

Unheralded Rattler Offensive Line Does the Dirty Work

Contributed by Royle King -- Black College Wire
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"We don't get a lot of the glory."

The Rattler football team's offense is ranked as the number one scoring offense in the conference and a big part of that success has come on the broad shoulders of the teams offensive line.

"They're very important, people see who scores, but the running back can't run and the receivers can't catch without the offensive line blocking," said Kershaw Lawrence, offensive coordinator and offensive line coach.

The team has helped anchor the success of quarterbacks Curtis Pulley and Eddie Battle who have combined for 1208 yards this season.

"The offensive line is the most important position next to the quarterback," Lawrence said.

Despite their importance, the line often goes unheralded by those outside of the huddle.

"We don't get a lot of the glory," said Steve Brazzle, starting center. "[The] offensive line won't get the glory, we're used to it by now, we're the ones who do all the dirty work."

Left Tackle Robert Okeafor agrees.

"It's cool," Okeafor said. "I get mine when the running back gets the recognition. First thing he does is say 'good job' when he comes back to the huddle (after a big play)."

Offensive lineman Chris Sands said the biggest part of protecting the quarterback and running back is mental.

"I feel like were the biggest part of the team," said Sands, right tackle. "You have to be real smart and aware at all times, you can't miss a block".

The Rattler offensive line may not get a lot of attributes but they have proven to be necessary to the teams success.

"Left tackle is the most important position," Okeafor said. "I have to be on my game every play. I'm on the backside of the quarterback, so if someone is going for the quarterback he can't see."

The starting line has been playing together for four years, according to Brazzle and it helps them with their chemistry.

"We hang out and go out to eat as a group, are comradely off the field helps us play better on the field. I'm grateful for the offensive line I have, were a talented bunch," Brazzle said. "We call each other brothers. We love going out, doing what we love."

The lack of recognition hasn't affected the line's valiant play.

"We don't look for anything, it's just the job we signed up for, it's like a no credit job," said Andrew Collins, left guard.

The offensive line's responsibility has been due to the team's mental and physical prowess.

"Height, weight, strong upper and lower body, most important, be flexible in the ankles and can bend at the knees," Lawrence said. "You have to have good feet and technique."

Before the game starts, the offensive line comes together for a few things.

"We pray before games, after the coin toss we get in a circle and hype ourselves up," Collins said.

The circle that they get into is called, "Rocking It Out".

"We go side to side and one lineman yells 'what they talking bout' and everybody else follows with 'shawty'," Okeafor said. "Gets us 'ampt' up and 'crunk' before the game."

Regardless of the accolades the offensive line players said they love what they do.

"It's all about pride," Sands said.

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Royle King writes for The Famuan, the Florida A&M University student newspaper, which originally published this article.