



## High school football player’s legacy lives on in Springdale

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As the high school football season in Arkansas comes to a close, Jarrell Williams Bulldog Stadium in Springdale sits empty in the cold December weather. In the south endzone, a maroon banner commemorates the memory of a former player.

For former teammate and UA freshman Garrett Vaughan said the number of lives that Kyler and his passing has impacted is immeasurable.

“I remember going to his funeral and just being astounded by the amount of people who were there,” Vaughan said. “People, not only from Springdale but from all over came to support the Williams family and reminisce on memories because Kyler could make friends with just about anyone.”

Vaughan, along with former Springdale quarterback Grant Allen, were the most recent recipients of the annual award named in Kyler’s honor. The award is given to a player or multiple players who exemplifies excellence on and off the field. Vaughan said earning the

award named after his friend and mentor meant a lot to him.

“It really was a tremendous honor to receive the award with (Allen) as an accomplishment for our athletic ability, but I think it was even more so about how we tried to embody the leadership and character of Kyler,” Vaughan said.

Sept. 24, 2016, was going

Williams said, Kyler’s mother. “(Kyler) was hunting in Kingston, out on some of our family’s land.”

Kyler Williams was an avid outdoorsman who loved to spend time in the woods and fish.

“If I know Kyler, he stayed as long as he could to get a deer,” Tysha said.

After pushing his time

car rolled multiple times on Arkansas Highway 21, and he was ejected and killed. Tysha Williams received the call no parent ever wants. Her son was gone.

“To this day, I don’t know what happened,” Tysha Williams said. “I try not to dwell on it because I feel like that’s the enemy’s way of getting me down, so I try not

her relationship with Kyler meant a lot to her.

“We would always ride around in my stepmom’s Camaro,” Makenzy Williams, Kyler’s little sister, said. “That’s where we grew our closest bonds.”

But most people knew Kyler Williams for his talents on the football field.

“He was a really small kid,

Kyler. He gave everything, 110% of his effort, his mother said.

“He had a sense of competitiveness that not a lot of other guys had,” Zak Clark said, Springdale’s head coach. “Good players, they don’t go really hard in practice. He wasn’t that way, he just loved playing.”

Through the 16 games he competed at the varsity level, Kyler accumulated 106 receptions, more than 1,500 receiving yards and 13 touchdowns.

His memory is carried on by his family, teammates, classmates and anyone who has heard his story.

“We’ve got a sign in the south endzone (of Jarrell Williams Bulldog Stadium) that guys will go by and touch,” Clark says. “I saw about every senior when we left the field on Friday went by there and at least stood by there or touched it.”

Tysha Williams said she thinks her son made a difference in more than just the community.

“I feel like he’s touched so many lives. His life and his death have impacted people,” his mom said. “I wouldn’t go through it again for anything. I wish he was back here, but it’s changed a lot of people for the better and it’s definitely changed us for the better.”

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- Freshman Garrett Vaughan

to be a typical Saturday for Kyler Williams and his family. Nothing seemed to be out of the ordinary.

“We were watching the Razorback game,” Tysha

among the trees for as long as could, Kyler Williams headed back to get ready for the homecoming dance later that night. Unfortunately, he would never return. Kyler’s

to think about that. I just have to trust that God is sovereign and in control and trust his plan.”

Kyler’s younger sister, who is a freshman at the UofA, said

but he was very athletic,” said Jackson Hutchison, a former teammate. “He was able to take over a game at any point.”

What people saw on Friday nights was just Kyler being

## “Game of the Century” marks 50th anniversary



Sadie Rucker Staff Photographer

The Razorbacks enter Donald W. Reynolds Stadium on Oct. 19 before the team’s game against Auburn.

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During the centennial of college football, the Razorbacks and Texas Longhorns competed for the national title in what many still regard as ‘The Game of the Century’ on Dec. 6, 1969.

Nearly 50,000 fans, including President Richard Nixon, were in attendance to behold the contest between two southern football juggernauts, in what would later be known as ‘The Big Shootout.’

Arkansas and Texas were both undefeated entering the game, and the matchup quickly cultivated regional and national attention. The game was slated to be broadcast nationally on ABC, and Nixon, a noted college football buff, was rumored to be in attendance according to Arkansas sports media.

“Fan in Chief: Richard Nixon and American Sports,

1969-1974,” a book written by Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, explains the buildup, the event and the aftermath of the Fayetteville showdown.

Austin displayed a heightened energy prior to the matchup, as the mayor of Texas declared Dec. 6 ‘Texas Longhorn Day in Austin and Fayetteville.’ A pep rally at Memorial Stadium in Austin drew a crowd of 25,000, an impressive mark for a school that had 35,000 students enrolled at the time.

When it was confirmed that the president would attend, the elation in Arkansas rose as high as the helicopter Nixon arrived in at Razorback Stadium.

“We flew over the airport and I saw the cars parked for, well, actually not just feet nor yards, but miles down the road,” Nixon said in the book.

Nixon and his entourage were seated at the 35-yard line among the fans.

“I must say I have never seen a football game where there is more excitement in the

air than there is today,” Nixon said in the book.

Texas started the game with the ball, but fumbled it on the second play of the game, which Arkansas recovered at the 22-yard line. The Razorbacks reached the end zone shortly after, when running back Bill Burnett dove over a pile of burnt orange and cardinal red jerseys for the first touchdown just a little over a minute and a half into the game.

The teams went scoreless for the next 34 minutes until Arkansas wide receiver Chuck Dicus broke the dry spell, catching a pass from quarterback Bill Montgomery over the middle for a 29-yard touchdown, as Arkansas doubled its lead to 14-0.

Arkansas shut out the visiting Longhorns for the first 45 minutes and forced the Longhorns to turn the ball over in five of their first eight possessions. But the momentum turned just 13 seconds into the fourth quarter when Texas quarterback James Street broke off a 42-

yard touchdown run to turn the tide for Texas. Street also carried in the two-point conversion, as the Arkansas lead shrunk to 14-8.

The Razorbacks responded with a 73-yard drive, which ended when the Longhorns intercepted a pass in the endzone. Texas’ subsequent drive seemed to be null, as they were pinned at its own 43-yard line on fourth down.

Street dropped back and heaved a 44-yard prayer that bypassed two Arkansas defenders on its way to Texas tight end Randy Peschel’s hands.

Professor Gerald Jordan, who was covering the game for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, said the big gain put a muzzle on the Razorback faithful.

“The whole stadium, which had just been rocking all day, that play just sucked the life out of them,” Jordan said.

The Longhorns scored two plays later on a 2-yard rush from running back Jim Bertelsen and took their first

lead of the game, 15-14, with just under four minutes left.

In its next possession, Arkansas made its way to the Texas 39-yard line as rain began to patter on player’s helmets. Trying to get within field goal range, Montgomery rolled right and threw to the 20-yard line, where the ball was intercepted by a Longhorn, sealing the Hogs’ defeat.

Texas won the heavyweight bout and was awarded the national championship plaque by Nixon, who congratulated both teams after the game.

“Your frame of mind is that the whole world is watching and cares about football and nothing else exists. You’re king of the heap,” Texas guard Bobby Mitchell said in the book. “So why wouldn’t the president be here?”

On the 50th anniversary of this monumental competition, both programs find themselves in a completely different state than they were in 1969, but that coveted matchup half a century ago will always remain a staple in each team’s history.

## Athletics aims to hire more women in coaching positions

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women filled nine of the 35 full-time assistant coaching spots.

The percentage of women coaching women in the NCAA has declined since the passage of Title IX, a law that prohibits discrimination based on gender in federally-funded educational programs, in 1972, reaching an all-time low of 42.4% in 2006, according to the 2017 NCAA Title IX Report.

Four UA women’s teams – golf, gymnastics, softball and tennis – are led by female head coaches, according to Razorback Athletics. This puts the percentage of women coaching women at the UofA at 44%, on par with the 2014 average of 43.4%, according to the 2017 NCAA Title IX Report.

While Hamilton thinks Razorback Athletics officials have tried to be intentional about hiring women to coach women’s sports, he thinks the hiring process is based on which candidates are interested and qualified, he said.

Women’s team head coaches at Auburn University, a similarly sized school based on student enrollment and number of athletes, received an average of \$319,771 in 2017, according to the EADA. This is more than the \$219,326 paid to UA women’s team head coaches that year, but about 18% of the \$1,820,519 average salary for Auburn’s men’s team head coaches.

This disparity is also reflected in the total expenses of men’s women’s teams, where Razorback Athletics spent \$65.9 million on men’s sports versus \$22.8 million on women’s, according to the 2019 EADA report.