



## TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

### *Top Prospect* By Paul Volponi Reviewed by Noah Rattmer

**Name:** Noah Rattmer

**Grade:** 8

**Book Title:** Top Prospect

**Author:** Paul Volpuni

**Number of Pages:** 270

**Rating (on a scale of 1-5):** 5/5

#### **Character List:**

- Travis Gardner- Travis is a standout, elite, 9th grade Quarterback, who is fighting for a starting position on his high school football team. Travis receives a scholarship to Gainesville University, one of the top football colleges in the country.
- Carter Gardner- Carter is Travis Gardner's older brother. Carter is a freshman at Gainesville. Carter plays tight end on the football team. Carter struggles to live in the shadow of his talented younger brother Travis.
- Coach Elvis Goddard- Coach Goddard is the head football coach at Gainesville University. Coach Goddard is very influential in the boys' lives and has high expectations and demands of the team.
- Alex Moore- Alex Moore is one of the top players on the Gainesville football team. Alex strives to be the best. He is a receiver with blazing speed on the field and Carter Gardner's roommate. Alex suffers a devastating injury to his ACL that begins a downward spiral in his life.
- Walter Henry- Walter Henry is a business man that owns a local car dealership. Walter is a shady man who tries to befriend the talented athletes. His goal is to take care of the boys in college so they will repay him grandly when they become wealthy football superstars. These actions are illegal and wind up coming back to bite him in the end.

#### **Review:**

Travis Gardner has dominated the position at Quarterback his whole life. When his older brother, Carter is recruited by one of the best football teams in the country, word quickly spreads that Travis is also a rising star. Travis manages to steal the starting quarterback position as a freshman. Travis is given the opportunity to appear on ESPN and is highlighted as the "next big thing." He is offered a future scholarship to Gainesville University by Coach Goddard. Even though Travis is a young high school freshman, he begins workouts and training with the Gainesville team. There he meets Alex Moore, the team's star receiver. Alex forms a bond with Travis and teaches him the "Gainesville way". Alex introduces the Gardner brothers to Walter Henry. Walter takes on the father figure in the boys lives since their dad lives out of state and has no interest in their lives or their football careers. The boys are naïve and vulnerable. Walter shows the boys with money, cars, and fancy dinners.

Alex Moore suffers a devastating injury on the field. Alex is determined to recover and get back on the field. He turns to steroids hoping to speed up the healing process. After a miraculous comeback, Alex continues to rely on the steroids. He dies suddenly, when the dose he takes is fatal. After an investigation, Travis and Carter find out that it was Walter Henry that was the one who introduced and supplied Alex with the illegal steroids. As a result of the investigations and embarrassment, Coach Goddard resigns as the head football coach Travis loses his offer to attend Gainesville. Travis must now build his own path to the future.

Top Prospect is the perfect combination of excitement, suspense and mystery. It is well written and keeps you wanting to read more. Athletes and young readers will enjoy the plot twists and stories of brotherhood, friendship and never giving up on your dreams. It shows the struggles of aspiring athletes and how these young kids need to be careful of who they encounter along the way. This is a story of dedication and striving for success. It makes the reader long for a sequel. I highly recommend this book and will certainly look for more of Paul Volpone's books.