

Pioneer's Anna wraps up Trench Trophy

Dominant lineman hauls in hardware

By Mary Jo Monnin
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Dylan Anna made a first impression that turned into a lasting impression.

The Pioneer senior, discovered by scouts early in the voting process, was named the winner of the eighth annual Trench Trophy on Wednesday during a banquet for 200 at the Lancaster Elks.

"One of our scouts after the first week said 'you've got to see this guy,'" said Trench Trophy co-chairman Ed Sciera. "He just goes and goes. He was on our radar from the beginning. He plays to the whistle. He'll make his initial block, and then he looks downfield for the next guy to block. That was one of the first things that attracted us."

The award recognizes the top senior lineman among all 86 football teams in Western New York. Sciera, along with 40 other committee members, chose Anna from an original list of 55, which made up the five nominees from each of the 11 weeks of voting. Committee members watched an estimated 700 hours of film before giving the nod to Anna.

"I'm kind of stunned, all the hard work and sweat and tears finally paid off," said Anna, who received the award from former Buffalo Bills line coach Jim McNally. "I was so happy to be a finalist and then they called my name."



Mark Mullville / Buffalo News
Dylan Anna was chosen from an original list of 55.

The award is sponsored by the Lancaster Elks Lodge No. 1478. Its \$1,000 scholarship was funded by the friends and family of the late John Gebhardt, who died unexpectedly on Dec. 10, 2009. Gebhardt was a member of the Elks and a 1964 graduate of Lancaster. He played football at Maryland.

Anna hopes to continue his career and is considering St. John Fisher, among other schools.

The 6-foot-1, 225-pound Pioneer co-captain was also second team All-Western New York. An offensive guard and defensive tackle, he led the Panthers to a 7-2 record and a No. 8 ranking in the WNY small school poll.

Retired Lackawanna coach and Trench Trophy Executive Committee member Bill Pukalo saw Anna play three times. He said he was good in pass protection, hitting a second-layer defenseman and could get down field.

"He was everything you wanted in a lineman," Pukalo said. "It seemed he was well-respected by opponents because he was getting double-teamed. When it takes two people to block one guy, that's a good sign. I talked to him before one of the games. He seemed very focused."

Guest speakers were Jack Catanzaro, a Lancaster graduate and All-American at Union College; Dave Hack, the Niagara-Wheatfield coach and All-CFL Hamilton Tiger Cats lineman; and Nick Christman, a Sweet Home graduate, starting guard at Edinboro and the 2007 Trench Trophy winner.

The Underclassman of the Year award was presented by Hack and went to junior guard/defensive tackle Andrew Burgio of Depew.

Other finalists for the Trench Trophy were: Austin Bauer (Lancaster), Jack Cambria (St. Joe's), Ben Fluent (Randolph), Pat Langworthy (Southwestern), Thomas NeMoyer (Canisius), Anthony Sanders (McKinley), Mike Schiavi (Lackawanna), Todd Therrien (Williamsville East) and Dereon Washington (Riverside).