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Weight room good to Vikings

GENEVA – Brennan Quinn's assuredness about weight training makes him sound like an infomercial.

"Lifting weights gets you to where you want to be," he says, missing only that made-for-TV smile. "That's gotten us to where we are because we are bigger and stronger and faster than other teams."

Perfect, Brennan. Print it!

Quinn and Geneva's football team began studying DVDs of Carmel on Monday night, a big part of preparing for Saturday's 1:30 p.m. IHSA Class 7A quarterfinal at Burgess Field. If the Vikings wanted, though, they could turn the same spotlight on themselves.

After missing the playoffs for 11 seasons from 1993-2003, Geneva stretched its postseason streak to five this fall, no small feat.

"It's taken several years," Vikings coach Rob Wicinski said, "but they now see a direct correlation with success on the football field and the weight room."

Testimonial No. 1 belongs to senior Bryce Biel. Admittedly a few shirt and pant sizes bigger than his days as a 200-pound quarterback for the freshman team, the 240-pound right guard can't praise lifting enough.

Like the rest of his teammates, he learned Geneva's training program during his eighth grade spring break, coming into the weight room to actually rub elbows with the Vikings he watched for so many Friday nights.

He returned the favor this past spring and plans to be there again come the last week of March.

"We're here to help and we're not here to bad rap them or anything," Biel said.

Summer hours fluctuate at Geneva's weight room, but players don't exactly go home when it's closed. Most belong to XSport or other area gyms and keep separate routines there during the season and offseason.

The payoff comes when other teams notice. After the Vikings harassed him throughout last week's 46-28 second-round win, Rockton Hononegah quarterback Chase Robinson marveled at the Vikings' size and speed.

"They picked me up and threw me down a few times," Robinson said. "I know that for a fact."

Geneva accelerated its lifting and conditioning schedule when the playoffs started by cutting down its time on the practice field.

Kinks remain, of course, and the 11-0 Vikings admit they are flawless only by record, but staying strong hasn't let them down.

"When we walk in [the weight room], this is one variable we can control," Wicinski said. "And this is our home base, and this is where we lock it up and get on it. This is a comfort zone for us. To get back in here is extremely important."

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