

WELL-ROUNDED

Chesnut Hill athlete focuses on more than just football

By Joshua Funk

For PA Football News

They call it the Inter-Academic League for a reason.

The league is comprised of private, college preparatory schools that resemble more of a collegiate setting than a high school setting.

The life of a student at Chesnut Hill Academy is like that of a college – after classes, there is much “down time” that needs to be managed.

“We get a lot of free time,” said Ibraheim Campbell, one of CHA’s football players, “so you have to manage your time wisely and not make decisions that will hurt you.”

Campbell, a two-way player for the Blue Devils at running back/defensive back, is one of those well-grounded individuals that avoid bad decisions. But opponents of Chesnut Hill might think it’s a bad decision when Campbell steps on the football field.

Here’s why: Campbell is one of the more talented athletes returning to the Inter-AC league next season. He finished the season with 247 carries for 1,772 yards and 22 touchdowns, all team bests. Defensively, he finished with 53 tackles and two interceptions.

Campbell had a successful season for it only being his first year as a starter on the Blue Devils’ varsity squad. But head coach Rick Knox said that with Campbell, you just knew he was bound for good things.

“When you look at him, not only physically, but at his work ethic, it was clear that he was going to have a good year (last year),” Knox said. “It was just a matter of how good or how great (that season would be.)”

How good was Campbell’s junior season? Chesnut Hill played an 11-game schedule last season, finishing 7-4 overall. In eight of those 11 games, Campbell surpassed 100 rushing yards in a game. Three times, Campbell surpassed 200 rushing yards.

And in one game, against Germantown Academy, the Blue Devils’ feature back racked up 32 carries for 310 yards and four touchdowns.

“He was our team last season,” Knox said. “He was the key to what we did.”

Crunching the numbers, Campbell averaged 161.1 rushing yards per game. Had Chesnut Hill been a member of the PIAA, and played the maximum possible 16 games, Campbell could have run for 2,577 yards and over 30 touchdowns.

To be honest, it's rare for athletes in the Inter-AC League to run for 2,000 yards in a season. Knox could only recall one athlete that ever accomplished the feat – a former Malvern Prep player who went on to Maryland and the Philadelphia Eagles.

“It would be amazing, really, if he could average 200 yards per game and break the 2,000 mark,” Knox said.

But 2,000 rushing yards isn't a goal of Campbell's.

“My ultimate goal is to win an Inter-AC title,” he said. “Yards or touchdowns aren't that important to me, as long as we win.”

And when he graduates from Chesnut Hill, Campbell doesn't want to be remembered solely as an athlete.

“I would like to be remembered as a very well-rounded person, not only for football, but academically as well,” he said. “Being well-rounded is very important to a person's character.”

Knox echoed what the sentiments of his Division-1 prospect.

“That's the kind of kids we have at this school,” Knox said. “When people see him (Ibraheim) graduate, they see a really good, young man. And that's something that more of us are proud of than anything else.”