

# Iroquois' Nathan Emer wins Trench Trophy as WNY's top lineman

By Budd Bailey

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The Iroquois football team certainly will miss having Nathan Emer around next season.

After all, it's not easy to replace a four-year starter - and a very good one at that.

Emer was named the winner of the 2016 Trench Trophy as Western New York's top senior lineman on Wednesday night. The announcement came at a dinner at the Lancaster Elks Lodge #1478.



*James P. McCoy/Buffalo News*

Nathan Emer of Iroquois wins the Trench Trophy at Lancaster Elks Lodge on Wednesday.

"I was really surprised," Emer said after receiving the award. "I've had a lot of help in this. It wasn't just my parents' support. My brother taught me everything he knew, and the coaches taught me everything they knew."

Emer checks in at 6-foot-5, 249 pounds. Not only is he big, but he's athletic, and that helped an Iroquois team that liked to run.

"Whenever the quarterback or the running back was interviewed this year, they always credited the linemen," Emer said. "We were a tight-knit team. Everybody appreciated everybody. We always knew everyone was together."

On defense, Emer had 42 tackles, 12 sacks, recovered six fumbles and deflected five passes. All of that good play was a reason why the Chiefs reached the playoffs this past season. It also made him an All-Western New York selection of The Buffalo News.

The two-way player did have a preference when it came to lining up for a play.

"I've always loved the defensive line," said Emer, who participates in track in the spring. "There were less rules. You could do what you wanted, and what the coaches told you to do. Offense was a case of stepping back and waiting to get hit. Defense is hitting people."

Iroquois defense coach Dave Bonacquisti has been following Emer for four seasons, and watched him improve each year.

"We weren't too good four years ago. We had a lot of injuries. He was trying to hide from me on the JVs, but I took him up. I'm not sure Mom and Dad were a big fan of me when I put him up on the varsity. He got beat up the first couple of games. But he became a fantastic player. He played both ways against some big tough kids from South Park, Riverside.

"He has a great family, tremendous work ethic. You don't get that good by accident."



*Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News*  
Iroquois Nathan Emer blocks against McKinley this season.

Emer's plans for the future aren't clear. He has been offered by Edinboro (Pa.), but he also picked up some interest from Division I schools lately.

"I'm not sure yet," Emer said about his college choice. "It's very nerve-racking, with all the coaches coming in all the time. Hopefully it will turn out all right."

Bonacquisti added, "I've never sent his film out to a college and not received a response in less than 48 hours. ... I took him to a camp in Columbus, and he did fantastic. His

measurables were at the top of the list."

The other finalists were Chauval Black of Dunkirk, Michael Carr-Johnson of Hutch-Tech, Tyler Grisolia of St. Francis, Preston Hutchinson of Franklinville/Ellicottville, Nick Jones of Dunkirk, Sean Kloss of Clarence, Daniel Kubik of Orchard Park, Jacob Luderman of Lancaster, Nathan Pawlowski of Cleveland Hill, Tyler White of Kenmore West, and J.B. Wilkes of Grand Island.

The undergraduate winners were Jeremiah Sanders of Bishop Timon/St. Jude, and Tariq Whitaker of Cheektowaga.