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Tyler Tanner and Westran Hornets Return to Southeast Missouri

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The Thanksgiving Holiday is always filled with travel, family, friends and of course football. Westran High School Hornets will experience an ultimate holiday weekend traveling to in Southeast Missouri to compete in the Missouri State High School State Semi Finals for Class 1A against the Hayti Indians this Saturday, November 24th at 1 p.m.

Westran High School is located forty-four miles North of Columbia Missouri in Huntsville and has a proud tradition of football. The county seat of Randolph County, Huntsville is a community of just over 1,500 with one very special individual - Dexter native Tyler Tanner. Tyler is a 2008 graduate of Dexter High School. Tyler was a standout member of the DHS athletic programs - excelling in both football and baseball. Tyler went on to play college baseball at William Baptist College.

"Tyler played for me and graduated in 2008", Dexter Head Coach Aaron Pixley recalled. "He's a very sharp offensive mind and really understands how to attack defenses.

Westran boasts an 11-2 record for the 2018 season, having defeated Fayette High School in the quarter finals this past Saturday by a score of 35-6. The team suffered two losses this season in their Lewis & Clark conference schedule to Scotland County (8-3) and Marceline (10-2).

Tanner note "We learned from our mistakes in those games and felt like we got back on track. We've seen quite a bit of adversity this year, and the way the guys have pulled together through all of it has really shown in how they treat each other and how they play the game."

Westran's walk through the playoffs has been an offensive machine as the Hornets have outscored their opponents 158 to 35. The Hornets offense team is filled with incredible talent with both an air and a ground attack. Quarterback, Alex Young is one of those exceptional athletes with 71 completions on 131 attempts for 1,347 yards and 13 touchdowns passing while rushing for 1,320 yards and 26 touchdowns. Running back, Kolby Dale, has also contributed 1,595 yards on 169 rushing attempts and adding 22 touchdowns for the team.

A quarterback isn't effective without a few good hands on the squad to catch the ball and Westran has two leading receivers in Koby Coonce and Kaden Massey. Coonce has snagged 34 receptions on the season with 800 yards and 22 touchdowns while Massey has caught 15 catches for 319 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Defensively, the Hornets leading tacklers are their strong linebacker crew of Kaden Massey (101), Alex Young (98) and Mason Untiedtd (70). They are anchored on the line by Ben Miller with 56 tackles and 2 sacks. While Koby Coonce leads the defensive backfield with 35 Tackles and 4 interceptions. Among this group of defensive players, they account for over 32 (TFL) tackles in the backfield of their opponents.

"They're just a fun group of young men." noted Coach Tanner. "They come to work every day excited for another week of football together."

"Tyler is the offensive coordinator at Westran HS. He's done a great job as is evident with Westran being in the Semifinals." added Pixley. "I'm very proud of him and fully expect Tyler to be a fine head coach someday."

Defensively, the Hornets have been very stingy all season allowing an average of 11.5 points per game in 2018. Head Coach Aaron O'Laughlin fills the role of defensive Coordinator and considers the Hornets defense to be key in Saturday's game.

The community of Dexter will be getting involved with this gridiron match up as Westran will be stopping in Dexter for a team walk thru and team meal before lodging at an area hotel. Risen Church will also host the team by providing them facilities for their team meal on Friday.

“We are very proud to support another school as they make the long trip down here” stated Head Dexter Football Coach, Aaron Pixley. “Westran will practice on our field and use the fieldhouse to dress out and back in.”

Westran will have their work cut out for themselves as they match up against the undefeated Hayti Indians (13-0). Saturdays game will be a match up of two dynamic high scoring offensive teams with the Indians have outscored their opponents during the playoffs 234 to 32. Similar to the this past Monday Night Football match up between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Los Angeles Rams, there shouldn't be a dull moment during this contest.

Westran is no stranger to the State playoffs appearing in 2010 and 2014 in the finals. They finished second both years.

If your Holiday plans have an opening on Saturday, a football game in Hayti may be exciting event to put into your weekend.

Coach Tanner expressed the privilege to be able to be able to return to Southeast Missouri for this game. “The outpouring of support toward our team has been incredible incredible from family, friends and the community,” noted Tanner. “I simply can't say ‘thank you’ enough to my family, the Dexter Public Schools, Coach Aaron Pixley, the Cato Family and Risen Church for making the plan for our team easy. We are looking forward to a great weekend.”

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