

# SARALAND

## TALL TALENT at quarterback

*Spartans' 6-foot-5 Brett Nezat is full of confidence as he takes on a leadership position*

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For quite a while, the next big thing with Saraland football was quarterback Jack West. He was projected to be a star even before he was a starter for the Spartans, and once he took over the offense the attention — and the college offers — continued.

West finished up his senior season last year and signed a scholarship with Stanford, selecting the Cardinal over several big-time offers.

So when Saraland takes the field for the season-opener on Aug. 24 at home against Class 4A powerhouse Andalusia, there will be a new starting quarterback for the Spartans. And he may well be the latest Next Big Thing.

Brett Nezat, a 6-foot-5, 215-pound junior, is set to take over the starting quarterback spot vacated by West. He transferred to Saraland from Cottage Hill Christian and by all accounts he has the potential and the talent to fashion a strong prep career for himself. Certainly, that's the hope of Saraland's coaching

staff and his Spartan teammates.

"I think he's going to be one of the better quarterbacks in the state the next couple of years," Saraland head coach Jeff Kelly, himself a former quarterback at Southern Miss, said. "He's a guy that just gets it and he understands what's going on around him. He's a tough kid, a kid that the other players respect and they watch him work. He's got that blue-collar mindset.

"He has a good feel for seeing things in coverages and we're real excited about the development that he's had from spring to now because he's been playing baseball and we didn't get a ton of time with him in the (film room) before spring training, so really everything in spring training was brand new to him. We were having to sort of back up and start from ground zero with everything at quarterback.

"But he's been a quick learner and he's got a good grasp of what we want to do now. But he's got to continue to work

See NEZAT, 41C

"I actually feel really good about everything. It's (transferring and learning a new offense) been a whole lot easier than I thought it was going to be. I made myself a little worried about it (originally), but I feel really good about it now."

— Saraland quarterback Brett Nezat

Photos by Todd Stacey/Call News

## FLOTT: Standout cornerback learned competitive edge from his brothers

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His talents and the way opposing teams approach playing against him makes Flott even more valuable, Kelly said.

"He gives you a lot of freedom on defense to be able to come up with some different coverage things," said Kelly. "You can put him on a guy and take the coverage to the other side and the other guys. You can really count on him to handle his side and his guy. So from a play-calling aspect he lets you get a little creative. I expect him to have the toughest assignment every Friday night. He'll always draw whoever the other team's best guy is and we'll line him up and see who wins."

That competitive edge, again, was created in the family backyard, playing against his brothers and other older athletes in the neighborhood.

"I started when I was seven years old," he said when asked when he began playing football. "I played against my brothers, guys who are all older and in college right now — Velus at USC, WyDale at Southern Miss and Bobby at South Alabama, so I've been around it a long time.

"I was learning from every one and in every phase in life. We were always competing and that has helped me out here, just trying to compete."

Flott said he realized pretty quickly how tough it would be going against his older brothers and friends, but it took him a while to realize the toughness they were displaying when playing against him was for his benefit and not just an opportunity to push him around a bit.

"I had to compete just to hang at home," he



Saraland cornerback Cordale Flott

said. "It really humbled me, honestly, because my brothers always pushed me around. They wanted me to be the best, for real. You learned how to handle things. It was hard for a little while. I thought they were bullying me and just messing around with me, but I found out they were just trying to make me better and pushing me to be better."

Mission accomplished. Now with colleges still contacting him, hoping to get him to change his mind, Flott prepares to help Saraland in its quest to reach the Class 6A playoffs and make a serious run at a state crown.

"I'm letting the process handle itself," he said of the attention he is receiving from recruiters. "I'm more focused on being a student-athlete for Saraland High School and being the best I can be as we build (team) chemistry.

"On a daily basis we work really hard building chemistry and practicing to be ready for whatever plays (we face). We are looking forward to claiming a lot of turnovers (on defense) so we can give the ball back to the offense and have them make some explosive plays for us."

Flott said he appreciates the compliments he has received, but he's more concerned with earning the respect of his teammates and contributing to a successful season for the Spartans.

"It's a blessing. It's what I work for and what I believe is going to help this team, by being a strong part of this defense and keeping it strong," he said. "I love to compete. I've grown up doing that and I'm going to continue to do that for this team so that we will get better and have a successful season."

### GOOD LUCK SPARTANS!



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