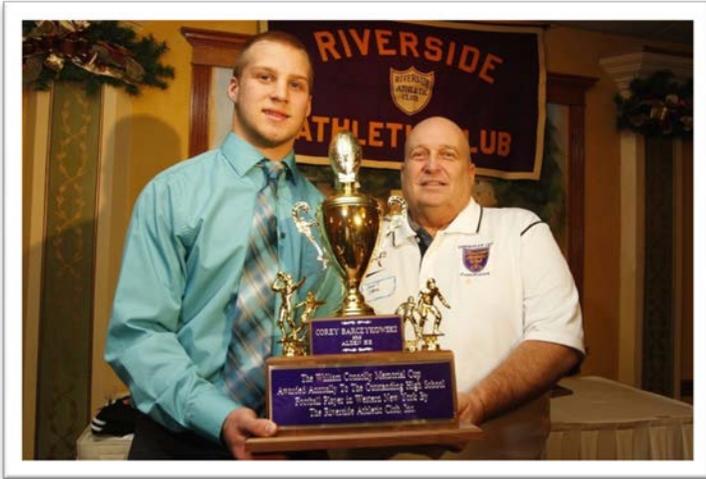


Alden's Barczykowski wins Connolly Cup

By Keith McShea
The Buffalo News
December 2, 2012



Mark Mulville / Buffalo News
Corey Barczykowski of Alden receives the Connolly Cup from the committee chairman Dennis Sarow on Saturday.

Alden finished first in The News small school poll for the third straight year. This season, the Bulldogs advanced to the program's first state semifinal

On Saturday, it finished on top again – while setting another new standard for the program.

Hard-charging, hard-hitting, hard-to-take-down senior Corey Barczykowski became the first player from Alden to win the Connolly Cup. After the introduction of the 10 finalists in a ceremony at Ilio DiPaolo's Restaurant, Connolly Cup Committee

Chairman Dennis Sarow announced the name of the 6-foot-1, 190-pound running back and defensive back.

He is the 41st winner of the award, which is presented by the Riverside Athletic Club and awarded to Western New York's most outstanding high school football player.

"I feel so honored to be up with some of these great names that have won this trophy," said Barczykowski. "It means a lot to me, it means a lot to my family. I was really nervous, really hoping I'd win it. I had my fingers crossed: all night, all day. It's been on my mind nonstop.

"It really is a great accomplishment not only for me, but my coaches, my team, my fans, and I really appreciate

Barczykowski ran for an Alden record of 2,255 yards this season. He had 28 touchdowns that helped him set a school record for points (170).

He did so with ferocious, downhill running that often resulted in him delivering the same kind of hits to potential tacklers that he very often delivered on defense (52 tackles).

"It's real simple," said Dick Diminuco, who announced last week that he has retired as Alden's head coach. "He's just a competitor. He competes all the time in everything he does. He competes hard. I've used the word 'warrior' ... and that's what he is."

Barczykowski had outstanding performances all season, particularly in the postseason. After running 29 times for 252 yards and three touchdowns against No. 2 small school Depew during the Class B East regular season, he went for 170 yards and two scores on 27 carries in the teams' Class B semifinal meeting. He had 274 yards and three touchdowns on 24 carries against East Rochester-Gananda in the Far West Regionals to help Alden earn its first trip to the state final four. In the Bulldogs' semifinal loss to eventual state champion Maine-Endwell, he showed his defensive tenacity with 15 tackles.

"I just try and go in week in and week out and try to get the victory," said Barczykowski. "It's not about me, it's about the team, and I try to sacrifice my own body just to get that win.

“My number one thank-you is my family. My family pushes me through everything. They try to get me to be my best. The whole football team pushed me this whole year to be my best and I tried to do the same for them.”

The other finalists for the award were: Lockport senior running back/linebacker James Chambers, South Park junior quarterback/linebacker Maurice Howie, Akron senior quarterback/defensive back Austin Mietz, St. Joe’s senior running back/defensive back Ilo Noble, Canisius junior running back/defensive back Qadree Ollison, West Seneca East senior quarterback/defensive back/kicker Andy Smigiera, Sweet Home senior quarterback Mike Torrillo, St. Mary’s junior running back Nick Vallone and Orchard Park senior running back Mitch Wilson.

Ollison and Canisius teammate Ryan Hunter, a senior lineman, were both honored Saturday as The Buffalo News Player of the Year.

It is the first time that The News’ Player of the Year and the Connolly Cup winner have gone to different players since 2009. That year, a pair of two-time state champions were honored: Sweet Home senior quarterback Patrick McMahon (News) and Southwestern senior quarterback Zack Sopak (Connolly Cup).

The banquet’s guest speaker was 2002 Connolly Cup winner Jehuu Caulcrick, the former star at Clymer and Michigan State who went on to play in the National Football League.