

Posted June 23, 2007

## **Bryce Paup: SPARQ being used by Amherst, in camps**

**By Scott Williams**

*Journal staff*

scott.williams@cwnews.net

AMHERST -- When Brian Toelle made the decision to accept the head football coaching position at Amherst High school he wanted to change the mindset.

In order to become a major player on the state prep football map, Toelle is emphasizing to his current and future players the importance of SPARQ.

The acronym stands for speed, power, agility, reaction and quickness, and Toelle is convinced those initials will help the Falcons spell success down the road.

"Football is as much an off-season as an in-season sport," said Toelle, who is entering his third season at Amherst. "The success of great high school programs is based on the off-season."

Approximately 70 youth football players participated in the third annual Bryce Paup Youth Football Camp held Tuesday through Thursday in Amherst.

One aspect of the camp that receives considerable attention and emphasis is the SPARQ program. Each athlete was tested in a variety of football activities, including the shuttle run, power throw and 40-yard dash.

A formula is then used based on time and distance in each event, and adjusted by age, to determine a SPARQ rating for each individual.

"The nice thing about SPARQ is we get an athletic rating and those kids can continue to improve that as they go through the levels of football," Toelle said.

The belief is good football players are made not born.

And Paup, a four-time All-Pro defensive end/linebacker, confirmed that notion by stressing the importance of being committed to the process.

"You're going to deal with peer pressure and you have to ask yourself, 'How is this going to help me reach my goals?' " said Paup, who was recently named the football coach at Green Bay Southwest High School. "Don't get distracted from that goal and make sure that is the right direction you want to go in."

Toelle feels the Falcons are already reaping the benefits of the SPARQ program.

He points to the degree in which weight training and agility exercises have been embraced at the junior high school levels and has caught on with the high school players.

"Just like life in general, if you want something, you've got to have discipline and work for it," Toelle said. "We want to win a state title, and you need kids that are really committed."