

# VYPE<sup>®</sup>

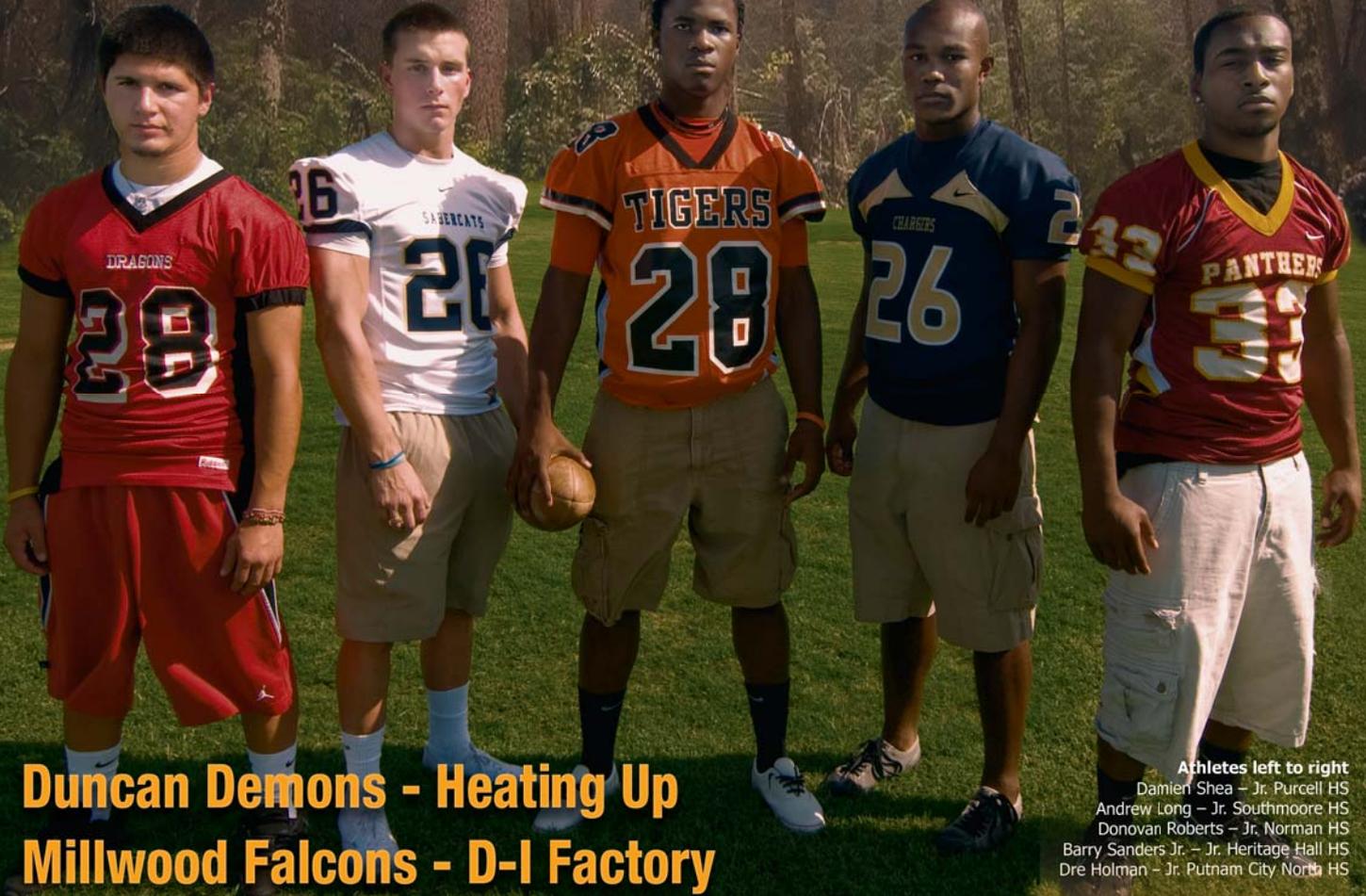
HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS MAGAZINE

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# READY TO RUN THE WORLD

Top 5 Junior running backs look to raise the bar this season.



**Duncan Demons - Heating Up**  
**Millwood Falcons - D-I Factory**

Athletes left to right  
Damien Shea - Jr. Purcell HS  
Andrew Long - Jr. Southmoore HS  
Donovan Roberts - Jr. Norman HS  
Barry Sanders Jr. - Jr. Heritage Hall HS  
Dre Holman - Jr. Putnam City North HS



**PICTURE THIS  
RANTS & RAVES  
GRILL  
& MORE!**

# Features



## Running Wild

Want to know who the best running backs from the West side are this season? VYPE has assembled a collection of running backs any team in Oklahoma would be lucky to have on their squad. This group is talented, fast and ready to run!



## Mr. Smith

Blaine Smith played football for the Blanchard Lions when he suffered a career ending injury, but that was his career in football. His baseball career is just getting started.



## Jitterbugs

Started two decades ago, the Jitterbugs are once again back on the top of the fastpitch softball mountain. Known for winning tournaments and sending girls to play in college, the Jitterbugs are turning heads and looking pretty in pink.



## D1 Factory Inc.

Millwood is consistently good in football, but this season they field a team that could compete against teams twice their size. The confidence level is high and the factory is putting out a great product.



## Heating Up

The Duncan Demons are ready to light the 2010 season on fire. With three of the more sought after recruits in Oklahoma, the Demons are loaded with talent and will be a force in Class 5A.

## Next Month...

The 2010 season has kicked off and VYPE is there to cover all the action.



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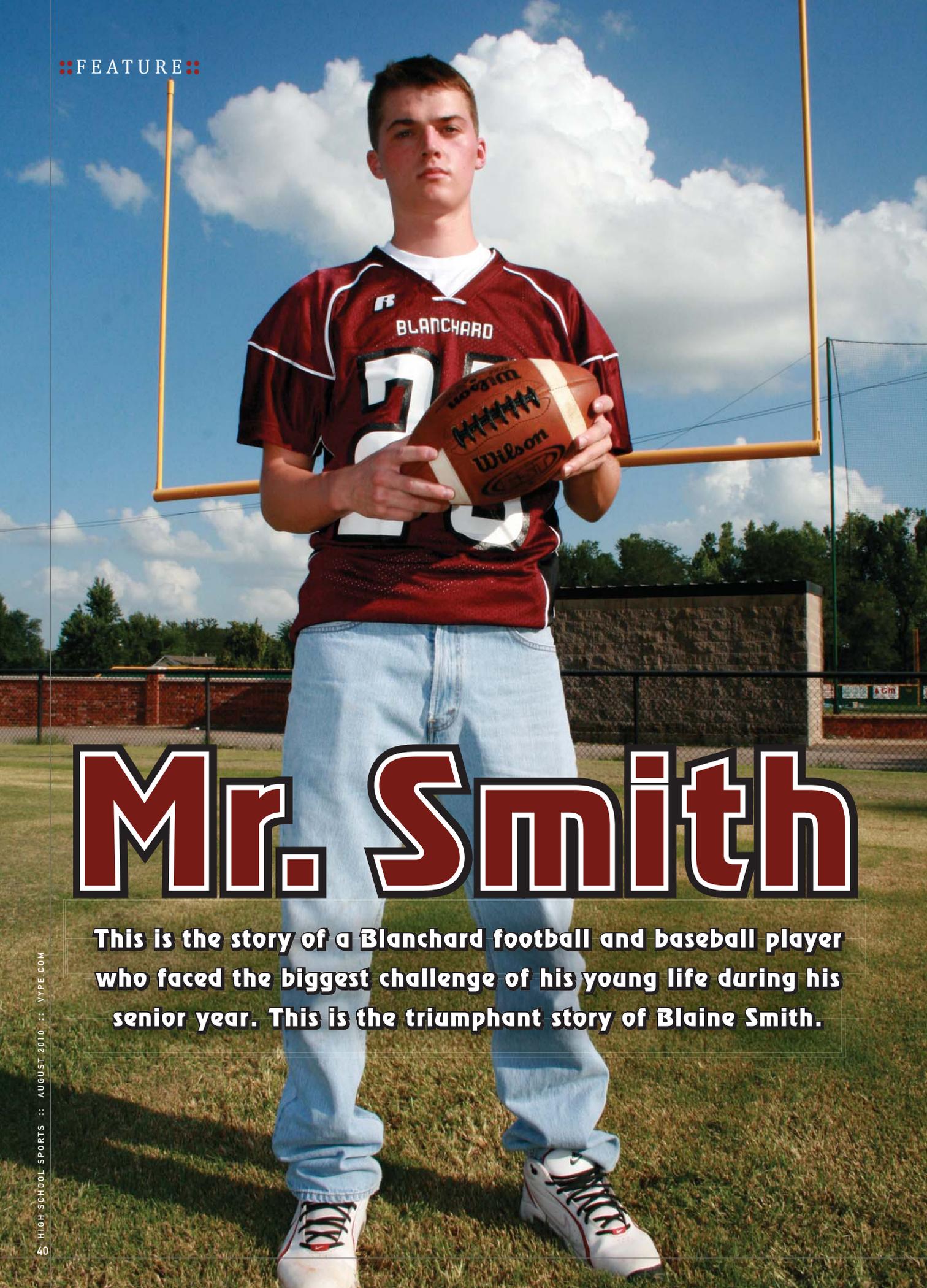
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# Mr. Smith

**This is the story of a Blanchard football and baseball player who faced the biggest challenge of his young life during his senior year. This is the triumphant story of Blaine Smith.**

By Brad Heath | Photos by Kim Hough

The stadium lights are shining down on the field, but the crowd is silent and the band has stopped playing. Players are on one knee and coaches have removed their headsets. Some of the cheerleaders have their hands over their mouths and a few football players refuse to look up. A circle of people has formed on the field. A huddle of a different kind. One player, motionless, lies on the field, his future uncertain. As they load him onto a backboard and eventually a stretcher the crowd begins to come to life. Trying to encourage the young man to fight whatever he's about to face. Moments later a whistle blows and play continues.

It's a scene played out across America on any given Friday night, but for **Blaine Smith** from **Blanchard** it was seemingly the end of his career and his future. On a goal line stand, Smith went in for a tackle and fractured the C5 and C6 vertebrae in his neck. The injury left him motionless and crippled on the field. "I had moved to the top of the stands at the 50-yard line so I didn't

have a direct view of the play, but you know when it's your kid on the field. I knew it was him because of his shoes and socks," said Blaine's father **Duane Smith**. "We got down to the field and they were already attending to him. They did a great job of keeping him still, removing his facemask and stabilizing his neck." Smith continued, "He was on the ground for a long time. They loaded him onto the stretcher and took him to the hospital in Norman."

Blaine was playing defensive end when the injury occurred. "It was third and goal on the one yard line, **Marshall Veal** and I hit the **Bridge Creek** running back, each of us from opposite sides. The running back was sandwiched and I had nowhere to go. Next thing I knew I was on the ground. Everything went black. **Blake Stringer** and the ref were standing over me," said Blaine.

That night a doctor (Dr. Cook) from **UCLA** was attending in the Norman hospital and noticed on Blaine's x-rays that he needed surgery and needed it now. "The doctor from UCLA came in and told us his C5 and C6 vertebra were fractured and he needed to operate in the next 30 minutes. The surgery took three

# “Blaine Smith is one of those chosen few selected to inspire.”

to four hours to complete,” explained Duane. “There was still a large crowd of friends, parents and family in the hospital at 4am. Blaine was taken to his room around 4:30-5am and that’s when we saw some movement.” The surgery was successful, but the extent of the injuries was still a mystery. Sick from the pain medication, Blaine was showing signs of movement in his hands, arms and legs. “When I first got out of surgery it was hard to move anything. I asked if I could grab a glass of water myself and I couldn’t even grab it. Four hours after surgery I had to use the restroom, they were going to help me but I said no. I just really wanted to do things for myself.”

Soon after his release from the hospital Smith began his own

## A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

form of recovery. Squeezing and throwing a tennis ball with his mother, Smith was determined to get out of the wheelchair and back on his feet. But his ultimate goal was much more than that. He wanted to play baseball. “Learning how to squeeze my hand was tough, it was the hardest part. When I first got out of surgery the only thing I could do was touch my index finger to my thumb. I asked my mom what I was going to do and she said we’re not going to have any down time. We’ll work on it until we get it down. I was literally working on getting better as soon as I was out of surgery,” said Blaine.

Less than 90 days after that

night against Bridge Creek, Blaine was ready to play baseball. “That was a special moment. You’re scared and excited at the same time. We knew he was pushing it. I knew his recovery was going good, but his resolve to get back on his feet and play baseball is really a credit to him. It say’s a lot about him,” said Duane.

Blaine made every moment count on the diamond having his best year at the plate batting .402 and receiving the honor of Defensive Player of the Year for the second year in a row. “Being a catcher and knowing there can be plays at the plate, I was kind of nervous. I was only 90 days out of surgery so I had some nerves. But as soon as that first pitch was thrown everything got off my chest. I felt natural. It was

awesome,” said Blaine. Now he prepares for college life and college baseball. “Doing my thing on the baseball field. Blake Stringer is coming to play with me as well. I’m looking forward to meeting new people and playing out of state. There’s other catchers on the team, but I want to build up my arm strength and compete for playing time as soon as I get there.”

Some people are born to become great leaders while others join the ranks of many who become role players in life. A select few are chosen to inspire. Blaine Smith is one of those chosen few selected to inspire.

