

ASU '02 recruit is eligible

Maryvale safety
passes ACT at last

By Paul Coro
The Arizona Republic

Last month, Robert James was lying in his bed sick from food poisoning when his antidote arrived.

James, a 2002 Arizona State football signee, finally got the ACT score he needed to play for the Sun Devils.

"I got out of bed and started dancing," James said.

Since then, James' American College Test score has been approved by the NCAA Clearinghouse. The Maryvale High graduate joined the Sun Devils' voluntary workouts this month.

Relatives, friends and coaches urged James to play at a junior college or a Division I-AA program, but James would not be deterred from his dream to play at ASU.

He worked with James Fazio, a Mesa Community College instructor, three times a week to improve his testing skills.

ASU linebacker De'Andre Johnson, a 2002 ASU signee from South Mountain High, took the same route and qualified in time to enroll at ASU in January.

"It was really hard for me, and I was getting frustrated," said James, a projected free safety who is now 5 feet 11 and close to 200 pounds (he was 168 pounds at Maryvale). "I wanted to stick with ASU. That's where my heart is."

James was rated as the eighth-best corner in the West by PacWestFootball when he was at Maryvale.

As a senior he played tailback and cornerback. He rushed for 1,129 yards and 16 touchdowns while making 32 solo tackles, including nine for losses.

He had 102 tackles as a junior while playing safety.