

# Parish Episcopal: *State Champions!*

How these young football players from Texas earned their way to the top

Any high school football team would treasure winning a state championship, and Parish Episcopal High School in Farmers Branch, Texas, is no exception – especially when you consider how their program evolved. But let's start by recapping the 2010 season.

On November 20, 2010, the Panthers pulled out a 21-12 win in their regional final game, and six days

later sneaked by with a 42-34 victory in the state semifinal game. Then, on December 4, Panther fans prepared for an exciting Division II state championship game against Fort Worth Christian. And the Panthers did not disappoint, as they came away with a nail-biting 49-41 victory. Time of possession was a key to victory, as the Panthers ran 76 offensive plays to their opponent's 46. Among the top ground

gainers for the Panthers were Brandon January, who scored a touchdown and ran for 232 yards on 26 carries, and Zach Shelley, who added 194 yards on 31 carries.

Parish Episcopal School is a member of the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS). It has two campuses, the Hillcrest Campus in Dallas with pre-K through second grade and the Midway Campus in Farmers

Photos by Wiley Williams



#26 Dallas Alderton



#52 Niko Padilla

#44 Rob Hankins

#44 Rob Hankins

# DEFENSE

Branch with third grade through 12th. Getting their graduating seniors into higher educational programs is a priority, with college guidance counseling beginning in ninth grade. As a result, 100 percent of Parish Episcopal graduates have been accepted to four-year colleges and universities. And to develop character, all students are required to devote 15 hours per year to community service projects.

Parish Episcopal students are encouraged to participate in athletics, and in 2009 the school was rated the number one Division II athletic program in TAPPS in 2009. This was Parish Episcopal's first state championship in football. They have also won state championships four times in girls swimming, once in volleyball, and twice in tennis. But some of the programs have struggled, especially football.

## Buying Footballs

The varsity football program at Parish Episcopal is only five years old. Assistant athletic director and head



Head football coach Scott Nady

football coach Scott Nady, who came to the school seven years ago, says that he saw this as an opportunity to build a program from scratch. He says that he'd taken on the same type of challenge at his previous coaching job, but "after we built it and started to win, it wasn't as fun. When I came here, we didn't have a football field, or for that matter any football helmets or even footballs – that to me sounded like a super fun opportunity." His approach was to take things really slow.

"The first team I coached when I

came here was a fifth-and-sixth-grade team, and the next year I coached the seventh-and-eighth-grade team; the following year I worked with the junior varsity and then varsity. My first year with the JV team we were 10-0, but we got introduced to varsity football rather harshly, as we went 2-8." But that didn't discourage Nady or his athletes; they roared back with winning records and playoff appearances all four years. One reason for the success, says Nady, is the organization of the school.

"The really neat thing about the way this school system is organized is that all the younger kids know who the older kids are. For a varsity football player it's like being a rock star because the little third, fourth, fifth and sixth graders look up to them like they are professional athletes. I would go so far as to say that there are a lot of kids



who know more about our quarterback Dru Smith than they do about Tony Romo.”

Such respect and admiration is one reason that hazing is nonexistent at Parish Episcopal. “There is such an incredible sense of community here that the older kids feel an obligation to be good leaders and good mentors for the younger kids. The constant presence of young eyes on the older boys creates a good amount of peer pressure to do the right thing. I’ve been here seven years now and we’ve never had one second of hazing – period. It’s just not acceptable. What we preach here, and what we take pride in, is that if you put on a football helmet it doesn’t matter if you only take one snap a game or you’re an all-state player. You’re part of the same team

and the same family, such that every player, from 11 years old to 19 years old, demands and deserves the same amount of respect.”

Regarding his association with BFS, Nady loves the system. “So much of my success in coaching goes right back to the BFS program, and it helps build an expectation of excellence that carries onto the football field. I only have 40 kids in this program, but I have six kids who can squat over 500 pounds and one who can squat 600 – and that’s all BFS.”

Asked about the issue of whether kids today are different from those of 10, 20 or even 30 years ago, Nady responds, “Some people in our culture have adopted this attitude that kids are different. One thing I know in my heart is that kids will do whatever you

demand of them if they know you love them. If you treat them fairly and if they know you love them, they will walk through a brick wall for you. They will say “Yes, sir” and “No, sir.”

Nady says that he and his staff encourage their players to excel in all areas of life, not just athletics. He expects them to compete in the classroom and be involved in other school activities such as student government and theater. And he teaches them to always try to do the right things in life. “I tell our young kids that the best part about being a Parish Episcopal ballplayer is that everybody in the community knows who you are, and that the worst thing about being a Parish Episcopal ballplayer is that everyone knows who you are. There is no time off from being judged.” BFS



#5 Charles Cook



#8 Dru Smith



#8 Dru Smith



#23 Zach Shelley



#5 Charles Cook



#2 Brandon January

# OFFENSE

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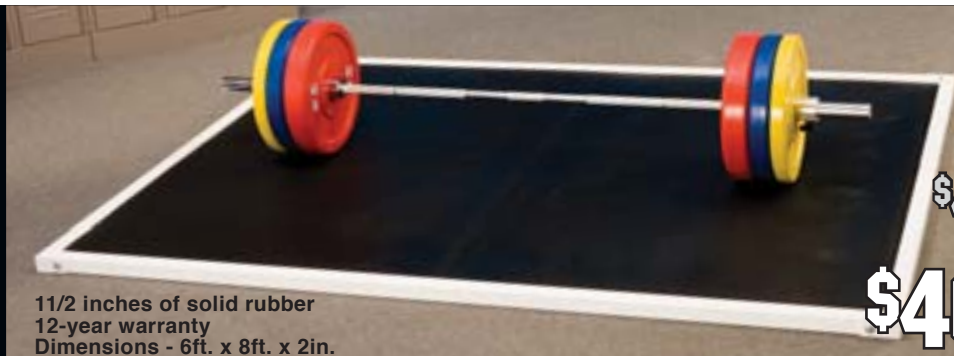
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