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Palo Alto native Anderson to join Cardinal D-line

By Kevin Zhang

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For many student-athletes heading off to school, moving across the country is a necessary process. But for incoming defensive lineman Kevin Anderson, that's not the case — Anderson is an alumnus of nearby Palo Alto High School and the only Bay Area recruit in Stanford's 2015 football class.

"I get the best of both worlds," Anderson said. "I am able to get a great college experience as a Stanford student-athlete but also can go home for things like Sunday-night dinners."

The 6-foot-4 Anderson didn't seem entirely destined to become a Cardinal player, as both of his parents received degrees from Cal and his brother currently plays football at Yale. On top of that, Anderson was not always an athletic standout. He never played organized tackle football until he entered high school and was on the junior varsity team until a postseason call-up promoted him in his sophomore season.

"I mostly played baseball in middle school," Anderson said. "However, I was always big and knew my size would be good for football." In his junior season, Anderson changed the course of his career.

"The summer between my sophomore and junior season, I found the weight room and gained about 20 pounds," he said. "The varsity coaches fit me very well and helped me tremendously."

Anderson finished his first full season on varsity as the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League's (SCVAL) Defensive Lineman of the Year after recording 68 tackles (18 for a loss) and 6.5 sacks. After the season, he sent his highlight reel to about 20 schools and gained considerable interest.

The first university to give him an offer was right across the street from where he went to school.

"Everyone says, 'There's always a special place in your heart for the first school that gives you an offer,'" Anderson said.

Although he received Stanford's offer in February of his junior year, Anderson had several objectives in his high school career that he had yet to complete. One was to improve upon Palo Alto's early postseason exit.

Before the start of the 2010 season, the Vikings found themselves underdogs, completely out of the picture for the state, section and even league titles. However, the team went on an incredible run and went 14-0 for the first time in school history, defeating heavily favored Centennial (Corona) in the state championship game 15-13. Palo Alto ended the season ranked No. 2 in the state and No. 13 in the country.

Anderson was the SCVAL Lineman of the Year and Metro Area Defensive Player of the Year while earning first-team all-state honors for his 113 tackles, 11.5 sacks and 2 blocked punts.

"It gives me chills thinking about the season," Anderson said. "From being ranked so low in the state to second, matching up with a guy on Centennial who weighed 100 pounds more than me, it was amazing."

With Palo Alto in his past and his future, Anderson looks forward to living out more of his dreams with the Cardinal.

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