

# sports

## AU football recruiting after no 2020 season

**DEAN PAOLUCCI**  
Reporter

The Ashland University football team is gearing up for the upcoming 2021 season in the fall. The football team is coming off a nonexistent season in 2020, one which was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Eagles were not the only team to lose out on the season, as all of NCAA Division II football was forced to cancel their season. Leading the way for the Eagles recruiting is Dominick Orsini, the defensive backs coach and recruiting coordinator, who enters his fourth season as a member of the Ashland football coaching staff. Orsini believes that not having

a 2020 football season was a big impact in the recruiting process not only to the Eagles football team, but to Division II football as a whole.

“Aside from the Power Five schools in Division I who played their schedule, I think you saw it across all of Division II that it allowed us to go out and recruit early,” Orsini said.

“We normally don’t start our recruiting until after the season, but since we didn’t have a season, it allowed us to start recruiting in August. We were able to offer kids earlier and go watch some high school games, but not a ton due to Covid.”

Assisting Orsini on the field will be newcomer to the Ashland football staff Devin Holiday. Holiday

was hired as the secondary coach in February and will assist Orsini with the defensive backs.

“I really jumped in,” Holiday said.

“Coach Rose and Coach Orsini have really been helping me out and helping me learn the defense that we are going to teach the guys. When it comes to meeting the guys and getting to know them, I think that is one of my strong suits. I am excited to be a part of this team.”

Due to Holiday only being hired in February, the new coach has not gone out on much recruiting, meanwhile Orsini has been busy on the recruiting trail with other coaches and sees some positives to the recruiting process in a pan-

demie year.

“Obviously without the season, we were able to focus on recruiting some more,” Orsini said.

“Because Division I was playing and had a little bit of a ‘dead period’, where they were not allowed to start talking to student athletes until a certain time, that enabled us in Division II to go out and get more Division I level guys in this recruiting class than we have ever had.”

Both coaches look forward to the prospect of a 2021 season, despite both knowing the season was cancelled in 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic.

“I am an optimist and I feel I am a ‘glass half full’ kind of guy,” Holiday said. “Me and Dom are working with the team and are

staying positive with the guys when it comes to our position groups. This is a big learning period for us and this allows us to teach these guys the defense and everything that they need to know for the upcoming season,” he said.

The football team and Ashland University athletics will begin their move to the Great Midwest Athletic Conference (G-MAC) in the fall of 2021 when the football team takes on Notre Dame College on the road on Sept. 4 at 1 p.m.



AU ATHLETICS

Junior Justin Moore stands ready, the football team’s next game is in September 2021.

## Ashland baseball optimistic for the GLIAC tournament



AU ATHLETICS

Austin Eifrid photographed embracing his teammates after walk-off win.

**JORDANN LOPATA**  
Sports Editor

The Ashland University baseball team, as well as many other spring sports teams at Ashland saw their 2020 season’s cut short because of the ongoing pandemic.

The baseball team who in 2019, made it to the World Series, have a lot of talent that returned due to the NCAA allowing student athletes an extra year of eligibility.

Head Coach John Schaly had insight on how the numerous returning players will impact the team this season. “A big majority of our seniors from the 2019 team did come back,” he said.

As far as how the season has been going the Eagles saw some injuries in the early months of

play that they’ve been trying to get healthy as they play essential GLIAC contests.

“We had four starters that were injured, and hadn’t seen the field yet. We’re trying to get healthy and ready for conference play,” Schaly said.

The Eagles are coming off of a weekend of GLIAC play against Northwood, but still have a long way to go in the season. In a seven week series of GLIAC play, the Eagles have four weeks left before the tournament towards the end of May.

Coach Schaly also reflected on the consistency of the team’s goals.

“Our goals are the same every year they don’t change. We want to win the regional rounds this year to qualify for the World Se-

ries. The ultimate goal after that is to win a national championship,” he said.

Currently the Eagles are 12-11 overall and 7-5 in conference play. The baseball team, just like other sports teams at Ashland and other schools have made the necessary adjustments to the Covid-19 protocols.

“I think our guys have handled it as well as can be expected. It’s been tough, and we’ve had some setbacks especially last fall, and last spring with our whole season being cancelled, but the guys have adjusted.”

Senior third baseman Garrett Roberts talked about how the covid protocols have affected the team.

“Playing through the protocols

has been tricky, and we take covid very seriously. But, we try to focus as much as possible, and control what we can control by following the protocols that we are asked to follow.”

Roberts, who has had an impressive season so far with two GLIAC of the week award honors and has a team high 29 RBI’s talked about his recognition.

“Winning the two GLIAC awards is awesome, and humbling because one week you can have a great week and then the next week not have a hit at all. That is what makes baseball such a fun and competitive sport to play,” Roberts said.

He also reflected on his motivation to come back and play after losing his 2020 season.

“My motivation to come back and play is the competition and being around my best friends for my last year of baseball. Also, we want the chance to win the GLIAC in back to back years,” he said.

The Eagles will face Purdue Northwest for a GLIAC matchup this weekend at Donges Field. The first game will be played on Friday at 3 p.m. Followed by games occurring on Saturday and Sunday, those starts will be at 1 p.m. both days.