

# Riverview football player chasing big dreams in U.S.

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TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

There's no slowing Taylor Burns down.

His season is over, but the Riverview football player is still very much hard at work.

Burns completed his first season at Episcopal High School, a private

boarding school in Alexandria, Virginia, last month. He helped the school post a 5-3 overall record and finish among the top 30 teams in Maryland (where it plays most of its games).

The 6-foot-4, 290-pound offensive lineman is already thinking about next season, his Grade 12 campaign at Episcopal. He rises each day at 6 a.m. for early

morning football workouts.

After a full day in class, he heads to track and field practice, where he works on his shot put and discus throws.

Later in the evening, he's in the gym lifting weights.

"I don't mind being busy," said the 17-year-old Burns. "I think it develops a lot of character."

Burns is among the top ranked NCAA Canadian prospects in the Class of 2019.

He made an immediate impact at Episcopal. He earned a starting spot on the offensive line, first at centre and later at tackle.

He said his game improved from

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## SPORT

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practising daily against NCAA Division I calibre recruits and playing in a competitive Interstate Athletic Conference, which is made up of Washington, D.C.-area schools.

"This season, I wanted to play a lot more explosive - getting off the ball as fast as possible, finishing my blocks and just being the best offensive lineman I can be," he said.

"I try to bring a lot of physicality and try to bring my teammates up by providing protection for my quarterback and for my running back. I had a great season, but I can always get better. I've got to keep on working hard and get ready for next season."

A highlight of the season was playing in the 117th consecutive edition of "The Game", an annual showdown versus rival Woodberry Forest. Episcopal won 21-7.

"It was a great environment. There were 10,000 people there," said Burns, the son of former Canadian Football League defensive lineman Darin Burns of Riverview.



Riverview offensive lineman Taylor Burns, left, completed his first football season at Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia. PHOTO: SUBMITTED

Burns suited up for the Riverview High Royals for the previous two seasons after moving to Riverview in 2015 from British Columbia. Last year, he started receiving calls from prep school and college

coaches in the United States who liked his size and potential.

Burns settled on enrolling at Episcopal, a school located on 135 acres about 13 kilometres from Washington, D.C.

The school is known for producing NCAA Division I football players, including sending eight players to top U.S. college programs this season. School alumni include Arizona Republican senator John McCain, NFL running back Tim Hightower and former Los Angeles Dodgers general manager Paul DePodesta.

"It's been great. I've been able to learn a lot as a student and I've been able to learn a lot as a football player," said Burns. "It's given me opportunities to make a name for myself this off-season."

Burns has already received interest from NCAA Division I schools and has visited Syracuse University and Cornell University in New York state.

He will participate in football camps at colleges across the U.S. this coming spring and summer, before making his five official college visits in the fall of 2018.

"It's exciting, but it's also really stressful. You always have the pressure of thinking, 'If I let go now, then a coach could see it,'" said Burns. "It keeps you motivated for sure."

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