



The Best Thing I Saw at State: The Strongest Student in the State

Dylan Rockett's Record-Breaking Finish Built on Years of Growth

By Ethan W. Anderson

The *Best Thing I Saw at State* is a new column that brings to life the moments that make high school sports so meaningful. Through the stories, emotions, and details that often go unseen at the state championships, it captures what the box score can't.



Kenner, LA — On Saturday, Live Oak senior Dylan Rockett delivered one of the most dominant performances in Louisiana high school powerlifting history. Competing in the 181.8-pound weight class, he broke three state records and finished with a staggering 1,820-pound total, the highest of any lifter in the entire meet and across all four days of competition, spanning five classifications.

His lifts told part of the story: 675-pound squat, 480-pound bench press, and a 665-pound deadlift.



Numbers that earned him the meet's Most Outstanding Lifter Award and cemented his place among the best pound-for-pound lifters the state has ever seen. But those numbers didn't start here.

"I was very excited when I won Most Outstanding Lifter," Rockett said. "It's something I've wanted all four years of high school. I knew I had a good chance this year, so I was really looking forward to it."

Four years ago, Rockett stood on this same stage as a freshman and finished eighth. He wasn't the strongest lifter in the state then. He wasn't even close. He was, however, the only freshman in his division to even qualify for state.

"Dylan and I came into Live Oak the same year," head coach Cash Littlefield said. "My first year taking over the program was his freshman year."

There was something there, even early on.

"During his freshman year, he managed to be the only freshman in Division I to qualify for state. I knew he was going to be very good and a possible future state champ," Littlefield said. "I never anticipated how much he would grow in the sport."

That word, grow, is where this story really lives. Because powerlifting doesn't reward shortcuts. It demands discipline, consistency, and patience. Progress is slow, measurable, and, at times, unforgiving. And Rockett embraced all of it.

"My mindset going into this meet was the same as always. I try to treat every meet the same," Rockett said. "But it being my last LHSPLA meet made it different. I just wanted to soak it in and enjoy the moment."

From eighth place as a freshman to third as a sophomore. From third to first as a junior. And from champion to record-breaker as a senior. Each year stronger than the last. Each year more complete than the last.

"From freshman year to now, I've grown a lot," Rockett said. "I've learned so much more about powerlifting, I've gotten a lot stronger, and I've added 860 pounds to my total. I've also gotten a lot better at helping other people with powerlifting."

"Dylan is the special combination of extremely talented, but also the hardest worker in the room," Littlefield said. "The work ethic is what has really driven him forward."

But strength, in high school sports, isn't just measured in pounds. It's measured in who you become along the way.

"None of that compares to how wonderful of a kid he is," Littlefield said. "He is an absolute joy to coach. Seeing how he handles being a student, friend, and teammate has been the most rewarding part."



That growth showed up in the people around him.

“The characteristic that truly separates Dylan is his care for his teammates,” Littlefield said. “He’s someone who could focus entirely on his own success, but instead, he’s made it a mission to help others develop.”

This year alone, Rockett worked with multiple first-year lifters, guiding them through a sport that once felt just as new to him.

“What pushes me is my own growth and just the desire to get stronger,” Rockett said. “I’ve always loved the idea of being strong. I’ve never really been worried about recognition. My coach, my team, my family, and my community support me with constant encouragement, and in powerlifting we all look out for each other.”



“I’ve told Dylan many times that he has had as much or more impact on this program as I have as a coach,” Littlefield said. “That’s selfless servanthood.”

That’s what high school sports are supposed to do. Yes, they build athletes. Yes, they build competitors. But more than anything, they build people. And sometimes, if you’re lucky, you get to watch all of that happen in real time. You see it in the freshman who just hopes to belong. You see it in the junior who starts to believe. And if the journey is right, you see it in the senior who finishes not just physically stronger, but stronger as a person.



“When people say I’m one of the greatest, it’s an amazing feeling,” Rockett said. “That’s something I’ve wanted since my freshman year, and it’s always been one of my biggest motivations.”

Rockett’s final numbers will be remembered. A 1,820-pound total. Three state records. The highest total in the meet.

But what he’ll remember most has nothing to do with numbers, awards, or attention.

“What I’ll miss most is my team,” Rockett said. “My favorite part has been helping my teammates get better. Just being able to lift with my teammates and my coach every day made school more fun. That’s what makes high school sports special, building something together and working toward something as a group.”

But the best thing I saw at state wasn’t the weight on the bar.

It was the four years behind it. A reflection of steady growth, adding weight little by little while becoming better each day as an athlete, as a student, and as a person. All of it a product of a team, a school, a community, and a state that rallied behind him.

By the time Dylan Rockett became the strongest student in the state, that wasn’t the most impressive thing about him anymore. It was who he had become through the process, a reminder that high school sports go **Beyond the Game**. At their best, they do not just build champions. They build people.

Author’s Note:*In my role as the Director of Communications, I have the unique privilege of attending nearly all sanctioned LHSAA State Championship events. Although the schedule is demanding, I have the privilege of seeing student-athletes from all walks of life, united by two things: their participation in Louisiana high school sports and their pursuit of a state championship. In my first year in this role, I’ve gained a deeper appreciation for high school athletics and for all the dedication that goes into making each season and event possible. Although my current role involves less writing than my previous positions, it has given me the opportunity to return to something I’ve always loved. While much of my work now focuses on press releases and public statements, I also have the chance to reconnect with my passion for feature writing, this time highlighting what I consider the purest form of sport: high school athletics. The goal is to highlight the best thing I saw at each state championship and share the unknown stories behind these events, capturing memorable moments for student-athletes, coaches, administrators, officials, and fans.*