

Following Michael Sam, Another Football Player Comes out as Gay

An Arizona college football player has told a magazine he is gay, probably making him the first active major college football player to come out publicly.

Chip Sarafin, an offensive lineman at Arizona State University, told a local gay sports magazine he decided to start telling his teammates last spring about his sexuality.

"It was really personal to me, and it benefited my peace of mind greatly," Sarafin said in an interview in the August issue of *Compete* magazine.

He said he wanted his teammates to hear the news from him and not from "the college rumor mill."

Sarafin is thought to be the first active Division I college football player to say in public that he is homosexual.

His announcement followed a groundbreaking revelation in February by defensive end Michael Sam, who said he was gay after his final college football season finished in Missouri.

Sam, a Southeastern Conference defensive player of the year, was drafted in the seventh round by the St. Louis Rams and would become the National Football League's first openly gay player if he makes the team.

Sarafin, at 6-foot-6 and 320 pounds, is competing as a graduate student after receiving his bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering this spring.

The native of Gilbert, Arizona, is involved in research relating to football head injuries, the school's website says.

He also is active with several community groups, including those attempting to end discrimination and bullying in youth sports.

Top Arizona State sports administrators said they strongly supported Sarafin and praised his accomplishments.

Vice President of Athletics Ray Anderson said in a statement the player “embodies all the characteristics that sets our student-athletes apart and allows our university to maintain an environment of inclusiveness and progression.”

Head football coach Todd Graham said Sarafin is well on his way to becoming successful once his playing days are over.

“Diversity and acceptance are two of the pillars of our program, and he has full support from his teammates and the coaching staff,” Graham said.

Reporting by David Schwartz; editing by Daniel Wallis and David Gregorio.

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