

MAKING EVERY INCH COUNT: Jacob Smith uses dedication to overcome all odds in sports

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Size matters sometimes in athletics, but for Carrollton's 5-foot-7 Jacob Smith, he makes the most of every inch and ounce of his slender frame.

Smith, a high school quarterback, is a throwback to days in 1984, when Boston College Heisman Trophy quarterback Doug Flutie captured a national audience. Flutie, only 5-

foot-9, was the top quarterback in college football in 1984 and also starred in the Canadian Football League and American Football League, defying all odds.

For Smith, he applies the same approach as Flutie in every sport, overcoming his size with his heart and intense dedication.

Carrollton's head football coach Nick Flowers said Smith has defied the odds and he believes he will continue to do so at Lindenwood University in Belleville. Smith recently signed a letter of intent to Lindenwood, accepting a football scholarship.

"He is one of the kids I will use as an example the rest of my coaching career if someone tells me a kid can't do something," Flowers said. "He was a kid people told wouldn't be successful, even going into last season. He is academically and athletically All-State and you couldn't ask for a finer student athlete and kid than Jacob Smith. I am proud of him and his family."

Smith led Carrollton's football team to a state championship berth for the first time ever this season. He applies the same principles in the classroom and was named a prestigious Illinois Academic All-State award winner recently, carrying a 3.96 academic average on a 4.0 scale. He was also Illinois Football Coaches Association All-State pick at quarterback.

Flowers said Jacob has followed his nephew – Carrollton graduate Jordan Harr - as an Academic All-State athlete.

"It is a very difficult award to win and he is well deserving," Flowers said. "Jacob has excelled in both the classroom and playing well on the field. I am excited for him to be able to play under coach Fisher at Lindenwood."

Flowers said he thinks Jacob will fit the Lindenwood offensive scheme because he can get outside the pocket. The coach said he could also see Jacob play some slot receiver with his good hands and athleticism.

Jacob said he was totally impressed by the Lindenwood coaching staff in the way they recruited him. He wants to eventually be a football coach and Lindenwood appears to be a place where he can learn more about that with a solid head coach and offensive coordinator in place.

"They were confident in the way I played on the field and even as a 5-foot-7 guy, I can still play quarterback at the next level," Jacob said. "I enjoyed that aspect when they recruited me. I see myself as a quarterback, even though I am not the typical size. I will make up for it if I get outside the pocket."



Jacob completed 287 passes in 441 attempts for 4,512 yards in his Carrollton career for 52 touchdowns. He was 139 of 188 passing for 2,476 yards this past season, a .739 completion rate, and tossed for 26 touchdowns and a quarterback rating of 146.5. He rushed 141 times for 754 yards and 15 touchdowns this past year.

Something that impresses Flowers the most is how Jacob helps the other younger quarterbacks, even occasionally attending Junior Football League practices. He also continually helps other players with their studies if they need some free tutoring.

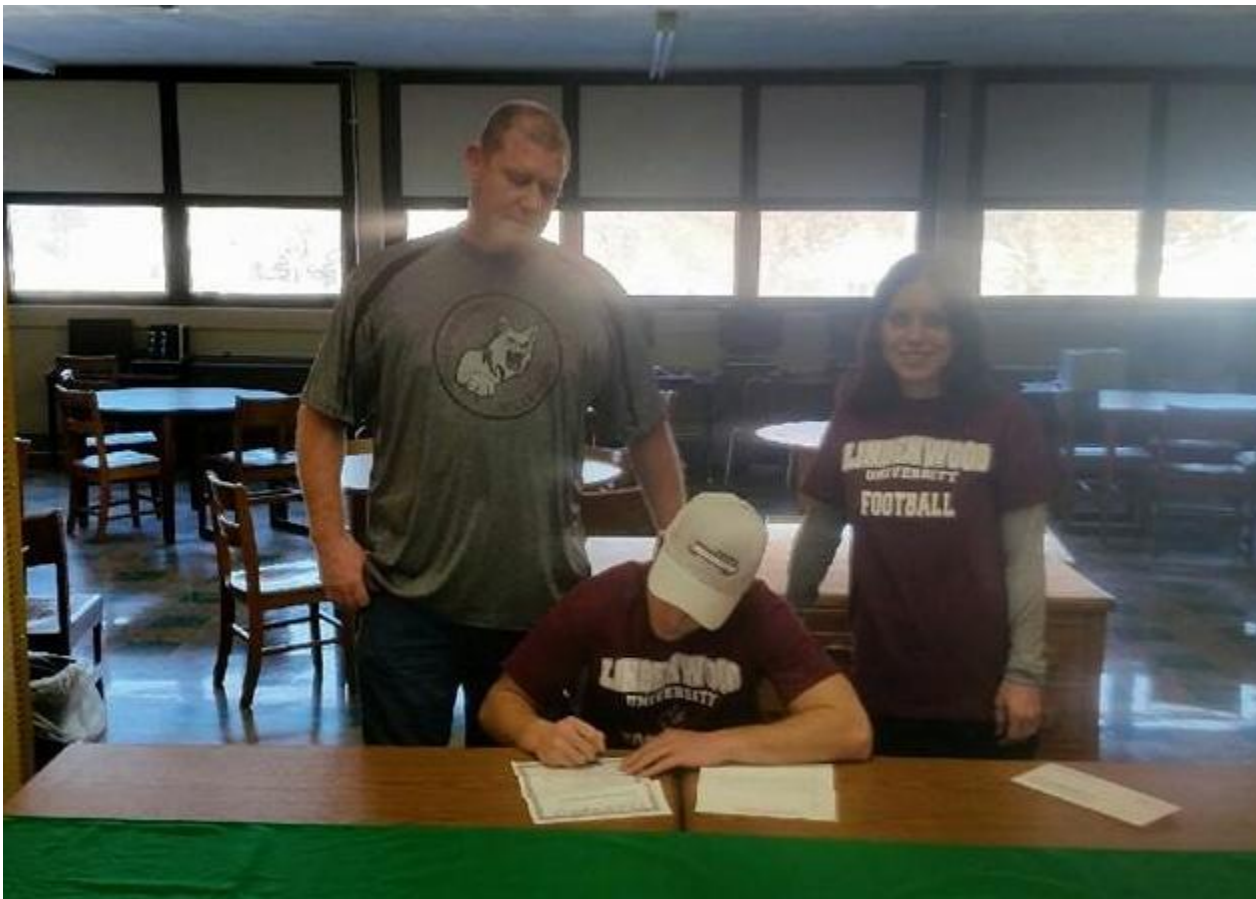
“I am always willing to help anybody if they are struggling,” he said. “I am especially sympathetic to the guys in athletics. I know how much time sports take up and sometimes makes it more difficult in the classroom.”

Jacob was a starter in basketball and now is playing baseball on the Hawks team as a shortstop and pitcher.

Through his years as a high school football and basketball player, Jacob always tried to keep a few simple things in his mind: “I tried not to listen to people who said I wasn’t big enough. I always thought I had a good idea of what I can do and I try to do that to the best of my ability.”

Jacob said he loved growing up in Carrollton and playing in front of the hometown fans.

“The community is great for sports and in general a great place to live,” he said. “The support of the fans is wonderful.”



Jacob said he owes much of his success in both athletics and the classroom to his parents – Luke and Rhonda Smith. Rhonda is an assistant principal. Jacob Smith said he is also fortunate he had significant support of his grandparents, Lyndell and Sally Smith and Ron and Carolyn Foiles.

“My grandparents are always at all my events,” Jacob said. “They sat at half court every time and were there at home basketball games an hour before waiting for the game to start. I have a great family network and support system here in Carrollton.”