

Bell, Carlson, Hayden pick their colleges

Written by Jim Ecker

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Three premier athletes from Metro high schools have made their college commitments.

Cedar Rapids Kennedy senior Cody Bell has decided to play golf at the University of Northern Iowa, ending a tug-of-war for his own emotions between golf and baseball.

Cedar Rapids Prairie senior Brayton Carlson has committed to play baseball at Southeastern Community College in West Burlington and Kennedy senior Alex Hayden has committed to play baseball at Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge.

Bell tied for sixth at the Class 4A state golf meet this year and placed fourth last year as a junior. He's also a top baseball player at Kennedy and had an offer to play baseball at Loras College.

Bell decided Wednesday to play golf at UNI. "I just feel that I'll be more successful playing golf in college as opposed to baseball," he said.

Bell is a year-round athlete at Kennedy with golf, basketball and baseball. He's looking forward to concentrating on golf at Northern Iowa.

"It will be something new," he said. "I'm hoping it really helps. I think with all the work I'm going to be able to put in and all the time, I think it will be a big step for my golf career."

Bell plans to study business and finance at UNI.

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Carlson will be joining his older brother, Dustin, on the Southeastern Community College baseball team. Dustin Carlson is a freshman relief pitcher at SCC.

Brayton Carlson hit .429 with eight homers and 36 RBIs for Prairie last season. He made second team all-state as a second baseman.

Southeastern Community College Coach Justin Schulte, formerly the head coach at Mount Mercy University, has attracted several Metro baseball players to his program. Terrell Sykes (Kennedy), David Yancey (Kennedy), Colby Brecht (Xavier) and Alex Ries (Xavier) are freshmen at SCC this year.

"I know a lot of guys on the team and Coach Schulte seems like a really good coach," Carlson said.

Griffin Michael (Kennedy) and Anthony Gagliardi (Prairie) began the school year at Southeastern Community College but will not play for the Blackhawks. Gagliardi has transferred to Indian Hills Community College.

Hayden compiled an 8-1 record with a 3.22 ERA at Kennedy last season as a junior, helping the Cougars reach the Class 4A state tournament. He's also a middle infielder and will be given a chance to be a two-way player at Iowa Central.

"They said they're open to me playing the field," he said. "They're leaving that up to me, and I haven't decided yet what I'm going to do with that."

Bell, Carlson and Hayden all said they're glad to have made their college decisions. "A lot of stress is relieved now," said Hayden, who had offers from at least four other schools in Iowa.