

# Tisi Tuifua:

His run got Bingham to a good start, but football was just part of fine year

By Bruce Smith  
Matchup

Tisi Tuifua admitted he was looking forward to his senior season for a long time.

Tuifua, a 6-foot-1, 210-pound running back, was part of Bingham's two state championships. As a junior, he carried the ball sparingly but moved into the starting lineup in the Miners' title-game victory over Fremont at Rice-Eccles Stadium.

Bingham's depth at fullback and his own shyness put him on the bench to start 2011. Tuifua said he wanted to showcase his skills. It didn't take long.

On Bingham's third play, Tuifua entered the game, took a handoff from quarterback Brady Lail, found a hole and sprinted 80 yards for a touchdown.

"I had never scored a (varsity) touchdown until then," Tuifua said. "The best part was I was able to see my dad's reaction. The play was '31-zone.' My tailback (Daniel Palepoi) blocked for me and he had a wonderful block. I'm sure anyone could have scored, but I ran fast.

"I used my speed for the weight I didn't have," he added.

The quick score gave Bingham a 7-0 lead. It was one of four touchdowns Tuifua had during the season. The Miners were deep at fullback, and Tuifua split time with two other players, including his good friend, Shinji Ishigaki. He finished with 238 yards on just 19 carries, but that set the school's season record for highest average yards per carry.

He also caught three passes for six yards. But what made him the most proud was his grades, scoring well on the ACT exam and being named to the Region 4 All-Academic team.



**Tisi Tuifua** got Bingham's 2011 season off to a good start with a long touchdown run against West Jordan.

"Getting good grades has always been important," he said. "I want to get an academic scholarship (into college.)"

He set himself apart doing both.

His quick touchdown was important for the Miners, who were wondering what kind of success they would have after dominating the previous two years. Tuifua's 4.4 speed (in the 40-yard dash) made a big difference.

That play also put a damper on West Jordan's upset hopes. The Jaguars, the Miners' neighborhood rival, believed they had one of their best teams ever but quickly found themselves behind 20-0.

Bingham coach Dave Peck admitted afterward how happy he was to see the Miners

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**ABOVE:** Tisi Tuifua tries to open a hole for teammate Daniel Palepoi to run through.

**RIGHT:** Tuifua blocks a Fremont defender on special teams.



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came out and play well after losing so many talented players the year before.

“I don’t think these guys know they aren’t as good as previous Bingham teams,” Peck said. “They think they’re the next great Bingham squad.”

Overall, the season didn’t go as well as the previous two years, but Tuifua wasn’t disappointed. He said there were too many great accomplishments, including some of his own.

“Obviously, it had a disappointing end,” he said. “We did get better through the season; we just didn’t get good enough. It was still a good year, and I developed a lot of friendships, especially with the younger kids.”

Tuifua played a big role – on and off the field. Tuifua admitted he has a good singing voice and was part of the school’s Glee Club. In addition, he served as a Student Body Officer as Vice President of Records. It’s a role he relished and

kept him busy throughout the year. When he wasn’t at the many Bingham workout sessions and practices, he was representing the SBOs at other school events.

Truth this, Tuifua accomplished quite a bit since moving over from Riverton when he was 14 years old.

Tuifua said his favorite memory was the bus ride home from Rice-Eccles Stadium after beating Fremont his junior year. He also appreciated the relationship the Bingham football and volleyball teams had as they supported each other at games.

When the football season ended, Tuifua’s great experiences continued. As an SBO, he continued to be active in every school event. He planned to attend college. He may not have had the statistics to get a football scholarship, but he had too much going for him to continue to find success.