

Picking All-Parish team a difficult task

Written by Russell Hedges

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Five Bossier Parish schools made the state football playoffs this season.

Three made it past the first round. Two reached the quarterfinals.

Needless to say, there were some very good football players in the parish this season.

That made picking the All-Bossier Parish team an extremely difficult task.

You can find the 2012 team on Page 9 of today's paper.

The line between a player making the first team and honorable mention was very thin at several positions.

The honorable mention list is long and contains many outstanding players.

Before picking the team, we asked all coaches to submit nominations.

The six coaches in the parish put up 62 players among them.

We eventually decided on 30 first-team players, two more than you see on the LSWA All-State teams.

One factor used in selecting first-team players was the all-district teams, which the coaches select.

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I saw every team in the parish play this season except Louisiana New Tech, but the coaches certainly know better than me who the best players are. However, making first team all-district didn't guarantee a player a spot on the All-Parish first team

Statistics were also a factor, but not the only one. The level of competition parish teams faced varied widely. Statistics never tell the whole story and sometimes can even be deceiving.

Another factor was how parish teams fared against each other because it is the All-Bossier Parish team and not an All-City or All-Area team.

Airline played three parish teams and won all three games convincingly — Bossier 34-12, Parkway 31-13 and Haughton 38-14.

So it should surprise no one that the Vikings have the most selections on the team with 10 and that senior quarterback Hayden Hildebrand is the Offensive MVP. Parkway junior quarterback Brandon Harris had an impressive season, too, and will be the parish's top returning offensive player next season.

Quarterback was one of the deepest positions in the parish this season in terms of talent.

Bossier's Samuel Dudley, Haughton's James David Almond and Louisiana New Tech's Deamante Johnson all had great seasons, too.

Parkway defensive lineman Antonio McGee, perhaps the parish's top college prospect, was also a solid choice for Defensive MVP. But Airline junior defensive lineman OJ Smith certainly gave him a run for his money.

Coach of the Year was a difficult choice. Airline's Bo Meeks and Parkway's David Feaster did

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outstanding jobs in leading their teams to shares of the District 1-5A championship.

But Bossier's Michael Concilio was the only parish coach to lead his team to an outright district title — and he did it for the second straight year.

The toughest decisions were offensive linemen and defense. Airline, Parkway and Haughton all had prolific offenses and it wasn't just the so-called "skill position" players that made them go.

Statistics were also a factor in selecting defensive players, but again they weren't everything. How much a player contributed to his team's success and how good the defense was overall along with the level of competition were also factors.

I definitely don't expect everyone to agree with all of our selections, and I respect everyone's opinion. Anytime you select an all-star team you're bound to disappoint someone. Cases certainly can be made that some honorable mention selections deserved to be on the first team.

It is simply the best team we could put together based on the available information.

The good news is that between the All-Parish team and the all-district teams, every player who deserved recognition this season likely got it.