**Landon fly half kicks his way to Durham and more?**

**In the fall of 2005, Coach Farnstrom had a problem; his kicker was no longer able to help the football team. So the resourceful teacher/mentor/coach walked over to one of the other fields where the soccer (or in English “football” players) were practicing to see if one of these athletes with strong, accurate legs might be willing to help. One Will Snyderwine raised his hand to try his skill kicking a ball over the crossbar.**

**The coach recognized this candidate as one of his hockey players**

**and may have known that this student was also an accomplished Rugby player— a fly half on the US junior team. Oddly enough, Will was proficient as a place kicker in rugby, but his skill punting the ball  is “miserable” according Will. Many rugby players are skilled at punting in a style that makes it difficult to return the ball and so there are a number of rugby punters, like our own Alexander Mockett, who kick for football teams.**

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**The Landon football team had a kicker for the remainder of that IAC Championship season and for his senior Fall, for both years at Landon Will was a two sport autumn athlete plus hockey and rugby in the other seasons. Evidentially, the young Mr. Snyderwine was an exceptional student; for he was accepted to Duke on the basis of his academics.**

Flash forward to the fall of 2007 where the Duke football coach sends an email to the student body asking for place kickers. Will’s buddies on the Blue Devil rugby club, who have seen his kicking prowess on the rugby pitch, urged him to attend the competition. He trots onto the field where there are a number of other students—lacrosse players, club soccer players and a couple of other “kickers”. The competition was neither very formal nor structured, according to Will; “the coaches sort of looked at us as we kicked to see how we addressed the ball and if we looked athletic”, he says. To his surprise, like the Fall of 2005, he was signed up as **a** kicker on the Duke football team.

Just being on an ACC Division I football team, getting the team gear, eating at the training table, hanging out with potential NFL stars (if their life is anything like the UNC stars, that’s a BIG deal) and traveling to Coral Gables, and other exciting ACC campuses would be a fantastic reward for this effort, but there’s more!!!

 

Right now, this Landon alumnus holds the following Duke records:

#1 most FGs in a season, 17 in 2009 (13 in 2010 with 4 games remaining)

Highest FG % season, .850 in 2009 (92.9 so far in 2010)

#1 PAT  conversion, 100 %, 2009 (22 in a row; 2010 24 in a row)

#2 most FGs in a game, 5 versus UVa 2009 and #3 4 versus VaTech 2009

# 9 most points in a season—75 points, 2009

Leading scorer 2010 14FGs 22PATs, 61 points with 4 games remaining

There are a lot of numbers in kicking, but the Duke statisticians provide some interesting data points—3 of 5 on sides kicks; 100% on all FG attempts (8) between 20 and 39 yards; 37 kick offs averaging 65.1 yards per kick (a plus 3.4 yards per kick margin over the Duke opponents= field position advantage); AND one unassisted tackle (against Navy; his 3rd career tackle on kick offsè clearly a rugby skill transfer). A late game

field goal against the Naval Academy was the margin of victory and much to the dismay of many Wahoo fans,

he kicked 5 FGs in the Blue Devils 28-17 win in 2009 (including a 4th Q 43 yard FG) The ACC named him

Player of the Week for his 16 point performance. At the end of the season, this walk on, former Rugby player received Duke’s the Bill Keziah Award as Duke’s Special Teams MVP and the league included Will on the Academic All ACC and 2nd team ALL League place kicker. Oh by the way, the Cavaliers’ fans are not any

happier this year as Will kicked another 10 points in the 2010 55-48 vanquishing of UVa.



**Will responded to the BSN’s standard set of questions that are given for the Senior Profiles; here are some of the interesting answers:**

* Started playing football his junior year at Landon
* Went to Chris Saylor’s and Gary Zauner’s kicking camps <http://www.coachzauner.com/player_testimonials.html>
* took economics class at Holton and now is his major at Duke and considering studying the subject during his 5th year
* he also enjoyed Dr. Brockhaus’  physics and calculus classes, Mr. Reed’s AP history class and Ms. Farnstrom’s Humanities course
* his favorite outside of class room experience was his work at Arden Court, where he visited Alzheimer patients and got to know them
* his senior project was a culinary arts class [more on this later].

**A typical day at Duke starts with a 5:30 wake up and heading to the football training facility. There are meetings for each group at 7am with practice between 9 and 11 am. The team makes it to campus around noon and the afternoon is filled with classes. The team eats together at a training table and the night is largely devoted to studying. There are scheduled lifting sessions all week.**

**Game day involves routine meetings and preparation but the times of these changes dramatically based on the time and location of the contest. During the game, Will does not have any of the idiosyncrasies for which kickers are known. As the ball moves towards the Duke goal posts, he finds the kicking net and practices a couple of kicks. “There’s a sound and a feeling, when I’m connecting with the ball”, Will says.”There are mental images that help me get good contact” he added. “When it’s time to go kick, I run out on the field with the kicking team and we do our thing; it’s pretty simple.”**

**Repetitions during practice has added to Will’s consistency on the field. One of the drills draws on the talents of some of his more theatrical teammates.  As described in The Charlotte Observer****, Snyderwine Ready to kick Deacons 9/10/10 article:**

Every week in football practice, Duke placekicker Will Snyderwine enters the Blue Devils’ version of The Matrix.

Teammates stand 2 feet away, exaggerating the distractions surrounding the snap before a game-winning kick. Players run between Snyderwine and his holder, screaming outlandish remarks. With crowd noise pumping through speakers set up on the field, he never knows when another teammate will jump over the line and spring into a kung fu demonstration. Others do cartwheels.

Meanwhile, Snyderwine counts off his steps, ignoring the chaos around him as he plays through a scenario simulating the biggest kick of his career.

“If you can kick in that, you can make a kick anywhere,” he said

**Some of that special team unity may derive from Will’s Landon senior project, “that cooking class has given me some talent in the kitchen; I make a really good chicken parm”, Chef Snyderwine said. Every Thursday, Will invites all of the special teams’ players, the punters (3), place kickers (5), long snappers (1), holders (2) and 4 position players to his apartment where they bond and feast on Will’s culinary creations. “Tonight, we’re having steak with a mushroom sauce”, Will said on 11/4, “so we’ll have good attendance.”**

**“The summer kicking work helped me particularly on my kickoffs”, #96 said, “I learned to reduce the height and get more depth. Coach Zauner was a big help and I enjoyed passing the knowledge that I had about kicking field goals to the younger campers.”  Coach Z, who has tutored big time kickers for 35 years, said**

” After working just two days with Will Snyderwine and seeing the improvement he made, I believe he will be One of the better kickers in College football the next two years.”

**ESPN’s ACC blogger named Will as the special team’s player of the week. He is also a second time semifinalist for the Lou Groza Award; the group of 20 kickers includes all of the big time programs in the BCS category. The award, given by the Palm Beach County Sports Commission, is usually a good predictor of future NFL success. The press release issued with the semifinalist list noted:**

**Past Groza finalists include current NFL kickers, Nate Kaeding, Sebastian Janikowski, Mike Nugent, Jason Elam, Mason Crosby and Graham Gano.**

**So does this prospect affect the former Landon Bear; Will says “first and foremost, I’m a Blue Devil now and 2011, but who would turn down a chance to make good money doing something as fun as kicking. Yea, sure I’d do it.” Neither the NFL team scouts nor the more notorious player agents (maybe they cannot find Durham from Chapel Hill) have contacted the 5’11”, 190# red shirt Junior. Will is focused on how an additional year in Durham can add to the team’s success and if there’s more beyond that “well, I will wait until that happens”, Will said. If the NFL could become a reality and if he had a choice (both BIG “ifs”, Will noted), he would love to play for “the ‘Skins.”**

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| **This tale of Will Snyderwine to the Blue Devils roster, and maybe even beyond, has some poetic elements to it. What would have happened If Will had decided neither to take up Coach Farnstrom’s invitation nor the email to the Duke tryout?  The answer would be found in Robert Frost’s famous lines, Will’s choices involved two forks in the roads, and his selected paths have led him on an interesting trail.****The former poet laureate and Mr. Dixon, Landon’s venerable English teacher, would both approve of the paths that Will has selected. Also, it is most likely that****David and Elizabeth Snyderwine are pleased with their son’s choice.http://bearsportsnews.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/will-snyderwine2.jpg?w=165&h=200** |