

ALERT SPOTLIGHT TOPICAL

After dad's farming accident, Crofton RB and community rallied – and reached state final

From the The World-Herald's 2026 high school football preview series

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CROFTON, Neb. — For the first time in his Crofton football career, Tyson Jackson's dad wasn't in the stands.

It wasn't by choice. Four days earlier, Rob Jackson's hand was severed in a farming accident.

While Rob was cleaning an auger, the machine switched on. A blade broke the metacarpals on his pinky and middle finger and stripped the ring finger metacarpal out of his hand.

"It made a gash about from my pinky knuckle to about halfway down my forearm. It was all split open," Rob said. "They ended up amputating the ring finger, because the bone was gone in the carpal. They didn't seem real keen on my pinky when I was in there, if it was going to be viable or not."

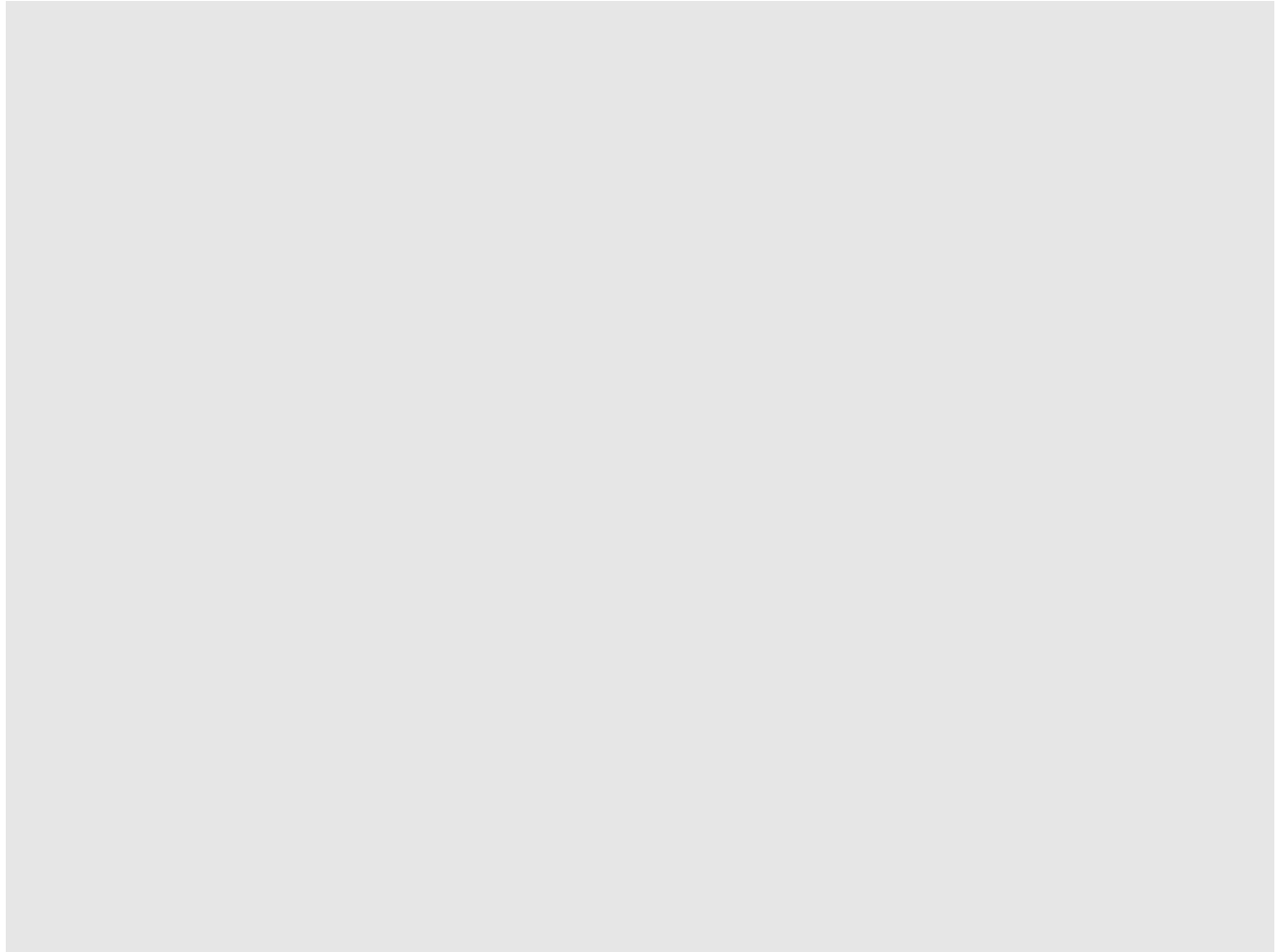
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"But they ended up keeping it, and it seems pretty good."



Rob Jackson had a finger amputated after a farming accident last fall.

ROB JACKSON

That was at 10:30 Monday morning. Tyson's mom let him get through school and football film review before telling him.

His dad faced the possibility of losing three fingers and a four-day hospital stay, but Tyson went to school every day. He was committed to the team, and his dad wouldn't have had it any other way.

During the day, people from Crofton and the surrounding areas got the family's last 300 acres of corn out. That ensured Tyson didn't miss football practice.

"Nebraska is very close knit," the running back said. "It was just really cool to see everyone come together for my dad and help support him."

When Friday came, Rob watched on a streaming service from home. Though he just got out of the hospital, he wanted to support his son.

Football is tradition in Crofton. On Friday nights, just about everyone in town gathers in the stands. When the Warriors are on the road, the town follows them.

"They see us grow up as kids," Tyson said. "It's not just playing for my family, but I feel like the entire town of Crofton is our family, and we can play for them."

That particular Friday, as his dad watched from home, the Warriors played Johnson-Brock in the second round of the Eight Man-1 playoffs.

With his dad on his mind, Tyson finished with 251 rushing yards and five touchdowns in the Warriors' 88-56 win.

"I felt it almost gave me a boost to play for my dad since he wasn't there," Tyson said. "I told myself before we went down, 'I'm dedicating this game to my dad for his injury.'"

By the next Friday, Rob healed enough to make it back to the stands.

Crofton faced Hemingford, which had one loss during the regular season. But the Warriors came out fighting, Tyson scored the first three touchdowns of the game and Crofton won 60-12.

After that first touchdown, Tyson looked up at his mom and dad.

"I pointed at them and gave them a thumbs up, and then my dad held up his injured hand like a thumbs up," Tyson said. "You can't take anything for granted. It was a very special moment for me, because we won the football game, but most of all, my dad was OK."

Though Crofton lost to Sandy Creek 66-26 in the final, getting so close to the championship has the team thinking it could win it all this year.

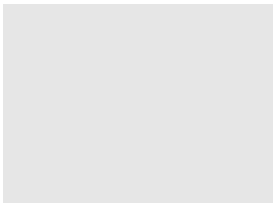
And Rob plans to be at every game for his son's senior season.

The Warriors have a powerful offense. Tyson finished with 2,468 yards rushing and 53 TDs in 2025 while Preston Foxhoven is back at quarterback. After he missed his freshman season due to an ACL tear, Foxhoven broke the school record for single-season passing yards and passing touchdowns last year.

"He didn't give up," coach Johnnie Ostermeyer said. "He worked hard. He came back even stronger than what he was."

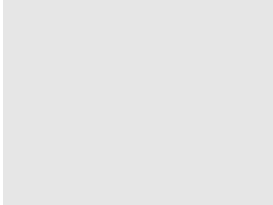
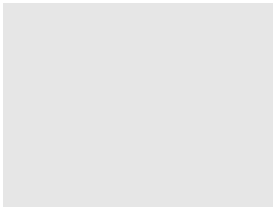
Senior Trevor Allen could also break the program record in receiving yards this season.

"The biggest thing that helped us last year is not worrying about things we can't control," Ostermeyer said. "We're going to play each week as if we have unfinished business to try to get back to that championship game."



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