

CBE's Mauer has second thoughts about college ball

By Joe Ferry
Special to The Inquirer

The plan is for Craig Mauer to hang up his cleats after Saturday afternoon's Bucks County Lions Clubs All-Star Football Game, enroll at West Virginia University in the fall, study business and economics, and maybe play an occasional rugby match to satisfy his competitive instincts.

But maybe, just maybe, he will decide to try to make it as a walk-on for the up-and-coming Mountaineers.

"I'm starting to have some second thoughts," Mauer said after a practice session for Saturday's 2 p.m. game at James Work Memorial Stadium on the campus of Delaware Valley College in Doylestown. "I know I would really miss playing football."

The seeds of doubt were planted in Mauer's mind during Monday afternoon's scrimmage among the 36 North players. Mauer, a 5-foot, 9-inch, 180-pound nose tackle, more than held his own in the trenches against

Bucks County All-Star Football Game

Central Bucks West's Corey Bornmann, a powerful 6-2, 205-pound center.

Mauer bounded off the field bathed in sweat, smiling inside and quietly satisfied with the knowledge that he had played well. Then one of his four CB East teammates, unaware that Mauer had already decided not to play football in college, asked him what he expected to encounter at West Virginia's training camp.

"That made me stop and think," Mauer said. "I figured I could play at a Division III school but I didn't want to sacrifice my education. But when he said that, I had some second thoughts."

To add to his good feelings, Mauer was informed by North coach Larry Greene that he had been chosen as a

captain by the players.

"It's a great feeling," Mauer said. "Most of these guys have only known me for a week. To gain their respect in that short amount of time is a real honor."

Joining Mauer as captains for the North will be Bornmann, quarterback Jeff Wolfinger from Quakertown and defensive back J. J. Kelso from C.B. West.

"Craig is a good leader," said Greene, who coached Mauer at East for three seasons. "He leads mostly by example. He's not a rah-rah kind of guy, but he does a lot of things very well."

Mauer played nose tackle and fullback for the Patriots while also seeing plenty of action on special teams.

"To play one of the down lineman positions at his size, Craig obviously had to have great quickness and strength," Greene said. "I think his wrestling background helped a lot. He was able to use finesse to leverage bigger kids. That was a great advantage for him."

Mauer kept in shape during the offseason by wrestling for East and playing rugby for the Doylestown Junior (under-18) team that finished first in the East and third in the nation in its age group this spring.

"Rugby is a lot more easy-going than football," said Mauer, an inside center. "There's more of a work ethic in football. The atmosphere is a lot different in rugby."

Likewise, the atmosphere at all-star practice has lightened considerably. After an initial feeling-out period, the North squad, which holds a 9-2-1 advantage in the series dating to 1976, has become a tight unit, according to Mauer.

"For a while, we just basically made small talk about football," Mauer said. "But now that we've gotten to know each other, guys are loosening up and having fun."

Greene said he was not entirely pleased with Monday's scrimmage. He blamed most of the disappointment on a strong crosswind that prevented quarterbacks Wolfinger and

Greg Coverdale (C.B. East) from getting the passing game together.

"I think our greatest talent will be in getting the ball to our skill people," said Greene, ticking off the names of Archbishop Wood receiver Bill Burke, West running back Randy Cuthbert, West running back Anthony Ventresca and East running back Sean Newman as potential game-breakers. "We're not a very big team, but we seem to have excellent speed and quickness. We'll have to use that to our advantage."

That means the North is not likely to slug it out in the trenches with the South squad, which won last year's game, 13-12. Whatever happens, Mauer is hoping his football career ends on a positive note.

"I hope we win the game," Mauer said. "We have some excellent players and everyone's been working hard. I'm looking forward to a good time in my last game so I have something to remember."