



**SAUNDERS**  
**Real Estate**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### ***WINNING DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR AT CROSSROADS JOINS LOCAL COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE OFFICE***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
LAKELAND, FL (April 19, 2007)**

Lakeland High School's former Defensive Coordinator, Clay Taylor, joins Coldwell Banker Commercial Saunders Real Estate as Sales Associate Realtor®, specializing in agricultural land transactions.

As the latest of many football championships slowly fade into memory, Lakeland High School's (LHS's) former Defensive Coordinator, Clay Taylor, stood at a crossroads in his life. With 23 years of focusing on coaching sports and mentoring youth, considering a career change came quietly with bittersweet and mixed emotions. "I loved my job at LHS and am blessed to have been a part of such a great program, but it is time for me to get back to my roots."



**Clay Taylor**  
Sales Associate Realtor®  
Coldwell Banker Commercials  
Saunders Real Estate  
(Former Lakeland High School  
Defensive Coordinator)

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**Coldwell Banker Commercial Saunders Real Estate**  
5120 S. Lakeland Dr., Suite 3, Lakeland, FL 33813



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Taylor, originally from Lakeland, Florida, studied Food and Resource Economics at the University of Florida to work toward a business career in the agribusiness industry in Central Florida. He also attended Carson Newman College in Jefferson TN and the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

After graduating and interviewing, life threw a curve ball, as it often does, when Taylor was offered an agriculture teaching position along with a football coaching position at Crystal Lake Junior High School in Lakeland. Thinking this was a good temporary job, he accepted, unknowingly embarking upon a 23-year career with the school district's sports programs that would open doors to many opportunities to make a significant difference in the lives of our community's young men.

Two years at Crystal Lake Junior High School and 21 years at Lakeland High School, Taylor looks back on a career he says that he would not change for anything. "Sport programs are a great interest of mine but I have to say that having the chance to mentor youth, to me, is the most gratifying aspect of the past 23 years." Taylor continues, "My dad was my mentor and gave me the invaluable life lessons of work ethic, integrity, and organization. After playing football as a student at LHS and then working with Coach Bill Castle for 21 years, Coach Castle became a great force in my life; motivating, teaching, and being a friend. Those moments will never leave me."

That attention to detail, organization, work ethic, and integrity has been one of the key parts of LHS's successful ball program over the years that are acknowledged by

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Coach Castle, who states, "Clay was a huge factor in the success of the program over the years. He had a hand in everything and in all projects associated with the football team. No one is more loyal, dedicated, and honest to offering integrity to the program."

The year 2006 brought to the LHS Dreadnaughts a consecutive third win as 5-A State Champions and its sixth overall win, under the coaching of Head Coach Bill Castle, Defensive Coordinator, Clay Taylor, and other coaching staff. "I knew we had a great chance to win because we had so many great players, but one never knows what will happen with injuries and unforeseen events. I focus on our goal, one step at a time. Consistency works."

Sports have been a part of Taylor's life since he was a young man. Attending Lakeland High School, he participated in the football program as a player under Coach Castle. In his early years, he participated in Baseball and later became wrestling coach and football coach at Crystal Lake Junior High School after college graduation.

Now, seizing the opportunity to make changes in his career, he leaves behind a legacy of memorable years of sports competition and guiding youth to stay in school, work harder, and excel in life.

Getting back to his roots, Taylor always had agriculture in the back in his mind and recently obtained a real estate license. He has since joined the Coldwell Banker

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Commercial Saunders Real Estate office that specializes in agricultural land and commercial properties. “During my decision process, I networked with over 40 people in agribusiness and when I met with Dean Saunders, I knew I found the right place for me.” Being in this new real estate environment will allow Taylor to build upon his specialty from years ago, while still influencing others around him with the same determination and balance found in his coaching.

“As a coach, I understood that I was not smarter necessarily, but that I was willing to work hard, be consistent, and never give up.” He sees that the grass is not always greener on the other side and success can come with consistency and stability. “If you want to get ahead, you have to do more than the other guy.”

It is a given that the maturity of professionalism and discipline nurtured through the football experience will be found in Taylor’s new position to the benefit of his real estate clients. He brings great agriculture background, knowledge of Central Florida, and his willingness to go the extra mile.

Taylor and wife, Gigi, have a daughter, Maddie, and twin boys. Twins, Clayton and Jesse, have often been seen on the sidelines at the Dreadnaught games as water boys and are avid Dreadnaught fans, decked out in the familiar black and orange. “I will continue to support the Lakeland High School teams and you will still see me at the games, but now I will be in the stands and not on the field.”

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