

Salter's an inspiration

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Five years ago, a youth football practice turned tragic for Paul Salter, leaving him paralyzed from the neck down.

Now, the teen who was the subject of a community-wide outpouring of support and prayers will receive its accolades as an inspiring graduate of Riverview High School.

"I don't think about it," he said about being an inspiration.

Salter, 17, plans to attend Manatee Community College, then the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee campus. He's thinking about majoring in government or political science.

"I like to debate and hear myself talk, like any other politician," Salter said.

"I like being able to prove my own point," he said. "I'm real stubborn with my beliefs.

Salter remains a big fan of football, even though a helmet-to-helmet collision with a teammate at a routine practice in 1999 left the then 13-year-old cornerback unable to use his legs or arms.

With the help of an aide who was his scribe for three years, Salter -- a Miami Dolphins fan -- graduated with a 3.5 grade point average. His upbeat spirit made him very popular with students and teachers.

"Not once have I ever heard Paul feel sorry for himself, or be hard on himself, or express frustration for what life has handed him," said Marjorie Bober, the aide who took notes for Salter and helped him take tests.

Salter said "that's the Salter way I suppose. I come from a long line of stubborn men."

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