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HIGH SCHOOLS

Taking an early look at some possible stars of '88

Sometimes, events off the athletic field can overshadow what takes place on it.

For example, the state Senate is investigating the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, the Ches-Mont League is playing with just four members, and three school districts are on strike.

It should be remembered, however, that although it sometimes is less important, the action on the field often receives most of our attention.

With that in mind, let's look to the playing fields and examine several football players who are expected to inspire headlines with their performances.

Carlton Aiken. Upper Dublin, OK, so the Freedom Division of the Suburban One American Conference is not the NFC East. But Aiken, a senior, would be an outstanding running back in any scholastic league. He rushed for 1,266 yards and 12 touchdowns last year on an Upper Dublin team that ended up 6-5 and didn't exactly have a big-time offensive line. Aiken, a strong safety as

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well, is being recruited by dozens of NCAA Division I schools, including Notre Dame, Penn State, West Virginia, Iowa, North Carolina and Pittsburgh. Aiken was named one of the nation's most promising rushers in Street & Smith's 1988 College Football Yearbook. His biggest asset, however, is his personality. "He is the type of kid you would like even if he wasn't a football player," said Upper Dublin coach John Pavlick.

James Spears. Glen Mills. Spears may be headed to college on a basketball scholarship, but this 6-foot-6, 215-pound tight end cuts a large swath on the football field, as well. The impressive thing about Spears, a sen-

ior, is that he makes his presence felt on both offense and defense. He scored three touchdowns and averaged 21 yards on his 27 receptions last year. He also made 33 tackles as a defensive end, and had 10 sacks. He is the only player to play both offense and defense for coach Joe Ferrainola, and helped the Bulls' defense rank as Delaware County's best last year.

Andreas Gaynor. Wissahickon. A running back last year, Gaynor was switched to quarterback by coach Mike Herbert to take advantage of his multitude of talents. Last year, he rushed for 800 yards, threw for 400 and gained 190 as a receiver. He also is the team's top hitter in the defensive secondary. And he has speed — he runs the 40-yard dash in 4.5 seconds. Even more impressively, he is part of the gifted-student program at Wissahickon. UCLA, Duke, North Carolina, Virginia, Notre Dame and Syracuse are among the 61 colleges recruiting Gaynor.

Chris Minor. Phoenixville. The Pioneer Conference's offensive

player of the year as a junior, this running back racked up 1,000 rushing yards and 500 receiving yards. He scored 16 touchdowns and averaged eight yards every time he touched the ball. He also is the defending league champion in the 100- and 200-meter dashes.

Chuck Morganti. North Catholic. Morganti made his mark last year as a junior by rushing for 1,143 yards. This year, the running back hopes to duplicate his feat of averaging 104 rushing yards per game and making the all-Catholic League first team. A versatile player who also can play linebacker, Morganti has received interest from Temple, Kentucky, Pittsburgh and Yale.

Terry Sauerbry. Neshaminy. A certain Division I pick, according to coach John Chaump, Sauerbry was the anchor of the Redskins' offensive line, which made running the wishbone look easy last year. This year, Chaump is switching from the wishbone to a multi-pro set, and Sauerbry has picked up the system with ease. "He's one of the key guys who will make our offense go," Chaump said.

Kyle Stranahan. Council Rock. An offensive tackle, Stranahan is being touted by coach Mike Ortman as the league's premier lineman. He is mobile, intelligent and versatile enough to play positions. But Ortman sees his role in clearing the way for the Council Rock runners as his biggest asset. "There aren't many like him around," the coach said.

Mike Carroll. Norristown. A two-way player at running back and defensive back, Carroll is a breakout runner who can turn the tide of a game in a hurry. He runs the 40-yard dash in 4.5 seconds and is a sure Division I pick, according to his coach, Roger Grove. Pittsburgh, Penn State and Florida State have shown interest.

Derick Pickett. Bishop McDevitt. A three-year starter at McDevitt, Pickett is noted for his size (6-6, 245), speed (4.9 in the 40) and strength (he bench-presses 300 pounds). He has never lost a game as a starting offensive lineman and is one of the main reasons at least one McDevitt rusher has gained more than 1,000

yards the last three years.

Joe Bergstrom. Archbishop Carroll. Named in Street & Smith as one of the nation's top linebackers, Bergstrom is again likely to dominate the Carroll defense. Last year, he had 65 tackles, 24 assists, three sacks, two fumble recoveries and an interception. He is smart and has good size at 6-4 and 220 pounds.

Other players to watch this year are Terry Tolbert, an Abington safety; Odin Brutsche, an Upper Merion lineman; Priest Ramsey, a Norristown split end; Chris Horstman, a Hatboro-Horsham running back and linebacker; John Staiber, a Monsignor Bonner fullback; Joe Seaner, an Archbishop Kennedy lineman; Lanue Johnson, a Penncrest running back; Bill Bair, a Ridley quarterback; Jesse Richardson, a St. James lineman; Frank Wycheck, an Archbishop Ryan running back; Jeff Simmins, a Father Judge fullback; Andrew Champion, a Conestoga lineman; Brett Ziegler, a Pennridge tailback; John McBratnie, a Malvern Prep lineman, and Bill Shaw, an Upper Merion tight end.