

SEEKING the spotlight

Competition between teammates is both natural and healthy. However the unique competitive nature of the team's two quarterbacks has driven the varsity football team to a new standard of sportsmanship and synergy.

Sticky skin coated in sweat sticks to bright blue jerseys, whistles blow, and grunts echo across the practice field with each bone-crushing hit. Daily football practice is typically filled with many stressors that send athletes home drained and unusually quiet at family dinner. However, these tense moments on the field fuel the competitive nature of the two starting quarterbacks, **seniors Zion Rush and Cameron Leggett**, both itching for the chance to prove themselves worthy of pushing the team to victory.

Following summer workouts, long practice hours, and team bondings after Leggett's transfer to MN, Rush and Leggett naturally became good friends. When it was revealed that Rush would be switching from receiver back to quarterback after the season kicked off, tensions began to rise between the pair.

"I didn't have a problem with him at the beginning of the season, but once I started playing quarterback, he started having an attitude towards me, which is when I realized just how competitive this was going to become," Rush said.

The rivalry between the pair eventually spilled over off the field and constantly consumed the minds of Rush and Leggett.

"On the field, in the weight room, in the classroom, everywhere we were just constantly competing with one another and that's just how our relationship became in that environment. Every day at practice, knowing that he's right behind me, watching me, or there with me made me perform a little bit better to show why I should be starting over him," Leggett said.

With two multiple-offer quarterbacks, raking in college attention and recruitment noise, **head Football Coach Allen Burrell** had many factors to analyze when choosing the starting quarterback for game day, further pushing Rush and Leggett to outshine one another.

"We compete every day at practice. We track practice,

keep track of percentages, who's doing better, who's operating the offense better. It was just a competition, just to see who had a better week. They're both seniors, so we wanted to make sure both of them got playing time," Burrell said.

The complicated dynamic between the two was noticeable on and off the field, with Burrell taking note of it's effect on the rest of the team.

"They got along for the most part for the good of the team, but they definitely have a mutual respect for one another," Burrell said.

Rather than weakening their team with pettiness and awkward tensions, their fiery competitiveness had positive impacts on the duo.

"I think competing against him made me a better athlete and as a person. Having each other to look up to and compete with just kind of changed my perspective on the game, made me work harder, and just become better in general, even off the field," Leggett said.

Rush and Leggett's dynamic stretched far beyond themselves, however, and Burrell noticed a significant change throughout the entirety of the team's dynamic thanks to the quarterbacks' quarrels.

"Throughout the year, they not only made each other better, but, as a matter of fact, made our whole team better. The team saw how they were competing against each other, and it kind of raised the level of our team, and I think that's why we started having a little success towards the end," Burrell said. I think they both got better as we got along," Burrell said.

As the notable football season, captained and uplifted by the double quarterbacks, comes to a close, the snarky comments and tensions among teammates have given way to friendships, life lessons, and personal growth.

"The season as a whole just made me a better person and I'm grateful that [Zion and I] got to do it together," Leggett said. *story by Olivia Hopkins*