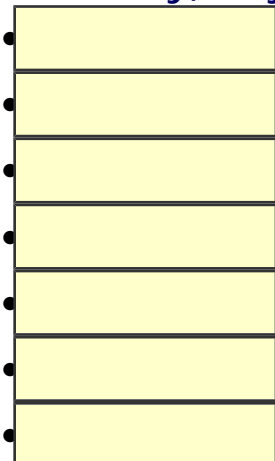


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Alcorn signs free agent deal with Packers

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By Padraic Duffy,
Journal Sports Writer

Former Black Hills State tight end Zac Alcorn is heading to the National Football League.

Alcorn, 25, agreed to terms on a free agent contract with the Green Bay Packers before the seventh and final round of the draft wrapped up Sunday, solidifying his future plans for the first time in months.

"It's awesome and it's just a huge, huge relief," Alcorn said of finding a professional football home. "I've been waiting for a few months for this, so it's nice to have it done with."

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Alcorn and his agent had been in contact with several other NFL teams as the draft concluded, but it was in Green Bay that the 6-foot-4, 260-pounder saw the best opportunity to make a roster.

"I talked to the (Indianapolis) Colts here not too long ago but I had to tell them no," Alcorn said, just minutes after his signing had become official. "A lot of teams had called my agent but he had evaluated the tight end position around the league and he thought that (Green Bay) was the optimal spot for me. I'm the only rookie tight end that they're bringing into camp."

Alcorn will head to Wisconsin to take part in the team's mini-camp within the next week or two before spending about a month with rookies and other free agents after that. He'll then get a month off before starting training camp at the end of the summer.

Besides the obvious excitement for Alcorn and his family, there was plenty of relief and joy in the Yellow Jacket program as well. Head coach John Scott was excited when reached by phone on Sunday afternoon.

"I'm just really thrilled for Zac, just as I would be for any of the guys that come out of the program and hit their goals or their dreams."

Scott, a lifelong Green Bay fan, will now have even more reason to cheer for the Pack.

"He's going to keep Brett Favre very happy," Scott said of Alcorn, who caught 32 balls for 588 yards and a team-leading seven touchdowns last year.

That thought alone was enough to make Alcorn wonder.

"I was just wondering about that, actually," Alcorn admitted. "What's it going to be like catching passes from Brett Favre?"

Scott says that he had a feeling Alcorn might become a "cheesehead" all along.

"They (Green Bay) sent a couple of different scouts up here a couple of different times and they sent two scouts to his pro day in Vermillion," Scott said. "We had a lot of teams that had single visits but they came back a few times. I kind of had a feeling because they did show a lot of interest."

Scott thinks Alcorn has a bright future in front of him, particularly after some specialized individual instruction from Packers' tight ends coach Ben McAdoo, something that is lacking at the lower levels of college football.

"They were really impressed with his ability to catch the football and his athleticism," Scott said of the Packers' scouts. "They made it clear that they were looking for somebody that could catch the ball, whereas some of the other teams were looking for more of a prototypical tight end, a blocker.

"Once Zac gets a full-time coach that can work with him on all the intricacies of the position he's going to pick it up very quickly. Like they said, you can always teach somebody blocking but you

can't teach good hands."

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