on kicker Zoeller

By [Marjie Ducey](#) / World-Herald staff writer



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No matter the opponent, Concordia felt it had an advantage in the kicking game thanks to Kenny Zoeller.

"He just brought a consistency and level of leadership in the kicking position we really valued this season," coach Vance Winter said.

Other NAIA coaches in the state saw that same value, voting Zoeller to The World-Herald's All-Nebraska NAIA football team.

All-Nebraska NAIA team

Offense

QB: John Dostal, Hastings, Sr.
TE: Tyler Mertens, Hastings, Sr.
WR: Tyrone Curry, Doane, Sr.
RB: Kene Martin, Midland, Sr.
RB: Dustin Bryant, Nebraska Wesleyan, Jr.
RB: Ryan Ludlow, Peru State, So.
OL: Dillon Carmichael, Doane, Jr.
OL: Kevin Roehrich, Doane, Sr.
OL: Tanner Paxton, Hastings, So.
OL: Adam Faulstich, Concordia, Sr.
OL: Ryan Beebe, Nebraska Wesleyan, Jr.
>> Honorary captain: John Dostal,

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The first-team AFCA All-American is one of three captains. Hastings quarterback John Dostal heads the offense, and Nebraska Wesleyan's Brett Kaczor, also a first-team All-American, captains the defense.

Zoeller, a senior from Spring, Texas, made 15 of 20 field goals and was 27 of 28 on extra points. He ranked third in the NAIA in field goals and 11th in points among all kickers with 72.

Besides being honored by the AFCA, he made the third team of the Beyond Sports Network all-star squad.

Zoeller had an unbelievable work ethic, Winter said, which led to some clutch kicks.

One of the biggest came against Northwestern College, when his 24-yarder with 2:39 left gave Concordia a 17-16 win. Although he missed some kicks, they were all in tough situations.

"He just had an unbelievable leg and talent for kicking," Winter said.

The word determined sums up Kaczor, Wesleyan coach Brian Keller said.

"He's just so determined to excel, whether it be in the classroom or out on the field," Keller said. "I think that tenacity just rubbed off on the rest of our team."

The senior from Ewing, Neb., finished with 94 tackles, 47 solo, along with three interceptions, two pass breakups, two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and a blocked kick. He was named the NAIA national player of the week for an outstanding game against Hastings, despite playing with a cracked sterum.

"That tells you a little bit about that determination," Keller said.

Even Keller's kids, sixth-grader Quinn and ninth-grader Braly, will miss Kaczor, who coached them in youth football and basketball along with another first-team selection, kick returner Cody Eiler.

The Broncos' Dostal didn't have much free time during football season.

"The kid logged more hours in the film room than anybody on our team," coach Tony Harper said.

The former walk-on at Nebraska joined Hastings two years ago and had an up-and-down junior year. Then, Harper said, Dostal committed himself to being the best.

The senior from Omaha Gross completed 164 of 333 passes for 19 touchdowns and 2,418 yards, just 39 short of the school record.

He also took a hand in motivating the other quarterbacks, which Harper said you don't always see at such a competitive position.

"On the field and in practice, he never had a bad day," Harper said. "He enjoyed his time out there."

Contact the writer:

Hastings

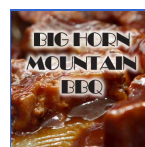
Defense

DL: Michael Voelker, Concordia, Sr.
DL: Russell Walton, Nebraska Wesleyan, Sr.
DL Phil Latimer, Nebraska Wesleyan, So.
LB: Jeremy Wallace, Doane, Jr.
LB: Clete Vrbka, Midland, Sr.
LB: Brett Kaczor, Nebraska Wesleyan, Sr.
LB: Preston Bruss, Peru State, Sr.
DB: Damell Woods, Concordia, Jr.
DB: Alex Gildon, Hastings, Fr.
DB: Nick Carlson, Midland, Sr.
DB: Vince Martinez, Doane, Sr.
>> Honorary captain: Brett Kaczor, Nebraska Wesleyan

Special Teams

K: Kenny Zoeller, Concordia, Sr.
P: Kelby Vandenberg, Nebraska Wesleyan, Jr.
KR: Cody Eiler, Nebraska Wesleyan, Sr.
PR: Derek Blessing, Concordia, Jr.
>> Honorary captain: Kenny Zoeller, Concordia

Honorable mention: Joe Knott, Nate Wragge, Rob Keeney, Jesse Ver Velde, Doane; Dylan Heithoff, Kyle Little, Colten Quinabo, Von Thomas, Concordia; Keenan Ballage, Trevor Bohn, John Melies, Hastings; Andy Schneider, Eric Taris, Midland; Seth Wardyn, Brian Pieper, Brandon Reeves, Jordan Delbaugh, Nebraska Wesleyan; Garret Campbell, Tyler Ford, Zach Lempka, Curtis Larsen, Peru State.



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