

FASTBREAK



VARSITY VIEWS

1ST-AND-3

THREE LOYOLA SUMMER STORYLINES

1. **Loyola makes Suburban Chicago Connie Mack League finals. (ABOVE)** Loyola made it to the finals of the SCCML tournament before losing to Palatine in the title game.
2. Ramblers win Morris Shootout. Loyola won the Morris Shootout June 30 by defeating Belleville West for the title.
3. Ramblers play for amateur title. Connor Prassas and Chip Savarie, both LA golfers, tied for the Illinois State Junior Amateur Championship title. Prassas won in a one-hole playoff.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Late bloomer

Hard work pushes undersized Sernus to gridiron success

JACK VITA, Editorial Intern

Nearly four years removed from New Trier football, Anthony Sernus has come into his own at Denison University.

At New Trier, Sernus was forced to sit on several occasions until a late growth spurt helped him secure a starting role his senior year with the Trevians at safety.

"I was pretty small to be honest," Sernus said. "I kind of hit a growth spurt junior year. So I was a little bit of a late bloomer. I don't really remember how tall I was, but I remember I wrestled my freshman year and I wrestled in the 112-pound weight class."

Significantly undersized his first three years of high school, Sernus' time on the field was limited. However, he would not give up. Through hard work in the weight room, Sernus, then standing at 6-feet tall, reached 180 pounds as a senior and was rewarded for his dedication.

"Sophomore and junior year I didn't really play too much," Sernus said. "I

played a little bit on special teams my junior year for varsity. I had a pretty good offseason from my junior to senior year. [I] grew a little bit naturally as well. [I] started my senior year and was elected captain as well."

Starting every game for the Trevians, Sernus placed second on the team in total tackles with 56.

Upon his success at the safety position, Sernus elected to play college football at Division III Denison University in Granville, Ohio.

Sernus, now 6-foot-2 and 215 pounds, has thrived with the Big Red, filling a role he never expected to fill.

"I came in as a safety and played safety my freshman year," Sernus said. "And then between my freshman and sophomore year I grew a little bit (more). During camp my sophomore year I got moved to outside linebacker. My junior year I got moved to inside. I'll be going back there for my senior year and I'll be playing inside again. So it's been kind of a progression from safety to outside linebacker to inside linebacker."

Through many of his own offseasons of hard work, Sernus has turned



New Trier grad Anthony Sernus went on to have a strong career for the Denison University football team, playing multiple positions on defense. PHOTO SUBMITTED

into a productive player at the collegiate level. In 2015, Sernus tallied 88 tackles, second most on the team.

Though moving from defensive back to middle linebacker isn't a common path, Sernus can look to a former Chicago Bears great as inspiration.

"Brian Urlacher came in as a safety," Sernus said. "He got moved to linebacker and he had a really successful career. I kind of take that to myself. Hopefully I can find some success of my own."

Urlacher's story is similar. The eight-time Pro Bowler made the switch in college at the University of New Mexico and would lead the Bears to a Super Bowl appearance in

his 13-year career.

Though Sernus doesn't expect the same magnitude of success that Urlacher achieved of himself, he has high hopes for his upcoming senior season.

"I think as a team we're definitely on the upswing," Sernus said. "The arrow is pointing upward. Our goal is to win the [North Coast Athletic Conference] and be conference champs and we've fallen short of that the last few years. But I think this year could be a really special year for us. My personal goal is to make the All-Conference team."

Sernus is currently preparing for his final year of football back where it all started, at New Trier.

In addition to working out every day, Sernus is working as a strength and conditioning coach for the Trevians, teaching teenagers the same things he was taught.

Sernus' unlikely story of hard work serves as an inspiration to his cousin, Ben Higgins, who is entering his senior year with the Trevians. Sernus sees the same untapped potential that he once possessed in Higgins.

"He's a [defensive back]," Sernus said. "Kind of like me, he was a late bloomer in high school. He didn't get to play as much as he wanted his junior year. But he kept his nose to the grindstone and has grown a lot and had a tremendous offseason."

LISTEN UP

"I think as a team we're definitely on the upswing. The arrow is pointing upward."

Anthony Sernus — New Trier grad and current Denison University defender on his team's outlook for the 2016 football season.

TUNE IN

What to watch this week

GIRLS GOLF: Three of the teams in the New Trier quad finished in the top 10 of last year's state tournament.

New Trier hosts Loyola, St. Charles East and Buffalo Grove, Tuesday, August 16 at 11 a.m. in Winnetka

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