

St. Joe's athletes sign college commitments

By **PATRICK J. BUECHI**
Staff Reporter

St. Joseph Collegiate Institute celebrated the success of its student athletes when 18 seniors caught the eye of college recruiters, and signed commitment letters to play for them. The teens, who represent six sports, will attend 15 different colleges and universities, in six different states, including Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.

"As director of athletics here at St. Joe's it's my honor to recognize student athletes who will be continuing their journey and competing in their sport at the collegiate level," said Brian Anken, director of Athletics for the Kenmore high school during the May 1 signing event. "The St. Joe's Athletic Department continues to set the standard of excellence throughout Western New York both in and outside of the classroom."

The students include five Division 3, five Division 2, and a record eight Division 1 commitments.

The school sponsors 18 sports, consisting of 42 teams, with more than 100 coaches and support staff involved in the Athletic Department. This year, more than 500 students at St. Joe's participated in at least one sport. In the past year, St. Joe's had teams that won conference championships, state championships, and a number of All-Conference athletes set new records.

"The opportunity to be a college athlete is the result of hard work and commitment, not only from you, but your parents, teachers, coaches and teammates," Anken told the students. "Your time here at St. Joe's has prepared you for any obstacles you may face. And, although next year you'll have new coaches, teammates and challenges, remember your family here at St. Joe's will always be tracking your progress and will always be your biggest supporters."

This year marked the largest number of college commitments from St. Joe's.

"I think the academic reputation alone draws people in here because they know they're going to get somebody



PATRICK J. BUECHI/STAFF

Eighteen of St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute's top athletes sign commitment letters to play on the teams of 15 colleges and universities. This is the largest commitment signing in St. Joe's recent history.

who is prepared," Anken said when asked what drew recruiters to St. Joe's. "And as we continue to elevate our expectations, as we continue to elevate our competition and out scheduling, we're getting our guys in front of more people and more places. It's drawing attention. That recipe for success we're putting together is working because our guys are getting great exposure and looks from places that a bunch of years ago we may not have been able to."

The 2018-19 school year saw football playing well, lacrosse being number one in its conference and reaching its highest national ranking ever.

"It's impressive," Anken said.

Shane Broad is one of two students who will stay local next fall. The Alden resident will play golf for Canisius College. "It's a great school, good med program, which convinced me," he said about attending the Buffalo institution.

Broad has plans to become an orthopedic surgeon, but hasn't given up his dreams of being a pro golfer. "It's a sport that always fascinated me. Freshman year I tried out for the varsity golf team, actually ended up making it,

then progressed on," he said.

The team practices on a range before the season starts, where the coaches teach the mechanics of the game.

"When we do practices the coaches help us on the course and tell us what we should be doing when we are on the course playing the game," Broad said.

Kellen Pulera fell in love with lacrosse as a kid. He will continue at Marist College in Poughkeepsie.

"They recruited me last year. They caught a couple games, then I went on my official visit end of August. I finally received the offer around September, and I couldn't deny it. I loved it. I love every part of it," he said.

Pulera attend public school in Amherst before coming to St. Joe's.

"Transferring to St. Joe's in the best decision I ever made," he said. "All the coaching staff, everyone is there hands on. They mold what is right and what is wrong into your head. They teach you day in and day out the proper way to play."

He plans on studying criminal justice, with the hope of being an FBI agent. His short-term plans are to win a MAC tournament.