

Engdahl anchors offensive line for Kingsmen

By Drew Cassel

The offensive line is a key point of any team. Without an offensive line, the run game is non-existent and the Quarterback has no time to throw.

Who is in charge of the Offensive Line? The center is. The center is responsible for managing calls on the line and giving blocking assignments. That is just the mental aspect while the physical aspects include snapping the ball and of course blocking effectively.

This season, Penn's Gold Rush Offense features a new center, Matt Engdahl (6-foot-0, 260 pounds).

It speaks highly of Engdahl that he has been entrusted to lead the Penn line at a new position.

"Matt is a very intelligent player," Penn's Offensive Line Coach Brent Laidig said. "Since his Sophomore year, he played multiple positions. If anyone could do it, it's Matt.

Engdahl was a Tackle prior to being a Center. There was plenty to learn.

"It was definitely a little bit of a struggle learning to snap and still do all the things I am responsible, for but I was happy to learn the new position," Engdahl said.

The new center also talked about the steps he took over the summer.

"Over the summer, I made sure I made sure I went to almost every practice and that I was paying attention to what my coach said," Engdahl stated. "Also, I made sure that I asked questions when I didn't understand part of my assignment."

Engdahl sees the position as a new challenge. Coach Laidig said that the position change required a lot of work.

"It's a lot of mental work," Laidig explained. "Learning how to adjust calls and play on the line takes a lot of determination."

The center position is complex. Not only do you have to know what you need to do, but what everyone else is doing. Being a center means you have to be physical, but also a good communicator and leader. There are lots of things that go into being a successful leader of an offensive line.

According to Engdahl, "Some key components would be making sure that everyone is accountable no matter who you are and making sure that the criticism is constructive and supportive. Also, making sure that everyone is having fun and enjoying themselves during practice."

Engdahl said, "Our seniors are in charge of establishing an environment of hard work and determination. We are responsible for making sure that everyone is doing what they are supposed to do but we also have to make sure that the underclassmen are having fun and feeling welcome."

Even though Engdahl has a lot on his plate it all just comes down to the love of football.

"I have always played Flag Football and Granger Rocket and I really love playing, and so I have stuck with it," Engdahl said. "I love the brotherhood and the friendships that I have made with many of the other teammates and the coaches. I love the fact that we all have to work together to be successful. I also enjoy the taunting and teasing between opponents and even other teammates."

Even though learning the center position is a lot of work and the position isn't always in the spotlight, it is a critically important position. At Penn, players and coaches agree, Matt Engdahl is the guy for the job.



Track and Football, 1,000 miles away

By Nate Kelly

Nathan Hurbough sprinted on the gridirons and tracks of Texas last season for Hurst Bell High School.

But after he father accepted a job in northern Indiana, he's wearing the gold-and-black colors of Penn High School.

Hurbough is a 6-foot-2, 154-pound Senior Wide Receiver for the Kingsmen Football Team, and he plans on running track for Penn.

Moving 1,000 miles away from his Texas home, Hurbough didn't know exactly what to expect. After being at Penn for a month, Hurbough's early impressions of Indiana are positive.

"When I first got here I didn't know what to expect ... I'm enjoying the different style of play," Hurbough said.

According to Hurbough, there are distinct differences in Texas and Indiana high school football.

"The play styles are different," Hurbough said. "Texas is a whole lot more 'athletic' and much more uptempo and physical.

"Indiana, on the other hand, is a little slower, but pays much more attention to detail and is much more complex."

Hurbough said that he is embracing the mental challenge of playing at Penn, and thinks it makes him a better player each day.

Another way that Hurbough wants to step up his game is as a Senior Leader. Hurbough makes it very clear that he wants to be a role model to younger players.

"As far as personal goals, I'd like to continue become a better leader ... to make sure I'm always somebody who people look up to."

Kingsmen Running Back Kyle Riffel said that Hurbough, who scored a touchdown against Valparaiso in his Penn debut, has made a positive impact for the "Gold Rush."

"He's a very funny and athletic player," Riffel said. "He brings our chemistry up and boosts the teams energy. He makes going to practice and games a lot more fun. Of course, he also helps us physically."

Hurbough has proven he can perform when it matters the most.

"I finished first in the 400, triple jump, and the 4x4 relay all at the regional meet," Hurbough said. "With the help of my coaches and teammates, it's the best moment in my career."

And as Hurbough competes in his Senior Football and Track seasons at Penn, Kingsmen fans are hoping there are a lot more special moments in his career.



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Wiseman fulfills dream as Kingsmen starter

By James Palen III

Owen Wiseman is a big part of the Penn Defense, better known as the "Wild Bunch."

Not only is Wiseman a key person on the field, but he also helps other teammates off the field.

"He (Wiseman) influenced me by making me work harder in the weight room, and is also a great and positive guy who has belief in whatever he is trying to accomplish," Kingsmen Wide Receiver Carson Mumaw said.

Wiseman, a 6-foot-2, 210-pound Junior Defensive Lineman, has made an impact for the Kingsmen this season.



A talented athlete like Wiseman could've chosen from a variety of sports to play, but he chose football. He wanted to be part of that varsity team that walks onto Freed Field under the lights, with a crowd of cheers roaring behind him. It's always been his passion. Ever since he was a young boy, he dreamed of this day. His dream has now become reality as he earned a starting spot on the Varsity.

Like any other football player, he goes through challenges and obstacles. Although, he isn't fazed. Those obstacles fuel him.

"It's a process every day, but over time I've learned to work harder and grow with my teammates," Wiseman said.

Some of the biggest influencers to Owen are his teammates and the coaching staff. They see what he can do and how much potential he has. When working on fundamentals or even just working out, if they're by his side, this is more motivation for me to become the best he can.

"They've taught me to always work hard and how to be a great leader and teammate," Wiseman said. "They always help me to keep working towards my goal."

One thing Wiseman always did was trust the Kingsmen process. No matter what it is, he listens to his coaches and does as he is told because he knows it's going to all work out in the end.

Recently, the Kingsmen coaches approached him with an idea. They wanted Wiseman's position (he was a tight end) to be a part of the defensive line.

At first, he thought it was the craziest idea. As time went on, he realized it was the best choice for him. He was able to benefit the team even more than being a tight end and he also earned his spot as a starter.



From Portugal, to America, to Football

By Mirnesa Sulejmanovic

Alfonso de Moura Pinheiro is a foreign exchange student from Portugal who was always fascinated by American culture.

You would think the transition from living from one country to another would be difficult, but not for Alfonso.

"Moving to the U.S. wasn't difficult for me," Alfonso said. "I've always wanted to do this kind of exchange program of course there are some adversities, but my host family, the Chapple family, is amazing and has helped me with everything. They're my biggest support here."



Since American culture fascinated Alfonso from the start, it's no surprise that he likes so many things about America.

"I like everything in America," Alfonso explained. "The people, the food, the culture, the school, and much more. Almost everything is different from Portugal, but that is the fun part of the experience."

Now, most people would think that going to a brand new school in a new country and with new people would also be a rough transition, but once again, not for Alfonso!

"I think I'm adjusting well to Penn," Alfonso said. "My teachers, friends, and family are always there when I need help, making things much easier. I have been making a lot of friends and everyone is very nice to me."

Alfonso started out this season as a Cross Country runner ... and then he saw the Penn Football Team practicing.

Football was something that caught Alfonso's eye and he couldn't look away.

"Everything about football interested me," Alfonso said. "I believe that what captivated me most was the culture around the games. In Portugal, American football is not very popular, so I was very curious to try and play. I already had my first games and had the opportunity to go on the field as a kicker, and that's the position I hope to play."

"I don't know what the future holds for me and if the coaches want me to do something else I will always be available."

His experiences in football could be amazingly memorable for him to say the least.

"My experience in football has been more than memorable," Alfonso said. "Everyone, coaches, players, staff have welcomed me with open arms and helping me with everything. Making me feel part of this big family."

Alfonso has a list of things on his bucket list that he's like to try here in America.

"I try and discover something new about America every day, and I love it," Alfonso said. "I believe that at this moment what I am most looking forward to see and experience are the festive seasons, like Christmas, Thanksgiving and much more."



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