

THE OFFICIAL DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE WISCONSIN BADGERS

VARSIITY

SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

VOL. 6 NO. 5



STATE OF MIND

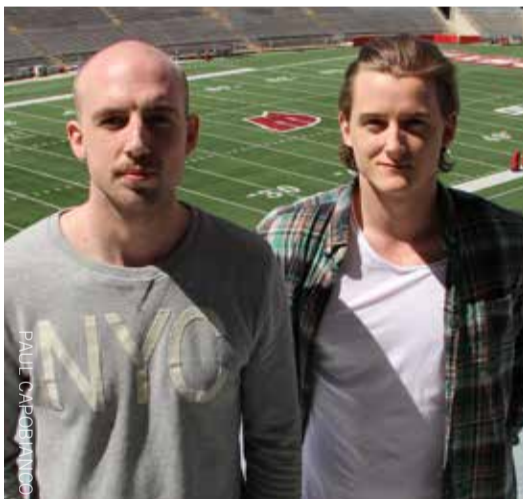
WEARING THE WISCONSIN UNIFORM CARRIES WEIGHT
WITH THOSE FROM THE BADGER STATE



DAVID STLUKA

EMOTION 'W'

There isn't a player in the Badgers locker room that doesn't wear the Motion W with pride, but for those Wisconsin natives on the roster, suiting up for UW means just a little bit more.



MEN'S HOCKEY

SYSTEMS STUDY

A pair of former hockey players from Sweden spent time with the Badgers as they look for a better model for organized sports in their homeland.

PAUL CARPANTINO

LUCAS AT LARGE

SLINGING & SINGING

Coming off a solid performance in UW's loss to Alabama — and another one on his brother's new album — Joel Stave is as confident as ever.



DAVID STLUKA

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BADGERING

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Young players learning fast

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

VARSIITY

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Slinging or singing, Stave is confident

The presence of a Mid-American Conference opponent, Miami University, in Saturday's home opener may rekindle some memories of the recruiting process, however limited, for quarterback Joel Stave. He was recruited by a MAC program, Western Michigan, and only one other FBS school, Wisconsin.

Stave made three trips to the Western Michigan campus in Kalamazoo. He went there for a summer football camp prior to his senior year at Whitnall High School in Greenfield. He went back for a conference game between the Broncos and Toledo. And he later went for an official visit.

"They sold me on the fact that they thought I would have a chance to play," Stave remembered of the Broncos' recruiting pitch. "But, really, they weren't recruiting me super hard. I didn't get offered by them until December. I think they had a few other guys offered. I was late on their radar."

The Badgers had been in touch with Stave for about six or seven months at that point. His recruiting contacts were offensive coordinator Paul Chryst and O-line coach Bob Bostad. It was no secret that another quarterback was on the UW radar, Jacoby Brissett, a highly-touted prospect out of Florida.

"He (Brissett) was still decid-

ing on where he was going to go when I committed (to Wisconsin)," said Stave, a walk-on with the Badgers. "I had already been going to school for a month (in the spring of 2011 as an early enrollee) before he decided that he wasn't going to come here."

Brissett opted to stay close to home and signed with the University of Florida. He ended up staying in Gainesville for only two seasons before transferring to NC State. Stave also didn't stray far from home, even though it meant taking the walk-on route.

"HE'S GOT ENOUGH PLAYS IN HIS HEAD, ENOUGH EXPERIENCE, THAT HE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS TO ATTACK," STAVE SAID OF CHRYST. "WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE A GOOD PLAN."

"A lot of walk-ons take a lot of pride in being under-recruited guys from in-state when they get a chance to play for their state school," said Stave, who fit in that category. "It's kind of different here than most states because it's the only Division I football program in the state."

And for that reason, among others, Stave suggested, it fuels the passion of Wisconsin-bred prospects "who aren't heavily recruited but who are excited to try and prove themselves at the highest level."

That's how he could be catego-

rized. Five years later, he's 21-8 as the UW's starting quarterback.

The topper is that he's now playing for Chryst, the Badgers' first-year head coach. It was during his freshman season when he was being redshirted that Stave first got a feel for the Chryst offense, which was in the hands of a minor league infielder and transfer from NC State, Russell Wilson.

Stave took part in seven-on-seven throwing with the scout team but he wasn't its quarterback. That role belonged to receiver Lance Baretz, who could simulate the option. "I was primarily watching reps with the (No. 1) offense," Stave said. "I did a lot of standing, watching and just kind of learning."

By then, he had already bought into Chryst's offensive concepts.

"That was really my thought when I committed," said Stave, who operated out of a shotgun spread in high school. "Watching Scott Tolzien his junior and senior years, I was thinking that this is really a good offense and it kind of fits what I'm able to do as a pocket passer with the play-action pass."

Stave felt even better about the system after being exposed to it during practices his first spring and fall at Wisconsin. Wilson's mastery of it on game days made him appreciate it even more. Last Saturday night, after a three-year wait, Stave finally got his



turn behind the wheel of Chryst's offense.

Stave didn't disappoint, either. Challenged by what looms as one of the premier defenses in college football, he completed 26 of 39 passes (67 percent) for 228 yards and two touchdowns. In the first half, he was 14-of-16 for 149 yards and one of his incompletions was intentional, a throw-away.

Stave looked like he had been running the offense his whole life, the ultimate compliment.

"I remembered a lot of the words themselves (from 2011), not as much as what they meant or the concepts that came along with them," said Stave, who was reintroduced to the terminology upon Chryst's return to Wisconsin after his three-year stint as the University of Pittsburgh head

coach.

"It did come back a little easier because I had a pretty good feel for the offense as a freshman, so it came back pretty quick when we started rolling with it. He (Chryst) tweaks it week-to-week based on what he sees defensively (from an opponent). He's got a great feel for what defenses like to."

Plus, he's adept as a play-caller. "He's got enough plays in his head, enough experience, that he knows what he wants to attack," said Stave. "We'll always have a good plan and through our preparation we're able to make game adjustments on what we see and what he thinks will work."

Against a formidable Alabama front seven, the Badgers utilized their short game with an empha-

sis on Stave throwing passes to the running backs. Dare Ogunbowale had six catches, Derek Watt had five, Corey Clement (who was less than 100 percent physically) had two and Taiwan Deal had one.

"They're very good players and they're all dangerous with the ball in their hands," said Stave, who spread the wealth with completions to eight different receivers. "And being able to get them the ball through more ways than just turning around and handing it to them can be really big for us."

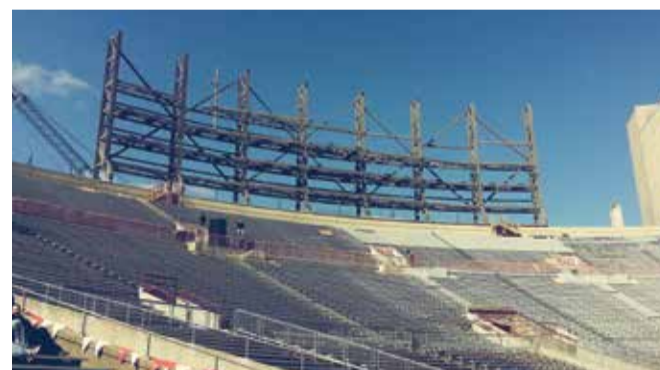
It's hard to imagine the Badgers facing a better defense. "They've got some unique kind of athletes — guys with size that are able to move the way they do," said Stave, who was sacked three times by the Tide. "They

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have a lot of confidence knowing they can line up and play you straight-up.”

Alabama made the Badgers one-dimensional by completely shutting down the run. But Stave saw benefits in such a test, pass or fail. “We’re able to take the positives that we had from the game and learn from them and we can also learn from the negatives,” he said. “We can take confidence in knowing we were able to move the ball, convert some third downs (6-of-14) and make some plays.”

During his Monday news conference, Chryst referenced Stave’s experience (32 games, 29 starts) as a fifth-year senior. But he also noted that this was “the first time that we were really interacting and doing what we did” in the week of preparation leading up to the opener.

“Every coach has their own philosophy — things that they like to do during game week — and Coach Chryst is the same way,” Stave said. “He likes to make sure that his quarterbacks are prepared; he likes to make sure we have a good feel for what we’re going to do on third down and what we’re doing in the red zone. I really like the way Coach Chryst prepares and the way he asks a lot out of the quarterbacks.”

Would thorough be the word to describe Chryst’s routine and/or habits? “That’s a very

good way to describe it,” said Stave, “He’s very thorough in his preparation. He’s not going to cut any corners, he’s not going to take any shortcuts, He’s going to make sure we know the game plan just like he does.”

To hear Stave talk in these terms would be music to Chryst’s ears. At that, Stave’s music is pleasing to most ears. Prior to training camp, he teamed up with his older brother, Bryan, a UW graduate, in a YouTube video duet of a Taylor Swift and Ed Sheeran song, “Everything Has

Changed.”

It’s part of a 10-song album that was released by Bryan Stave. “I play some guitar and the bongos, do a little piano and sing a little bit of harmony,” Joel Stave said of his musical contributions. “Whatever was needed, I was there to help. That’s what brothers do for each other.”

The Brothers Stave have performed together on campus at The Buckingham, which annually shines a spotlight on the talents of UW student-athletes. Joel Stave’s earliest go-to song was Train’s “Drops of Jupiter.” He has been playing the piano since he was a kid. “But I’ve played a lot more football in front of people,” he said, “than I’ve sung in front of people. They’re different, very different.”

That’s why he has so much respect for his brother’s vocal skills.

“To get out in front of a group,” Joel Stave said, “that takes a lot of confidence. You’re not really worrying about what people are going to think about you because you put yourself out there. And when you start to sing, people are going to have their opinions and they’re not going to be afraid to say them. So you just have to have trust in yourself and believe in yourself and have fun with it.”

Sort of like playing quarterback?

He chuckled and said, “There’s a lot of carryover. That’s a good way of putting it.” ■



ICON SPORTSMIRE



Home games like holidays in Madison

Last week a friend, who also happens to be a college football nut, asked what it would take to declare the opening of the season as a national holiday.

I had no answer, other than to say isn't every college football weekend a bit of a holiday?

Especially the seven Saturdays when your team plays at home. The first of those special days is coming up this week at Camp Randall Stadium when the Badgers host Miami University.

Before we move on, let us get this much out of the way — it is Miami, or Miami University, not Miami of Ohio. Those at the school respectfully ask that we avoid the “of Ohio” part. I have old buddies who are graduates of that institution (an excellent school, I might add), and few things get their blood pressure up more than referring to their alma mater as Miami of Ohio.

So Miami University it is. Located in Oxford, Ohio, and a proud member of the Mid-American Conference. In fact, the Red-Hawks own the best winning percentage in league history. This despite struggling mightily the last four years. Since winning the MAC title in 2010, Miami has suffered through four consecutive losing seasons, including an 0-12 nightmare in 2013.

Enter Chuck Martin, who after four years on the Notre Dame staff is in his second year as the RedHawks' head coach. Step by

painstaking step, Martin is trying to return the program to glory.

Martin joins a program with a rich history. Miami is known as being the “Cradle of Coaches.” It is a legit label. The list of coaching greats includes Woody Hayes, Bo Schembechler, Sid Gillman and Ara Parseghian. Former Miami players or assistant coaches through the years are names such as Paul Brown, Weeb Ewbank, Jim Tressel and John Harbaugh.

EACH HALL OF FAME CLASS PROVIDES A FUN TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE. IT ALSO SERVES AS A HISTORY LESSON. GREATNESS STRETCHES ACROSS ALL SPORTS, AND IT WILL BE ENJOYABLE TO SEE A NUMBER OF PROGRAMS REPRESENTED ONCE AGAIN.

Then there is Dave McClain, who was a Miami assistant before becoming head coach at Ball State in 1971. Seven years later, he was at the University of Wisconsin.

As for other Miami players who might sound familiar, I give you Ben Roethlisberger. Before helping the Steelers to a couple of Super Bowl victories, Big Ben more or less rewrote the Red-Hawks record book.

Another name is Travis Prentice. Three years ago, you might

have heard that name quite a bit. Prentice played from 1996-99, and the star running back left school with an NCAA-record 78 career touchdowns. The mark stood until 2012, when Montee Ball finished his college career with 83 TDs.

There is your brief history lesson on Miami.

Now back to the holiday question. I hope it feels like a holiday on campus this weekend. On Friday night the university will welcome its latest UW Athletic Hall of Fame class. Volleyball star Lizzy Fitzgerald, soccer standout Mike Gentile, hoops great Devin Harris, football All-American Jim Leonhard, hockey legends Brian Rafalski and Kerry Weiland and longtime administrator Paula Bonner will add their names to the list of the very best UW Athletics has to offer.

During Saturday's game at Camp Randall, the group will be recognized. It is a special moment for them, and it should be for fans as well. Each Hall of Fame class provides a fun trip down memory lane. It also serves as a Badgers history lesson. Athletic greatness stretches across all sports, and it will be enjoyable to see a number of programs represented once again.

Holiday weekend or not, it figures to be a festive weekend in Madison. Enjoy it. There is much to celebrate. Besides, who doesn't like a good party? ■

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF GAME DAY AT CAMP RANDALL?



RYLAN LUBECK

Junior • Wrestling

“My favorite part of Wisconsin football game days is the atmosphere and tradition we have. Everyone is wearing Badger red and ready to jump around when we score and when we win.”



JESSIE BOWDEN

Sophomore • Women's Rowing

“My favorite part of game day at Camp Randall is the atmosphere. When you walk into the stadium, you're met with a sea of red and white. The excitement and the anticipation in the air are tangible. And for a couple of hours, everyone on campus, or maybe even the state, is cheering for the same thing.”



CANNON CLIFTON

Junior • Men's Swimming

“My favorite part of game day is being able to hang out with the other guys on my team before the game starts. The games generally lie right after Saturday practice for us, so it's good timing.”



ASHLEY VAN ZEELAND

Senior • Softball

“My favorite part about Badger football games is the exciting atmosphere that all of the students and fans bring to the game. Game day is an experience and tradition that makes me so thankful to be a part of this university.”



MICHAEL SCOTT

SHAELYN SORENSEN

A redshirt freshman for the No. 11-ranked Wisconsin women's cross country team, Shaelyn Sorensen won the Badger Season Opener and led UW to the team title last Friday in her collegiate debut. Sorensen redshirted the 2014-15 cross country and track seasons but gained valuable experience running at both the 2015 USA Junior Cross Country Championship and the 2015 IAAF World Junior Cross Country Championship in China. Sorensen also had a solid track season while competing unattached, winning all four races in which she was entered.

What was it like to race in the world championship?

"It was a cool experience. It was a really cool experience to go to China. I had never been over on that side of the world. It was cool to see a different culture. My race wasn't as good as I would have hoped for, but because it was at elevation and a completely different environment, I understood why. The experience of competing internationally was amazing."

How do you think the experience running at the international level will help you this season?

"The race went out really fast and it was a stacked field, so I think it would help me prepare for postseason races like Big Tens and NCAAs. I think it's helpful that I was able to compete in a race that had a huge crowd at the start of the race."

What did you learn during your redshirt season?

"I learned to take recovery seriously. In high school, I didn't have as intense of workouts, but I usually ran the same pace

ALL ABOUT SHAEYLN

Year: Redshirt Freshman

Hometown: Lake Elmo, Minn.

High School: Tartan

Height: 5-5

QUICK Qs FOR SHAEYLN

Favorite place to run?

"The UW Arboretum. It's really nice to run there."

Favorite cereal?

"Lucky Charms."

Favorite class?

"Chemistry 103."

Favorite season?

"Fall, I like the weather. It's good to run in and I like the leaves when they turn colors."

Favorite TV series?

"*Devious Maids* on Lifetime."

Favorite pre-race meal?

"I like spaghetti and meatballs."



BY THE BOOK

BY MIKE LUCAS // UWBADGERS.COM

Joe Schobert satisfies his appetite for adventure by letting his mind wander through the pages of his favorite stories — he’s churned through the Harry Potter series 20 times — something that rarely happens when he’s locked in on the field. The playmaking outside linebacker isn’t one to stray from the game plan, even if he didn’t follow a typical path in making his way to Madison.



With a natural fluidity to his movements, a smoothness that prompted Wisconsin defensive coordinator Dave Aranda to nickname him “Sinatra” after the legendary crooner, Joe Schobert tends to play outside linebacker by the book rather than doing it “My Way,” with all due respect to Old Blue Eyes.

He’s also prone to getting lost in a book.

Especially if the author is J.K. Rowling, Christopher Paolini, Rick Riordan or George R.R. Martin.

Rowling, the creator of the “Harry Potter” series, drew Schobert into the fantasy world of wizards and dragons at such an early age that he confessed “I pretended to read the first book” while he was still learning the meaning of words. But he was hooked from the beginning.

“I used to read it all the way through and then start over instead of moving on,” he said. “I would keep re-reading Harry Potter.”

An avid reader, Schobert has since expanded to other novelists like Paolini (“Inheritance Cycle”), Riordan (“Percy Jackson”) and Martin (“Game of Thrones”). And he has not limited his reading to fiction.

“I like biographies about athletes,” he said. “I like reading about different sports and seeing the process of them growing up and getting into their sport and mindset.”

During training camp, Schobert read a book on David Beckham, the iconic international soccer star. He also stayed true to his annual ritual. “At the start of every football season, I like to read Harry Potter over and see if I can get through them all,” he said of the seven novels. “I’ve probably read the whole series 20 times. But I always forget some little thing here and there. I haven’t read it for a year.”

On road trips, Schobert will immerse himself in a book on the way to the stadium. “Especially with away games, you can have a 45-minute bus ride,” he said, “so I will listen to music and pull out a book and read it on the way to the game. It’s just something to relax and get your focus off your phone and other things. It’s to kind of get ready. Once I get there, I usually start to get down to business.”

Befitting his status among the national leaders in quarterback sacks and tackles for loss, Schobert is all business on the field. In the season opener, he had 13 tackles, including four TFLs, and two sacks

against Alabama. In the home opener, he had six tackles, a sack and two hurries against Miami University. As edge rushers, Schobert and Vince Biegel are complementary bookends.

“Vince and I are always competitive in football,” said Schobert, a senior from Waukesha. “That’s a good thing about us — we’re each trying to make the most plays in our room (among the linebackers). It’s a good competition to have in practice and games. When competing with someone on your own team, I think elevates the overall play for both of us and it helps the team.”

Had it not been for a late phone call and recruiting pitch from Wisconsin, Schobert would have been playing in front of 9,865 at the indoor Alerus Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota, last Saturday instead

of playing in front of 76,535 at Camp Randall Stadium in Madison.

The Badgers won, too, by landing Schobert. But they almost let him get away.

“I was going there (North Dakota) as a walk-on because they didn’t have any scholarship available,” Schobert said. “I

came to them late in the recruiting process. One of my friends was going there, too. I visited, I liked it and I was going to do pre-med. That was the plan.”

It’s not like Schobert didn’t want to play for his home state school while

he was growing up in Waukesha. “Being an hour away, I never came to a game, but I would always watch them every Saturday,” he said of the Badgers. “I liked the running backs, P.J. Hill and Brian Calhoun.”

There was also much to like about Schobert as a high school running back.

During his junior season, he led Waukesha West to the WIAA Division 1 state championship by rushing for 296 yards in a 45-26 win over Stevens Point. Schobert broke the title game rushing record set by Racine Park’s John Clay, who went on to become the 10th-leading rusher in UW history.

The big-time recruiters were still unimpressed, though.

“The most I ever got was generic letters from different colleges,” he said. “I don’t know why. Maybe it was because I didn’t go to (football) camps too much. I did a little after my junior year but I still had track in the spring and I was playing summer basketball. I wasn’t really focusing on it.”

Besides North Dakota, the only other school to show any real interest was Drake.

“The coaching staff was great, I liked the campus,” he said. “But they don’t offer scholarships.”

So he crossed Des Moines off his list and added Grand Forks until ...

Until the 2012 Wisconsin Football Coaches Association All-Star Game in Oshkosh.

Schobert put on a show. Playing for the South team — which featured UW’s only two recruits, Leo Musso



I WILL LISTEN TO MUSIC AND PULL OUT A BOOK AND READ IT ON THE WAY TO THE GAME. IT’S JUST SOMETHING TO RELAX AND GET YOUR FOCUS OFF YOUR PHONE AND OTHER THINGS. IT’S TO KIND OF GET READY. ONCE I GET THERE, I USUALLY START TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS.





and Jack Russell, in the game — Schobert had an interception on defense, four rushes for 53 yards on offense and five punt returns for 92 yards on special teams. The South won, 37-0.

After seeing him in practice, the all-star coaches were shocked that Schobert didn't have any major offers. "They'd say, 'You're only going to North Dakota? As a walk-on?'" Schobert recalled. "So they all pitched in and tried to get my name out there to whoever they knew."

One of those, Jed Kennedy, who coach Melvin Gordon and Vonte Jackson at Kenosha Bradford, even vented to a local newspaper. "How that kid is not playing major Division I football somewhere on a full scholarship, I don't get it," said Kennedy, who had moved on to Pulaski High School. "We had a dunk contest on the crossbar and he won that — did a 360 between his legs."

Reminded of that feat, which he duplicated four years later with a basketball during offseason workouts at Wisconsin, much to the astonishment of his Badgers teammates, Schobert said, "It was a football, so it was easier to palm. And it was just a goal post, so it wasn't as hard."

Kennedy also noted that Schobert had won a race between some of the South All-Stars, including Musso, after one of the practices. And, just for grins, he also threw a football 64 yards.

"I was surprised about that (winning the race) but people told me that Leo tripped at that beginning," he said. "And I did throw 60-plus, but there was a lineman who could throw 80-something."

You get the picture. Others did. He was a natural, a playmaker. After the all-star game, North Dakota State offered Schobert a scholarship and Northern Illinois talked to him about grayshirting, whereby he would have to pay his own way the first semester before going on tender.

The Badgers got their wakeup call and Bret Bielema, then the head coach, called Schobert in late July with a walk-on offer that he simply couldn't refuse. So he said thanks, but no thanks, to North Dakota. And, a week later, he was practicing with the Badgers — as a wide receiver.

"It was a little overwhelming," he said of the experiment, which lasted only three days. "I had to learn to line up with different splits on certain plays and all the route concepts."



ULTIMATE FANS

Deborah Mueller
Season Ticket Holder for 30 Years

Badger fans are like "one big family." That's part of the reason Deborah Mueller has remained a loyal fan throughout the years, attending games since the 1960s. She also enjoys sharing the fun with her own family, whom she frequently goes to games with. Although it's become harder for Deborah to attend games in recent years, she loves being a part of such a great tradition!



Schobert was summarily moved to safety and then linebacker as a freshman. Although he lettered, he appeared in just five games, mostly on special teams. In retrospect, Schobert acknowledged that he has thought about having one more year of eligibility after this one if he had redshirted.

“Sometimes when I’m hanging out with all my friends, I’ll think about it,” he said. “I live with a bunch of guys who are all redshirt juniors. And it’s kind of weird because I’m a senior and they’re not.”

But he has no regrets. “Overall, I think I’ve had a good career so far,” he said. “And I’ve been healthy — and hopefully I will stay healthy. Getting out of college football healthy is a big key.”

Schobert came under Bielema’s wing for just one semester before Bielema left for Arkansas. With the arrival of Gary Andersen and his Utah State defensive coordinator, Aranda, the Badgers switched from a 4-3 defensive alignment to a 3-4 and Schobert was one of the beneficiaries.

In 2013, he made his first start at Arizona State. Schobert lined up at outside linebacker along with Brendan Kelly. Chris Borland and Ethan Armstrong were the inside ‘backers. “I remember just trying to get mentally ready to face that pace of offense,” said Schobert, who also remembered how the Sun Devils ran 93 plays during a hotly-contested and controversial 32-30 win over the Badgers in Tempe.

Schobert had five tackles and one TFL, the first of many that he has collected for Wisconsin during a productive career that has now spanned 34 games and 17 starts. None of those starts is more memorable than his overtime performance against Auburn in the Outback

Bowl last January. “I think when I was in it,” he said of his shining moment, “I didn’t really realize it (what he was accomplishing).”

After the Badgers took a 34-31 lead on Rafael Gaglianone’s 25-yard field goal, Schobert took charge. On first down, he tackled tailback Cameron Artis-Payne for a 2-yard loss. On second down, he assisted on a tackle of wide receiver Sammie Coates which resulted in no gain after a pass completion. On third down, he tackled quarterback Nick Marshall for a 1-yard loss on the tail-end of a trick play throwback to the QB. On fourth down, Auburn’s Daniel Carlson



“A lot of guys say that you just have this feeling; it’s just something about this place that you really can’t pass up in my opinion,” James said of Madison.

missed a 45-yard field goal.

“Looking back on it, I thought it was all pretty cool,” Schobert said. “I didn’t think I really had a good game up until then; I had an OK game, but once that happened (in overtime) nobody remembered the rest of the game. It was a good sequence for me. They ran certain plays my way and I was the guy who had the chance to make the play. It was exciting and it led to that missed field goal.”

Schobert still vividly remembers “everybody running on the field and Coach (Barry) Alvarez getting hoisted on the shoulders” of UW players. Alvarez, the athletic director, took over as the interim coach after Andersen announced that he was leaving for Oregon State. Hence, the program was in transition again. But Alvarez hired Paul Chryst, who retained Aranda, who brought in Armstrong as a graduate assistant.

The continuity has all worked in Schobert’s favor. “There is a comfort level,” he said.

First-year outside linebackers coach Tim Tibesar is known as a technician and there has been a re-

newed emphasis on techniques, Schobert pointed out. Armstrong’s influence as a GA has not gone unnoticed, either. “It’s nice having him back,” said Schobert, who added “I had no clue what I was doing (as a freshman) and he’s so smart with everything football-related that he kind of helped me along.”

Today, he’s in a position to help himself.

“We can continue building on the scheme,” Schobert said. “Going into the third year (with Aranda’s defense), I know what my role is and what my job is in terms of the structure of the defense. I know when to take chances and risks to try and make plays with-

in the confines of our rules. We don’t have to question, ‘Could I have done that on that play?’ Instead, you can play and react.”

Which is now the book on Schobert.



“IT STILL GIVES ME CHILLS THINKING ABOUT BEING ABLE TO RUN OUT AT CAMP RANDALL STADIUM WITH MY TEAMMATES AND MY (BADGER) BROTHERS THAT YOU WORK WITH AND SHARE THAT RED W WITH. IT’S REALLY A TREAT.”

-JACK CICHY



KELLI GRASHEL



Umeå University students Oscar Edstrom and Lucas Eriksson

NOBEL INTENTIONS

Studying the NCAA and the American model for collegiate sports, a pair of Swedish hockey players recently spent time with members of the Wisconsin men's hockey team as they look for ideas to improve organized athletics back home.

BY PAUL CAPOBIANCO ■ UW ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

While there has been much discussion in recent years about what many see as the professionalization of college athletics, at least two former Swedish hockey players see the way college athletics are run in the United States as a potential model system that their home country might be wise to emulate.

A pair of Umeå University students, Oscar Edstrom and Lucas Eriksson, visited the University of Wisconsin in April to dig deeper and find out the opinions of Wisconsin's hockey players in how being an athlete training for a potential career in the game meshes with the life of a student.

Edstrom and Eriksson are both former hockey players whose careers ended earlier than they would have liked. They came to research how combining sports and studies works in the United States.

Their inquiry wasn't entirely focused on the logistics of balancing school and athletics. In Sweden, athletes like those who play hockey self-identify as hockey players. They wanted to find out how the

student-athletes, namely hockey players here in the U.S., identify themselves to see if it is more than just as hockey players.

"In Sweden, you're growing up and the focus is on hockey and you're growing into this athlete identity," Edstrom stated. "Here, the coaches remind people of the importance of school. You don't have that in Sweden. The hockey takes over, because that's the dream. Here you can balance it out."

One of the main ways they researched the NCAA system was by interviewing current Badger men's hockey student-athletes to learn about the choices they have made and what it is like to dedicate so much to a sport, while also advancing their education to prepare for life when it is time to pack away the ice skates. One of those interviewed was 2014-15 team co-captain Brad Navin.

"They are turning pro [in Sweden] at 17 or 18 years old and don't enroll in school like here where you come to college and balance hockey and school at the same time. They are just playing hockey," Navin

explained. “Oscar and Lucas wanted to see how we did that, balance our academics and athletics. For them to go play pro hockey, and say they retire when they are 30, they have to try to go back to school and then a lot of them by that time have families, so they don't have much time to invest in school. A lot of them just don't go, so they thought it was pretty unique how we can balance both. Credit goes to our academic advisors and everybody here who is involved to keep everybody on track.”

Both Eriksson and Edstrom know people who have gone through exactly what Navin talked about.

“I know a lot of friends that play the third league in Sweden, because they maybe played at the highest level or second league or high junior level in Sweden and they didn't quite ‘make it,’” Eriksson said. “But they keep playing in the third league because they are afraid to stop playing and because they don't really know what else to do.

“You can find a job without [an education] after hockey, but the possibilities aren't really there.”

“Many of the players just take a job,” Edstrom added. “They take whatever comes up, but they don't like it. They don't think about what they want to do in their career.”

Hockey could be considered the national sport in Sweden, especially for men, and the historical path for a boy growing up is to play hockey. Once you reach a certain age, you become exclusively a hockey player trying to make it big. Edstrom has two brothers who play in the Swedish Elite league,

the highest league in the country and a third brother in the second league. Edstrom himself reached the third league before injuries curtailed his playing career. This year, Edstrom served as the general manager for one of the Swedish third league teams.

Eriksson's background also gives insight into why this research topic. His American mom and Swedish dad met at Lamar University in Texas where she was



LUCAS ERIKSSON:

“EVERY PLAYER HERE SEEMS REALLY HAPPY TO HAVE EVERYTHING THAT THEY DO. WE ARE NOT EXPECTING IT TO BE THE CASE IN SWEDEN RIGHT NOW. IT HAS BEEN A LONG PROCESS HERE, BUT YOU GUYS SHOW THAT IT'S POSSIBLE IF YOU STRUCTURE YOUR DAYS.”



Men's hockey celebrates its seniors each spring with a brunch as it did at the end of the 2014-15 season with, left to right, Chase Drake, Matt Paape, Joseph LaBate, Brad Navin, Lanson Peterson and Joel Rumpel.

MARY WEAVER-KLEES

an athlete and he was an NCAA high jump champion who went on to compete in the 1984 Olympics for Sweden in the triple jump.

Eriksson played hockey growing up in southern Sweden, but when he reached age 15, came to the United States and tried out for junior teams like the USHL's Green Bay Gamblers and Cedar Rapids Rough Riders. He didn't catch on, but eventually ended up playing two years of Junior A hockey in Minnesota.

His knees began giving him trouble, so he gave up his hockey dreams and moved back to Sweden. He worked for a few years while trying to figure out his future. He was stressed because he was lost as to what to do with his life.

"I'm thankful that I started studying and kind of thankful that I quit pretty early, because I think it would have been harder if I would have been 30," Eriksson admitted.

The impetus for their visit to Wisconsin was to finish off their senior research project so they could graduate this past June, but the impact has greater potential. They are hoping to report their findings to the Swedish sports federation, a group that is excited to learn more about the athletic-academic model used in the U.S.

"Hockey and all sports, they're not integrated in high school [in Sweden]," Eriksson explained. "You don't play high school sports. You go to high school and you play on your local teams. You never really integrate them both."

Edstrom and Eriksson are not the only people in Sweden who have noticed. In recent years, a small group has made their way over to attend U.S. schools to further their playing careers and their academic careers.

"There are a lot of hockey players who have done that here and they kind of get forgotten in Sweden," Eriksson added. "Carl Hagelin of the New York Rangers, when he made the Rangers,

the Swedish papers wrote about the unknown Swede who made it big. He was unknown because he left juniors in Sweden and took the NCAA route. He was probably a good player here in the NCAA and was probably a good player growing up in Sweden, but I don't think in Sweden they understand how big it is playing NCAA or playing college hockey. It is a different culture."

Both Edstrom, who served as a third league general manager last year while attending school, and Eriksson see the third league as the level of hockey



Brad Navin recently signed to continue his hockey career as a professional with the ECHL's Gwinnet Gladiators after graduating from Wisconsin this year.

LARRY RADLOFF



Brad Navin, Bucky, Matt Paape and Chase Drake all got their degrees in 2015 after competing in college hockey. Brad Navin will continue his career as a professional in the ECHL.

in Sweden where an NCAA-like system could work.

“You practice as much as the Swedish Elite League, almost, but you don't get any pay, so you have to work,” Eriksson stated. “The third league would be a perfect league to try to integrate those teams to universities to make that a kind of university league. That would be a good place.

“Like the team Oscar was general manager for, you could sell them as a university team. You could sell it to players that they can study while they play hockey.”

“We have marketed ourselves a little bit like that. Our hockey players can come and play with us, but we also encourage the study part,” Edstrom stated. “The problem is when it is not integrated. You have matches and exams at the same time, so sometimes we have to let them do the exams instead of playing the game. But we think that's better that they do that, because they need the academics more than the hockey in that level. It would maybe be a different thing in the higher levels, because then you get paid and it's more of an opportunity to make a long career of it.”

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Edstrom and Eriksson came away impressed from their time at Wisconsin. They ended up talking with more hockey players than they expected as the initial volunteer group swelled once word spread about what they were doing. Staff members from the athletic department also ended up taking part. Edstrom and Eriksson even ended up going along with sophomore Corbin McGuire to his Norwegian studies class so the pair could see what classes were like and they contributed with their first-hand knowledge of Scandinavia.

“Every player here seems really happy to have everything that they do,” Eriksson said. “We are not expecting it to be the case in Sweden right now. It has been a long process here, but you guys show that it's possible if you structure your days. Even if you are playing on the elite level, you can structure your days so you maybe can kick-start your hockey career while you are a full-time student.

“It is pretty amazing, too, like when you are in the system you learn how to study,” Edstrom added. “If you go pro, and you aren't finished, you have guys

like [former Badger] Robbie Earl that are doing classes now. He is in Europe playing. He's taking some classes. That's pretty amazing. You show them that there's another world outside of sports and that is pretty important.”

They also came away impressed with all that the school and the athletic department offers the players.

“We have been studying this field now and found that ‘providing life skills,’ that is what they call it, is an important thing,” Edstrom said. “It really does help them with the transition into the career after sports.

“The NCAA has adopted these kinds of things in courses and schools like Wisconsin can take that and make it their own. I think a lot of places around the world in Europe, they are trying to use this kind of life skills model, but really don't know how to use it. It's a pretty good example here how to use it. So that's, I think, a good thing to bring back to Sweden.

“For an athlete, I think getting paid is less important than getting an education because that's going to last a lifetime.”

According to Edstrom, there is simply a culture established here that is missing in Sweden.

“I saw when we got here, I was watching the sports channel and it was an American swimmer I think who won a couple of medals, four Olympic medals [Missy Franklin]. She's an NCAA student. She said she had offers to turn pro, but she really wanted the college experience.”

Eriksson added, “Athletes have this kind of thing that you want to be the best. That doesn't go away after you're done. You are going to want to probably be the best at something else, and I think that is what you see.

“My dad is a good example, for me. He wanted to be the best, and he was, and after he had a career-ending injury and couldn't jump after that, he was 30. He still had the college. He went back to Sweden and he became a doctor and he's doing really well. There's a bunch of examples, like Mike Richter with the New York Rangers when he played.

He went four years in Harvard I think.”

Richter actually started his career with two years at Wisconsin, before finishing up his schooling through various places, including finishing up at Yale.

“He was in the system, so even if he went pro in the middle, he could go back to it because he knows college and how it works. It was easier for him.”

The pair pointed out that there are examples of successful Swedes, like NHL superstars Peter Forsberg and Mats Sundin, who didn't go to school and who are just fine without it, but the options that education provides once a playing career ends that are the key.


“They are pretty much set for life and they have their own companies, but they are rare examples because they've been such great hockey players and they can live off that,” Eriksson remarked. “They're

a brand, so you can't really compare them to all the people who compete.”

Talking to some of the Badgers after Edstrom and Eriksson visited, they seemed to support much of what the duo thinks about how it works with students as athletes in the NCAA.

“I think they were pretty happy with our answers and pretty happy with the information that they found out,” sophomore defenseman Tim Davison said. “The benefit that we have is that we get to be athletes and students to get our degree. When we are done with our pro careers, if we go on to be pros, then we can jump right into the workforce and not have to go back to school for four more years.

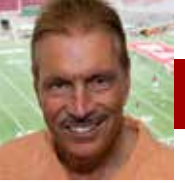
“There's quite a few returning pros I've seen walking around with backpacks in the Fetzer Center at the Kohl Center. I've talked with a few of those guys who have said make sure you know academics is important.

“I think hockey players are pretty down-to-earth guys and they realize pro careers, no matter how long you play, the odds are pretty slim in your ability to support yourself and family for years to come. You are going to want to be able to get a degree so that you are able to get a good job where you enjoy what you do and you are making enough money for your family.” 



OSCAR EDSTROM:

“WE HAVE BEEN STUDYING THIS FIELD NOW AND FOUND THAT ‘PROVIDING LIFE SKILLS’ IS AN IMPORTANT THING. FOR AN ATHLETE, I THINK GETTING PAID IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN GETTING AN EDUCATION BECAUSE THAT'S GOING TO LAST A LIFETIME.”



ICON SPORTSMAN

Opener offers opportunities for UW's youth

Linebacker Edwards, safety Dixon look to learn from early experience vs. Alabama

As a former high school quarterback, T.J. Edwards was accustomed to probing a defense in an attempt to uncover areas that potentially could be exploited because of inexperienced personnel. Attacking a freshman is the same at any level. Edwards got a taste of that reality from the other side of the equation here Saturday night in his first start as a Wisconsin linebacker.

"It was a learning experience — first and foremost," said Edwards, a redshirt freshman from Lake Villa, Illinois. "I grew up and over the next couple of days, I will grow up even more just from learning from this. It's tough right now, so I feel a little disappointed."

An emotionally bankrupt Edwards was speaking moments after Alabama's methodical 35-17 victory over the outmanned Badgers in the AdvoCare Classic at AT&T Stadium. The 6-foot-1, 238-pound Edwards finished with 12 tackles (6 solo), including one TFL; second most on the UW defense behind senior outside linebacker Joe Schobert who had 13 tackles, four TFLs and two quarterback sacks.

UW defensive coordinator Dave Aranda expected that Edwards

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GREG ANDERSON

Extra effort is making Badgers better

Improving Wisconsin hosts Badger Classic and alumnae reunion weekend

It takes a lot to build a team. The 11th-ranked Wisconsin volleyball squad is finding that out.

After losing their season-opening match, the Badgers have rebounded to win four straight and improve to 4-1 on the year.

“Opening weekend ... (there) were a lot of new pieces that we were trying to fit in and that played out with a lot of ... miscommunication or just not being clear with how we were communicating,” UW head coach Kelly Sheffield said, “about bouncing back after an opponent gets on a three- or four-point run, of being physical and having a presence.”

“That was the main focus this last week, in a lot of different ways. We’re having a tough time getting them to see clearly on some things that we are wanting. Building on the connections that are necessary is taking some time.”

The connections are building after UW went 2-0 at the ACC/Big Ten Challenge last weekend with a 3-0 sweep of No. 18 North Carolina and a 3-1 win over host Louisville. Sophomore Kelli Bates led the Badgers on offense, recording double-figure kills in both matches and adding 12 digs against the Cardinals for her third double-double of the season. Senior Taylor Morey was named the

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Badgers gear up for Big Ten play this week

Wisconsin begins its conference slate at Rutgers on Friday night

Think of it as an opportunity to start over with a clean slate. That's the message head coach John Trask is no doubt sending to the Wisconsin men's soccer team this week as it prepares to begin Big Ten Conference play on Friday against Rutgers.

While the regular season hasn't gotten off to the start that the Badgers were hoping for, when they open Big Ten play this week they'll have the opportunity to begin anew — a fresh slate in their season.

The non-conference schedule certainly provided tests and lessons for the young group. Challenges included facing a top-20 team, trying to win an overtime game and trying to climb out of a 3-0 deficit. Those are just some of the lessons that Trask hopes his players will learn from and take with them into conference play.

"These are the types of games that a young team needs before the start of the Big Ten season," Trask said of the team's early matches. "We feel that we have a talented group of players. We really feel like this team is going to come together, and hopefully by the time we start Big Ten play."

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EVAN HALPOP

Tightening up defense becomes key focus

Coach Wilkins aims to help the Badgers shore up their back line moving forward

This time last season, the Wisconsin women's soccer team had posted five shutouts through its first six games.

Through six games this season, the Badgers are still working to record their first clean sheet.

Yes, UW was able to rely on 2014 Big Ten Goalkeeper of the Year and third-team All-American Genevieve Richard a year ago. The squad also had the presence of senior center back Alexandra Heller.

But the 2015 Badgers return three of the four starters from last year's backline and have goalkeeper Caitlyn Clem, who's been in the program for three seasons.

Wisconsin has certainly taken on early challenges during its non-conference slate, facing then-No. 10 Pepperdine and No. 12 UCLA in back-to-back games of a West Coast road trip. But games at home against Western Michigan, North Dakota State, Loyola Chicago and Illinois State each provided UW with an opportunity record a shutout on the comfort of its own field.

Still, the Badgers have yet to blank an opponent, and that's something that head coach Paula Wilkins plans to stress this week in training.

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DAVID STLUKA

Back to school: Ziemek ready for senior year

Decathlete returns to UW after competing at World Championships

Most Wisconsin students spent the last few weeks in August relaxing, enjoying the final weeks of summer classes began on Sept. 2.

That wasn't the case for UW senior Zach Ziemek, as he spent the latter half of August halfway around the world competing in the decathlon at the 2015 IAAF World Championships in Beijing, China.

Ziemek began his journey to Beijing with a week-long stay at the U.S. team's training camp with UW assistant coach Nate Davis, who over sees the multi-event athletes at Wisconsin. Ziemek used the time to adjust to the time change and get in some training with Davis.

"Double Z" went on to finish 15th in the decathlon with a score of 8,006 points, marking the second time in his career that he's broken the 8,000-point barrier. The fourth-youngest competitor in the field, Ziemek ranked second among both collegians and Americans in the field.

"Breaking 8,000 was awesome," Ziemek said. "But I was just off a little bit on each event. I was just off one little cue or technical aspect off. My 8,000 could have easily been turned into a PR,

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