

2018 MERCURY FALL ALL-AREA » FOOTBALL

BORN FOR THIS

WITH A FOOTBALL FUTURE IN HIS BLOOD, RYAN BODOLUS WENT ABOVE AND BEYOND WHILE LEADING POTTS GROVE TO 12-2 YEAR



THOMAS NASH - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Pottsgrove senior Ryan Bodolus is the 2018 Mercury All-Area Football Player of the Year. Below, Bodolus (81) forces a fumble by Bishop Shanahan quarterback Charlie Maddocks in the second half of their District 1-4A playoff game, a game Bodolus called the most memorable of his career.

By Rob Senior
For Digital First Media
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Family history and genetics predetermined that Ryan Bodolus would become a football player.

The hard work, determination, leadership, and championships? Those were all his ideas.

Bodolus, a senior tight end/defensive end for Pottsgrove, paced the Falcons' stingy defense this year with 75 tackles (32 for loss) and an astounding 18 sacks. But it was his sheer dominance on a play-by-play basis that helped Bodolus stand out as the 2018 Mercury All-Area Football Player of the Year.

"When you look at the tape, (Ryan) shows up on every single play," said Pottsgrove head coach

Bill Hawthorne. "His motor is absolutely relentless, which isn't as common as some people think in a player of this caliber."

That motor powered the Falcons to a 12-2 finish this season, which included their third consecutive District 1 Class 4A title and featured the school's first-ever state playoff victory, a 14-10 slugfest over District 4's Jersey Shore.

It's been a lifelong journey to this point for Ryan, whose father Dave coached for years at St. Pius X in Pottstown from 1995-2001 before moving on to Daniel Boone from 2003-2011. Even in those days, young Ryan couldn't stay away from the football field.

"I'd serve as the waterboy, or I'd hang around the school or the field,

BODOLUS » PAGE 4



"To me, Ryan Bodolus epitomizes what I want Pottsgrove football to be. He lays it on the line on the field, he's a great representative of our program in our community, and he's a top-notch student in our classrooms. ... I'm very fortunate to be around Ryan Bodolus. In all sincerity, if my own son grows up to be like Ryan, I'll consider myself a successful father."

— Pottsgrove head coach Bill Hawthorne

NFL: EAGLES

Birds' backs against wall with Texans in town

By Bob Grotz
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PHILADELPHIA » Chris Long opened eyes last week rallying his teammates around Eagles quarterback Nick Foles.

Long constructed a locker room display featuring memorabilia of

Foles including a personally autographed copy of "Believe It," the best-selling book the quarterback authored after becoming MVP of Super Bowl LII.

If the Eagles don't believe, there's not much of a tomorrow because it's going to take all of their energy to defeat the talent-laden Houston Texans Sunday at Lincoln Financial Field (1

p.m., CBS, WIP 94.1-FM).

A loss by the Eagles (7-7) combined with a Minnesota Vikings (7-6-1) triumph over the Detroit Lions and it's clean out your locker time.

But back to the Foles' shrine. It isn't the first time the Eagles tried the locker routine to pump themselves with emotion to win a big game.

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Eagles fans are hoping Nick Foles (9) has another late-season miracle in him. It'll take a win over the Houston Texans (Sunday, 1 p.m.) to keep the dream going.

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MERCURY FALL ALL-AREA

Mercury All-Area Football Teams

FIRST TEAM



ENGRO, SPRING-FORD



MARTIN, OWEN J. ROBERTS



TAYLOR, POTTS GROVE



BONANNI, SPRING-FORD



SKARBEK, POPE JOHN PAUL II



BODOLUS, POTTS GROVE



KOLANDER, SPRING-FORD



MAROTTA, PERKIOMEN VALLEY



SEAMAN, POTTS GROVE



ADAMS, POTTS GROVE



SNYDER, POTTS TOWN



HINE, PHOENIXVILLE

Offense

QB—Ryan Engro, Spring-Ford
 RB—Marcus Martin, Owen J. Roberts
 RB—Isaiah Taylor, Pottsgrove
 WR—Dante Bonanni, Spring-Ford
 WR—Steve Skarbek, Pope John Paul II
 TE—Ryan Bodolus, Pottsgrove
 OL—Ryan Kolander, Spring-Ford
 OL—Will Marotta, Perkiomen Valley
 OL—Darrian Seaman, Pottsgrove
 OL—Justin Adams, Pottsgrove
 OL—Destyn Snyder, Pottstown
 OL—Tyler Hine, Phoenixville

Defense

DE—Ryan Bodolus, Pottsgrove
 DE—Aidan Hayward, Owen J. Roberts
 DT—Tonee Ellis, Methacton
 DT—Araldo Montagano, Owen J. Roberts
 LB—Nick DelRomano, Spring-Ford
 LB—Hunter Ricci, Perkiomen Valley
 LB—Marc Picariello, Upper Merion
 CB—Isaiah Domine, Perkiomen Valley
 CB—Jimai Springfield, Pottsgrove
 S—Austin Rowley, Perkiomen Valley
 S—Nehemiah Figueroa, Pottstown

Specialists

K—Taylor Smith, Spring-Ford
 P—Michael Sereny, Pottsgrove
 KR—Jimai Springfield, Pottsgrove

SECOND TEAM

Offense

QB—Kamal Gray, Pope John Paul II
 RB—Jamie Moccia, Boyertown
 RB—Tanner Vanderslice, Daniel Boone
 WR—Isaiah Domine, Perkiomen Valley
 WR—Christian Thomas, Norristown
 TE—Justin Mitala, Pope John Paul II
 OL—Marc Picariello, Upper Merion
 OL—Nate Tornetta, Pottsgrove
 OL—Tyler Wilhelm, Perkiomen Valley
 OL—Colby Stahl, Methacton
 OL—Araldo Montagano, Owen J. Roberts
 OL—Logan Hollingsworth, Upper Perk

Defense

DE—Kevin Jainlett, Upper Merion
 DE—Nate Orkfrizt-Robinson, Spring-Ford
 DT—Jacob Sterling, Perkiomen Valley
 DT—Justin Adams, Pottsgrove
 LB—Zach Lomonaco, Perkiomen Valley
 LB—James Albert, Spring-Ford
 LB—Malik Smith, Perkiomen Valley
 CB—Steve Brown, Methacton
 CB—Ahmad Stone, Upper Merion
 S—Alex Koretke, Spring-Ford
 S—Tommy Buchert, Daniel Boone

HONORABLE MENTION

Boyertown: Blaise Caroselli, Dylan Robertson, Connor Rohrbach, Noah Segal
 Daniel Boone: Logan Dallas, Jake Dwinchick, Chase Lacey, Matt Okuniewski, Keith Taney
 Hill School: Gernard Finney, Naz Higgins
 Methacton: Larry Dickerson, Gary Knox, Will Roese, Brett Romano, Mike Torcini
 Norristown: Daniel Watson.
 Owen J. Roberts: Cooper Chamberlain, Savaughn Davidheiser, Dante DeNardo, Hunter Hinrichs.
 Perkiomen Valley: Doug Lingo, Jon Moccia, Cole Peterlin, Jake Sturm.
 Phoenixville: Travis Pannella, Connor Patania, Alex Washington.
 Pope John Paul II: Sean Anderson, Bryan Dendig, Matt Dobrowolski, Justin Kormos, CJ McCafferty, AJ Natale.
 Pottstown: Daniel Darden, Dereck Darden, Jon Oister.
 Pottsgrove: Rylee Howard, Nijjer Owens, Jay Sisko, Khaliym Smith.
 Spring-Ford: Stephen Brill, Walt Molishus, Blaize Scarcelle, Blake Terrizzi, Nick Uba, Leo Van Hulst.
 Upper Merion: Marc Clayton, Taiyan Lobban, Zaire Savage, Dontae Slocum.
 Upper Perkiomen: Tyrese Reid, Luke Whary.

COACH OF THE YEAR

Rob Flowers, Daniel Boone



HAYWARD, OWEN J. ROBERTS



ELLIS, METHACTON



MONTAGANO, OWEN J. ROBERTS



DELROMANO, SPRING-FORD



RICCI, PERKIOMEN VALLEY



PICARIELLO, UPPER MERION



DOMINE, PERKIOMEN VALLEY



SPRINGFIELD, POTTS GROVE



ROWLEY, PERKIOMEN VALLEY



FIGUEROA, POTTS TOWN



SMITH, SPRING-FORD



SERENY, POTTS GROVE

Bodolus

FROM PAGE 1

see the guys in the weight room," he recalled. "I think it definitely played a role in building my work ethic."

Dave would step down at Boone after the 2011 season when brother Tommy Bodolus was named Mercury All-Area Player of the Year as Boone quarterback, right around the time Ryan started his own football journey. The family would move into the Pottsgrove School District just as Ryan was ready to begin his high school days.

"I played 9th grade ball," remembered Ryan, "then in 10th grade, I started out on JV before the starting defensive end got injured. That gave me my first opportunity to start."

Bodolus never looked back, notching about a dozen tackles and a couple sacks his sophomore year before exploding onto the scene in 2017, leading the Falcons with 70 tackles (28 for loss) and 17 sacks as a junior.

The numbers were eye-popping, but the breakout season wasn't too surprising to anyone who knew Ryan Bodolus, who dedicated himself to a training regimen before the 2017 season that made his ascent possible.

"I just want to do a little more each year," he said. "Each time I go to the weight room, I try to stay a little longer. When I'm working outside, I'm doing more bag drills, more conditioning. I added more and more as time went on."

Coming into the 2018 season, Bodolus wasn't sneak-

ing up on anyone. Opposing coaches game-planned extensively around the defensive end.

"The fact of the matter is, whether they'd double him or try another tactic — it didn't really stop Ryan," Hawthorne said. "In 21 years of coaching, I've never seen anyone as relentless as Ryan on the field, or in the weight room."

"His strength, lateral quickness, and explosion off the ball made Ryan Bodolus the most dominant player we faced all year," agreed Rory Graver, head coach of Pope John Paul II. "But most impressive was his motor — he brought the same intensity on the first snap of the game as he did late in the fourth quarter."

Bill Hawthorne took over this past season for the retired Rick Pennypacker — his own former coach — as the first new coach at Pottsgrove in nearly three decades. From a player's standpoint, Bodolus said he didn't notice much of a difference through the coaching transition. Hawthorne primarily echoed those sentiments, but placed the credit on the shoulders of Bodolus and his classmates.

"I can remember my first day after being named head coach, I headed into the weight room, and there's Ryan teaching younger players how to lift," the coach recalled. "I was extremely fortunate to have this particular senior class for my first season as a head coach."

"Ryan's a leader by example, but this year he grew as a team leader, encouraging teammates. It helped all of us, as a coaching staff, tremendously."

Once the season be-

gan, the Falcons didn't exactly ease their way into things, welcoming District 12 front-runner West Catholic to Pennypacker Field for the opening game. After three quarters, the Falcons trailed 14-0 before converting a quick turnover and driving in the dying minutes to score and move within 14-13 with less than a minute to play. Hawthorne — in his first game in charge — went for a two-point conversion and the win and was rewarded when Isaiah Taylor ran into the end zone behind the blocking of Bodolus, Nate Tornetta, Justin Adams, and Darrian Seaman, who started on both the offensive and defensive lines for Pottsgrove.

The Falcons were tested by Frontier Division opponents Pope John Paul II and Upper Merion in the regular season, but came through when it counted most to build up a 9-0 regular season.

They would meet Perkiomen Valley in the PAC championship game for a third consecutive year. The 2016 and 2017 contests had each ended in favor of PV, meaning Bodolus and his classmates had one last chance to conquer the Vikings.

It wasn't to be. "We needed to step it up," said Bodolus after the 35-17 championship game loss. "It was disappointing, but it also woke us up before the playoffs."

The District 1 4A semifinals brought Bishop Shanahan to town on a rainy, miserable night that turned the game into a muddy mess—a situation clearly to Bodolus' liking. The senior defensive end more or less cemented his post-season honors that

night with two sacks, a fumble recovery that he returned 39 yards for a score, a blocked extra point to prevent Shanahan from tying the game late in the third quarter, and finally sealing the game with a late sack and forced fumble against Shanahan's Charlie Maddocks, cementing Pottsgrove's 14-13 victory.

"Easily, the most memorable game of my career," said Bodolus. "The weather conditions, the outcome — that's the most fun I've ever had on the football field."

The next week, the Trojans would top Pottstown for their third consecutive District 1-4A title — a great achievement for Bodolus, his classmates, and a program that's emerged as one of District 1's consistent powerhouses over his career.

But the accolades kept coming, as the next week the Falcons became the first team in school history to notch a state playoff victory, topping District 4 champion Jersey Shore 14-10 at Northern Lehigh High School on November 16.

"Anytime you're the first team in school history to accomplish something, it's special," said Bodolus. "Those are my favorite games — competitive, coming right down to the end, just like the Shanahan game."

Ultimately, Pottsgrove's record over Bodolus' final two years was 23-4 — with all four losses coming against either Perkiomen Valley or District II powerhouse Bethlehem Catholic in states. Unfortunately, that's exactly who awaited the Falcons in the state quarterfinals.

For the third straight year, the Golden Hawks of Bethlehem Catholic ended

Pottsgrove's season, this time by a final score of 58-20 that unfortunately blurs the fact that the Falcons competed gamely for three quarters, at one point just a few yards from turning it into a one-score game before injuries began to mount, and the pure size and strength of the Hawks began to emerge.

"I just wished I had one more game," said Bodolus. "But we were proud of how we played. The last couple years, we sort of got bullied by them and I felt like we quit late. Not this year — we didn't win, but we didn't lay down either."

Moving onto the next phase, Bodolus, an honor student carrying a 4.2 grade point average, is interested in a number of possible schools after graduation, both academically and athletically. Ryan plans to attain both a bachelor's and master's degree and is torn between environmental engineering and business as potential majors.

Diane Bodolus credits the strong bond between her husband and son with a good deal of Ryan's success.

"He's had a personal coach his entire career," she said, nodding in Dave's direction. "Dave instilled that work ethic in Ryan and his brothers (Tommy and Eric, former area high school players who went onto play at Bucknell and Kutztown respectively.)"

Ryan also has a 14-year old sister Courtney. Talking to the Bodoluses as a family, it's apparent that they all share in the credit for one another's successes.

"We just want to see Ryan happy," said Dave Bodolus. "And he was. He had a great time playing for Coach

Pennypacker, and this year with Bill — everything comes together your senior year. Most kids don't get to play for district titles, but that's all icing on the cake. We just want to see him working toward his goals, and the things Ryan's learned from Coach Hawthorne and Pottsgrove football are going to take him in the right direction."

It did help the former coach that his son chose football.

"I always say, if he'd chosen music or something, I wouldn't have been much help at all," laughed Dave.

"I have to add that Mom gets a lot of credit too," said Hawthorne. "I've learned that as a football coach, you can't overstate the importance of having supportive parents, who just give and do everything you can ask."

Not surprisingly, Ryan Bodolus turned the focus away from himself when asked for his most treasured high school football memories.

"My teammates and coaches — Justin Adams, Nate Tornetta, Jimai Springfield, Coach Hawthorne, Coach Bradford, Coach Lindy ... there are too many to name, but none of this success is possible without a whole team working towards the same goals."

"To me, Ryan Bodolus epitomizes what I want Pottsgrove football to be," said Hawthorne. "He lays it on the line on the field, he's a great representative of our program in our community, and he's a top-notch student in our classrooms. I'm very fortunate to be around Ryan Bodolus. In all sincerity, if my own son grows up to be like Ryan, I'll consider myself a successful father."