



Nathan Walker reflects on being selected for all-state at wide receiver

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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CARROLLTON - Whenever the Carrollton Hawks qualify for the football playoffs, they have a tradition, which is most likely shared by several other teams across the country. Several team members bleach their hair.

Nathan Walker was one of those participants.

Although he's a natural brunet, it's been six weeks, and he still looks like a punk rocker want-a-be.

"I don't care about it," Walker insists. "I haven't done anything to re-dye it. I used two boxes of hair dye on it, but my roots are growing back."

In time the brown hair will return and so will Walker on the gridiron next fall. As for now the junior wide receiver/defensive back can warm in the glow of Carrollton's accomplishments, plus his achievements.

On Nov 19 Walker was awarded to the prestigious Illinois Football Coaches Association (IHSFCA) Class 1A All-State Team as a wide receiver. Additional honors are First Team All-WIVC as a wide receiver and defensive back.

"I didn't think I was going to get it and towards the end of the year I saw my numbers, and they were pretty high. Higher than a lot of other people's and then I thought maybe I could get it."

In the off-season, Walker did what every athlete does to be successful, and that is get in the weight room as much as possible while partaking in 7-on-7s to improve his wide receiver mechanics.

"I hit the weight room pretty much every other day as team thing, and then we did a lot of 7-on-7's. We were winning those, and we started thinking we could be good because we beat 4A schools. We were doing pretty good."

During the season, Walker caught 59 passes for 1,155 yards and 15 touchdowns. Overall he tallied 1,737 all-purpose yards, 17 touchdowns, and 110 points. On defense, he finished with 66 total tackles, three interceptions, and three fumble recoveries.

His catches, yards, and touchdowns are all new school single-season records as well as new WIVC South records. As for the whole WIVC, Walker is all alone now in catches for a season but is still behind Unity-Payson's Cory Miller who tallied 1,156 yards and 21 touchdowns in 2016.

Walker is on pace to break all of the wide receiver career records in Hawks history and the WIVC South.

Now Walker joins an elite club of earning all-state in the calendar year for baseball (center fielder) and football. He was also stunned when he found out about the

announcement then, but now he's more shocked about football, and most would be too. During Walker's freshman season in baseball, he batted 305., was tied for second on the team in RBI and hit two home runs, which is a year anybody would be proud of.

"In baseball, I kept track of my numbers throughout the year, and they were pretty good. That one wasn't as big of a surprise as this one was."

However, in football, he came out of nowhere.

Walker barely saw the field last year though, he knew he would be a starter, and got a growth spurt in the off-season, but the junior never saw this kind of success coming.

Another player who came out of nowhere was his quarterback, Hunter Flowers. Just a sophomore he threw for 2,250 yards with 34 touchdowns and ten interceptions and nearly half of his yards and touchdowns were to Walker.

"has a cannon. He can throw it a long way, and he's pretty accurate," Walker said. "In that Triopia game he was on the, and he had to throw across his body and threw it 50-some yards. I was like three yards out, and I probably should've scored."

With the high school basketball season in full-swing now, Walker has his full attention on the sport as he is a starter for a young Hawks team that is currently 1-1. He's averaging ten points so far, and before you think he could get all-state in basketball, he'd be the first to say not a chance.

We shall see.