

Trey Frierson shaped by life-changing challenges

Things looked bleak for the St. Joe baseball team.

The Bruins, facing a hostile crowd at Loyd Star Attendance Center, were down 8-6 with two outs at the top of the final inning of the final game of the South State championship.

Junior Trey Frierson was at bat, facing a three-ball, two-strike count and one more pitch that could throw the game to Loyd Star.

Hundreds of St. Joe fans traveled to Brookhaven that Saturday, May 13, for the winner-take-all matchup against Loyd Star. The Bruins lost Game 1 on the road days earlier, but won Game 2 at home – setting up this pivotal contest.

I leaned on the rail of the shabby dugout, the warm late-spring wind whipping across my face while the



JOE PEARSON
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sun beat down on the field. I chewed nervously on a dwindling supply of sunflower seeds.

Mud and grass stained Trey's blue-and-white, pin-striped baseball jersey as he stepped in the batter's box, calmly eyed the pitcher and waited for the most important throw of the game and the 2017 baseball season.



Jimmy Frierson III, or "Trey" as everyone calls him, was born in Canton on June 7, 1999. Trey had always been an exceptional athlete, dominating Canton youth sports in football, basketball and baseball.

But seven years ago, Trey faced something much bigger than the pressures of any athletic event. Trey lost his mother, Monique, who passed away in November 2010 after years of fighting breast cancer.

Trey was in the sixth grade.

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*– Grant Murphy,
St. Joe senior*

“That’s my drive, you know, to make my mom happy, my grandma and my dad happy,” he said recently.

Of the many special memories he has, Christmas 2009 stands out the most – the last one he spent with his mom. Trey will never forget sharing the day with his parents and siblings.

“The passing of my mom is the most important things of my life,”

Trey said, fidgeting with a pink bracelet on his wrist.

His mother once wore the bracelet; now he wears it as reminder of her.

“It (his mom’s death) changed me . . . but it definitely made me stronger as a person,” Trey said. “It made me and my friends closer.”

Great friends

One such friend is fellow senior Grant Murphy. The two are so close, in fact, that Trey even sent Grant’s mom, Danielle, a Mother’s Day card one year.

“He has overcome some tremendous obstacles in his life, and those have helped him make it to where he is today,” Grant said. “Trey is one of the few athletes you find that will stop at nothing to excel, no matter what happens.”

Trey has undoubtedly made his mom – and his dad and his grandmother – happy.

He led the Bruin baseball team in hits last year while playing shortstop. As the Bruin’s star wide receiver last fall, Trey had 44 receptions for almost 900 yards and 10 touchdowns.

This year, for the first time since middle school, Trey decided to play basketball. He simply wanted to make his senior year as memorable as possible.

But if you ask Trey anything about his high school career at St. Joe, his answer is always the same: “My biggest accomplishment is being an all ‘A’ student.”

Intangible qualities

Trey has the “it factor” – that intangible, indescribable quality that makes him stand out from the rest. Maybe it’s because of what he has gone through personally. Or maybe it’s because he’s from Canton.

The small Madison County city

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serves as the county seat and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The colorful Georgia courthouse dominates the center of town and the city's historic shopping district.

"In Canton, they say if you play sports, (then you play) for your city and your family, and never forget where you came from," Trey said.

Growing up in Canton and playing sports as a youth helped Trey develop a strong work ethic that has ultimately led to success in St. Joe's academic classes and varsity sports.

"Trey's a really smart kid, so he picks up on things fast," said Mike Howell, the Bruins' head basketball coach.

"He hasn't played basketball since he was in the eighth grade," Coach Howell said. "So for him to pick up on things so fast is a testament

“For him to pick up on things so fast is a testament to what type of kid he is and what type of work ethic he has.”

– Mike Howell,
Bruins basketball coach

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While Trey has done well in basketball, his football and baseball action has attracted interest from community colleges. In fact, Trey plans to play baseball at Copiah-Lincoln Community College next year

Meanwhile, as the Bruin baseball season quickly approaches, Trey, his teammates and his coaches have high hopes for him as well as the Bruin team. They hope to build on the success from the 2017 season.

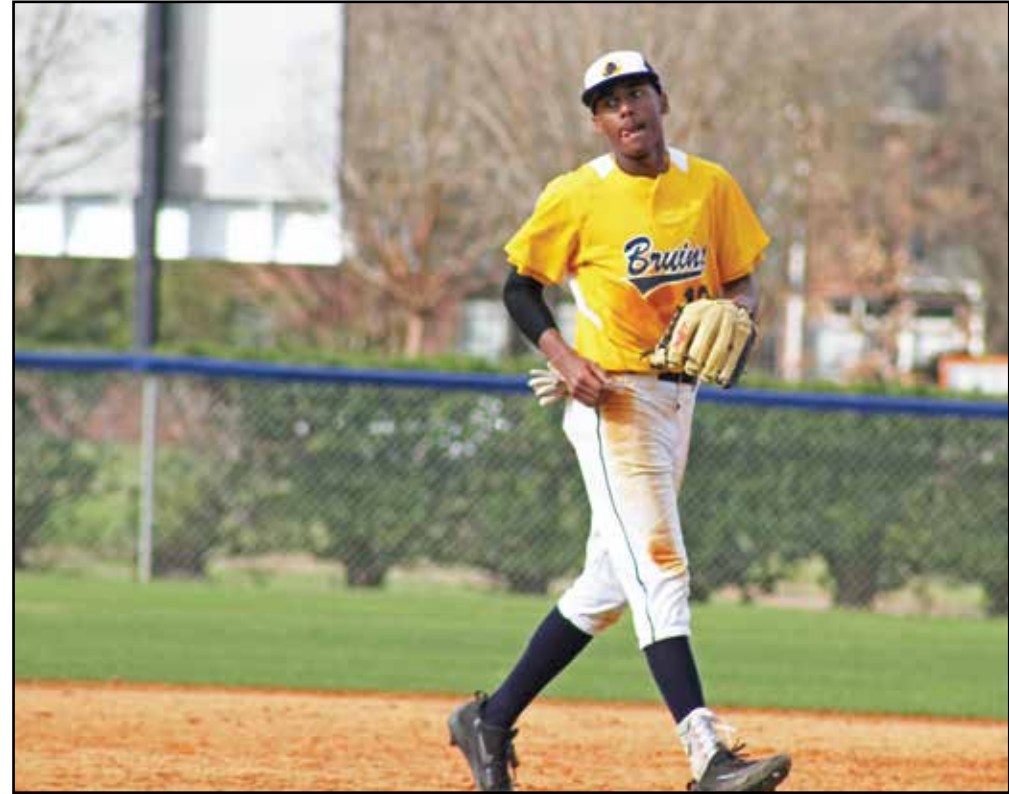


Bruin fans and players watched Trey step up to the plate at Loyd Star late that Saturday afternoon. The Bruins fought too hard to lose in the top of the seventh inning. They had to keep the dream alive.

Trey swung. In a sudden, quick blur, he slammed the ball to the left field fence, advanced to third base, drove in three runs and put the Bruins in front.

While the Bruins ultimately lost the game in the bottom of the seventh, Trey and his teammates gave it their all. I know. I was there.

As Trey reached third after hitting the triple, he stood quietly in place. He remained calm, hands on his hips, a smile on his face – and his mom's bracelet on his wrist.



File photo/The Bear Facts

St. Joseph Catholic School baseball player Trey Frierson in the outfield during the 2017 baseball season. Frierson, a senior this year, is expected to play a critical role on the Bruins' 2018 squad.