

Brooks Martinson Never Let Tragic Loss Define Him



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get home from practice. "I just think he sees a helping hand," Brooks said. "He'll be outside and he likes playing with ratchet straps, so he'll yell over to me to help him load bikes into his dad's truck. It's not fun not being able to do something, so why not help."

It wasn't until his junior year that Brooks got much playing time on varsity. He's now a staple on a Barnesville defense that has given up an average of 10 points a game this season.

"He was a slow developer," Strand said. "He just outworked the other guys at that position last year. He reads the lineman well, he studies film, he studies the game. He's not the biggest guy, fastest guy, certainly not the strongest guy, but he plays hard and with a lot of passion when he's out there."

Strand said Brooks used to try to go under blocks, but this season he goes through them.

After Memorable Season, Strand Tends To His Health

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there at all times."

Strand said his surgery is called a PFO closure, which is short for an esoteric medical term. He was born with the condition, which never showed any signs until his stroke.

"When you're born there's a gap between two sides of your heart, which eventually closes up," Strand said. "But for 10 to 15 percent of people it doesn't close up. So as your body produces blood clots, which is very normal for the body to do, those generally go to your lungs, which absorb the clots. When you have a hole in one side of the heart, it doesn't filter through and goes directly to the brain. So whenever you hear of a relatively young person having a stroke, more times than not it's because of that chamber never sealing and the heart throwing a clot into the brain."

Strand said the surgical procedure involves going through the leg and the mouth in order to put a patch on both sides of the heart chamber. He's hopeful the tingling and numbness he was feeling before the surgery will eventually go away.

After a week off, Strand looks to be back in his office tending to administrative duties and looking forward to the 2019 season, which he again has high hopes for.

"I don't have to talk them into setting the bar high for themselves," Strand said. "They set their own bar. This is a great group to coach

The scene of his dad's accident is not a place that Brooks tries to avoid either. He remembers it, but there's more to him.

"I try not to think of it," Brooks said. "It's weird to say, but it doesn't bother me anymore."

Life has gone on for Brooks and his family. Tanya is engaged to a man Brooks considers a role model. Brooks loves to hunt and fish with him.

"He's a great man," Brooks said. "He came into my life and has taken on that father role."

This doesn't mean Brooks never thinks of his father. He's been told his dad was quiet but funny and always tried to help people. Brooks hopes he shares those qualities. Something Brooks has always wondered was what his dad would think watching him play football for Barnesville.

"He'd be very proud, very proud," Tanya said. "Knowing that your kid has done so well in life, it makes you proud. You're happy that they've made the right choices and done well and you hope they continue to make good choices."

because he got along so well. There's no bickering or fighting, they just get along. I've had teams where seniors think they should run everything. A lot of our younger kids play well, and the older kids accept them. There's great chemistry

Three Generations On The Gridiron

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to a fever pitch. His father walked up to him and said. "Dean, if you get thrown out of this game, it'll be the last one you play in this season."

Moments later, Dean was back on the field and running interference for halfback Ray Severson,

"He gets tackled, and when I got there, the defensive guy from Hawley is hitting Ray on the back of his knees with his fists. I grabbed him by the helmet and pulled him off and almost did something I shouldn't have. If I had hit the Hawley player, I probably wouldn't have played the rest of the year."

By the end of the game, Dean recalled, eight Hawley players and five Barnesville players were ejected by the officials.

Dean was a senior that particular season, which saw about 70 kids out for the team.

"The younger guys who practiced against us were called the hamburger squad," Dean said. "Coach Kerlin told those guys 'the harder you practice against the older guys, the better you'll be.' And they played hard against us."

Adam and his teammates spend a lot of time in the weight room, something that BHS didn't have 57 years ago.

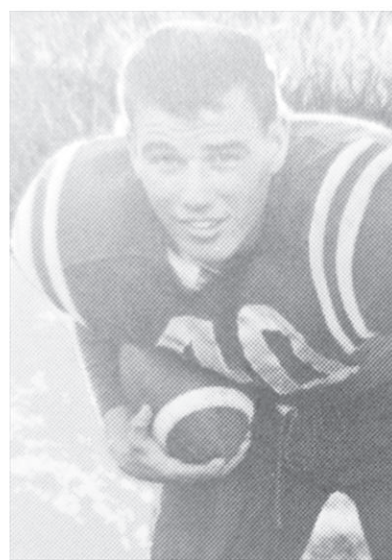
"The strongest players on our team were the potato farmers," Dean said. "But I think the kids today are stronger because of that weight training."

"Everything else being equal, the kids who show up in the weight room are the ones who'll be getting into the game," said Dean's son Ryan, who played for the Trojans in the 1980s from seventh grade through his senior year.

The teams Ryan played on didn't have the same level of success of the 1961 team or the current Trojan team. From playing cornerback his junior year, he took over quarterback duties as a senior and wore number 5, the same number Adam wore this past season.

"We were very competitive," Ryan said. "But I think the best we did was around .500."

From Dean's senior year to when Ryan played, high school football went through transformations with



DEAN TONSFELDT
1961 TROJAN TEAM



RYAN TONSFELDT
1989 TROJAN TEAM



ADAM TONSFELDT
2018 TROJAN TEAM

equipment, training, post-season play, off-season camps and parental involvement.

When asked if he gave Ryan advice, Dean said, "I gave him encouragement and told him that, as a backfield player, it's better to hit than get hit."

Both Dad Ryan and Grandfather Dean agreed it's sometimes harder to sit in the stands and watch your son play than it is to actually be in the thick of it on the field.

"I felt like Ryan does now," Dean said.

"The amount of parental involvement was higher by the time I played," Ryan said. "My dad was super busy, but he came to every game. I try not to be the type of parent who gets over-invested with their student athlete. Bryan Strand and his coaching staff do a great job, so I do my best to stay out of it. The level of trust I have with the coaches is pretty high."

Ryan did his share of volunteer coaching in Adam's younger days, and they still watch game films together.

"Mostly, I try to be encouraging," Ryan said. "And I know Adam is always looking to be a better player, so he doesn't mind if I tell him one thing he can do differently."

Adam was sidelined when he broke his thumb during a pre-season scrimmage, missing the first two varsity games and going in on defense before taking the QB reins for the sixth regular season game.

As the third generation of Trojan football players in the Tonsfeldt family, Adam is well aware of the Barnesville athletic tradition.

"I like that tradition," Adam said. "We have a lot of the same people coming out to watch the games year after year. The support we have here is incredible. It's a real adrenalin rush when you hear the fans out there cheering for the team. There's probably not a better traveling team in the region because we've had away games where our fans outnumber the home team's fans."

Being pumped for the game can mean the difference between a win and a loss. But Adam cautions, "Sometimes you almost have to bring your excitement level down a bit. Once you get a few plays in, you usually get more focused."

Like his grandfather's team, the 2018 Trojans used the T-formation, which works well with Adam's 5-foot, 8-inch stature.

After the Trojans beat Minneapolis North in the semifinals,



THANK YOU
Saundra Snobl
and
Holly Inniger
for taking pictures
of the players and
games throughout
the season.

From The Staff At
The Barnesville
Record-Review

Coach Strand said his team's offensive formation was confusing to the defense. "It's really hard to find our quarterback because he's so short," Strand said.

Whether their respective team went undefeated, played evenly through the season, or played at U.S. Bank Stadium for the state championship, Dean, Ryan and Adam Tonsfeldt have a lot of

memories of the joys and sorrows of playing on a Trojan football team.

"Grandpa and Dad tell a lot of stories about the teams they played on," Adam said. "So I know that it meant a lot to them."

Still a sophomore with two seasons ahead of him, Adam will continue to collect a stadium full of memories that he says, "I'll pass along to my own kids."

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Good Job Trojans!

PROCLAMATION

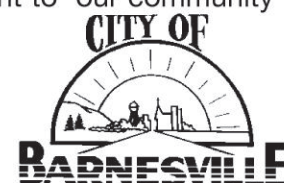
- WHEREAS, During the 2018 season the Barnesville High School Trojan Football Team made school history by their accomplishments on the gridiron;
- WHEREAS, The Barnesville Trojans went through the entire regular football season with only a single loss, establishing a record of 4-2 at the end of regular season play;
- WHEREAS, The Barnesville Trojans won the Section 6A Title by defeating the Frazee Hornets, the Roseau Rams and then arch rival Hawley Nuggets;
- WHEREAS, The Barnesville Trojans made it farther in the state tournaments than any other team in recent history winning again Moose Lake-Willow River and then defeating Minneapolis North at US Bank Stadium;
- WHEREAS, The Barnesville Trojans displayed exceptional grit, determination and sportsmanship in their loss in the state tournament to the Caledonia Warriors;
- WHEREAS, The Barnesville Trojan Football Squad established a season record of 9-3 in advancing to the State of Minnesota tournament finals;
- WHEREAS, The entire Barnesville community is proud of the effort put forth by the team, their coaches and their fans as they have won the support of residents of the school district, alumni living out of the area and everyone associated with Barnesville High School and proud to call themselves Trojan fans;

NOW THEREFORE it is my honor as Mayor of the City of Barnesville to recognize these achievements of the Barnesville High School Trojan Football Team, their parents, Head Coach Bryan Strand and the entire coaching staff for their achievements and for the character and effort that they displayed throughout the year and in the playoffs.

It is with great pleasure that I proclaim the day of the **Trojan Football Honors Banquet** Sunday, December 16 **"BARNESVILLE TROJAN FOOTBALL DAY"**

I encourage our citizens and all BHS alumni and fans to join me in congratulating the Barnesville High School Trojan Football Squad for their outstanding 2018 season and the recognition they have brought to our community through their efforts individually and as a team.

/s/Eugene A. Prim, Mayor
City of Barnesville



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