

Under the Radar



Athlete of the Year

Isaac Perez of Toppenish Helped the Cats Reach High Heights

Looking back at this past high school season, there were several outstanding athletes.

However, very few had the impact of **Isaac Perez** of Toppenish.



Isaac Perez

After suffering a severe knee injury during the summer of his junior year, he missed the football season and the first half of basketball.

Despite that setback, he came back to have an outstanding senior year, setting school records and displaying outstanding leadership.

Turn back to the fall of 2019.

The Wildcats football team was coming off a successful season in which they finished second in the CWAC South. But, they lost in the league cross-over playoff game.

If you had a chance to see the team play, it would have been easy to see how good Perez was.

The 6-0 quarterback was electric. He was mobile, ran the offense proficiently and when the game was on the line, he took over.

Two examples were in two key losses; Prosser and Clarkston.

The Mustangs narrowly escaped with a 25-21 win,

but Prosser fans were on the edge of their seats as time expired.

Perez was a major factor and ran around the field like a slippery snake, unable to be tackled.

In the Cats' first non-CWAC football playoff game in years, Toppenish was struggling.

Clarkston dominated in the first half, rolling to a 34-6 halftime lead.

The only score came on a 36-yard TD run by Perez and the coaches put the game in his hands after the Bantams went up 41-6.

He tallied nearly 500 total offensive yards; gaining 193 rushing on 25 carries with 269 through the air.

The final score was 48-27 and if you weren't a believer in him before, you changed your mind afterwards.

He also had some pretty good weapons like the Toppenish career all-time leading receiver, Manuel Felan, who is heading to PLU. (This year he caught 46 passes for 909 yards and 12 TD's.)

Seniors Matthew Ramirez, Isaias Ramirez, Nick Garza and sophomore Jason Grant were also some deadly targets.

Perez, was the second-

team all-CWAC quarterback which was probably a huge oversight.

In 10 games, he completed 62.3% of his passes (134 of 215), for 2,156 yards, 26 touchdowns and just 5 interceptions.

He was also the Cats' leading rusher with 539 yards which included 8 touchdowns.

It's a shame, he won't get a chance to play that sport in college.

However, the sport he will be playing is basketball.

Headed to Big Bend College in Moses Lake, he wants to play the sport at a major college level, and as long as he can.

His also has a very impressive resume on the hardwood.

Toppenish spent most of the year as the top-ranked RPI team in the state and brought home a sixth-place trophy, the highest finish since the 1991-92 season.

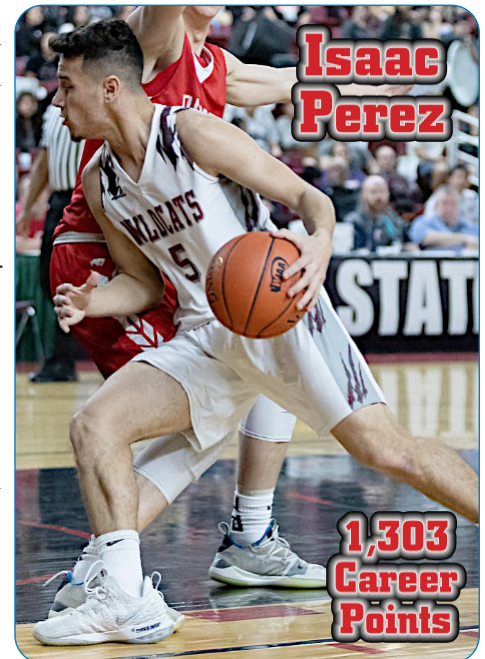
Along the way, Perez broke older brother Isiah's school record in scoring with 1,303 career points.

A first-team all-CWAC selection, he played point guard because of his leadership skills.

He often made the big play when the game was on the line, and like football could have easily been the league's Player of the Year. (He averaged 7-8 assists and 7-8 rebounds per game while defending all five positions on the floor.)

Perez was also Top-Hi's ASB Class President, carried a 3.6 GPA and has an eye on a degree in finance and business when he finishes college. (He was also a CWAC Scholarship finalist.)

Like most seniors, spring sports didn't happen, but the two sports he did play, proved a strong case at why he is our pick as the *Player of the Year*.



(Andrew Hamil photo)

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