

# Knights' Grant Mitchell signs football letter of intent to attend Concordia University

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** – When **Grant Mitchell** first arrived at Metro East Lutheran in the fall of 2012, playing football may have been the furthest thing from his mind.

Mitchell played baseball for the Knights, but Mitchell decided to join the football program for the 2014 season, his junior year at the school.

It wasn't the best of seasons for the Knights; in fact, MEL had to end its season early because injuries depleted them to the point where they couldn't field a team from mid-season that year on.

The sport's future at the school looked iffy until MEL came to an agreement to form a co-op with Madison, which hadn't had the sport for nearly 25 years. Mitchell, however, pressed on with football, despite having never played it before suiting up for 2014.

Mitchell quickly became a team leader for MEL and helped show the Knights – both in 2014 and 2015 – how much hard work and dedication can help overcome the odds.

Mitchell parlayed it into a scholarship for Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod-affiliated school Concordia University in Seward, Neb., where he signed a letter of intent to play for the Bulldogs starting with the 2016 season. The NAIA school is a member of the Great Plains Athletic Conference, which has schools in Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota.

“Grant's going to be a huge loss for us,” said **Knight coach Matt Tschudy**, “but a huge gain for Concordia. He's a great football player, a great mind-set, just a good all-around attitude towards the game.”

Mitchell played both on the offensive and defensive lines for the Knights, but having not played football his first two years, Mitchell showed a natural ability at offensive guard and defensive tackle for MEL. “What was really amazing to see was Grant, not playing his freshman and sophomore years, when he came out and played his junior and senior year, he was kind of a natural at it and he picked up the game very quickly, which was good to see.”

“As a person, I wanted to change, and I wanted to see what kind of character could be revealed,” Mitchell said about his decision to play football. “I know football is real good at doing that, so I thought, hey, why not go out?”

“Coach Tschudy was constantly trying to get me to play, so actually, I joined.”

Looking back at his first year with the football Knights and the struggles MEL had just to get a team on the field, Mitchell recalled “it's hard not having the support other schools have; staying with it is the main thing.”

Having the co-op team with Madison allowed the Knights to play the 2015 season; while the Knights finished 0-9. just playing out the season was a success in itself; the players from both schools bonded together as a unit. “It was really good having that experience,” Mitchell said. “I think it was tough at first; we kept with it and we had a

few losses throughout the season players-wise, but we had some guys who really changed throughout the year and it showed.”

Mitchell's leadership, despite only having played two years in football, shone as the Knights took the field for 2015, Teschudy felt. “Even though it was his second year playing football,” Tschudy said, “the players from Madison had never played high-school football (Madison's football program was disbanded after the 1992 season by the Madison School Board), so the leadership he provided – he helped mentor a lot of those guys.

“Even some of the upperclassmen, he was still helping mentor them. He's got great leadership abilities; it's huge. You can have all the athletic talent in the world, but if you don't have any sort of drive or leadership, it's not going to do you any good.”

Mitchell is planning on majoring in theology or history at Concordia with an eye at becoming a teacher at the high school level.