



Special to the Record-Eagle/Mike Dunn

Alex Gilde would like to play in the Big Ten, preferably at Northwestern University.

## Weightlifter

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linemen Michalak and Ryan Eisenga (6-2, 225) are three-year starters on both sides of the ball. There is enough muscle mass between Gilde, Michalak and Eisenga for the trio to create their own zip code.

For his part, Gilde will be seeking to build on a junior season in which he recorded an amazing 16 tackles for loss from his post on the defensive line and had the most overall stops of any linemen wearing green- and-gold.

McBain line coach Anders Hill, a former starting center for Central Michigan University, expects Gilde to have an outstanding senior season and believes he can go on to have a highly successful career in the Division I college ranks.

That is, if he gets the opportunity to play Division I.

"It's really a shame that some D-I schools will look at his height and automatically exclude him," Hill said, shaking his head. "When I was playing, I hated to go against guys at nose guard who were under six foot and strong and quick on their

feet like Alex. All Alex needs is a chance.

"There's no doubt at all in my mind that he'll prove himself for any team that gives him an opportunity to play."

Gilde's personal preference is Northwestern. For one thing, he would love to play in the Big Ten. For another, he is pursuing a career in medicine and Northwestern has one of the top medical schools in the nation.

In June, Gilde was invited to participate in a prospect camp. He doesn't know for sure if anything will come of it, but he thought he did

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— Anders Hill, McBain line coach

well enough to get the attention of the position coaches.

"You get certain vibes and I sensed that they liked me," he said. "Obviously, I would love to go there. It's a good fit for me. I liked the school and I liked the coaches. I talked to the position coach and he told what they would require if I went there."

Gilde acknowledges that it would be a huge challenge to play football for a Big Ten college and go to medical school at the same time.

"The academic advisor set out the template for medical students," he said. "It would mean going to a lot of study halls, but it can be done. Their philosophy seemed to be that it's challenging, but not overwhelming."

If Gilde doesn't get to go to Northwestern, it won't be for lack of effort. And it won't be for lack of setting his sights high. He knows that even if Northwestern

isn't in the future, something good is.

"There's been interest from a lot of other schools," he said. "If I can't go to Northwestern, then I'll just go somewhere else and play football and enroll in med school there. I'm not overly anxious about it. God has his own plans for me."

## McBain

**Coach:** Paul Siembida

**2004:** 3-2 in the Highland Conference, 8-4 overall

**Key Players Returning:** L Alex Gilde (5-11, 275), L Steven Michalak (6-3, 220), L Ryan Eisenga (6-3, 335).

**Key Newcomers:** TE-LB Ryan Yonkman (6-2, 190), QB Justin Sluiter (6-0, 165).

**Outlook:** McBain came on strong last season, reaching the regional finals in the playoffs before losing to Newberry. The Ramblers beat St. Francis, the defending state champion, in their playoff opener.

Coach Paul Siembida returns a strong line that he hopes will pave the way to a Highland Conference title and another playoff berth. The line features three seniors— Alex Gilde, Steve Michalak and Ryan Eisenga. Gilde is a four-year starter and the national powerlifter of the year.

Siembida thinks the momentum established late in the 2004 season will carryover in 2005.

"I firmly believe in my guys," he said. "We know what we're capable of doing. Our goal is to start where we left off."

The Ramblers lost All-State back Eric Westdorp to graduation. He rushed for more than 2,000 yards. But he was aided by that strong line.

"Our strength is our line, offensively and defensively," Siembida said. "We have a lot of experience on the line. And those guys have worked hard in the weight room."

Junior Justin Sluiter will run the offense. Senior Dylan Wiltzer will replace Westdorp.

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