

Gurney brothers will play football for George Fox University

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The Gurney brothers have been stand-out athletes for the Outlaws for the past several years and will take their skills, talents, and abilities to the next level. On June 6 twins Jacob and Jonny signed an official letter of intent to play football for George Fox University.

Jacob and Jonny always wanted to play football, but the earliest they could start in Sisters was fourth grade flag football. They told *The Nugget* they would have loved to play tackle but didn't want to travel to Bend.

Both boys shared memories from those early years.

Jonny said, "We didn't win one game that first year we played flag football. But the second year we got to have all the same players back on our team and we won every game, and went on to win the championship. We had a solid group: us, the Head boys (Tanner and Tyler) Ryan Cook, and Tucker Brink, and we stayed together all through high school."

Jacob said, "In sixth grade we got to play tackle football, and I wanted to play tight end and catch the ball. In our first game I only got to play defense. In our second game, I got to play tight end for one play and got five yards. I was so stoked! In our third game, we lost our left tackle so the coach decided my efforts would be better spent at offensive line, and I've played there ever since."

The Gurney brothers continued to enjoy the game, and played all through middle and high school. They both were recognized by the Sky-Em League for their outstanding play this past year.

Jacob was this year's Sky-Em Defensive Player of the Year. He was a first-team

offensive tackle selection, and is a two-time MVP at linebacker in the Sky-Em Conference.

Coach Gary Thorson said, "Jacob is physically and mentally tough, and very reliable. He has a tremendous love for the game of football and it shows in how he practices and plays on Friday night. He has a great practice work ethic that rubs off on others, and is a leader by example."

Jonny was named second-team quarterback and was a second team selection at linebacker.

Thorson said, "Jonny is extremely versatile and one of our best athletes the last few years. Gaining honors at both these positions is in itself an example of his abilities. Jonny was a wildcat quarterback in our offense, and his running ability added another dimension to the Outlaws' offense this past season. Along with his brother, and Ryan Cook, probably the best high school trio of linebackers I got to work with in all my years as a high school coach."

The Gurneys have many memories of their final year as Outlaws, and shared one highlight that stood out among the rest.

Jonny said, "It was our game against Sutherlin, and one of our easier games this year. I was kind of dinged up from our previous game, and I only got one play in the entire game. Coach put me in

as receiver. The quarterback hiked the ball and pitched it to the running back at the left. I ran back to the right, and the running back pitched me the ball. I threw it to the receiver (Christopher Luz), who ran 80 yards for the touchdown. We almost got Play of the Week on the news channel, but we came in second."

Jacob said, "The highlight of my senior year was my pick six (interception returned for a touchdown) against Crook County."

Jacob and Jonny have always wanted to play at the next level, and sent football videos to several colleges, but never made a commitment. Then, George Fox University's head coach contacted Thorson about the Gurneys.

One of the Bruins' offensive coordinators came to Sisters to meet with the twins. After several phone calls, the brothers made an official visit to the campus. Jacob and Jonny toured the campus and football facilities. They met with the coaches and players, and even spent an evening bowling with them.

While still on campus, both boys were offered a spot on the team; Jacob at linebacker and Jonny at wide receiver.

The George Fox football program is still in its infancy, and just wrapped up their fourth year in the league. Even though they're a start-up program they tell their

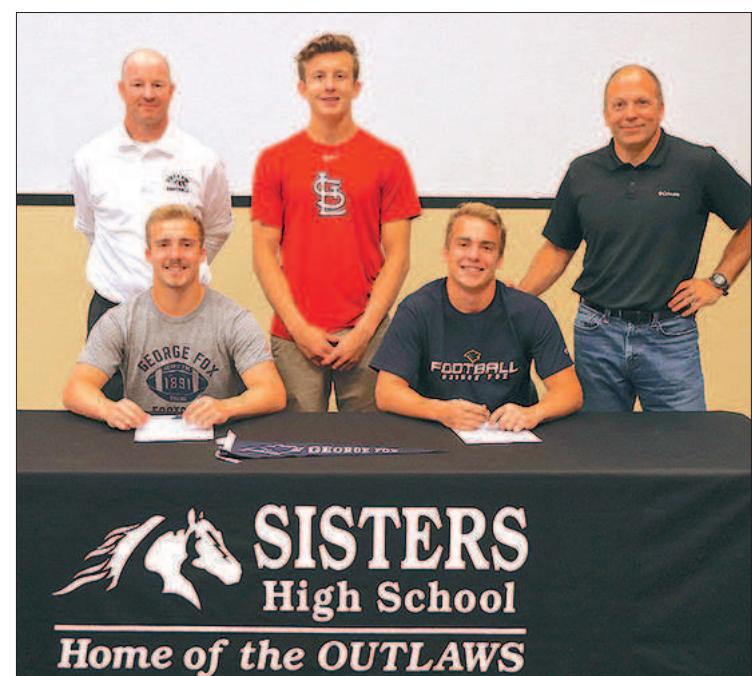


PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Jonny and Jake Gurney signed to play together at George Fox University.

players they're going to play like a championship program.

Jacob and Jonny shared how they feel about playing at the collegiate level.

Jacob said, "I'm excited and nervous. I'm excited to be playing with people who love the sport and will give their all to the team. And I'm nervous about the better competition."

Jonny commented, "It's exciting because it's the next step in the sport. Everything is bigger and players are better. I know it's going to be a lot of hard work."

The Gurneys told *The Nugget* that they chose George Fox because it's a good Christian-based school and they'll be close to home.

They also are looking forward to small class sizes where they will be able to know their teachers on a personal level.

Jonny plans to pursue a degree in business administration.

"I want to be a good business manager," said Jonny. "I love being around people and talking with people."

Jacob plans to get a Bachelor of Science degree, and then go into pre-med. Eventually, Jacob wants to become an anesthesiologist.

"It's going to be a high-level game and it's going to be risky," said Jacob. "But I've always loved to care for people. All the years of study are going to be worth it."

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