

Talladega High sports standout honored by AHSAA

BY LOYD MCINTOSH
Daily Home correspondent

Jackson Burel, a 2024 graduate of Talladega High School, has been named one of Alabama's Bryant-Jordan Scholarship Foundation's 2024 Scholar-Athlete Award winners.

The son of a teacher and a chaplain at a local hospice, Burel was a two-sport standout in soccer and football in high school, graduating with a 4.0 GPA and scoring a 30 on the ACT. He will attend the University of Alabama, where he plans on majoring in aerospace engineering as well as hopes of earning a spot as a walk-on for the Crimson Tide football team as a kicker.

"This is the number-one school in football in the nation, in my opinion," Burel says. "So it's going to be hard, but I think I have a chance."

As an athlete, Burel excelled in the center fullback position on the Tigers soccer team. He was also the kicker for the football team until head coach Damien Dorsey realized he needed a key position filled and tapped Burel for the job: quarterback.

"We really didn't have anybody to do it, and Coach was just like, 'You know, I think you can play quarterback. So we're going to put you here and we're going to try it,'" Burel explained.

The conversion from kicker to signal caller was difficult, Burel admits, but he says the coaching staff and his teammates rallied around him to make the transition as smooth as possible. He also learned valuable lessons about leadership and overcoming adversity during his season as the Tigers' quarterback.

"Knowing I was just a kicker, my teammates helped me more than the coaches helped me, honestly, because they knew how hard it was gonna be," Burel said. "I learned that I was capable of doing things that I didn't think I would ever be able to do or see myself doing."

Academically, Burel says his strongest subjects are math and science, and he credits his favorite teacher, Landon Jones, for opening his mind to math. Burel says Jones was a major influence in his decision to study aerospace engineering and pursue a career working for one of the major private spaceflight companies, such as Elon Musk's Space X or Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin.

"Before him, I didn't really have great math teachers, so I wasn't into math, but then I had his class and it took me to a different level," Burel says. "He really influenced my major. He's a very good teacher."

Burel was one of 52 student-athletes among all seven classes in the Alabama High School Athletic Association to receive the 2024 Bryant-Jordan Scholarship Program award. Named in honor of legendary Alabama Head Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant of Auburn Head Coach Ralph "Shug" Jordan, the program recognizes and awards a \$3,000 scholarship to each scholar-athlete for their excellence in athletics and academics. Burel said the application process was somewhat grueling and that he didn't expect to win, due to the number of other students being considered. He said he was "dumbfounded" but is honored to receive the award.

"I really didn't think it was possible because of how many people were applying for it," Burel says. "I was very surprised."



RLF
The Robinson Law Firm, P.C.
RLFLaw.net



Let Us Handle Your Case
We specialize in:
Personal Injury • Criminal Law
Probate Law • Real Estate
Domestic Relations

Contact Us For A Consultation
Main Office
6th Avenue Court Street W.
P.O. Box 370
Ashville, AL 35953
205-594-5133
205-884-5133

*No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

Inspired by the brave and bold bison - our time honored and forward powered mascot - students who attend SUSCC blaze new trails every day.

Regardless of conditions, challenges, or circumstances, they press forward, empowered by the certainty that a Bison Nation education will lead them to create strong and successful lives and careers.

It's time to blaze your own path at SUSCC! Call today to set up a campus tour, or visit us virtually at suscc.edu. It's time to be Bison brave. It's time to be Bison bold.

It's time to *Venture Forward.*

SOUTHERN UNION
STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WADLEY • OPELIKA • VALLEY • SUSCC.EDU