

# Features



## Miller's Generational Legacy of High School Football

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The Miller's have a family legacy that no other grandfather, father, and son have ever accomplished in Dexter. All three have perfect regular undefeated seasons in Bearcat football. The Miller family has a tradition in football, with aspirations and achievements being passed down and celebrated across three generations.

The 2024 football season was definitely one for the record books. The Bearcats matched a program record of 11 wins and they won the MSHSAA Class 3, District 1 Championship, which was the first in thirteen years. Most exciting for the Miller family was the fact that this achievement may never be matched again as three members of their family played in three of the four perfect seasons at Charles Bland Stadium. The four unbeaten regular season years were 1940, 1963, 1986, and 2024. The Miller family had a player on each of those teams except the 1940 team.

Jaxon Miller, a defensive back, and a sophomore at Dexter High School had told his father, Gavin Miller, "Wouldn't it be cool one day! One day, maybe, we could go undefeated. You went undefeated and 'Papa Moose' went undefeated, and I could too!"

And so this year the 2024 football team did just that, making it three generations on undefeated teams!

'Papa Moose' was Glenn Miller, grandfather of Jaxon. He played on the 1963 team, but passed away in 2009, when Jaxon was less than a year old. Glenn went by 'Big Moose Tank' in high school and was six-foot-five-inches weighing 250 pounds. His height and weight did not transfer down to his son and grandson. "Tank" blocked for

Jimmy Bland, whose dad is named Charles. This is who the stadium is named after. Over the three years he played varsity his team went 26-3. He was All-Conference defensive tackle from the 1963 season during which they went 10-0.

Gavin Miller, father of Jaxon, was a wide receiver on the 1986 and 1987 District Championship Teams. His record over three years as a Bearcat was 27-2 so "we beat my dad's team by one," stated Gavin.

"Jaxon is a football fanatic," commented Gavin. "He knew that my dad played college football at Arkansas State and that I played at Evangel University and my brother who also played at Evangel.. He is just a football guy!"

Like most small towns, you might show up at a restaurant, you see an old friend and you talk of the good ole days of football. It is just what small communities do. This season will be no different. Dexter will talk of the wins for many years to come. This team had 11 wins and only one other Bearcat team has ever accomplished this feat.

During Gavin's time, Dexter won 27 of 29 games including a 9-0 season in 1986. The Bearcats went 11-1, similar to the 2024 season his son played on. Two of those teams advanced to the MSHSAA Class 4 semifinal (1986) and quarterfinal (1987). Gavin was an All-SEMO Conference player for three seasons.

Jaxon's 2024 football team went 11-1 and were 9-0 in regular season. He was recently named as First Team All-SEMO Conference selection and he is just a sophomore. He saw the potential for achieving something that had not been done since the 1980s.

"I knew we could," Jaxon said of having a perfect season. "It was there. We had the players, and we had the coaches to do it."

"Our work ethic," continued Jaxon. "We all worked hard. We lifted hard in the weight room. We listened to the coaches. We did what was asked of us."

The turning point for the Bearcats was when they defeated Southern Boone. They exploded offensively in the first four games, but when they faced a state ranked team and beat them, the players knew they had a good chance of going undefeated. Once they got over beating Park Hills and Ste. Gen who have given the 'Cats trouble in the past, a state run was most definitely in their grasp.

This football team may be disappointed in how the season ended; however they should recognize the significance of their achievements.

Jaxon aspires to continue this legacy. "I mean we could do it again next season."

The Miller family has deep roots in the Dexter Community and their connection to the local football scene is shown in their teamwork and community spirit.

There is a strong family tradition in Bearcat football and they hope to pass down those achievements and celebrate for generations to come.

Once a Bearcat, Always a Bearcat!

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