

Gurney named league's top defender

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

Senior Jacob Gurney was named the Defensive Player of the Year in the Sky-Em League for the second year in row.

Coach Gary Thorson told *The Nugget* that the award is not only a reflection of Jacob's abilities as a player, but also a recognition of the Outlaws' defense as a whole, and how well they play together.

Sisters offense had several players selected to all-league teams.

Brady Wessel (junior) earned first-team honors as guard for the second consecutive year. Wessel was without a doubt the Outlaws' most physical lineman and, according to Thorson, a great technician.

"Brady's off-season work-ethic in the weight room — and his commitment to the program — have helped build him into an outstanding offensive lineman," said Thorson. "He has a great drive to finish his blocks."

Gurney (senior) was a first-team pick at tackle. He made the switch from an all-league guard last year to a first-team tackle this year, and didn't miss a beat.

"Along with Jacob's tremendous work-ethic and desire to excel, he is a great technician with good mobility, and that combines to make him a great tackle in our offense," Thorson said.

Senior Tyler Head earned first-team tight end for the second consecutive year, and is one of the team's best athletes.

"Tyler has improved his blocking over last year,

possesses good hands, and has had a big impact on our offense," said Thorson.

Jacob Stevens (junior) rounded out the first-league offensive players at running back.

Thorson said, "While a bit under-sized at his position, 'Little Stevie,' is a tough runner that hits the hole hard, and has been consistent all year long. He has the speed to take it all the way every time he touches the ball, and has broken off several long runs for the Outlaws this past season."

Christopher Luz (junior) earned second-team slot-back. Luz was one of the league's most explosive players, and has become a big play threat in the Outlaws offense.

"Christopher is one of the team's most improved players," said Thorson. "He has great hands, and is very elusive once he has the ball in his hands. He is a consistent playmaker for us. He also spent some time at quarterback for us as well. He's a very intelligent football player who understands the game, and what we are trying to do on both sides of the ball."

Sisters had two players recognized at quarterback. Johnny Gurney was a second-team pick at the position and Tanner Head earned honorable-mention.

Thorson told *The Nugget* that to have two players earn honors at the same position speaks to the abilities of the two team leaders.

"Johnny has been a wild-cat quarterback in our offense, and his running ability has added another dimension to the Outlaws' offense," said Thorson. "Tanner received

honors at quarterback last year as well, and he's one of the best throwers in our conference. Tanner has had several outstanding games for us this fall. He's shown amazing character and desire in coming back from injuries, and has earned the respect of not only his teammates, but others throughout the league as well."

Jaden Condel (junior) was honorable-mention at center on offense. Condel played at both center and guard for the Outlaws, but his play at center has been critical in the development of the Outlaws' offense.

"Jaden has a great practice work-ethic and a desire to excel, and that shows every Friday night for Jaden," said Thorson. "He's a smart and heady player who has developed into a great technician."

Specialist all-league recognition went to Christopher Luz and Zach Morgan.

Luz was named first-team kick-returner. Christopher is explosive and dangerous, and returned several punts and kickoffs for scores and is a major weapon in the Outlaws' special teams play.

"Christopher is very shifty and elusive," said Thorson. "He has a great knack for making people miss, and is a threat to score every time the ball is kicked to him."

Morgan (junior) was a second-team punter. Zach has been consistent in punting the ball for the Outlaws all year long, and has been a weapon



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Jacob Gurney's defensive skills earned him top honors in league.

in the Outlaws' special teams' play.

"Zach has learned to place his punts where he needs to," said Thorson. "He's saved us a few times with his athleticism when the snaps were off, and made great plays in getting the punts off."

On defense, senior Tyler Head was a first-team outside-linebacker pick, a repeat for this award for Head at this position. Tyler has started at this position for the Outlaws for the past three years.

"Tyler has been very tough against the run for the Outlaws from his rover position, and his athleticism shows in coverage as well," said Thorson. "His knowledge and understanding of the game at this position shows every week for us and he consistently made

big plays for us every Friday night."

Three defensive linemen, Brady Wessel, Joel Miller, and Austin Lake all earned spots on all-league teams.

Wessel was selected first-team, Miller earned second-team, and Lake was honorable-mention.

Thorson told *The Nugget* that the success of the Outlaws defense and linebackers was due to the work of the defensive line, which included Wessel, Miller, and Lake.

"Each of these guys did a great job of drawing double teams and allowing the linebackers behind them to flow and fly to the ball," said Thorson. "Brady is the most experienced and physical of

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