

2000s Fremont Ross All-Ohioans

Opelt named first-team all-Ohio

Teammates
Kyle Cook and
Kory Decker
given special
mention.

By MATTHEW HORN
 Sports Writer

First Aaron Opelt of Fremont Ross did the startling Monday.

Then he surprised himself.

He bagged a 10-point buck while deer hunting in Gallipolis early in the day.

Then he nabbed one of three quarterback spots on the first-team all-Ohio squad.

"My dad met me down here half an hour ago and

he told me (of the honor)," Opelt said. "I was more shocked than I was when I shot my deer. It's unbelievable."

"I'm very proud of it. It's an unbelievable honor to have. It's pretty neat. I really never expected anything like this playing as a sophomore, junior or even this year. It stuck up on me I guess."

Opelt's deer is the second largest he has ever shot and the largest he has seen taken out of the woods where he was hunting in the last eight years.

The all-state designation was the loftiest of his athletic career — although a scholarship will certainly usurp it in the future.

Little Giant coach Derek Kidwell did no campaign-

ing for his signal caller — who earned the recognition off a 5-5 season. Each of the Little Giants' wins came on the road and they topped a Toledo Central Catholic team that will play Canfield in the Division II state title game Friday.

In fact, Opelt shoved a scrambling TCC quarterback out of bounds to preserve a 20-14 victory in Week 2.

"I don't put people up for the heck of it," Kidwell said. "I put up players that can play for anybody in the state since we're Division I. I don't think there's any Division I coach that wouldn't want him on their team. If you can find a better Division I quarterback than Aaron I'd like to see him.

"I'm happy for the young

man. I think he's definitely deserving of any award he gets with how hard he worked in two years."

Kyle Cook and Kory Decker were special mention selections for Ross.

"It's a big honor for them to be considered among the better football players in the state," Kidwell said.

Findlay's Ryan Sottoway (defensive back), Caleb Enright (running back) and Brandon Walker (kicker) were also named to the first team from the Greater Buckeye Conference in Division I. Offensive lineman Terner Acheson was second-team, and Ryan Kuhlman, Luke Wiler and Zack Kraus were special mention for the Trojans.

Chris Miller (offensive lineman) and Jordan Ed-

wards (running back) were first-team for Sandusky in Division II. Hassan Moore was a special mention.

Phil Shepherd was a first-team defensive back for Marion Harding and Randy Summers was special mention.

Matt Beggin was special mention for Lima Senior.

Opelt threw for 2,148 yards this season, including four games of 250 or more. He twice completed 23 throws in a game and added 16 touchdown passes while rushing for nearly 600 yards.

Kidwell said his most notable statistic was an average of more than 300 passing yards per game in the GBC.

"All the league schools

had seen him and knew his

talent," Kidwell said. "And schemed to stop him and eliminate his big plays, and he still found ways to march us up and down the field."

Opelt said he began to consider playing quarterback at the Division I level after his junior year.

"We had an all-right year together and coach kept putting it in my ear that I could do it," he said. "I never really thought about it. I started getting calls and the schools started getting bigger. I started going to camps and when I knew that I really could do it, it started becoming a goal."

Now the only thing left is to make a decision on his destination.

See OPELT, B2

Opelt named to all-Ohio team

Continued From B1

"I'll make a decision on the school that fits me best and once I get there it's going to be all about sports," he said. "If you focus on one thing long enough and work hard at it you'll have success."

Opelt said the Little Giants had the makings of a playoff team.

"We had the right players in the right spots but we let a few games slip. I'd take those guys against any team we played against — I'd rather have my teammates. Every high school team has ups and downs. We didn't click early. There is no part of the team that killed us. We shot ourselves in the foot. We knew we could do it.

"I wouldn't take anything back. I'd do it again. There's nothing like Friday. People say it and say it but you really don't know what it is until you play your last game knowing you won't step out there again with those guys. It's a great feeling that a lot of people won't have again."

That list does not include Opelt, although the feelings will be pushed back a day to Saturday.

"He's not a kid of many words," Kidwell said. "The thing I like to remember is his competitiveness. It's got to be self-gratifying that he played his best football game in his last high school football game against our biggest rival. It wasn't easy for any of the seniors to take off their pads but after the game he played, it made it a little easier for him to take off his Fremont jersey and see what jersey is next."

"He never shied away from pressure. It's tough with a new coach in a new system and he never got flustered. He was patient and willing to learn, and kept working every day. His best football is still ahead of him."

Opelt, who is also a standout outfielder in the state and a versatile talent on the basketball court, completed 17-of-29 passes for 235 yards and four touchdowns against Sandusky to close his prep career. He added 183 yards and one score on 16 carries.

"Being a three-sport athlete he's been very busy," Kidwell said. "That's one of his biggest contributions — any coach would say he busted his butt for all of us. That's the type of kid he is. If you ask him to do something he'll do it and won't question it."

Opelt said he simply fits into a group.

"When coaches say I work extra hard, I just do what the whole team does," he said. "The linemen and everybody else are in the weight room. We worked as a team. Everybody lifted in the mornings. That really helped our success."

But Opelt was the one with the shotgun arm who needed the slightest of seams to cover large chunks of yardage by air or land.

"I wish I had him for four years," Kidwell said. "I told the seniors that if I'd have had them for four years we wouldn't be at a banquet. We'd be preparing for the playoffs."

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2000

Rick Legg, Special mention

2001

Bo Martin Second Team

Jered Kingsborough, Honorable Mention

Mike Davis, Honorable Mention

2005

Aaron Opelt First Team

Kyle Cook. Special Mention

Kory Decker Special Mention

2006

Devin Johnson First Team

2007

Deondray Brown First Team

2008

Terrence Davis First Team

Nate Hasselbach Second Team

Aaron Spencer Special Mention

Cody Foos

2009

Shane Durnwald Honorable Mention

Aaron Spencer Honorable Mention