

**WILDCAT FOOTBALL ANNOUNCES SCHOOL-RECORD 19 LETTER OF INTENT SIGNEES**  
*Seven White Chip Prospects among Signing Class that Includes All Washington Prep Standouts*

ELLENSBURG, Wash. -- (Feb. 6) A busy first few weeks on the job for Central Washington University head football coach **Blaine Bennett** have culminated with the announcement of a school-record 19 National Letter of Intent signings, as announced Wednesday.

Among the signings are seven players who have received "White Chip" status as being among the top 100 high school recruits in the state of Washington according to the *Seattle Times* newspaper. All 19 of the Wildcats' announced signees on Wednesday are products of high schools within the state. The previous high for National Letter of Intent signees at CWU had been 17 in both 2005 and 2007.

"Our recruiting philosophy at Central is to focus on the best high school student-athletes we can get from the state of Washington," Bennett said. "We feel like we did that this year by signing 19 excellent football players from the state of Washington. We did a good job identifying quality players at all positions, making it a well-rounded class by position, and we have signed a student-athlete from nearly every high school classification.

"We thank the high school coaches within the state, as well as the Central alumni, who helped make this recruiting class a success."

The "White Chip" signees include three student-athletes who played quarterback during their high school days -- **Oliver Henry** from Bethel High School in Spanaway, **Ryan Robertson** from Eastlake High School in Sammamish, and **Griffin Squires** from W.F. West High School in Centralia. Henry and Robertson are both expected to play quarterback for the Wildcats, while Squires was signed as an "athlete", with his collegiate position not yet determined.

Two of the Wildcats' "White Chip" signees played at Lakes High School in Lakewood, as running back **Dominick Davis** and defensive lineman **Tupou Manaea** are two of three Lancers to sign with Central Washington on Wednesday. The third Lakes player to ink with the Wildcats is wide receiver **Tony Thomas**.

Offensive lineman **Joey Tivnan** of Centralia High School and linebacker **Matt Tuttle** from Shelton High School were also among the *Times*' "White Chip" prospects.

While all of Central Washington's signees are from the state of Washington, only one -- linebacker **Mike Reno** of Kittitas High School -- is from east of the Cascade Mountains. Reno, who lives in Ellensburg and starred locally for the Coyotes, was a first team all-Central Washington 2B honoree on both offense and defense.

Lakes, Fife, and Bethel all had multiple student-athletes sign with CWU on Wednesday. Three Lakes players signed, with two each from Milton's Fife High School and from Spanaway's Bethel High School.

Representing Fife are Class 2A all-state running back **Tyler Cardin** and defensive end **Chris Finlayson**. Cardin, who ran for 366 yards and five touchdowns in a game this season against Klahowya, was the Nisqually 2A Offensive Most Valuable Player, while Finlayson was named the league's top defensive player.

In addition to Henry, Bethel star defensive back **Radio Battle** also represents the Braves among Central Washington's newcomers.

Offensive skill position players were the theme of the signing class, with the addition of the aforementioned quarterbacks, plus four running backs. Joining Davis and Cardin as projected running backs for the Wildcats are **Lorne Bridgford** from Everett's Cascade High School and **Lamardray Fuller** from Todd Beamer High School in Federal Way. Both backs ran for better than 1,100 yards as seniors at

their respective schools, with Bridgford totaling more than 1,500 yards in his final campaign with the Bruins.

Also signing on to play on the offensive side of the football for the Wildcats were tight end **Ryan Bean** (Tumwater) and offensive lineman **Tyler Hopkins** (Gig Harbor). Each earned first team all-league accolades from their respective prep conferences in 2007.

Additional defensive standouts to ink Letters of Intent with Central Washington included defensive back **Jacob Burkey** from Skyview High School in Vancouver, defensive end **Caleb Curry** from Kentridge High School, and defensive tackle **Devin Dyer** from Heritage High School in Vancouver. Burkey was a first team all-Greater St. Helens League choice for the Storm this past year, while Curry starred for the Chargers and earned all-South Puget Sound League 4A North merits. Dyer battled injury during his senior season with the Timberwolves.

“With the two-week window of opportunity and the challenging weather, it was tough to get everybody on campus,” Bennett added. “We still have additional student-athletes from eastern Washington who have planned visits in the coming weeks.”

The group of newcomers to the Wildcat program will join a squad that expects to return a total of 14 starters -- six offensive and eight defensive -- in 2008. Central Washington will return to the Great Northwest Athletic Conference this fall following a two-year stint in the North Central Conference, which was capped by a 10-3 record and first-ever appearance in the NCAA Division II National Quarterfinals.

*(Brief biological sketches on the student-athletes who signed National Letters of Intent with Central Washington University football on Wednesday are attached in the PDF document)*

| <b>Name</b>      | <b>Pos.</b> | <b>Ht.</b> | <b>Wt.</b> | <b>Hometown/Previous School(s)</b> |
|------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Radio Battle     | DB          | 6-2        | 190        | Spanaway, Wash./Bethel             |
| Ryan Bean        | TE          | 6-2        | 211        | Tumwater, Wash./Tumwater           |
| Lorne Bridgford  | RB          | 6-0        | 185        | Everett, Wash./Cascade             |
| Jacob Burkey     | DB          | 5-11       | 178        | Vancouver, Wash./Skyview           |
| Tyler Cardin     | RB          | 5-9        | 170        | Milton, Wash./Fife                 |
| Caleb Curry      | DE          | 6-3        | 235        | Auburn, Wash./Kentridge            |
| Dominick Davis   | RB          | 5-8        | 170        | Lakewood, Wash./Lakes              |
| Devin Dyer       | DL          | 6-1        | 275        | Vancouver, Wash./Heritage          |
| Chris Finlayson  | DE          | 6-6        | 220        | Milton, Wash./Fife                 |
| Lamardray Fuller | RB          | 5-9        | 199        | Federal Way, Wash./Todd Beamer     |
| Oliver Henry     | QB          | 6-6        | 210        | Spanaway, Wash./Bethel             |
| Tyler Hopkins    | OL          | 6-3        | 299        | Gig Harbor, Wash./Gig Harbor       |
| Tupou Manaea     | DL          | 6-1        | 270        | Lakewood, Wash./Lakes              |
| Mike Reno        | LB          | 6-3        | 200        | Ellensburg, Wash./Kittitas         |
| Ryan Robertson   | QB          | 6-3        | 186        | Sammamish, Wash./Eastlake          |
| Griffin Squires  | ATH         | 6-3        | 220        | Chehalis, Wash./W.F. West          |
| Tony Thomas      | WR          | 5-8        | 154        | Lakewood, Wash./Lakes              |
| Joey Tivnan      | OL          | 6-2        | 255        | Centralia, Wash./Centralia         |
| Matt Tuttle      | LB          | 6-1        | 243        | Shelton, Wash./Shelton             |