Andi Stempniak photo / Former UW-Stout tackle Tyler Butzler, a Tomah native, received an invite to participate in the Green Bay Packers' rookie minicamp this week in Green Bay.

**Sports, Page 1D**
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**Packners give UW-Stout’s Butzler a chance**

**By Adam Parks**
Leader-Telegram staff

As far as excuses go for trying to reschedule a final exam, UW-Stout’s Tyler Butzler has a pretty good one. Especially for someone living within the borders of Wisconsin.

After all, it’s not every day someone from the Division III university in Menomonie gets a rookie tryout with the Green Bay Packers.

“My professors, they all understand,” Butzler said with a laugh.

Butzler will put the finishing touches on his college career this morning when he turns in the last of his college finals. Thursday, it’ll all be about the next chapter in his life as he tries to latch on with the team he grew up cheering for as a youngster.
“I grew up a Packers fan,” the Tomah native said. “I’ve been rooting for the Packers my whole life, so I couldn’t ask to go to a better place.”

Green Bay was the first team to call the 6-foot-4, 315-pound Butzler after the draft, getting in contact with him about half an hour after the final pick. He wasted little time accepting the offer, then quickly got back to work preparing for his moment to shine.

Since Jan. 1, Butzler’s been making an hour-long trek to Woodbury, Minn., four or five times a week to work with former UW-Stout running back Ryan Englebert — who signed with the Cincinnati Bengals as a rookie free agent in 2007. Butzler followed one of his former teammates at UW-Stout to Englebert’s ETS workout facility, where he’s improved everything from his strength and speed to lateral quickness.

“It’s definitely paying off,” said Butzler, one of five WIAC athletes to get rookie tryout invites. “It was definitely the right decision training there.”

Those results showed during Butzler’s pro day at the McClain Center on the University of Wisconsin campus in March. Waiting until all the Badgers had completed their workouts, Butzler and several other NFL hopefuls from the DIII ranks were put through the ringer by NFL scouts. The former first-team All-WIAC selection was impressive, running the 40-yard dash in 5.1 seconds, performing the pro agility test in 4.4 seconds, completing the three-cone drill in 7.4 seconds, posting a vertical jump of 33 feet, ½ inch, a broad jump of 8-6 and doing 32 repetitions on the 225-pound bench press.

Butzler, who played tackle at UW-Stout but is slated to work out at guard for the Packers, said all of his numbers were among the five best in the country for interior linemen.

Now, he’s hoping to turn those numbers into some memorable production at this weekend’s rookie minicamp.

“I’m hoping to turn some heads,” said Butzler, who noted he’s being moved to guard due to his short arm length. “Since I’m coming from a DIII, I’ll be going up against all the drafted guys and DI guys and hopefully I can just go down there and show them what I’m made of.”