

# Stanford Teammates in Seahawk Camp

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RENTON — They're too smart to be good at football.

That's a misconception Richard Sherman and Doug Baldwin have heard a lot about Stanford, the school the two Seahawks rookies attended and watched grow from Pac-10 doormat to BCS contender.

Well, maybe not so much now that the Cardinal are coming off a 12-1 season and are expected to compete for the Pac-12 championship. But back in 2006, when Sherman was a true freshman and his team finished 1-11? Those assumptions may have been more fair.

"I feel like people give us the short end of the stick a lot of times because of the academics," Sherman said. "They assume you're slow, they assume you don't have explosive players, you don't have the best athletes, because of the academic standards."

Witnesses of Seattle's training camp this season cannot draw such conclusions based solely on the play of Sherman and Baldwin, both of whom have made strong cases for their inclusion on the 53-man roster.

That's more of a sure thing for Sherman than it is for Baldwin, who signed as an undrafted free agent, and as a receiver is entrenched in perhaps the team's most competitive position battle.

So far, he's impressed. Baldwin led the team in catches in their first preseason game (four of them for 29 yards), and always seems to find himself open when he's given reps during practice.

The first pass thrown his way during Thursday's game against San Diego was on third-and-six on Seattle's first possession. Tarvaris Jackson fired a bullet to Baldwin just beyond the sticks.

Baldwin hauled it in, good for a seven-yard gain and a first down.

And a whole lot of calmed nerves.

"I needed that hit. I needed to get hit," Baldwin said. "I was nervous the whole time, thinking, 'Man, these are NFL guys, these guys hit harder, they run faster,' but at the end of the day, they're still human beings. Once I got that first hit, I was good."

Sherman prefers to do the hitting himself. A receiver for the first two seasons of his college career, he converted to cornerback as a redshirt junior. At 6-foot-3 and 195 pounds, Sherman is big enough — not to mention strong and aggressive enough, too — to jam receivers at the line and play press coverage. He got the better of receiver Golden Tate on a couple different occasions during Sunday's practice, and receiver Sidney Rice singled Sherman out afterward for his ability to lock up receivers at the line of scrimmage.

"I think it's the more competitive side of the ball, in my opinion," Sherman said of playing corner. "Because at receiver, if you don't have a great offensive line, a great quarterback to get you the ball, you can run the best routes in the world and never see the ball — no one knows how talented you are. But on defense, if nobody catches the ball on your side, hey, you're doing a great job and you can get involved in every play."

Easing Sherman's transition to the NFL level is the similarity in schemes between Seattle and Stanford. Even the terminology hasn't been difficult to adapt to.

"The terminology of certain plays is a little different. The terminology of adjustments is a little different. It's subtle differences," Sherman said. "It's not out of this world, left-field differences. It's real subtle. It's easy to catch on to."

The hard hits and press coverage are what sets Sherman apart. What about Baldwin?

"My creativity, especially in the slot," Baldwin said. "A lot of offensive coordinators, they put up these pictures and the lines are drawn perfectly, but at the end of the day, once you get out there on that field, there's body parts flying everywhere. So you have to get creative to get open and get separation from the linebackers and defensive backs."

Both he and Sherman have already done a good enough job separating from the Stanford myth.

"I think it says a lot about the program, and obviously where they're headed and where they've been," Sherman said of the Seahawks having both he and Baldwin in camp together. "We were 1-11 when I got there (in 2006). We just had a 12-1 season. We'll probably do a little better this year with one more season and (Andrew) Luck back. It's going to be fun to watch."