

Sisler's Thompson named top high school player in city

The best of the bunch

FOOTBALL

By Marvin McDonald
Sports Reporter

SOME GUYS, such as Darwin Thompson, tip their hands early.

Thompson trotted off the Sisler bench and intercepted a pass for a Spartans touchdown in his first game. That was four years ago and yesterday, the fleet-footed 17-year-old tailback/linebacker ran off with the Winnipeg High School Football League's prestigious Harry Hood Award as the league's top player.

Thompson was joined on centre stage at Sisler by other league award winners — Matt Kruchak of the Churchill Bulldogs, who walked off with the Kas Vidruk lineman award; and quarterback/linebacker Jamie

Marchillo of River East Kodiaks, who earned the John Potter/D'Arcy Bain sport physiotherapy bursary.

"Darwin is a coach's dream," said Ken Gordon, assistant coach of the Spartans. "He's talented and a team player who blends football and other sports with studies and his religion."

Thompson, who started playing with the Spartans as a Grade 9 student, helped lead Sisler to three straight championship final games, winning both the 1995 and 1996 WHSFL championships.

"This is the best team we've had," the 5-foot-9, 175-pound Thompson said. "We went undefeated this season."

Thompson was quick to credit his teammates and head coach Rick Hudson.

"The chemistry of this team was unbelievable," Thompson said. "Most

of us have been together since Grade 10 and we matured together.

"We don't have a best player on this team, as everyone contributes and does his part. That's why we were so successful this year."

"Darwin's a terrific kid," a beaming Hudson said. "He's a great team person and is just one of the guys. He jokes, works hard and leads by example."

Hudson said Thompson is a very quiet, unassuming person whose life centres around his family and church.

"Darwin's a pleasure to deal with in the classroom," Hudson said.

Thompson said he may study either pharmacy or engineering at the University of Manitoba next fall.

"I've been approached by some colleges in the United States," he said. "But nothing is definite."