

Tolsma Ready To Take Charge

Avon Senior Aims To Help Pirates Defend Class 9B Title

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AVON — A few years back, Avon head football coach Tom Culver watched a linebacker flying all over the place in a junior high game. When that same player was a freshman, Culver put him in after a starter got hurt.

And Devin Tolsma has not spent much time on the sidelines since.

Tolsma, who enters his fourth year as a starter on defense and his third year of starting on offense, is one of the keys for the Pirates as they look to defend their Class 9A title.

Culver remembered seeing Tolsma make an impact as a junior high player.

"He was all over the place," Culver said. "When he was a freshman, someone got hurt and we put him in on 'D.' From that point on he started on defense. He was small back then, but he was a tough kid. As a freshman, he was our second-leading tackler."

Part of what helped Tolsma break into the lineup was that the upperclassmen accepted him.

"I got along with most of the seniors," he said. "I felt welcome, and they helped me out. I didn't feel so nervous around them."

Tolsma racked up 152.5 tackles last season, bringing his career total past 400.

While Tolsma has been a game-changer defensively, he has also proven to be a weapon on offense. Tolsma broke into the offensive starting lineup as a sophomore, and the running back rushed for 1,315 yards a year ago. But Culver feels that



Whether it was leaving defenders in the dust on offense or sending ball carriers to the turf on defense, Avon's Devin Tolsma (26) had a knack for getting the better of opponents last season. Tolsma returns after a 1,300-yard offensive and a 150-tackle defensive season, stronger and hungry to take the Pirates to a second straight Class 9B title.

P&D FILE PHOTO

Tolsma's biggest contributions on offense aren't necessarily when he has the ball.

"He's a great blocker," Culver said. "He pancakes people. He's got great leverage and is aggressive."

With his running mate

Brandon Kocmich hampered with injury, Tolsma picked up the slack down the stretch.

He rushed for 178 yards in a first-round victory over Scotland, and 219 yards and four touchdowns in a semifinal victory over Wall.

Tolsma capped his junior season the way any high school football player would want to, winning a state championship on his birthday. He rushed for 94 yards and a touchdown on offense, and recorded a game-high 16

tackles with 1.5 tackles for loss in a 24-22 victory over Hamlin.

With Kocmich now continuing his playing career at Dakota Wesleyan, Tolsma will likely carry more of the offensive load this season.

"I don't think there's any doubts that he's going to get more carries," Culver said. "We may have to go to an 'I' (formation), and he's up for the challenge. He'll do what it takes for the team to win."

To prepare for his senior season, Tolsma continued to hit the weight room, adding 20 pounds of muscle to his 5-9 frame.

"I lifted three, four times a week and did a lot of conditioning for quickness," he said. "Being a little bigger will help."

Besides being a leader in performance, Tolsma is also a leader in practice.

"A lot of times, if things aren't going well in practice, I don't have to say something. He beats me to it," Culver said. "He works hard himself and he demands it of those around him."

With the 2014 season just around the corner, the focus is not on what the Pirates did last year, but what they want to do this year, Tolsma said.

"Nobody really thinks about last year," he said.

"We're focused on doing the little things right. If we do the little things right, the big things will come."

And spending another birthday at the DakotaDome — actually, this year the championship falls the day after Tolsma's 18th birthday — would be a pretty good way to end a high school career.

"We're going to take it game by game," he said. "But hopefully we can play there again in 2014."

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/ICimburek. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net

S.D. FOOTBALL

Alcester-Hudson

COACH: Brian Haak
ASSISTANTS: Steve Hale, Kevin Kunz, Skylar Erickson, Mike Seivert, Randy Walth

VITALS: Class 9A, Tri-Valley Conference

LAST YEAR: The Cubs went 8-2 last season, and were defeated in the second round by Wolsey-Wessington. AH returns eight starters on each side of the ball.

RETURNING LETTER-WINNERS: Jaylen Dickau (Sr., 5-9, 155, G/DE; 56.5 tackles, 13 TFL, 6 sacks), Grant Johnson (Jr., 5-11, 165, QB/DB; 1,319 yards passing, 11 TD; 924 yards rushing, 18 TD), Mitchell Johnson (Jr., 5-9, 165, RB/LB; 229 yards rushing, 3 TD; 21-303 receiving; 67.5 tackles, 9 TFL), Chris Klemme (Sr., 5-11, 155, WR), Colin Walth (Sr., 5-9, 160, RB/LB; 706 yards rushing, 8 TD; 14-208 receiving, 2 TD; 72 tackles, 9 TFL), Lyle LaFramboise (Sr., 6-2, 175, WR/DB; 32-520 receiving, 8 TD), Gavin Doering (So., 5-10, 160, E/DE), Lance Sogn (Sr., 5-11, 190, OL/DL), Samuel Jensen (So., 5-8, 140, DB), Trent Rus (So., 5-9, 240, DT)

TOP PROSPECTS: Zach Ronning (Jr., 5-9, 155, RB/LB), Eric Berg (Sr., 6-0, 165, OL/DL), Logan McConnell (So., 5-7, 140, RB/LB), Alex Pulscher (Jr., 5-11, 165, OL/DL), Nick Johannsen (Jr., 5-11, 190, OL/DL)

Andes Central

COACH: Rich Stephens
VITALS: Class 9A, Great Plains Conference
LAST YEAR: Andes Central fell to 3-5 a season ago.



Alcester-Hudson's Grant Johnson (18)

They return four letterwinners this fall.

RETURNING LETTER-WINNERS: Reno Long (Sr., 5-9, 190, FB/LB), Leo Hopkins (So., 5-6, 130, RB/DB), Hayden Medicine Horn (Jr., 6-1, 190, TE/LB), Trezen Dorcen (So., 6-1, 260, OL/DL)

TOP PROSPECTS: Tyrel Flying Hawk (Sr., 6-2, 190, RB/DE)

Avon

COACH: Tom Culver
ASSISTANTS: Mel Fathke, Matt Yost, Justin Lukkes, Mark Mudder

VITALS: Class 9B, Great Plains Conference
LAST YEAR: The Pirates completed a perfect 12-0 season that capped off a

championship run. They lost seven offensive and eight defensive starters from last season.

RETURNING STARTERS: Devin Tolsma (Sr., 5-9, 165, RB/DB; 1,315 yards rushing; 152.5 tackles last year, 400 career tackles), Logan Mudder (Sr., 6-4, 195, QB/DB; 478 yards rushing, 257 yards passing; 42 tackles, 2 defensive INT), Kole Beeson (Sr., 5-9, 200, FB/LB; 154 yards rushing; 21 tackles), Jacob Knodel (Sr., 6-2, 215, TE/DE; 2-48 receiving; 53 tackles), Cody Namminga (Sr., 5-8, 180, TE/DE; 2-84 receiving; 27 tackles), Josh Knodel (Sr., 6-2, 235, OL/DL; 30 tackles), Alex Balvin (Jr., 5-11, 205, G; 46 tackles), Jesse Chambers (Sr., 6-1, 220, NG; 17 tackles)

TOP PROSPECTS: Brendan Anderson (Jr., 5-8, 195, FB/LB; 107 tackles), Jeremy Leibel (Sr., 5-10, 150, TE/DE; 19 tackles), Zach Wynia (Sr., 6-2, 175, TE/DE), Liam Swanson (Sr., 6-2, 170, RB/DB), John Kopp (Jr., 5-9, 190, FB/DL), Trey Doom (Sr., 6-1, 220, OL/DL), Cole Fillaus (Sr., 5-9, 160, OG/DT)

Beresford

COACH: Mike Busch
ASSISTANTS: AJ Schable, Trey James, Brad Muller, Jerry Carda, Alex DeVries

VITALS: Class 11B
LAST YEAR: The Watchdogs went 5-4 a season ago and were defeated by Tri-Valley in the first round of the playoffs.

RETURNING LETTER-WINNERS:

Oliver Doeden (Sr., 6-3, QB; 1,800 passing yards, 26 combined TDs; all-conference), Kole Nordquist (Sr., 6-1, DE, HM All-State), Justin Dollan (Sr., 5-8, OL), Nick Adams (Sr., 6-1, OL), AJ Schmidt (Sr., 6-1, OL), Sam Patrick (Sr., 6-0, LB), Brent Beckstrom (Sr., 5-10, DB), Seth Weiland (Sr., 6-4, DL), Skyler Ingwerson (Sr., 5-11, RB), Hunter Cotton (Sr., 5-11, QB/WR), Zack Bickett (Sr., 5-11, DL), Joe Kirkenback (Sr., WR), Chris Kropuenske (Jr., 5-10, RB; 600 yards rushing, 57 tackles), Logan Busch (Jr., 6-5, OL/DL), Tristian Lutter (Jr., 6-0, DL; all-conference), Jared Lyle (Jr., 5-10, WR/DB; all-conference), Conor Hoy (Jr., 6-4), Thatcher Schulp (Jr., 6-1), Hunter Bergland (Jr., 5-9), Caleb Peterson (So., 5-10), Riley Johnson (So., 6-0)

TOP PROSPECTS: Skyler Ingwerson (Sr., 5-11, 165, RB), Hunter Ingwerson (Jr., 5-11, 150, WR), Lathan Norling (So., 6-3, 175, OL), Keaton Peterson (So., 5-9, 180, RB), Dylan Andal (Jr., 6-0, 150, DB), Caeden Gunvoldsen (So., 5-7, 175, OL), Austin Snedeker (So., 6-0, 185, OL/DL), Chris Housken (So., 6-3, 250, OL/DL), Caleb Carnes (Fr., 6-2, QB/DE), Hunter Borah (Fr., 5-7, RB/DB), Jack Fitzgerald (Fr., 5-9, OL/DL), Zaine Wagner (Fr., 6-2, OL/DL), Peter Cruz (Fr., 5-10, RB/DB), Parker Goblirsch (Fr., 6-0, WR/DB), Nick Caspersen (Fr., 5-11, OL/LB)

Bon Homme

COACH: Byron Pudwill
ASSISTANTS: Jason Hein, Gary Kortan

VITALS: Class 11B, Southeast South Dakota Conference
LAST YEAR: The Cavaliers went 5-4 last season and were defeated by Winner in the first round of the playoffs.

RETURNING LETTER-WINNERS: Hunter Young (Sr., 5-11, 180, FB/RB; 409 yards; 47 tackles, 3 INT), Chase Kortan (So., 6-0, 170, RB/DB; 917 yards, 9 TD; 32 tackles, INT for TD), Tanner Van Winkle (Sr., 6-1, 180, TE/LB; 34 tackles), Zach Sutera (Sr., 6-1, 160, DB; 27 tackles), Brendan Bares (Sr., 6-2, 180, LB; 32 tackles)

TOP PROSPECTS: Mason Kniffen (Sr., 5-11, 180, OL/DE), Lucas Crownover (Sr., 6-0, 190, OL/DE), Cole Uecker (So., 5-9, 150, QB/DB), Alan Haataja (Jr., 5-11, 200, OL/DL), Ben Hajek (Jr., 5-9, 170, RB/WR), Carter Mecham (Jr., 6-0, 180, WR/LB), Alex Caba (Jr., 5-9, 170, WR/LB), Zach Sykora (So., 5-9, 150, WR/DB), Sam Caba (So., 5-9, 140, WR/DB), Austin Kotalik (So., 5-9, 150, WR/LB), Nathan Schenkel (So., 6-0, 170, WR/LB), Devin Millen (Jr., 6-3, 170, WR/DB), Logan Rothschild (Sr., 5-11, 210, OL/DL), Andrew Mitzel (So., 5-10, 170,

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SCOTLAND HIGHLANDERS

Football

Aug. 29	vs. Centerville	(7 p.m.)
Sept. 5	at Tripp-Delmont-Armour	Tripp (7 p.m.)
Sept. 12	vs. Avon	(7 p.m.)
Sept. 19	vs. Andes Central	(7 p.m.)
Sept. 26	at Gayville-Volin	(7 p.m.)
Oct. 3	vs. Gregory	(7 p.m.)
Oct. 10	at Burke-South Central	Burke (7 p.m.)
Oct. 17	at Marty Indian	(2 p.m.)
Oct. 28	Playoffs First Round	TBD
Nov. 3	Playoffs Quarterfinals	TBD
Nov. 8	Playoffs Semifinals	TBD
Nov. 14	State 9B Championship	Vermillion (10:30 a.m.)

Volleyball

Aug. 28	at Irene-Wakonda (W)	at Parker
Sept. 8	at Freeman	Gayville-Volin Tour.
Sept. 9	Gayville-Volin/at Centerville	Oct. 14 at Bon Homme
Sept. 11	vs. Canistota	Oct. 16 vs. Tripp-Delmont-Armour
Sept. 16	vs. Andes Central	Oct. 20 at Hanson
Sept. 20	Cavalier Clash (Tyndall)	Oct. 25 SESD (Chamberlain)
Sept. 23	at Marion	Oct. 27 at Menno
Sept. 25	vs. Ethan	Nov. 4-7 District 9B (Parker)
Sept. 30	vs. Avon	Nov. 11 Region 5B
Oct. 2	vs. Parkston	Nov. 20-22 State B at Mitchell
Oct. 7	vs. Wagner	

Cross Country

Sept. 6	Mount Vernon-Plankinton Inv.	Mount Vernon (9 a.m.)
Sept. 8	Scotland Inv.	(4:15 p.m.)
Sept. 17	Freeman Inv.	Valley View GC (1 p.m.)
Sept. 20	Wagner Inv.	(9 a.m.)
Sept. 22	Bon Homme Inv.	Bon Homme GC (2 p.m.)
Sept. 27	Platte-Geddes Inv.	Platte (10 a.m.)
Oct. 2	Burke-South Central Inv.	Burke (4:15 p.m.)
Oct. 6	Southeast South Dakota Conf.	Burke (3 p.m.)
Oct. 9	Ethan-Parkston Inv.	Parkston (4:15 p.m.)
Oct. 15	Region 3B	Valley View GC, Freeman (1 p.m.)
Oct. 25	State Meet	Broadland Creek GC, Huron (1 p.m.)

SD Boys XC

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Logan Klaudt (8th), Joe Grassmid (7th)

Parker

COACH: Phil Bjorneberg
VITALS: Region 3B, Big East Conference

LAST YEAR: Parker finished fourth at state.

RETURNING LETTER-WINNERS: Grant Plucker (Fr., state qualifier), Camden Bialas (8th), Nick Haraldson (8th), Nick Thon (8th), Blake Olson (8th)

TOP PROSPECTS: Zamuil Centeno (Fr.), Joe Hoogestrat (8th)

Scotland

COACH: Gary Pepper

VITALS: Region 3B, Southeast South Dakota Conference

RETURNING LETTER-WINNERS: Damien Fuerst (So.), Riley Nooney (So.), Zane Weidenbach (So.)

TOP PROSPECTS: Nick Baker (8th), Graydan Furney (8th), Skyler Knakmuhs (7th)

Viborg-Hurley

COACH: Bill Hansen
VITALS: Region 3B, Tri-

Valley Conference

RETURNING LETTER-WINNERS: Layne Meyers (Sr., 34th at state), Logan Hansen (So.), Logan Slack (So.), Ryan Dorn (Fr.), Quinn Dorn (Fr.)

Wagner

COACH: Briana Fiegen
VITALS: Region 4B
TOP PROSPECT: Steven Dion (Fr.)

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