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Buena signing day enjoys surprise cameo Syracuse's Kelly talks to Mesa-bound Colt seniors

ROBERT CHARETTE | HERALD/REVIEW

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MARK.LEVY@SVHERALD.COM Buena High School senior football standouts Grady McCoy, left, and Seth Doser prepare to sign their letters of intent to attend Mesa Community College on scholarships during Wednesday's National Signing Day at Buena.

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SIERRA VISTA — National letter of intent day for the class of 2015 Buena Colts was more modest than in years' past with only Grady McCoy and Seth Doser pledging to become Mesa Community College Thunderbirds next fall. However, the day's events came with a surprise cameo by former Buena standout and Syracuse Orange Darius Kelly, who gave the seniors a possible glimpse at their bright futures.

The offensive lineman McCoy and linebacker Doser are planning to stick in each position when they join the 18-time national champion Thunderbirds as they were drawn to the program's consistency for delivering players to Division I programs.

"I had a few choices, but Mesa for me is better for my future," McCoy said. "I still have a possibility to go to a bigger school. It will help me in the long run."

McCoy was getting looks from Pima Community College and NAIA-member Dakota State University. Doser also got attention from Dakota State as well as NAIA-member

Arizona Christian University.

"It was close to home and my family," Doser said. "It's a good team and they send kids to Division I schools every year... hopefully, I'll be one of them."

Doser racked up 103 tackles in his senior campaign at Buena.

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On Wednesday, Mesa had seven players sign with four-year universities with two joining colleges in the "Power Five" conferences in Oklahoma State and Cal-Berkeley.

"Congratulations guys, we're really proud of you for taking the next step," said Buena athletic director Greg Duce.

Both seniors thanked their families, coaches, and teammates as well as credited them for getting to where they're able to sign NLI papers. With each senior aiming to earn an offer by a four-year university by way of Mesa, they had a sterling example of a former Colt who had accomplished that feat, though through his own unique and challenging circumstances.

Kelly was the Colts' leading tackler four games into the 2010 season before breaking his arm his senior season on a punt return in blowout Buena win. He was able to recover to matriculate to Pima Community College, from where he earned an offer to play at Syracuse University. As an Orange, Kelly had 105 tackles and an interception in two seasons.

Kelly made sure to alert McCoy and Doser, though, of the challenges facing an athlete who takes the junior college route.

"This is an unbelievable opportunity to play football at the next level," Kelly said.

"Not too many people get this chance to continue the game how they want to. I'm thankful for the opportunities I had at Buena and ending my career here early with a broken arm, but for the opportunity to continue to play football at pima community college. It's a tough road. Junior college is not an easy road. You're on your own, no family, no teammates, no high school. This is the time for you to buckle down and take schooling seriously and not throw it away with dumb decisions."

If McCoy and Doser could picture themselves playing Division I ball though Kelly's example, Duce made sure that the younger Colts in attendance be sure to take notice of McCoy and Doser.

"Just envision yourself here," Duce said. "You got to believe that you can do it before it can happen."

Buena's all-time receiving leader Deonte Williams, who is also expected to sign with Mesa, was absent from Wednesday's ceremony.

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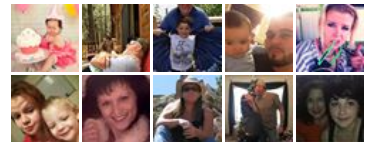
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