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ROGERSVILLE, Pa. – Since early March, the Coronavirus pandemic has shut down sports at virtually every level, impacting thousands, if not millions of high school, college and pro athletes around the world. Even though he didn't get to suit up for his senior baseball season, West Greene's Ben Jackson accomplished more as an athlete, a student, and a citizen than perhaps anyone could have imagined.

After a phenomenal career in Blue and Gold, Jackson was the obvious pick to be named Greenesports.net Student-Athlete of the Year for the 2019-20 school year. This marks the second-straight season the winner graduated from West Greene after Madison and McKenna Lampe were picked as co-award winners.

As part of the award, Jackson receives a \$1,000 scholarship.

“Coming into this year, we had an inkling that this was going to be a special season for Ben,” said Greenesports.net co-founder Lanfer Simpson. “We knew what he had done his first three years on the football field as he progressed from 4,000 to 5,000 to 6,000 yards. Then when you think about Ben the student, it makes things even more amazing.”

If Jackson was judged solely on his football accomplishments, he would have still been an easy selection for this year's award. The highlights of that time on the gridiron are listed below:

- MaxPreps All-American
- Pennsylvania Football Writers Class A All-State 1st Team (Running Back) and Player of the Year
- PA Football News Class 1A Coaches All-State 1st Team (Running Back)
- PA Football News Class 1A Coaches All-State Player of the Year
- WPIAL all-time single season rushing leader (3,076 yards in 2019)
- WPIAL All-time leader in single season touchdowns (regular season) with 47 touchdowns in 2019
- WPIAL second-highest all-time single season touchdowns total (50 in 2019)
- WPIAL third-highest all-time leading career rusher (7,102)
- Greene County all-time leading career rusher
- Four-time All-Greene County
- Golden Helmet Award
- Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Player of the Year
- Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's Trib 25 Football Player of the Year
- Cover Three Athletics WPIAL 1A Football Player of the Year
- Washington Observer-Reporter Player of the Year
- Uniontown Herald-Standard Player of the year
- 102 Career touchdowns
- Pittsburgh Positive Athlete Award
- Four-time All-Conference

With Jackson leading the way, West Greene also broke a 24-year playoff drought in 2017. The Pioneers made it three-straight trips to the postseason and won their first WPIAL playoff contest since 1993 by shutting out Greensburg Central Catholic 36-0 on Nov. 1.

After wrapping up his fall on the gridiron, Jackson donned a Pioneer basketball uniform and continued to find success. He was a three-time all-county pick, an all-conference selection, a third-team All-WPIAL honoree and was selected for the Round Ball Classic All-Star Game.

Jackson competed in not just one, but two sports in the spring and left his mark in both. He spent two years with the West Greene track & field team and a two-time all-county honoree. He earned section titles in the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash and triple jump. Jackson also holds the school record in the triple jump.

He showed off his blistering speed by breaking 11 seconds in the 100 meters (10.98 seconds).

For his junior year of 2019, Jackson moved from the track to the diamond and signed up with the West Greene baseball team. All he did was hit .534 in his first high school season.

Outside of athletics, Jackson served as West Greene's 2020 senior class president and graduated as the salutatorian. Over his academic career, he served as Vice-President of the National Honor Society and Secretary of the Engineering Club.

Jackson also participated in the Peer Mentoring Program and was a juror in the Peer Court Program. Among other academic highlights, he earned an American Citizenship Award and an Academic Letter.

Somehow, Jackson also made time to serve as a volunteer firefighter with Center Township Volunteer Fire Department – Company 91.

As with any other standout football player, especially in Southwestern Pennsylvania, there is always plenty of attention paid to where Jackson was going to continue his playing career. After picking up offers from Penn State, Navy and Colgate among others, Jackson decided his future was with The United States Army.

“Making the decision to go to West Point was tough. Earlier in the year, I really was not sure where I wanted to attend college. However, I did know that I wanted to join the military at some point in my life,” Jackson said. “I didn't want to make any hasty decisions, so I prayed about it. I then came to the conclusion that West Point is where I belong. At West Point, I have the opportunity to receive a great education and play football, all while being able to serve this great nation.”

After accomplishing so much at West Greene, Jackson is preparing for what will undoubtedly be the greatest challenge of this life. No matter what form that challenge takes, he appreciates the love and support from his hometown that he will take with him to the State of New York and likely all around the world.

“I will never forget the people who make up West Greene. West Greene isn't just a geographical location, it's one giant family,” Jackson said. “Everyone from West Greene has always been welcoming with open arms. The men and women of West Greene have showed a tremendous amount of support, respect and kindness. No matter who you are or what situation you're in, the people from West Greene are always more than willing to lend a helping hand. I can't stress enough how thankful I am to have been able to grow up in such a loving and close community. It has really shaped me as the person I am today.”