



BRIAN BAER Special to T

Spencer Webb paints his face before Christian Brothers played Jesuit on Sept. 9. It's a pregame ritual for the 6-foot-6 senior tight end who has overcome the absence of his parents to be recruited by colleges across the country. Webb plans to sign a national letter of intent with Oregon

## HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

# His brother led him from a dark place – now Christian Brothers star's 'dreams are coming true'

BY JOE DAVIDSON  
jldavidson@sacbee.com

**S**pencer Webb paints his face before every game, meticulously drawing his forefinger across his upper cheeks with the sticky goo until it's just right.

Standing before a mirror is easy now. Webb likes what he sees. But this hasn't always been the case.

Before he emerged as a tower-

ing 6-foot-6 national recruit at Christian Brothers High School, Webb was every bit a lost soul. He didn't like what the reflection revealed: images of confusion, resentment, sadness.

That's gone now. A boy from a broken home and broken roots is held together by a conviction that things will continue to be OK, that he can control all of it with attitude and effort, and that the glue has been applied by 32-year-old brother Cody Webb, his legal guardian for five years.

"My dreams are coming true," Webb said.

Football is Webb's release, and he unleashes. At 235 pounds and growing, the tight end is a blend of grace in the open field catching the ball and of fury, running over defenders on his way to the end zone. Christian Brothers is in its 100th year of football, and Webb stands as one of its most promising talents. He evokes images of Eason Ramson of the 1970s who went on to start at tight end for the 49ers during

their first Super Bowl season in 1981, and Matt Traverso of the late 1990s before he played at Stanford.

"And Spencer's still just a puppy, still growing into his body, but he's a great talent," Christian Brothers coach Tyle Almond said. "He's coachable, he's got a great attitude. It's incredible and inspiring to think a young man is raising a teenager, and they're doing a great job."

Webb's first scholarship offer was from Sacramento State, and then others came from across the country.

"We were at a Sac State football camp in June and an assistant coach from Oregon saw me in a Christian Brothers shirt," CB assistant coach Jason Regino said. "He came sprinting over to tell me how much they love Spencer. 'The kid is going to be

SEE WEBB

special.”

Webb plans to sign a national letter of intent with Oregon in February and said he may well cry when he does so. And he is OK with that. For now, Webb wants to maximize his senior season, thankful for what he has and glad his past is just that.

“I grew up faster than a lot of kids,” Webb said. “I never really had a mom or dad in my life. They chose to do other things, bad things, so it’s been me and my brother. I had a dream, he had a dream and we’re making that dream happen.”

He paused and continued, “It doesn’t really bother me now not knowing my mom. She missed out. I’ll see my dad every once in awhile. I tell him I love him, but he understands the role my brother has in my life, that my brother is my everything.”

Webb and his brother have the same father but different mothers.

## SOLANO COUNTY ROOTS

Webb grew up in Dixon, where his beloved grandfather Donald “Spido” Webb was a multisport star in the 1940s. In 2015, the elder Webb was inducted into the school’s athletic Hall of Fame, 10 years after he died at 80 of cancer. Spencer, as a 5-year-old, held his grandfather’s hand in his last moments.

Spido Webb was drafted into the Air Force at 18 and served in the 101st Airborne Division.

Webb has his grandfather’s dog tags and cherishes them. He wears them on his cleats during games.

He said Spido is watching over him, and he looked to him for guidance when trying to decide what college to attend. While praying before bed one night in April, Webb asked his grandfather what to do, where to go. When he lifted his head, he saw a light flickering across an

Oregon Ducks poster.

“My grandfather was a competitor, tried to do the best he could, helped people, cared about people, and I think I’m like him,” Webb said. “He’d be proud. I want to do well in college. I might get into teaching, maybe be a principal, and I’ll always talk to little kids, teach them things.”

Webb said he would urge kids to chase their dreams, to be happy.

## NEW BEGINNING

Webb was living with an aunt and uncle at the time of his grandfather’s death. By middle school, Webb had lost himself and was quick to find trouble. That’s where Cody Webb came in.

Cody Webb, also a Dixon High multisport athlete

from, the adversity he’s overcome, wow. He muscled through a lot. You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make them drink. He’s drinking the water. He’s reaping the benefits. My wife makes it a happy, loving home. A lot of kids from broken homes as kids don’t have a place of peace. Spencer does.

“We took it on full steam. We had a game plan. We used football as a third party – discipline and rewards.”

## HAPPY PLACES

Webb lights up a room with his smile and chatter. This includes the weight room, where he competes just as hard as when in a helmet or his size 14 cleats. He likes what he sees in the mirror, too, a

long, lanky, muscular frame that expects to add some 30 pounds in college.

And Webb is ripe for any challenge.

At the Dixon May Fair last spring, Webb dressed up as Woody from the movie “Toy Story” – cowboy hat, vest, boots, grin and all.

“He’s a ham,” Christian Brothers assistant coach Dan Carmazzi said.

“I got a picture of that and had him sign it, and it hangs in my office, proudly,” said Kristen McCarthy, the director of admissions and communications at Christian Brothers. “He brings a lot of joy into my office, and to this school.”

Joe Davidson:  
916-321-1280,  
@SacBee\_joeD

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Spencer Webb

in his day, is a manager of an industrial construction supplies firm in Dixon.

“I wasn’t getting good grades in seventh grade, wasn’t motivated, wasn’t happy, and my brother said, ‘That’s it. You’re moving in with me.’” Webb recalled. “One day, I woke up in Dixon and fell asleep in my new home in West Sacramento.”

to, and this is where my home and family is. I’m thankful. My brother is my everything.”

Cody and wife Alicia don’t have to remind anyone of house rules or expectations. They’re raising a motivated young man.

“I’m definitely proud of him,” Cody said. “Just to see how far he’s come



BRIAN BAER/Sacramento Bee

Christian Brothers' Spencer Webb catches a touchdown pass against Oakdale during last season's Sac-Joaquin Section Division III championship game. "Spencer's still just a puppy, still growing into his body, but he's a great talent," Christian Brothers coach Tyler Almond said.