



THE RANKINS: Dedication on and off the Field

BY NATALIE LERNER

Photo courtesy of the Rankin family

“Earn the right to win.” Ashford Forest resident Todd Rankin preaches this to his three kids, daily. Todd wants his kids to know that greatness and winning doesn’t happen overnight. It’s dedication to improving one’s craft that unleashes the power of greatness, and ultimately a strong win.

Todd and his wife, Rachel, are committed to the growth and support of their kids, Nash (17), London (14), Lexington (9), and the family dog, Ranger (13), but it’s not just their own kids that they are pouring heart, soul, and motivational thought into. Todd is head coach for the Spartans at Stratford High School, while Rachel is a reading/dyslexia interventionist at Meadow Wood Elementary. The couple has devoted their entire essence to helping students improve and achieve.

“My dad has been a high school football coach since before I was born,” shared Nash, the Rankin’s eldest child.

Todd added, “All of my coaching stops have been in the Houston area except for one year in North Texas. My most notable stops have been at Conroe High School (5 years), North Shore High School (9 years), and most recently Klein Collins High School

(1.5 years) before I became the head coach at Stratford.”

Todd was born in Naples, Texas and grew up in the Dallas area until 8th grade when he moved to West Houston. He graduated from nearby Alief Hastings High School in 1987.

Rachel was born and raised in Conroe and graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in Early Childhood Education. She was a 1st grade/kindergarten teacher for 10 years and has been a reading/dyslexia interventionist for the past 12.

“My wife and I met in 2000 through friends when I was coaching at Conroe High School and she was a senior at Texas A&M,” Todd recalled. “We married in 2002 at St. James Episcopal Church in Conroe, and we will celebrate our 20th anniversary this summer.”

Family life has always revolved around three things: faith, family, and football. Break time is often the Frio River or the beach, although a recent trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico took place. Nash and his dad share a special bond when it comes to football though. Plus, Todd has the rare opportunity of getting to coach his own son right now at Stratford.

Nash reminisced, “I started playing flag football around the age of five and was

throwing with my dad before that.” Todd ended up coaching flag football when Nash was nine. Great synergy won them the championship. In 7th grade, Nash’s flag football team won the Houston Regional Tournament, which earned the whole family a trip to in the National Championships at Disney World.

Nash found love for football all on his own though. “I became interested in football at a very young age because my mom was always taking me to my dad’s football games.”

Supporting one another in their endeavors has always been of high importance for the Rankins.

“Our hobbies right now are keeping up with our three kids and everything that they are involved in,” shared Todd. “We attend Houston’s First Baptist Church and volunteer for activities happening at our kids’ three schools.”

Nash is a junior at Stratford High School where he plays varsity quarterback as a member of his dad’s football team, runs track, and is a part of Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

London is in 8th grade at Spring Forest Middle School where she’s a member of



Photos courtesy of R. Scott Jackson Photography

Nash in action.

National Junior Honor Society, the Student Council Vice President, and on the A Honor Roll.

Lexington is in 3rd grade at Meadow Wood Elementary. She dances at Houston Academy of Dance, sang in her school choir, and swims in the summers on the Nottingham Forest Sharks swim team.

Nash had to share his favorite story about his dad supporting him in his interests. "I was in fifth grade and my dad came home late from work and it was already dark. We went out to throw with limited light from a street lamp and I broke his finger while

we were practicing. We laugh about it now. It just shows how much time and effort we have put into this for years. We still throw in the front yard when we can, but only with daylight!"

Nash expanded on the effort he's put into excelling at football and what keeps him going. "Sometimes being a coach's kid is a challenge because I know how hard I have to work to prove why I'm on the field." He went on, "My dad has always inspired me to work hard and be the best I can be. Also, being a part of this special group of guys

is inspiring. You want to be your best for them and not let each other down."

The team was undefeated district champs as freshman and junior varsity, plus bi-district champs in the playoffs on varsity last year. Nash threw over 2,700 yards and scored 26 touchdowns, a feat made possible by the great offensive lineman and skilled players around him.

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Father and son. Coach and player.

Nash was awarded 2020 and 2021 17-6A Academic All District as a player and 2021 17-6A Unanimous 1st Team All-District Quarterback.

“This upcoming year we want to make a deep playoff run,” stated Nash. “Making it to the state championship game is something we talk about and work towards each day. I have dreams of playing in college after high school.”

For readers contemplating a football career, Nash shared, “Football is a great sport that has a lot to offer, but it takes time and effort in the weight room and on the field. Adversity and competition will always be there. You have to want that if you’re going to be successful.”

Nash reminds us of Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

If there’s anything to learn from the Rankins, it’s that with the right mindset, and dedication on and off the field, big things happen!

Thank you to Greg Dial Jr. with Spring Branch Sportsline for coordinating this feature.

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