BFS SUCCESS STORY

Winning the State Championships in 2005 was front page news in Grand County, Utah.

Red Devils win 2A state champion

by Jeff Richards

Supplement to

contributing writer Buoyed by Zane Taylor's dramatic blocked punt with two and a half minutes left, the Grand County Red Devils came from behind to defeat 2A archrival San Juan 25-22 Saturday afternoon at SUU in Cedar City, giving Moab its first-ever football state champi-

Trailing 22-19 in the see-saw onship. nailbiter, the Devils were finally able to force fourth down with 2:27 left, thanks to linebacker Tyler Montague's sack of Bronco quarterback Kyle Hosler. The Red Devils were told to get set up to return the punt, but Taylor had

other ideas. "The thought popped into my head that I'm going to go and try to block it," recalled Taylor, a 286-lb. senior lineman. "I gave it everything I had, because I knew that if I blocked it, it could turn the tide.'

Added teammate Anthony Croasmun, "I just looked at Zane and thought, 'Oh boy, he's going







In 2005, the Red Devils of Grand County High School were ready to change history.

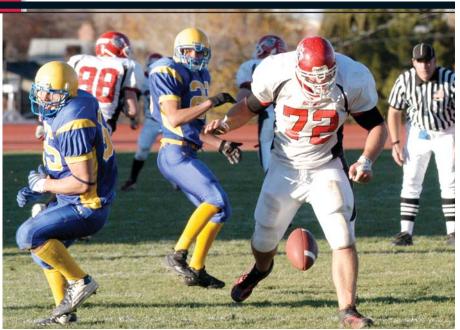
How the Red Devils Overturned History

It took 84 years, but Grand County High School finally fulfilled its dream

On November 17, the Grand County Red Devils were behind San Juan 22-19 with 2:27 left on the clock. On a fourth down, thanks to a quarterback sack by 286-pound senior linebacker Tyler Montague, the Red Devils lined up to receive the punt. But the Red Devils had one more miracle left in them, and in the ensuing play defensive lineman Zane Taylor broke through the offensive line and batted down the punt. The frantic race for the ball left it just three yards from the San Juan goal line. On their first two plays the Red Devils were kept from scoring, but then quarterback Tony Dalton leapt over the goal line to put six points on the board and secure the win, 25-22. An amazing game, no doubt, especially when you consider the history of Red Devil football.

irst, Grand County has had San Juan as a thorn in its side for 18 years, because that's the number of games in a row the Red Devils have lost to San Juan. You might be getting the idea that the Red Devils are not exactly a perennial powerhouse-the team hadn't won a state championship in 84 years, and in 2002 the team didn't win a single game. The following year they won two games, and in 2004 they won three, but 2005 was a special team. "We've known since my freshman year that we were the ones who could take state," Montague told reporter James Edward from the Deseret Morning News. "We just had to stay patient." Adds Head Coach Dennis Wells, "This championship is something we've been dreaming of for a long time."

The Red Devil's victory is particularly meaningful in that both the victory and the game ball for the 2A State Championships have been dedicated to Grand County junior Kerby Smith. Kerby, a 4.0 GPA student who wore number 44 when he played fullback and middle linebacker for the team, had been diagnosed on the final day of the regular season with acute lymphocytic leukemia and could only support the team from the sidelines for the championship game.



Late in the fourth quarter of their championship game, defensive lineman Zane Taylor broke through San Juan's offensive line and blocked the punt, leaving the ball just three yards from the goal line.

Smith's treatment for the cancer will last three years, but his father, John, says the prognosis is good.

The Red Devils' dream season admittedly had a few blemishes, as the team had two losses early on. The first was a heartbreaking loss redeemed only by Kerby's two touchdowns. The second loss occurred in the following game against Juab, 28-14, putting Grand County at 2-2 for the season and an eventual underdog in the playoffs against San Juan, who went undefeated until the championship game.

One of the heroes of the playoffs was tailback Tanner Brown. Wearing number 44 in Kerby Smith's honor, Tanner rushed for eight touchdowns in the playoffs. He had 264 yards and four touchdowns in the 43-0 victory over North Sevier, the Red Devils' first playoff win since 1984. Against Juab, Tanner rushed for 254 yards and made two touchdowns to help Grand County to a 21-6 win. In the final



The Red Devils' season was dedicated to #44 Kerby Smith, a key player who had to leave the team before the playoffs when he was diagnosed with cancer.



The Red Devils embrace their championship trophy and celebrate their victory.



The Red Devils finished the season with the #1 ranked offense and defense in the state.

game, Tanner helped the team come from 9-0 behind to finish with 181 yards on 34 carries. For the year, Tanner rushed for a school record of 2,026 yards.

The Four-Year Plan

Coach Wells took over the Red Devil football program in 2002. "I told this team, when we started to visualize, what it would be like to ride down Main Street on a fire engine in a parade celebrating a state championship victory," says Wells. That first year, however, the team from Moab, Utah, went 0-10.

When he'd played ball in high school, Wells had been coached in college by BFS Clinician Rick Bojak; and in May of 2003 Wells brought in his mentor for a two-day strength and conditioning clinic. The team embraced the program and saw great improvements in speed, strength and power. One of the poster athletes for the program is noseguard Zack Taylor. Then a freshman, Taylor had a personal best in the power clean at 205 pounds. This season he did 365 pounds, and he earned a scholarship to the University of Utah.

The 2005 State Champions are hard at work in the weightroom preparing for the 2006 season, and Coach Wells intends to prove that 2005 wasn't a fluke for the Red Devils. "Our goal this year is to win a state championship, and I believe we have things set in place to do it again."



Zane Taylor's power clean improved from 205 pounds to 365 pounds.



Head Football Coach Dennis Wells took over a 2002 team that didn't win a single game, making the Red Devils' state title victory even more remarkable.

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