

# College Update

## O Tale of the Tape

### Bridgewater roster chalk full of Central Virginians

By Ryan Yemen

He was an honor roll student and first team All-Dogwood District honoree at Nelson County, and now as senior at Bridgewater College, Stephen Howard is looking to crack the first team of the Old Dominion Athletic Conference to one-up the progress he made as a junior defensive lineman.

At 6-foot-1 and 225 pounds, in 2010 the defensive end earned second team All-ODAC accolades thanks to ranking second in the conference in sacks and piling up 39 tackles. Of those 39 stops, 11.5 were for a loss and Howard also collected an interception and touchdown in a game against Randolph-Macon.

His junior campaign marked dramatic improvement from his first two seasons with the Eagles, both of which were impressively similar. As a sophomore and junior Howard saw action in nine games and recorded respective tackle totals of 21 and 19 tackles. Howard had four tackles for a loss in his first two seasons at Bridgewater.

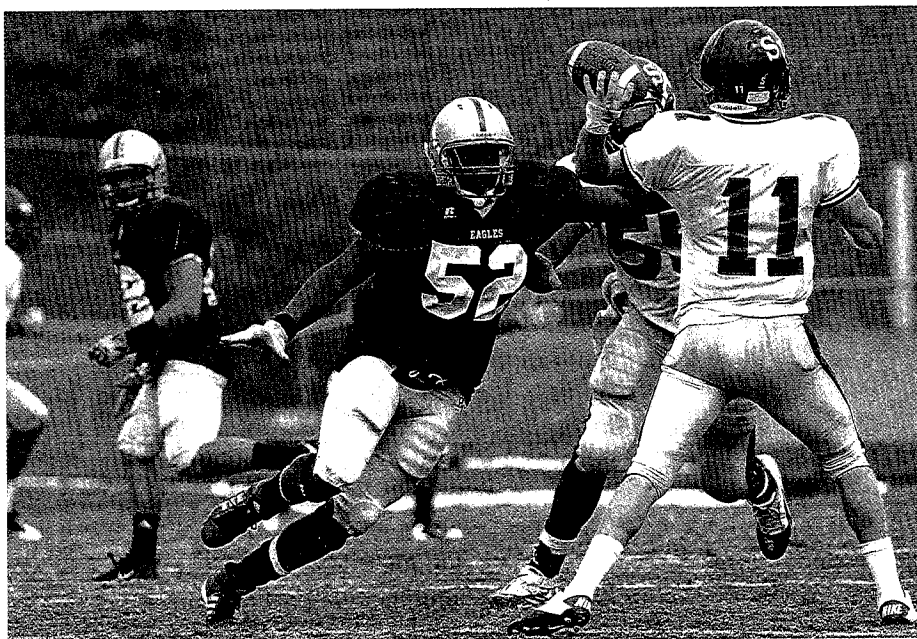
In Howard's first two games of the year, he's off to a solid start with eight tackles and a half sack to his name already.

Of course, Howard's not the only Central Virginian excelling at Bridgewater. Former Louisa County standout Jeff Mehlhaff was named the ODAC's defensive player of the week after the Eagles edged Shenandoah 28-23. The cornerback intercepted a pass and returned it 32 yards for a touchdown. He also had a forced fumble on the goal line, came up with five solo tackles and one stop for a loss.

Howard and Mehlhaff headline, but the Eagles are loaded with young local talent. Louisa's Josh Giusto enters his sophomore year as an offensive lineman. Western Albemarle graduate Mitchell Parks, the 2009 Scrimmage Play and Jefferson District defensive player of the year is one of three Central Virginia freshman looking for playing time this year as a safety. 2010 first team All-Jefferson District running back and Monticello graduate Jesse Ayres is playing at the same position. STAB's Tyler Knight is a freshman defensive lineman.

And fittingly enough, who is helping coach the Eagles this year? Former Blue Ridge coach Del Smith is in charge of the linebackers. ❄

**BELOW »** Nelson County alum Stephen Howard (52) is one of more than handful of former local products playing for Bridgewater. (Bridgewater sports information)



### St. Anne's-Belfield volleyball



ALLIE NICHOLSON



NIKKITA BRIONES

**ALLIE NICHOLSON**

**Class ::** Junior

**Position ::** Outside hitter

**Height::** 6'

**Pregame meal ::** "I eat a lot of Bodo's. The first one is a BLT with cream cheese which everyone thinks is gross, and then just a plain bagel with cream cheese. I put it away."

**Best thing about playing with Briones ::** "Nikkita makes me want to try harder because of her attitude and the way she hustles all the time."

**NIKKITA BRIONES**

**Class ::** Junior

**Position ::** Setter

**Height::** 5'6"

**Pregame ritual ::** "I have a playlist I listen to and I like to be alone."

**Best thing about playing with Nicholson::** "Knowing that I can put up literally the worst set ever and she'll still get it, she somehow can get it across the court and hit it over."

## X Quotables

"Football is my passion. When I get to just come off (the edge) and light someone up, it just makes me feel good – the gridiron is my home."

– Monticello sophomore defensive back T.J. Tillery after playing Albemarle