



AIA FEATURE STORY By: Don Ketchum

GREENWAY QUARTERBACK THANKFUL FOR CHANCE TO PLAY IN 4A-II SEMIFINAL

PHOENIX, AZ (November 21, 2008) – Greg Walton knows all about giving thanks.

The senior quarterback from Phoenix Greenway High is thankful to have a chance to lead his team against defending state champion Scottsdale Notre Dame Prep in the Class 4A Division II semifinals on Friday night at Phoenix North Canyon High. Kickoff is 7 p.m.

And Walton is thankful he is alive after a fire earlier this year caused serious damage to the home where he lived with his family. They since have moved.

He went to sleep early, then was awakened suddenly by a commotion. He thought something had happened to his father, who had been working at the back of the house.

But a spark had ignited lint from the dryer in the laundry room, and the fire spread to the kitchen. Walton, his father and mother, sister and a niece escaped unharmed.

“You’re thankful because it could have been a lot worse,” Walton said.

After his Thanksgiving meal settles, Walton will go about the business of trying to figure out how to help Greenway (10-2) defeat Notre Dame (12-0), which defeated Greenway 40-17 on Nov. 6.

“We hung with them for about three quarters and we still are confident we can play with them,” said Walton, who threw for 127 yards and an interception and rushed for 55 yards against Notre Dame. For the season, he has thrown for 1,842 yards and 15 touchdowns and rushed for 732 yards and 15 TDs.

Walton’s versatility “is the main reason we are still playing,” said longtime Greenway coach Mike Brown.

“Quarterback is an exciting position to play,” Walton said. “You have the ball on every play and can do a lot of things.”

In order to defeat Notre Dame, Walton said, “We have to be able to throw the ball, don’t have any turnovers and limit our penalties.”

Greenway has momentum after a thrilling 22-21 victory on the road over Queen Creek in the quarterfinals. Walton helped provide the margin of victory by tossing a two-point conversion pass to Ronnie Sellers.

This is the time of year when leaders step up and Walton has the confidence he can get the job done.

“You have to try to lift your teammates up, give them encouragement. You’re all in it together,” he said.

“We have had a lot of hard practices, but that’s what you need. We also have bonded as a team, and that should help carry us.”

Walton hopes to play in college. He wants to play quarterback, but his athleticism could allow him to play another position, such as wide receiver.

“Hopefully things will work out,” Walton said.

They already have. Walton has his life, and for that he is thankful.

Have a Story Idea:

The AIA is looking for story ideas on member high schools, including its student-athlete, coaches and administrators. Have a story that you think should be shared with the AIA community? Email your idea to Don Ketchum at dketchum@aiaonline.org.