

Senior Aloysius Jackson looks to make a play during the homecoming game against Airport.

THE FINAL SNAP

by JOSH PEARSON

Heartbreak, relief, frustration, and irritation were some of the emotions felt by the Cavalier football team the night of November 10. For seniors, the realization that Friday night lights would no longer shine for them set in, and tears welled up in their eyes. The final night of Varsity football was somber for both players and fans as the three year Varsity quarterback, Aloysius Jackson, played his final snap in the Cavalier uniform.

"We didn't make it to the playoffs, and that kind of opened my eyes to see that this team has really made me and broke me in ways. We had hard times on this team, but it has taught me a lot of things as far as caring for others, looking out for others, and being able to be a leader. And I will take that with me throughout life," Jackson said.

Jackson led the team to an even 7-7 region record over the 3 years at the helm, and revitalized Northeast football along with the other 31 seniors. The phrase "Cavs

on a Mission" was a way of life for the 2015-2016 football team that provided a foundation for the team that exceeded all expectations, and pushed each player to be better than they already were.

"Cavs on a mission wasn't just about winning a state championship," Jackson said. "It was about bettering ourselves as young men... We were Cavaliers on a mission in life, not just on a mission for a state championship."

Jackson matured throughout the years spent as the RNE quarterback, developing as a young man and as an athlete. Aloysius took on immense responsibility at the helm of the offense, and proved that he was capable of carrying much of the offensive load.

"[People] look at the quarterback position and say, 'you led this team to a win. And if you lose, even if it's not your fault, they'll say, 'well the quarterback didn't get the job done,'" Jackson explained. "It's just a lot of responsibility and excitement that comes with the position."

During the campaign of "Cavs on a Mission," Jackson helped lead the team into the playoffs, capping off one of the best seasons for Northeast football in recent history. Throughout his entire career as a Cavalier, Jackson produced numerous game-changing highlight performances.

"My junior year in the first round of the playoffs against Emerald, on the third play of the game, I ran a 56 yard touchdown," Jackson said. "I can remember the crowd being so loud. It was just a great atmosphere."

Following the last game of the season, Jackson reflected on his time as the Northeast quarterback. Though the final game of a rollercoaster career resulted in a loss, Jackson took away positive experiences from his time on the football team.

"The team means everything to me," Jackson said. "If I didn't play football, if I wasn't on this team since my sophomore year, I don't know if I would still be in school right now. Football just changes lives, and it changed mine."

Bobby Counts