

South Park's Jeremiah Sanders caps standout career by earning Trench Trophy

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Jeremiah Sanders paved the way toward history during his time with South Park, so it's fitting that he capped his standout career by achieving something no other Buffalo Public Schools football player had ever done before Wednesday night.

Sanders is the first city schools product to win the Trench Trophy, an honor bestowed upon the top senior two-way lineman in Western New York each year since 2003.

Sanders, a three-time first team All-Western New York selection, received the award over 11 other finalists during the Trench Trophy's annual dinner banquet ceremony at the Lancaster Elks Lodge before an estimated 200.



Senior lineman Jeremiah Sanders makes one of his 117 tackles on the season for South Park.

The 6-foot-2, 285-pound Sanders helped South Park (9-1) reach its second Section VI final in three seasons. He did it by winning battles in the trenches to contribute to an offense that averaged more than 30 points per game. For the second straight season, Sanders did not yield a sack.

"This makes me proud to know I'm the first to win this is an honor," a beaming Sanders said. "To bring this back to my school means a lot to me."

"He's been good for so many years," said Carl Kuras, co-chairman for the Trench Trophy. "We were very impressed with his physical prowess as well as his technique and attitude toward being a football player."

Other finalists for the honor were Canisius' Will McGennis, Cheektowaga's Tariq Whitaker and Terrance Bass, Cleveland Hill's Sam Arrington and Manny Al-Hemyari, Franklinville/Ellicottville's Walt Woodarek, Lancaster's Joseph Andreessen and Jake Calo, North Tonawanda's Jordon Holmes, Starpoint's Kyle Schraeder and West Seneca West's Brad Claycomb.

The top junior linemen of the year honored by the Trench Trophy were Cardinal O'Hara junior Stephen Boyd Jr. and Lewiston-Porter junior Joseph Powers.

Sanders earned that distinction last year while playing for Bishop Timon-St. Jude.

He followed that by returning to South Park, the team he helped win a state title back in 2015, by having another strong season that further solidified his status as the area's top lineman.

Sanders, who started as a freshman at Section VI Class B finalist Bennett, notched 31 pancake blocks. He also made quite the impact defensively, finishing with 117 tackles, 13 sacks, three fumble recoveries and three forced fumbles.

This year he did it while being the elder statesman on a young line for a Sparks team that won the battle in the trenches more often than they lost it.

"This year we had a very inexperienced line and with him we were still able to get to a sectional final," South Park coach Tim Delaney said. "It just speaks to his ability.

"Just a fantastic high school career. I think it's fitting he's the first Buffalo Public Schools kid to win the award which kind of caps everything for South Park High School."

South Park now holds the distinction of being the first former Harvard Cup member to win a Section VI title, state title, have a Connolly Cup winner (Tyree Brown) and now Trench Trophy winner.

"My high school career it just kept changing school to school," said Sanders, who will play for junior college ASA in New York City in the fall. "But South Park really has been a home to me. I was just happy to come back, add to the team and earn this award for the team and the school."