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## Honoring Heroes and Healing Together: BSN SPORTS Supports Kerrville ISD

After July's devastating floods, Kerrville found healing under the Friday night lights — see how BSN SPORTS helped honor first responders.



### A Community Forever Changed

On the morning of July 4, 2025, torrential downpours caused the Guadalupe River in Central Texas to surge—rising by over 20 feet in under an hour—triggering catastrophic flash flooding through Kerrville and Kerr County that resulted in at least 117 confirmed deaths, including 71 adults and 37 children, with two still missing. Among those lost was beloved **Tivy High School soccer coach Reece Zunker**, who tragically passed away with his wife and two children. His memory was woven into Kerrville ISD's First Responders Night on Friday, August 29, where the community gathered to honor local heroes and begin to heal.

### Honoring First Responders



...NEED CAPTAINS printed above the numbers and Hill Country Strong patches stitched on the sleeves. Representatives from fire, police, sheriff, and game warden departments stood as honorary captains for the coin toss, while helicopters from the Texas National Guard and the Texas Department of Public Safety soared overhead in two breathtaking flyovers.



## The Story Behind Hill Country Strong

In the weeks following the flood, Kerrville coaches wanted to find a way to both recognize the student-athletes who stepped up to help their towns recover and honor the legacy of Coach Zunker. Together with BSN SPORTS, they developed the idea for *Hill Country Strong* t-shirts.

The shirts were later worn on the sidelines by the Tivy staff and members of the Del Rio coaching staff. Printed on the back was the phrase *"You'll Never Walk Alone"* — a motto Coach Zunker often shared with his players. Including his words gave the community a powerful reminder that, even in tragedy, they would move forward together.

Bringing these ideas to life required teamwork. **Chris Whitehead** and **Wayne Paugh** from BSN SPORTS played a key role in designing and ordering the shirts, ensuring every detail reflected the spirit of the event.



*"Our team is going to help Kerrville and Kerrville Tivy heal by playing together and playing for something bigger than themselves and pulling for one another," he said. "Friday night lights are here. We made a dedication to the senior class to make it as special as we possibly can."*

## BSN SPORTS' Role

Josh Blackard, BSN SPORTS area sales manager for South Texas, reflected on the collaboration.

*"When the idea of honoring first responders came up, it was an easy decision for us to support by providing custom made jerseys that carried both school pride and a message of gratitude. I feel honored to have been part of such a special night," he said.*

The event was equally moving for Terry Babilla, BSN SPORTS President.

*"It was an incredible night. What stood out to me was seeing two fierce competitors on the field come together for a common cause off the field. The place was packed with thousands of noisy fans and First Responders and there were many tears shed in the crowd during the recognition. I want to give special thanks to Josh Blackard for coordinating the event, Sarah Gholston and her team for designing and expediting the custom jerseys and delivering them in two weeks, Greg Norton for videoing the evening's events and Jim Slomka for organizing the helicopter flyover. I have never witnessed a flyover at a high school football game, and it was truly incredible and something I will never forget" Babilla shared.*

## Recognizing Local Heroes




The celebration also honored the broader Kerrville community. The Kerrville Public School Foundation recognized *Kerrville*

Lauren Jette, Public Relations Specialist at Kerrville ISD, shared her perspective on the night.

*"As a one-person PR department for Kerrville ISD, I was really stressing about handling the high volume of media requests and covering the highlights of the game and pregame events, when BSN SPORTS offered to send in their team to assist. This was more than just a game for our community – it was a chance to come together, thank our first responders and take another step on the path to healing. Thank you for your contribution to this special night for the Kerrville and Tivy community," she said.*

Moments like this reflect what BSN SPORTS stands for: walking with communities in their hardest days, honoring those who serve selflessly, and using the power of sport to bring people together in hope and healing.

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Sherry Wright 

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