

Husky Defensive End Makes An Impact

Last Spring, Husky Defensive End, Andrew Hudson, was baptized into Christ. In the past year, because of his faith and his hard work, he has made an incredible impact for the Huskies both on and off the field. Andrew has been a blessing to the University, his teammates and his ministry. If you spend a couple of minutes with him, you'll immediately notice his humble demeanor, unassuming humility and a big contagious smile.

In an age when athletes are put on a pedestal and where sports can be considered one of the most noble pursuits in life, it seems that Andrew has a great perspective on his life and what things outside of football matter to him. Especially, what he enjoys about being a part of a Campus Ministry. "What I love most about our bible talk is how we have all come so close to one another. Though we are in school and it can seem busy at times; living together with Christians and having daily contact with them has helped me grow and encouraged me through the tough times, especially when school and football aren't going well."

Andrew's faith has helped him stay grounded. No matter what the outcome of the game, Andrew comes to Church with a smile and some faithful words. When I asked him how he stays positive, Andrew talked about his time with God. "Usually, on Monday morning and either Friday night or Saturday morning, I get to have a legitimate quiet time without rushing or going through the motions. I feel that prayer is half the relationship. Reading the Bible and getting a golden nugget out of the scriptures is also fulfilling. Though that sounds good and easy, it's something that I often can set aside and at times forget. It is easy for me to be around the spiritual family and encourage others. But my personal relationship with God is something that I would like to see get stronger. I feel that I have had my best weeks when I've lived a balanced life. When I don't put off actually reading the Bible, then I feel that I am able to perform at my best. When all 4 phases of my life being school, football, my social life, and my spirituality are in balance, I reach Saturday focused and ready to perform."

This summer, Andrew lived with us for a month and my family got to see his commitment firsthand. He was up at 4:30 am 5 days a week to make morning workouts. He was gone most of the day at practice and class. His evenings were spent with his Bible Talk and teammates, and yet he still found time to be an active part of our ministry and family. Sometimes it's easy to forget just how much time one has to sacrifice in order to be a successful athlete. When asked about his daily schedule, Andrew shared just what his routine looks like during the season, "Typically I have to be up early and have few hours to myself where I have to find time to eat and share the Gospel, usually with a brother like Mike or Mick. From 1:20p.m. to 8p.m. I have meetings, practice, dinner and tutoring. I try to get to tutoring early so I can leave in time for bible talk." Then you have to add in homework, lifting, and

extra time studying plays and schemes; and yet no one has ever heard Andrew complain about all this. In fact, he calls it a blessing and eagerly embraces it. Like many athletes, Andrew has sometimes showed up to Bible Talk with his dinner in hand, excited to participate in the discussion.

What might be most refreshing to hear, is Andrew's faith and spiritual aspirations to see others impacted by his life and friendship. When you see him around his teammates it becomes evident that he is a true friend and genuinely supportive. He shared about the type of teammate he tries to be, "One way for me (to encourage my teammates) is simple complements. Noticing someone's hard work when they feel no one else does. That's what I do. Even just motivating someone by having a great attitude is important. The season is long, and everyone hits a wall at some point or another and needs a push. But the best thing you can bring to any team is energy, passion and of course, some laughter. Practices can be repetitive at times and it can be easy to just go through the motions. We have an energetic coaching staff but they can only meet us half way, if we as players can bring the same enthusiasm and make practice fun, then we come closer as a team and become more accountable."

This past year, we started an athletes Bible Talk Wednesday Evenings at the Shell House. There are a number of Husky Athletes studying the Bible and we hope to continue the Bible Talk throughout the Winter and Spring. Off the field Andrew is committed to helping others come to know Christ and a number of his teammates are studying the Bible as well. This type of humility is uncommon in many athletes, but Andrew shares honestly about his struggles finding this inner peace. "Last year while red shirting I had a lot of uncertainty about myself and how my image appeared to others. I cared a lot about what others saw in me. Much of what I thought about myself was completely based off my performance on the field. So as you could imagine, there were some highs, but plenty of lows. Having a family in Christ and having a purpose in my life that far exceeds that of football, helps me realize what matters the most."

This season, Andrew's hard work was rewarded and he has earned a spot in the starting rotation on the Husky defense. In his past four games he's beginning to come into his own with a 3 sacks, a fumble recovery and a near interception. It's faith building to have a brother who brings as much joy and energy into our fellowship as Andrew. We hope to see him continuing to make an impact at the University of Washington for years to come, both on and off the field.

Alex Whitaker, Seattle Campus Minister