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Mustang trio signs on the dotted line

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ARDEN HILLS — There were smiles all around, and lots of well-wishes from family, friends and teammates.

There was time to snap a few photos, answer a few questions, and most importantly, sign on the dotted line.

A trio of Mounds View High School's finest student/athletes stepped into the spotlight for a short but exciting time here at the senior high last Wednesday afternoon.

Seniors Bekah Roth, Megan Lauck, and Katie Volhaber cast their lots with their college or university of choice on the first day of the national signing period.

"It's special to have three of our senior athletes sign early like this," Mounds View athletic director Bob Madison offered. "(Bekah, Megan and Katie) are as good students as they are athletes, and they always represent themselves and Mounds View very well."

Roth decided to stay in the area after considering Winona State University, North Dakota State University and Iowa State University.

One of the top hitters and softball players in the state last season, Roth signed with Concordia College in St. Paul.

"We are very excited to have Bekah joining our program in the fall of 2010," offered Golden Bear head coach Bob Bartel. "Her versatility is a coach's dream. I think her style of play is a perfect fit for our program — she can run, hit, and plays strong defense. I see her stealing a lot of bases in her career and making opposing defenses nervous with her speed."

Roth split time on the mound and behind the plate for the Mustangs and for head coach (and her dad) Frank Roth last season. She has an outstanding arm and could play well in just about any position on the field. Mounds View will be blessed with a group of talented young pitchers, and she may spend less time pitching this spring.

"I don't think I'll be pitching at all in college," she said. "But that's OK, I'll play anywhere."

Roth, who will decide on a major in the future, said that she felt comfortable with the Concordia players, as well as with coach Bartel

"I know and have played with (Irondale grad and Golden Bear freshman infielder) Amanda DeKanick in the summer," Roth said. "Coach Bartel is a lot like my dad, he's super organized and easy to get along with, and assistant coaches Paige Dopp and Kristen Schmidt really know softball. I just figure I will fit in (at Concordia)."

Coach Bartel sees it as a good fit as well.

"I know when you get a girl from Mounds View that she has been well-coached," he said. We have faced many former Mounds View players in the past — it'll be great to have one on our side."

"Staying near home so my little brother (John) and family can see me play is important to me," Roth

said.

It's also important to little brother, who chased around the commons area at Mounds View sporting his new Concordia Golden Bear T-shirt and baseball cap, with a smile about as big as a catcher's mitt.

Lauck ready to step up

Lauck said that she has had her eyes on the North Dakota program (and vice versa) for a good long time.

"I think they contacted me in my sophomore, or maybe even freshman season," she said. "I considered Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Concordia St. Paul (to play both volleyball and softball), but I like the size of the school and everyone just seems like they're extra nice. They've got a good sports program and the women's basketball team outdraws the men."

Lauck averaged 12.5 points per game last season for coach Bill McKee. A Suburban East All-Conference selection, she also received Associated Press All State and St. Paul Pioneer Press Honorable Mention accolades.

"Megan is someone who can play both inside and on the perimeter," North Dakota head coach Gene Roebuck said. "She has a good outside shot so we may use her there quite often."

North Dakota commitments were also received from Madison "Madi" Buck of Bismarck, N.D., Emily Evers of Grand Forks, and Allyssa Wall of North Sioux City, S.D.

"Not only will we add some much-needed size, but athletic ability and quickness as well," Roebuck said. "These players are very versatile. Not only can they play inside, but they can also step out and play the perimeter."

"Megan is real competitive, and she'll have to be in Division I basketball," said McKee. "She's a good rebounder and a smart player. She can jump and run the floor. I think she'll play some outside, away from the post, so she'll have to improve her outside shooting."

"I want to improve my ball handling and work on my shot," Lauck said. "I want to do everything that I can to get some playing time."

North Dakota was 18-11 last season under Roebuck with games against Arkansas, Northwestern and Iowa St. This year it plays Western Kentucky, Gonzaga, Arizona St., and Texas Tech.

Like Roth, Lauck is undecided about a major, but has an interest in sociology.

"I visited the campus about a month ago and met the girls and watched a practice," Lauck said. "Everyone was very, very nice, and it just felt like it was the right place for me."

Volhaber likes Ames atmosphere

Volhaber zeroed in on Iowa State after pondering Northern Arizona, Arizona St., and Kansas.

She decided to head just south to Ames, Iowa and swim under the guidance of veteran coach Duane Sorenson.

"I love the area and the campus," said Volhaber. "I'm looking forward to working with coach Sorenson and with assistant coach (Kelly) Nordell. She's the one who recruited me and I like her very much."

The talented senior is swimming year-round for Great Wolf Swim Club, based out of Spring Lake Park.

"I decided to swim with my club this year instead of swimming with our high school team," she said. "I get to train more and there are lots of big meets."

Volhaber is a freestyle specialist, with her best event the 50 free. She said that she swims the 100 butterfly "on the side."

Elementary education is something that well may be in her post-Iowa State future.

"I'd maybe like to be a teacher some day," she said. "I'd like to teach the young kids, like kindergarten or first grade."

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