

## IHSAA, Princeton AD weigh in on Evans transfer



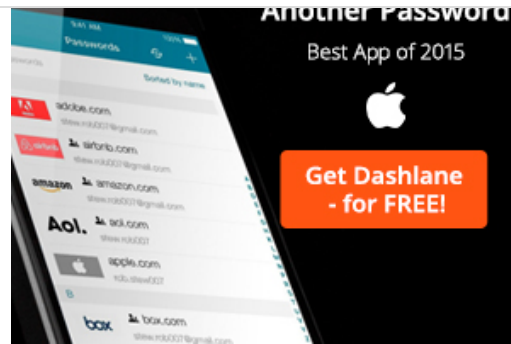
Central's Tor'Jon Evans worked to evade a tackle from Jasper's Malik Chatman, left, and Sam DeWitt in the first half of the Class 4A sectional game Friday evening at Jerry Brewer Alumni Stadium in Jasper. Central defeated Jasper 26-15.

BRITTNEY LOHMILLER / DUBOIS COUNTY HERALD

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EVANSVILLE — There are a litany of reasons a student-athlete may transfer from one high school to another.



Every case is unique: from a ward of the court to change in residence to hardship scenarios. The process begins with the principal and/or athletic director of the receiving school submitting paperwork to the sending school. If the two are in agreement, the Indiana High School Athletic Association follows that recommendation and will grant the ruling unless special circumstances arise.

In the situation of the Evans brothers transferring from Central to Princeton, which has generated significant public fodder, IHSAA bylaws state there is reason to believe the change in schools is legitimate.

"Any time there is a bona fide change in residence in which a family would move from one school district to another – which is our 19-5 bylaw – a student-athlete could gain eligibility," said IHSAA assistant commissioner Paul Neidig, a former chief of staff with the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp. and athletic director at Central.

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Princeton athletics director Jason Engelbrecht estimated he handles anywhere from 12 to 20 transfers per year. He said that only if the sending school -- in this case, Central -- did not oblige would the IHSAA arbitrate the matter.

Engelbrecht said everything was done with caution and by the book.

"It's an athletic transfer based on a custodial move to a new district," said Engelbrecht, a former Central baseball coach. "As long as you've got that address in the district and it's legitimate, that's a hard one to turn down because it's in the best interest of the kid, obviously, if the parent has made that decision. You can't take away eligibility because of a parent's decision to move.

"It's a unique scenario and I know there are going to be a lot of eyes on it and so forth, but it was legitimate from beginning to end."

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The Evans family is said to have moved to Princeton in late December and enrolled in school Monday. Gomer Evans, the boys' father, recently accepted a job position in the Princeton school district. He has not returned a message left for him.



Phone calls and a voicemail left for Andy Owen, the current EVSC athletic director and former Central football head coach, were also not returned.

This isn't the first time there were tribulations between the Evans family and Central.

In August 2016, the family reportedly left Evansville just one game into the season to move to St. Louis – only to return just a few days later. It was then revealed that Tias Stewart, the older half-brother, was suspended the next two games for a violation of the school's code of conduct policy.

The Evans brothers were monumental in Central's rise to prominence in football the past two seasons. Tor'Jon was named a Class 4A first-team all-state running back, and Tre'Jon was an all-conference defensive back.

"It's a great opportunity for them, first of all, because this is a great community," said Princeton football head coach Jared Maners, who was the defensive coordinator at Central from 2013-17. "If they come here and do the right things, make their grades, stay eligible and committed to school and have the mindset that they're ready to compete, it's going to be a great opportunity for them."

Tor'Jon Evans, a sophomore, captured Evansville Downtown Quarterback Club's Outstanding Player in each of his two seasons. This past fall, he rushed for a school-record 2,610 yards on 262 carries, including 32 touchdowns, in leading the Bears (11-2) to their third-ever Class 4A sectional title.

Tre'Jon Evans, also a sophomore, ran the ball occasionally at Central, racking up 309 yards on just 16 carries. Tory Evans, a freshman, had 28 carries for 113 yards. There is another brother, Julius, who moved in from Belleville, Illinois. He is also a sophomore.

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