

SARALAND SPARTANS

SPARTAN 'THUMPER'

Randale Hinton explains he learned his style growing up with supercharged cousins

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He may not look the part at first glance, but Randale Hinton is, in the words of Saraland head coach Jeff Kelly, a “thumper.”

The 6-foot-0, 175-pound senior has already introduced himself to Spartan offensive opponents in the past, most of whom would agree with Kelly’s assessment, having experienced the defensive back’s hard-charging approach to the game personally.

As such, Hinton will be counted on to continue to deliver for Saraland in the secondary this season.

“He’s a thumper now,” Kelly said when asked to describe Hinton’s playing style. “He likes to come downhill and get to the football. He’s one of the most physical tacklers we’ve got. This is his third year starting and he’s a really savvy player who understands what we’re doing.”

“He’s got a good nose for the ball. He’s our quarterback in the secondary; he gets us lined up and in the right set and he has a nose for the football. I look for big things out of him. We’re real proud of how he has developed and how he has turned into a leader for our team this year.”

Hinton comes by his style naturally. It’s a family tradition, so to speak.

“Really, most of the guys who used to play in the secondary here (at Saraland), most of them were my cousins,” Hinton said. “We all lived in the same neighborhood so I played against them every day. They’re the reason I really learned what I need to do.”

The list of family members and former “thumpers” includes Diminio Williams, Wydale Flott and Tyler Sims. And just because they were related didn’t mean anyone got a break when neighborhood games were played.

“It was fun, but it really got personal sometimes,” Hinton said. “It helped me be more aggressive and not run from any challenge, you step up and play. It gives you more confidence in yourself.”

And that’s pretty much how Hinton approaches the game when on the field for the Spartans.

“He can come down and play the slot or centerfield on defense,” Kelly said. “He does it all. He’s been around and he took his lumps as a sophomore playing on a good football team. He was thrown into the fire early, probably a little earlier than was perfect for him, but he’s been around playing a long time and he’s a good ball player.”

Hinton said he hopes his play attracts a little more attention from Division 1 college scouts this season, but mainly he wants to continue to improve his play and step forward as a leader for the Spartans’ defense.

“I feel very good (about the upcoming season),” he said. “I think I have gotten better each year. From my sophomore year to now, there’s a big difference (in the way I play). ... I’ve gotten bigger, faster and stronger, but the biggest difference is in knowing what I’ve got to do. I know what needs to be done on the field and where I need to be to get things done.”



Saraland senior defensive back Randale Hinton: “I’ve gotten bigger, faster and stronger, but the biggest difference is in knowing what I’ve got to do.”



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