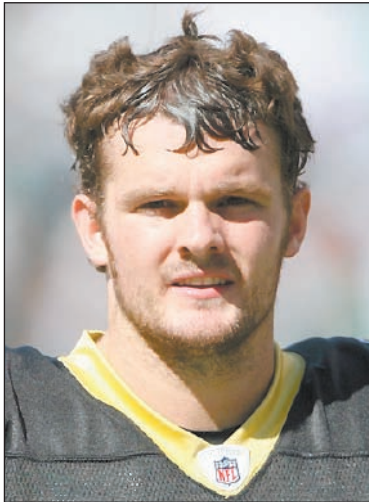


Good Luck in the Super Bowl to Pearland's Thomas Morstead

PUNTER FOR THE NEW ORLEANS SAINTS



2010



2003

It is always refreshing when a young person goes away from home and does well. It is even more refreshing when that same young person doesn't forget his roots.

Such is the case with former Pearland kicker/punter Thomas Morstead who became one of the nation's top punters while playing for the Southern Methodist University Mustangs. The 2009 fifth round draft pick by the New Orleans Saints is now just a few days away from playing in the biggest game of his young career — Super Bowl XLIV and the Indianapolis Colts at Dolphins Stadium in Miami on Sunday, February 7.

Morstead was the kicker/punter for the Oilers during his 2003 senior season. Pearland posted a 10-2 record before falling to Port Arthur Memorial and running back Jamaal Charles (UT/Kansas City Chiefs) 31-23 in the Region III area round. Now, Charles and Morstead find themselves as budding stars in the NFL.

During his career at SMU, he averaged 43.4 yards on 166 punts, with 59 downed inside the 20-yard line. Morstead departed ranked fifth in SMU history with 217 points — including a school-record streak of 78 straight PATs.

"I stay in touch with Thomas almost on a weekly basis," Pearland head coach Tony Heath said. "Thomas is a very humble young man and told me one day that there are times he remembers things that I said to him that have carried over during his college days and now in the NFL."

Morstead came home during an off week

during the season to speak to his former team.

"He told our kids that they should never be afraid to have a dream," Heath said. "He emphasized hard work and dedication that are some of the keys to achieving a dream.



He is certainly living proof of seeing his dream come true."

Morstead has shared his success by inviting Heath, and wife Rhonda, to see the

Saints and the Dallas Cowboys play one another.

Heath recalled when Morstead was just a 5-4, 130 pound freshman who broke his leg in a scrimmage. Morstead didn't return to Heath's office until he was a 6-2, 175 pound senior and asked for one final opportunity to kick.

"I almost didn't recognize him," Heath laughingly said. "Now he is 6-4, 225 and is considered one of the best in the NFL."

Against Minnesota in the NFC title game, Morstead punted seven times for a 51.3 yard average that included a 63-yarder. Four of those were inside the 20 yard line.

New Orleans head coach Sean Payton was laughed at when he used a fifth round draft pick for Morstead, but now the young head coach has had the last laugh.

"For us it was pretty obvious," Payton said. "The biggest thing is if Thomas misses a punt, we're still getting hang time above 4.0 (seconds). So sometimes it's not the hits, it's the misses. I think he has done a good job of being consistent. "Everyone was up in arms with a fifth-round selection there, but it looks pretty good now."

Morstead earned NFL Special Teams "Player of the Week" twice during the regular season. He has proven that he can be a key player for the Saints in the Super Bowl, especially in determining field position for the defense against the high-octane Colts offense.

Morstead is the son of John and Isobel Morstead of Pearland.



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