

Hector's Quarterback Tanner Gaines to Play for Arkansas Tech

Tanner Gaines is an energetic young man who has achieved his lifelong dream of being able to play college football. On February 1st, 2017, Tanner signed a [National Letter of Intent \(NLI\)](#) to compete for [Arkansas Tech University's Wonder Boys](#) football team. His recruiter, [Coach Dearmon](#), has had his eye on Gaines since his tenth-grade year.



Tanner Gaines, Sarah Gaines, and Brent Dearmon on National Signing Day 2017. Photo courtesy of Sarah Gaines.

“The day I signed my NLI was a day I will never forget because I have grown up dreaming of playing college ball. Watching athletes on TV sign to their college was something that I always saw and would hope that would be me. When it happened it was a very special moment for me,” said Tanner.

The Hector Wildcats have maintained an [impressive record](#) as the team played nearly undefeated in Conference Games during Tanner’s Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior years, losing only one Conference Game during his Senior year in 2016.

The Journey

Gaines shares insights about growing up in Hector and his experiences along the journey towards a promising athletic career in the video interview below.

Support Makes a Difference

Gaines is a longtime resident of Hector and credits family, friends, Coaches, and Hector community with helping to shape him into the athlete he is today. Gaines played basketball and was also really into baseball in his early years. Coach Taylor, who is now the Superintendent of the Hector School District, and Coach Russell encouraged him to try out for football in his eighth-grade year.

One of the things that keep Gaines performing at his best are the kids who look up to him. Tanner stated that some of his biggest supporters are his five younger cousins, his coaches, and his parents, Sarah and Brian Gaines.

Family Life

The Gaines family has always supported Tanner’s competitive spirit as they traversed the state of Arkansas watching him compete in travel teams for baseball, basketball, and football.

“Before games, we would prepare all week, talking about the

team, the competition, watching the films with him and discussing practice. After the games, I cannot remember a time he rode the bus home. The long drives home were the times to talk about plays, the refs, the game, and anything else we wanted. Being plugged into what drives Tanner is what drives us as parents,” said Sarah Gaines.

The Gaines home was a place where the team gathered on Fridays. The driveway often looked like a parking lot for teenage boys. They would all come together to hang out before the games.

“We always had team dinners and team breakfasts. Those small things make a huge difference in the mental preparation for the game, and it builds team camaraderie. Tanner’s coaches, team and their parents have been like family to us over the years.”

Bright Future

Gains plans to minor in history and major in physical education at Arkansas Tech University. He now coaches Hector’s Pee Wee Team and says that and the love of the game made him want to become a professional football coach.



Gaines coaching kids on the Pee Wee Team. Photo courtesy of Sarah Gaines.



Tanner Gaines coaches the Pee Wee Team in Hector, Arkansas. Photo courtesy of Sarah Gaines.

Gaines offers the advice for other kids interested in playing quarterback positions in football, to use what they are comfortable doing in the sport. Focusing on the abilities they have allows the players the freedom from worrying about the ones they may lack.

Winners Spirit

It is no surprise that Tanner's hard work and dedication to athletics lead to many opportunities for his future. Check out Gaines No.12 in action by viewing the highlights of 2016 Hector Wildcat football mid-season in the video below.

There is something inspiring about an athlete that places high importance on performing his best while remaining genuine and grounded in his relationships with others. Sarah Gaines recounts people's reactions about her son's personality and the way he handles success.

"One thing I would want people to know about Tanner is that everywhere I go, I hear the same things from almost everyone. Tanner is very humble, very polite, and loved by all. He has achieved great things, but he does not brag about them and

gets after me for sharing too much on social media at times,” said Sarah.

“He came home once during a homecoming week and I said, “did you get nominated for anything?” He said, ‘Mom, I don’t want to be nominated for anything. I have had success in sports so I want someone else to have recognition who deserves it.’