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By Rustin Watt • Daily Leader

Many Liberal athletes have been very successful after making the move to collegiate athletics. Ricky Jacques was a standout running back for the Liberal Redskins two years ago, and now he has added 'national champion' to his accomplishments.

Jacques an '08 graduate and 1,000 yard rusher for Liberal High School received many honors as a Redskin athlete and has just come off a spectacular season with the Butler County Community College Grizzlies — a spectacular season that ended with a national championship victory.

“Winning a national title was a huge rush, but it was expected at a successful program like Butler’s,” Jacques said. “As soon as we sealed the victory in overtime with the interception, I just broke down. It was a great feeling to see all the hard work pay off.”

Butler just came off back-to-back national championship wins and is an elite program in junior college football. Many players that move on to play Division 1 along with many players in the NFL today come from community colleges.

“Not a lot of people realize that juco ball is pretty big time,”

Jacques said. “Many of the D1 players you see came from juco teams in similar situations such as Kenny Wilson, Rudi Johnson (running back for the Lions played for Butler) or Corey Dillon (Cincinnati Bengal and New England Patriot who played at Garden City Community College), and many more. It’s still big-time football. It’s the next level regardless.”

Jacques credited his Redskin coaching staff for preparing him for the next level.

“I was ready for it with Coach Schroeder, Brown and Kline, and just the entire staff pushing me to the limit every day with every opportunity they had to get me strong mentally as well as physically capable of playing at the next level,” Jacques said.

He was also thankful for the work the coaches put in to get him scholarship opportunities.

“The staff worked really hard and did all they could to get my name out there and get looked at,” Jacques said. “They called, wrote, texted, e-mailed, made highlight tapes — you name it. They worked hard to get me to the next level, and I’m thankful they got me to a good program that’ll further my preparation for the D1 level after finishing at Butler.”

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