

Long remembers community support

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First, Clyde coach Ryan Carter helped the Fliers establish history as a senior tight end/defensive lineman.

Fremont Ross coach Chad Long then helped Clyde take it one step further as a junior safety, with a Division III state championship in 1995.

The Fliers qualified for the postseason for the first time in 1994. They won the first four playoff games in program history, before finishing runners-up in the state.

"We were 10-0 my junior year," Carter said. "That was probably the best team. We didn't make the playoffs. When we got in my senior year, it was a special occasion.

"It wasn't hard for me," Carter said of missing the crown by one year. "All those kids on our team as a junior were great kids. I had a redshirt my first year (in college). I was able to watch that game.

"It was a cool experience. I was happy for those kids, the school and Coach (Bob) Bishop."

Fremont Ross football coach Chad Long graduated from Clyde in 1997. He was a safety in 1995, after intercepting 13 passes as a sophomore.

"Enjoy the moment and cherish the moment," he said. "It doesn't happen often. Cherish, enjoy and remember the moment, win or lose."

Carter headed to Ball State as a defensive lineman, before shifting to offensive tackle. Long continued his career at Bowling Green State University.

"He had a huge body with soft hands," Long said of Carter's days at tight end. "He played a little defense."

Carter was a two-way starter on the line. He finished at Ball State in 2000.

"That was fun," Long said of playing against one another in the Mid-American Conference.

As coach of the third team to reach the state final and a player on the first, Carter has a unique perspective.

"I talked to them from

both angles,” he said. “I went through it, I watched it and now I’m a coach. The memories are better if you win it. Those (1995) guys have better memories. The year after us has better stories.”

The Fliers’ fire truck escort through Green Springs brought back memories for Long. He also remembers candle-lit Route 20, seemingly from Bellevue to Clyde.

“The community support and what they’re doing for these guys is always memorable,” Long said. “That’s what I remember the most. The community is excited. Not just Clyde. Lots of people come to see because Clyde usually gets the furthest around here.”



Clyde graduate Chad Long MATTHEW HORN



Clyde coach Ryan Carter yells instructions as time runs out. DOUG HISE

It's been 24 years, however, since Clyde played for a state championship.

"Obviously, we're here," Fliers quarterback Ryan Lozier said. "We're one of the better teams in school history. But how cool would it be to be the second Clyde team to win it. Hopefully our town and the surrounding area come out to support us."

He knows that won't be a problem.

"The community is awesome," Lozier said. "The support when you hear that roar. The escort through town (Saturday). It was 12:30 a.m. and there were more people outside than at 12:30 p.m. It's a good feeling how proud they are."

"It's hard work rewarded. This didn't just start. It's not a short journey. The senior group worked about 10 years together to get here."

Carter was already Clyde's varsity boys basketball coach

when he took the football helm in 2013. He coached both teams for one year.

"I was helping with the interview process to hire a new coach," Carter said. "It came to a point where they turned to me and asked me to do it for a year. That was a tough year. But we beat (Toledo Central Catholic's) DeShone Kizer in regional and went to the final four."

"They came to me in the offseason, 'Would you...?' It was a better situation for me at the time. I gave up basketball. It's worked out."

It certainly has. The Fliers would like to help Carter take that last step this time.

"He told us there would be media and attention this week," Lozier said. "Enjoy the moment. Not everybody gets to do this, but the main goal is to win the game. We're here for a reason."

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