

## RIVER ROUGE

# Schools, firm owned by district grad, enter partnership



DQS Solutions & Staffing founder and CEO and River Rouge graduate Josh Morris, middle, served as the honorary captain ahead of the Panthers' home opener on Sept. 6. ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

BY THE NEWS HERALD

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The River Rouge School District and a business owned by an alum of the Downriver school system will mean enhanced revenue for the athletic program.

A multi-year agreement, valued at nearly \$2 million, is set to significantly enhance the educational and athletic experiences for students and staff within the district. The

partnership was officially unveiled during the River Rouge Panthers' home opener against Muskegon Mona Shores on Friday.

The River Rouge Stadium will be renamed to DQS Solutions & Staffing Stadium. This event coincided with the start of the 96th annual River Rouge Days.

DQS Solutions & Staffing will provide a substantial annual investment to support various district initiatives. Additionally, yearly scholarships will be awarded to deserving students, and students will have the opportunity to gain valuable work experience through paid summer internships. Graduates will benefit from training and gain valuable work experience through paid summer internships. Graduates will benefit from training and job placement opportunities provided by DQS.

Josh Morris, founder and CEO of DQS Solutions & Staffing and a River Rouge alum, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership.

"We understand the importance of supporting local communities and fostering opportunities for growth. River Rouge helped shape me into the person I am today, and my team and I are looking forward to being an important part of River Rouge's history and future," he said.

Morris was on hand Friday night to watch his alma mater play at the newly-rebranded DQS Solutions & Staffing Stadium. He told The News-Herald the genesis of the partnership was a simple request for a donation.

"Being a graduate of River Rouge High School and being able to come back with business being successful, giving back to the community was very important," Morris said. "We got approached about some donations but we wanted to do something on a larger scale. So we talked about potentially renaming the stadium, and also provide some scholarship and after-school job opportunities.

"There is a wide array of it," Morris added. "DQS gets the name on the stadium but what we're ultimately able to do is provide a much bigger impact to the kids."

Morris on Friday served as an honorary captain for Rouge ahead of their big-time matchup vs Mona Shores. The Class of 2005 graduate expressed a lot of pride for the strides that the school's football program has made.

"I'm extremely proud of the coaches," Morris said. "(Athletic director Chester Franklin), obviously Dr. Coleman and the River Rouge school board, it is amazing what this program has done starting with (former head coach Corey Parker) and now (current head coach Eric Pettway).

"This is home," Morris said. "No matter where I've gone in my career, being able to come back here always feels like home. When you're from here, everyone is looking out for

everyone. River Rouge may get a bad rep but this is the greatest community in Downriver, bar none.”

Derrick R. Coleman, superintendent of the River Rouge School District, believes the strength of the partnership is far greater than the revenue it is generating.

“It is an indisputable fact that children will rarely become what they have not seen. Therefore, this partnership affords our students additional access and opportunity to help shape who they will become once they graduate. CEO Josh Morris and DQS are committed to nurturing and fostering professional growth opportunities for our students through employment, networking opportunities, valuable real-world experiences, mentorship, and career pathways,” he said.

Alexander Muller of The News-Herald contributed to this report.