

Spartan Footballers Shine in Summer Events

By Ron Holt

Dakota Moran had high expectations for Bixby High's football program when he was named the Spartans' Director of Strength and Training earlier this summer. By his own admission, those expectations were exceeded.

"Bixby has done a great job of developing young men from the time they're little kids all the way to high school and even further than that. So, developing quality kids ... that's the first thing that came to mind," Moran said after watching the Spartans' record-setting Night of Champions recently at Lee Snider Stadium.

"The mission is staying the same, continuing to develop kids not just football players but it's a testament to them and how hard they work when they come into the room every day," added Moran, who came to Bixby from Casady High School in Oklahoma City.

"You expect them to be really hard workers because of the success Bixby has had but when you are in here and around these kids, they attack at a whole new level, and you can tell why they've had so much success. I'm proud to be here."

In front a large crowd, Bixby's football prospects displayed the progress they're making in the weight room this summer. During the Night of Champions, Bixby had 61 players power clean lift 225 pounds or above and five players lift 300 pounds or above. There were 61 personal records set, including a personal best 300-pound lift by senior standout Emory Snyder.

"I loved tonight," said Moran, a 2012 Midwest City High School graduate. "It was electric and fun for the kids. The community engagement was great. Having the community coming out here to watch these kids ... that's what it's all about."

Veteran Spartan head coach Loren Montgomery was also impressed with the Night of Champions lifting performances on a steamy evening. "It was good. I thought there were a lot of PRs ... a lot of young guys hit 225 for the first time," Montgomery said afterward.

"I was super pleased and hopefully everybody stayed healthy. There were a ton of people here watching these kids so that was good, too."

Coach Moran arrived at Bixby with an impressive resume. He earned a master's degree in health and kinesiology from Northeastern State University. Prior to working at Casady, he was assistant director of strength and nutrition at Pittsburg State (Kansas) and was director of strength and conditioning at Iowa Western Community College.

In explaining his philosophy in recent comments in June's Coach Speak newsletter, Moran said, "My philosophy is to develop the fastest, most explosive and most physical team possible while building athletes who are prepared to thrive under the stressors of competition."

Assisting coach Moran are Drake Gammon and Taylor Solomon.

The Night of Champions, which followed the finale of a three-day Bixby Youth Football Association pad camp, was the final summer activity for the Spartans.

The defending Class 6A-1 state champion Spartans continue their daily strength and conditioning workouts during the next three weeks in preparation for the start of fall football practice on Monday, August 11.

"Once we get past the Fourth of July, it's pretty much all football," coach Montgomery noted. "It's just two or three weeks when we start."

NOTEBOOK – In MaxPreps recent listing of the Top 100 Football Teams entering the 2025 season, Bixby's Spartans were ranked No. 60 nationally. Owasso was the only other Oklahoma team mentioned as the Rams were ranked No. 91. East St. Louis (Illinois), which participates in Bixby's summer team camp, was ranked No. 31. ... The annual Battle of the Burbs, the season opener featuring Bixby and Owasso, returns to the new turf at the University of Tulsa's Skelly Field at H.A. Chapman Stadium on Thursday, August 28. Last year the game was played at Owasso. "It would have been great here but there's not much room here," coach Montgomery said. "We get the gate this year. It's good for Tulsa and

a great environment for the kids.” Owasso defeated Bixby in the Battle of the Burbs last year, but the Spartans downed the Rams in overtime in the 2024 state title game ... Bixby is represented on the Daily Oklahoman’s Top 30 Players for the 2026 recruiting class. Spartan linebacker Trey McGlothlin was ranked No. 6, linebacker Cord Nolan was listed at No. 13, defensive back-wide receiver Braeden Presley was No. 14 and defensive back Emory Snyder was No. 26. The newspaper has yet to announce the top five recruits. ... Bixby’s annual spring game, which is held at the conclusion of school, went into overtime before the winner was decided. “It was extremely well attended, we had a really good crowd,” coach Montgomery said. “We divided the squad into four equal teams, and it went into overtime. It was exciting because everybody has to play and everybody has to produce.” Spartan grid alumni were coaches for the game.

7-ON-7 CHAMPIONS – With several talented skill players returning, Bixby capitalized in winning the recent Southwest Elite 7-on-7 Showcase in Springdale, Arkansas, after earlier winning the Skordle 7-on-7 large-school title at the competition hosted by Bixby.

In the Southwest Elite, which annually draws teams from surrounding states, the Spartans were 5-0 prior to capturing a 38-33 win over host Shiloh Christian in the championship. Bixby scored on a last-second touchdown pass in securing the victory.

“We ended up beating Shiloh Christian in the championship. I was pleased with how we played ... we had a lot of guys play well. And our second bunch did pretty good, too. After pool play, I think they were seeded ninth out of 16 teams.”

In the Skordle 7-on-7 tournament, the Spartans were also unbeaten, going 5-0 before defeating Mill Valley of Shawnee, Kansas, 43-8 in the championship.

OL-DL CAMP – Bixby hosted its popular OL-DL Camp for prospective offensive and defensive linemen on June 24-25. The two-day teaching, competitive event, which continues growing in popularity, attracted 650 players, the most to attend.

“It was a really good deal. There aren’t many linemen camps anymore, most of them are like recruiting deals but not many of them have competition like we do,” coach Montgomery said. “The small school guys want to go against the big school guys to see how they do.

“We had guys from everywhere. We had players from every corner of Oklahoma. We had some guys from Texas and a good group from Missouri.”

TEAM CAMP – Bixby opened the summer in competitive fashion as the Spartans hosted a team camp, which included talented squads from East St. Louis (Illinois), Edmond Memorial, Broken Arrow, Lawton, Westmoore and Booker T. Washington.

“It was really good competition,” coach Montgomery said of the team camp, June 3-5. “East St. Louis won the state championship last year in Illinois and they got after it. It was good for our guys to realize that even though we’ve had some success and have a lot of guys who are going to get to play on Saturday, the camp showed them where we need to improve.

“We did some good things, and we got to look at some of the question marks we’re trying to answer as far as the offensive line and inside linebacker. Those guys are getting a lot of reps and our younger guys got reps, too. All the teams that came were good teams.”