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Adler, Runyan waste no time in showdown for 3rd Congressional District



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By ROB SPAHR Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, June 13, 2010 |

As a National Football League player, Jon Runyan absorbed punishment and delivered it, too. That experience will come in handy because politics has its own version of the blindside blitz.

Runyan, the Republican candidate for the U.S. House in the 3rd Congressional District, will challenge incumbent Democrat Rep. John Adler for the seat this fall.

“The 3rd Congressional District in New Jersey will be one of most closely watched races probably in the country, certainly the most watched in the state of New Jersey,” said Ben Dworkin, the director of the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics at Rider University. “This is because this district elected Republicans for decades. Yet in 2008, it elected a Democrat for the first time and the Republicans are itching to win back a seat they believe is theirs.”

Runyan wasted no time attacking his opponent, who reacted swiftly. Runyan, flanked by Gov. Chris Christie during his post-primary victory speech Tuesday night, called Adler a “career politician” whose actions helped cause the financial crisis facing both the state and the nation.

Not to be outdone, Adler’s campaign manager, Geoff Mackles, released a statement minutes later, attacking Runyan for allegedly dodging, ducking debates during the primary, insulting veterans groups and failing to tell voters where he stood on issues.

Adler’s response asked that Runyan, a former Philadelphia Eagles and NFL Pro offensive tackle, show “more respect for his fellow citizens starting tomorrow than we have seen from him in the last 15 years.”

And just like that, the 3rd District race shifted into full throttle.

