

## TO UNDERSTAND GRACE

WESTERVILLE, OHIO – Jack Curran has a reputation as a young man who walks to the beat of his own drum.

“He really doesn’t care what people think,” clarified his mother, Beth Curran. “Jack has always been the type of kid that walked to the beat of his own drum. He’s this 6’3” football player who also loves to putter around in his garden!”



Gardening aside, at least for the moment, Curran, now 18, grew up around sports in Westerville.

“It was something to keep me busy,” he explained, “I enjoyed them. And it was a good use of time. It also became the primary avenue to make the most friends.”

“I guess,” he added, “you could say I was destined to play sports, growing up in a household with a dad and an older brother who love football and baseball.”

Not surprising, Curran played both sports throughout his childhood.

“My parents,” he said, “always stood beside me, teaching me to work hard in sports so I could be successful, but not without pointing me toward my relationship with God first.”

Curran said he accepted Christ “and came into a relationship with God at the age of 8.”

“But,” he said, “it wasn’t until my 8th grade year I decided I wanted to give my life to God and follow him. I guess I saw the difference in the two lifestyles and how living for the world just wasn’t nearly as worthwhile or fulfilling.”

When he started high school at Westerville Central, he stopped playing baseball to focus on football.

“As far as training goes,” he said, “I never got very serious about it until freshman year. High school football is a serious commitment, so these past four years I made sure to work hard out-of-season in the weight room and in school.”

Ironically, he added, “the off-season preparation became my favorite part of football. Many would disagree and say the Friday night lights make high school football memorable, but I preferred the workouts with my friends.”

Jack Curran walks to the beat of his own drum. Remember?

“I think Jack was ‘set apart’ on the football team because of his faith,” said his mother. “He made great friends through football. But he didn’t partake in the partying outside of football, or school. He just wasn’t interested.”

“I don’t think,” Curran responded, “God had much influence on my athletic career aside from teaching me to remain faithful, and to stand on truth when people question my faith.”

“I do think,” he added, “God wanted to use me as an ambassador standing for my faith, and standing out from some of the things other players did off the field.”

Curran graduated from Westerville Central HS in 2017. But, of course, not without challenges. Or lessons learned.

“Junior year, I had a back injury that took me out for the season,” he recalled as a for instance. “I had to watch from the sidelines, wondering if I would even be able to make it back senior year.”

He did, playing defensive end and left tackle on the offensive line.

“Still playing with my injury,” he said, “I developed a greater understanding for how to work past mental roadblocks, to help out my teammates and to play a better game.”

His coach noticed.

“In my 8 years at Westerville Central,” said the school’s head football coach, John Magistro, “I found Jack Curran to be one of the finest young men to walk through our program. As a football player, he was very coachable and had a very strong work ethic that allowed him to excel on the football field.”

“But to me,” he added, “the character he displayed off the field displayed what Jack was all about: Strong academically, a great classmate, a great son, and probably the most important characteristic, a very strong Christian, who was never ashamed to show his love for God!”

And what of his gardening interests?

“God,” his mother summarized, “has used Jack’s love of nature and his natural athletic ability to grow him into who he is today.”

Accordingly, Curran is now a freshman at OSU studying ecological engineering with a minor in business innovation and entrepreneurship. But that’s not what really excites him about the next step of his life.

“I’m really excited,” he said, “to live with a bunch of guys who are part of my church, to not just get an education but to also move toward people...and to understand grace.”

Shaping Talent focuses on the influences that lead athletes to succeed. The people who helped them. Their work ethic. How and why they turned something they like into something they do. In other words, how God shaped their growth. If you have a suggestion for a future profile, contact Rye D’Orazio at Central Ohio Fellowship of Christian Athletes at 614-682-6551 or email [rdorazio@fca.org](mailto:rdorazio@fca.org).