

Brett Walton:

His aggressiveness and ability created made him a great team leader

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

The 2012 football season should go down in history as one of the most important for Boise High School football.

The Braves put their “stamp” on their new football facility, defeated three teams it hadn’t beaten in years and ended with one of the most exciting wins ever – in Idaho and perhaps around the country.

There wasn’t a championship, but that didn’t matter. In Brett Walton’s eyes, it all felt good.

“We had our ups and downs and it was hard to maintain a winning season when a lot of things went wrong,” he said. “But three wins is better than not winning at all.

“And that win at Meridian ... that was probably the highlight of the year. We had to come back from a lot of adversity. They were up 23 in the fourth quarter. Everyone wanted to keep on fighting. That’s what we do ... constantly fight.”

It didn’t end until quarterback Tanner Gustavsen rolled to the right on an 8-yard scoring run with 1.9 seconds left. He got behind Walton and Jacob Kodanko and put the ball over the goal line for the 62-61 win.

“Tanner reached over three guys and does a complete helicopter to get to the end zone,” Walton recalled. “He goes up in the air and sacrificed himself for the team and the sport he loves. Meridian didn’t want to compete after that. Our fans came on the field. It was pretty nice.

“After that, Meridian didn’t want to play and he went in untouched on the two-point conversion.”

The much-maligned Braves defense, which had given up 46 points in the first half alone, stopped Meridian on three consecutive possessions,



Brett Walton had an important part in Boise’s successes and was one of those players who rarely left the field.

Walton’s highlights

- * - **TEAM’S TOP DEFENSIVE PLAYER**, he was also the third-leading rusher and had several important blocks.
- * - **CALLED VALLIVUE** his best game: “They had some big linemen but we filled every hole and stopped them.”
- * - **HAS ONE OLDER SISTER** – Rachel – but Walton said she’s probably a better athlete.
- * - **DIDN’T LIKE** walking to Dona Larsen Park. He said “I’m supposed to say I liked it, but I’d get cramps on the way.”



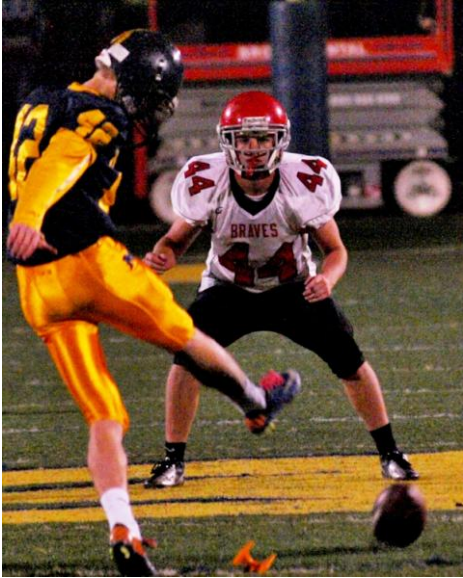
Brett Walton

which allowed Boise to rally and set up the final moments.

Those series of events helped Walton – and most Boise players – forget most of the disappointments during the season. For the seniors, Boise’s 3-6 record this year was their best. Along the

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BOISE FOOTBALL: Senior profile



TOP LEFT: Brett Walton awaits the kickoff in the Meridian game.



TOP RIGHT: Walton and Kyle Gustafson watch as coach Clark reacts to a Gatorade bath.

LOWER MIDDLE: Walton takes a quick break in a 2011 game.



LOWER RIGHT: Walton takes a handoff from QB Tanner Gustavsen.



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way, they also defeated Borah, Vallivue and Meridian for the first time in years.

“Football is all in your head,” Walton said. “What I learned about playing at Boise High is you don’t have to be a big person, but you have to be agile and smart. They’re not going to run through you if you take their legs out.”

Walton certainly fit that mold. He was listed as 6-foot and 185 pounds on the roster, and doubled as an outside linebacker and running back. After the season, he began losing weight in order to make the wrestling team, where he had competed at 158 pounds the year before.

Coach Bob Clark said Walton was one of the team’s most-aggressive players and – surprisingly – he stayed healthy during his career.

“He constantly gave 100 percent,” said Clark, who also had Walton as a teaching assistant. “That’s what I love him for.”

Walton had to mature as a football player to become a team captain and eventually a second team all-SIC selection. He was always a talented linebacker, but Clark also wanted him on offense.

Walton said he had “slippery fingers” at first, but then combined with Gustavsen, Chase Choate and Josh Maxfield to give the Braves a running attack that forced defenses not to concentrate on the pass.

“Tanner had a great year. He threw only four interceptions and that’s why he deserved the conference player of the year. We were able to go right up the gut with the football and he could throw it to guys like Deion (Hardy) or hit Skyler Rowe deep. Skyler would catch everything that touched his hands.”

The Braves were third in the SIC in scoring, but first in most yards. Against Meridian, Boise rolled up 629 yards, which could be a school record.

“Our offense scored fast a lot,” he said. “Our defense got tired because we were going on the field every two minutes because our offense was scoring. If they had slower drives that would give us more rest.”

Walton, however, eventually figured all that playing just would just get him in shape for wrestling, where he hoped to improve on his third-place finish at state the previous year.