

‘Win for your teammates,’ says pro player and coach

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It's been a historic week for Buck Pierce.

The 2000 Del Norte High School graduate helped coach the Winnipeg Blue Bombers to its first Canadian Football League Grey Cup Championship in 29 years - a 33-12 win over the Hamilton Tiger-Cats on Nov. 24.

Then, Pierce saw Del Norte win its first-ever North Coast Section Division 5 title last Saturday in a thriller over Encinal High School, 14-13.

Pierce told The Triplicate he still follows the Warriors from Winnipeg, thanks to the miracles of modern technology. He jokingly took no credit in their win, after sending the team a pep talk Nov. 27 via video messaging.

“They’ve done a fantastic job,” said Pierce. “Every year, I look forward to listening to their games. I understand what this time of life means to them. To win a North Coast Section Championship is amazing for those guys.

“I also know how the community backs its high school athletes. There’s a lot of excitement in Del Norte County that this team has done something it’s never done before. It’s amazing for them. I couldn’t be happier.”

After graduating in 2000, Pierce played college football at New Mexico State University and a had short stint with the Houston Texans in the National Football League.

He then went north and signed with the B.C. Lions, where he was a backup quarterback when the team won the Grey Cup in 2005.

Pierce signed with Winnipeg in 2010, then retired from playing football in 2013. However, he joined the Blue Bombers coaching staff as a running backs coach in 2014 and became the quarterbacks coach two seasons later.

Having experienced championships now as a player and a coach, Pierce has one more piece of advice for the Warriors, who are preparing for their state playoff match Friday against The Kings Academy.

“Trust each other, trust the coaches. Win one game and move on, advance.

“Just keep winning another game - for your teammates,” said Pierce.