

JACKSON

Jarrett Scott brings rare level of size and speed

BY LEEQUINTON BLACKMON
Sports Correspondent

At 6-foot-2, 195 pounds and growing, Jackson senior Jarrett Scott might be one of the largest multi-position players in the state.

Normally, people think of multi-position players as perhaps being smaller players who make up for their lack of size with rare speed and quickness or those that don't easily fit into a specific, one-position role. That's not the case with Scott, a player who uses both size and speed to his advantage, regardless what position he is playing.

Scott's primary position is outside linebacker, which he excels at due to his quickness and speed on the edge. However, the do-it-all senior sees a lot of time on offense as a wide receiver and tight end and he usually has an advantage at those positions on most Friday nights.

When Scott lines up at wide receiver, he's usually bigger than the cornerback that's covering him. When he lines up at tight end, he's usually faster and more athletic than the linebacker or safety that's covering him.

With a rare combination of size and speed, Scott says it's hard for him to pick a position that he favors more than the other.

"It really doesn't matter," he said. "I'm just going to line up wherever they want me to line up at. I don't really care about having a favorite position or anything like that. To me, wherever they line me up at, that's my favorite position. I just try to go out there and wherever I'm lined up at I try to do the best I can to make a play. It doesn't matter if it's on offense or defense. I'm just trying to make a play."

Although it's not one of his three listed positions, Scott also sees time as Jackson's kicker. With that many responsibilities on the team, one might think a player like Scott would be under a tremendous amount of pressure to perform at a high level, but not in this case. According to Scott, having multiple roles on the team actually makes the game more enjoyable for him.

"I like it a lot," Scott said of his many roles on the team. "There are definitely not any boring practices and boring games when you play multiple positions because you're always learning. That's the exciting part about the game. When you come out there and you have to learn something and



Jarrett Scott

you're actually able to go out there and do it successfully in a game, that's what it's all about."

Considering he plays on both sides of the ball, there probably isn't a player on the team outside of quarterback Lane Rotch that's been more affected by the coaching changes the Aggies have made this offseason.

"It's definitely a challenge," Scott said of the coaching changes. "I was so used to the old coaches and the way they did things. It's taking time for me to covert over, because coach (Ryan) Little has different ways he likes running things. Then it's going to be a little different on offense as well, so I have to learn some things on that side of the ball."

As the Aggies prepare to start the season, Scott says as a senior leader on the team he wants to use these coaching changes and his ability to play multiple positions as a way to teach the young players how to respond to adversity, which is something Jackson is going to have to do if it wants to bounce back from last year's 5-5 record.

"You just have to adapt to it," Scott said. "That's life, because life is all about adapting to changes. It's no different in football, but like I said, that's what makes the game fun. If you're not facing new challenges and learning, then you're not getting better."

Jackson can 'feel the difference' for Aggies

BY LEEQUINTON BLACKMON
Sports Correspondent

Coming into his senior season, Jackson safety Nykendrick Jackson is expecting the Aggies' defense to look a lot different than it did last year.

According to the Aggies' senior defensive back, the changes on defense aren't really something one can see. Instead, they are the type of changes you sense as a player.

"You can just feel the difference," he said. "I feel like the defense is just going to be better. You can't explain it, but as a player we just know we're going to be better. It's easier and it feels like everything is running a lot smoother. Everything is just clicking into place."

Last season, the Aggies gave up 17.7 points per game on defense. That average would be good for most teams, but not for an Aggies team that's used to a defense holding its opponents to 13 points or less a game.

Statistically, the Aggies defense was not that bad a year ago. In fact, their 17.7 points allowed per game average was actually two points better than the previous year's defense, that 2016 team coming just one win away from playing for the state championship.

However, every player on last season's defensive unit knows regardless of what the numbers say, they didn't play nearly as well as they could have.

In Jackson's opinion, one of the things the Aggies lacked on defense last season was discipline.

"That's something we pride ourselves on, and last year we just didn't have it," he said. "It's not really that we played bad last year. Of course, we didn't have the type of season we wanted to, but a lot of that was because we didn't do the things on defense that we were supposed to do. We weren't as disciplined and aggressive as we normally are on defense. We didn't run to the ball every play, we didn't fly around on defense like we normally do and it showed against certain teams."

One of those teams was two-time



Nykendrick Jackson

region champ Vigor. The Wolves' 33-0 win at Legion Field last year was the most points scored on an Aggies defense since St. Paul's scored 34 points in 2014.

Now with St. Paul's gone to Class 6A and off the Jackson schedule the Aggies seemingly can shift all their attention to avenging their loss to Vigor, but that's not the way Jackson says they're approaching this upcoming season.

"We want to win the region and go on to win a championship," he said. "Vigor has won the region the last two years, but we're not going into the season just focusing on beating them. Everybody knows what happened when we played them last year, but we've moved past that."

"It's different and we've got bigger goals than just trying to focus in on one team. The region is filled with good teams, so we know what we've got to do. Effort and attitude is what it's going to take. We've just got to go out there and compete and try to outwork the opponent on every down and just get after it."

If the Aggies can once again find their discipline on defense under Nykendrick Jackson's leadership, then we should see an Aggies defense that's not just better statistically, but better on the field as well.

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