

## FRUITDALE

## Ellison: Pirates' big little man



Fruitdale's Daniel Ellison

*Senior weighs just 130 pounds but he's a large presence on field*

BY LEEQUINTON BLACKMON  
Sports Correspondent

It's not often the smallest player on the field may be the biggest player on the field, but that's usually the case when it comes to Fruitdale's Daniel Ellison.

Ellison is a 5-foot-6, 130-pound senior who plays as though he was a 6-footer weighing more than 200 pounds, according to Fruitdale head coach Mike Davis.

"If you were to ask me how big he is, I'd probably say he's a whole lot bigger than he actually is," Davis said. "That's just the type of player he is. When you watch him play, you probably wouldn't realize he was that small. He definitely carries a bigger presence than what he is physically, and he knows how to make that presence known."

Ellison's presence is felt in a lot of ways, mainly because he plays so many positions for the Pirates' offense. Ellison is primarily a slot receiver who excels in route running, but he also takes snaps at both quarterback and running back during the game.

"He's a huge part of our offense," Davis said. "He's going to play all over the place for us on offense, and we'll probably throw him out there on defense a little bit too at defensive back. He's just a really smart player."

"I think what he lacks in size, he makes up for in effort and toughness. You won't find a player that's as tough as he is when it comes to how he approaches the game. He can learn a scheme very quickly, which makes it good for us, because we know we can pretty much put him anywhere on the field and he's going to do a good job at that position."

Ellison has been playing football since 2006. Over that period of time, he's played a lot of positions, scored a lot of points and made a lot of tackles. However, he considers his recent selection

as a team captain to be one of the major highlights of his playing career.

"Being picked to be one of the captains really touched me," Ellison said. "I've been playing football for as long as I can remember and it's a big part of my life, so being a captain means a lot to me. I don't like to talk about myself too much, so it's nice to have an accomplishment like that, because it shows you what your teammates think of you. It's not something I'm going to take for granted."

Aside from his play on the field, one of the things that separates Ellison from other players and makes him such a capable leader is his confidence. It's the type of confidence that has rubbed off on his teammates and gotten them to buy into the belief that they're much better than they're previous 0-10 record says they are.

Last season, Fruitdale not only lost every game, but they struggled to even look competitive in many of those games. That's something Ellison plans to change this season.

"We can't make excuses," Ellison said. "We know what happened last year, and that's in the past. I think we had the athletes to be successful, but it was just a matter of not everybody buying in and giving it their 100 percent effort."

"It's different this year. We've got some young players and I want them to believe that we're just as good as anybody in our region, and we are. There are about four teams that are going to be really tough to beat, but at the same time there's about six games that I know if we try our hardest, we can win those games."

The Pirates are hoping Ellison's leadership and confidence can lead them to some much-needed victories, especially against some of the teams they feel they played well enough to beat last year.

## Senior lineman Houston Trammell like coach on field

*He says he coaches himself hard*

BY LEEQUINTON BLACKMON  
Sports Correspondent

After defensive coordinator Dawson Tuberville left Fruitdale to return home for a coaching job at Excel, Fruitdale's defense was left with a bit of uncertainty.

Questions such as who's going to coach the defense? and what type of scheme they will run? were being asked on a regular basis. In many ways, those questions have been answered with Fruitdale's next-man-up mentality.

Along with assistant coach Kevin Hollingshead, Pirates' head coach Mike Davis will take over the defense until a new defensive coordinator is hired.

Such a sudden change is a difficult thing to deal with for any team, but it helps that Fruitdale has a coach on the field in senior defensive and offensive lineman Houston Trammell to help them navigate through the transition.

At 6-foot-0, 200 pounds, Trammell plays both left defensive end and right tackle. He's been on the team since he was in the eighth grade, which has landed him the role of being one of the team's captains.

Being named as a team captain is something Trammell considers a huge honor, but also a welcomed responsibility, because without a defensive coordinator, he takes it upon himself to be a coach on the field.

"Coach Davis is really hard on us, and it makes us better," Trammell said. "I try to be that type of guy on the field with the younger guys because I know that it's going to make them better players. I think that's my role on the team. I'm always trying to help the young guys and show them

what to do and what not to do."

In order to be that leader and coach on the field, Trammell says he coaches himself just as hard as Davis coaches him.

"That's something that coach Davis always says," Trammell said. "He's always talking about being accountable for what you do. I try to hold myself accountable so that I can be able to hold the guys around me accountable. I know I'm a senior and a captain and all of that, but I can't hold other guys accountable if I don't hold myself accountable first. I can't tell them they're shooting the wrong gap if I'm not out there doing what I'm supposed to do."

In many ways, Trammell's leadership style can be seen as a lead-by-example type of approach. Trammell himself even admits he's not a very talkative guy and he'd much rather let his play dictate his leadership.

"He's not the typical vocal leader," Davis said of Trammell's leadership style. "Of course, he's going to talk on the field and get guys in the right spots and help them the best way he knows how, but he's not the in-your-face type of leader. He'd much rather lead by example, and I think that's why he coaches himself so hard. He just practices hard and plays the game the right way and I think those younger players really pay attention to the way he approaches the game."

With some uncertainty surrounding an already young defense, Davis and the Pirates are hoping Trammell's veteran leadership can be just what they need to help steer the defense through the difficult transition of not having a full-time coordinator on that side of the ball.



Fruitdale's Houston Trammell