

Bits and Pieces

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I am very proud of Alex Linnenkohl. He played his high school football at Capital High School in Olympia, Washington. As a senior he played offensive guard and defensive tackle. Alex was around 6'1 and 270 pounds. Without question, he was one of the best offensive line prospects I had seen for years at the high school level. I remember hearing school after school telling me he was too short to play big-time college football. I remember the University of Michigan Offensive Line Coach telling me, "We will not recruit a high school offensive lineman unless he is 6'5 or taller."

Alex had a great high school career and he worked his tail off in the weight room and in our Barton Line Camps during his off-season. He comes from good stock as his father (Bill Linnenkohl) was a terrific football player at the Air Force Academy and then at Puget Sound University.

Alex, his father and I really hung in tough, never giving up and finally Mike Riley, the Head Coach at Oregon State University made the offer that Alex wanted so bad. Alex went to Oregon State and redshirted. Then as a redshirt freshman he was a backup. Then this fall as a sophomore he got his first PAC 10 start vs. USC in Corvallis as a center. USC came in ranked as the number one team in the country and OSU simply took it to them. OSU ran the ball, not between the tackles, but between the guards. Alex was outstanding in his first start. He started every game the rest of the way and was one of the top offensive linemen in the OSU program. If he stays healthy, he will be a three-year starter in the PAC 10 and I predict he will have an NFL career in front of him. Alex is now 6'1 and 300 pounds of solid muscle. He has worked his tail off in making himself a great football player.

This article was sent to me recently and I thought I would share it with you. I am very proud of Alex and I am so happy for his father.

TALES FROM THE LODGE? ILLUMINATION AWARD

By Angie Machado

INTRODUCTION

One of many emerging stars in 2008 was Alex Linnenkohl. He's a primary reason that Jacquizz Rodgers ran roughshod over defenses, and Linnenkohl wasn't projected to contribute when summer camp opened. I'll jump to the conclusion of this feature by crediting a legendary coaching effort from Mike Cavanaugh and acknowledging Linnenkohl's preparation for the challenge. That part is obvious. But there's more to this unfolding story, and we'll reveal it in chapters.

REFLECTION - FOOTBALL CAMPS

To understand how an athlete suddenly makes an impact, we have to retrace Linnenkohl's steps back to the first day I heard about him. Alex was a high school junior and had already caught the attention of Greg Barton (Barton Football Academy). I met Greg Barton for lunch.

We met at Chili's. And if you're an avid watcher of 'The Office', you'll know, "Chili's is the new golf course. It's where business happens." We discussed Northwest football and recruiting.

Greg Barton said, "Keep an eye on Alex Linnenkohl this summer. He's on everybody's radar, but he's under-recruited and will have offers a month into the season when programs get a second look at him."

About a week later Eric Machado and I went to an indoor workout session that Barton hosted in Lewis and Clark's basketball gym. Linnenkohl and Myles Wade were both there and they went head-to-head many times during 1x1 drills. Even on the hardwood basketball courts it was clear that Linnenkohl was never intimidated and knew how to use footwork and technique to turn away larger athletes.

A couple months later we watched Linnenkohl workout with the rest of his Capital teammates at the Oregon State Football Camp. He continued to do everything right, but at that time he barely measured 6-1 in socks, and

evaluators admitted his size was the only reason he didn't have a half dozen football offers. He was also playing MLB and DE so it was evident he had plenty of speed for a Pac-10 OL.

By the end of the Oregon State Camp I was convinced he was a low risk athlete that could develop after a couple of seasons with the Beavers. This isn't uncommon. At every Beaver Camp I pick one kid that does not have an offer and drop his name whenever it's convenient.

Over the years this list has included players like Joe Hernandez (I never said I was always right!), Patrick Chung (yes, he would have been a Beaver in a heartbeat), Colin Kelly (can't wait to see him this spring), Alex Linnenkohl (I have to give the credit to Barton), and this year it was Jeff Tuel (QB who ended up committing to WSU).

To my surprise the Beaver coaches pitched an offer to Linnenkohl during the summer, and were fortunate enough to receive a verbal before his season started. In my opinion their gamble paid off because it solidified Linnenkohl as a Beaver before other poachers could find a foothold into his recruitment.

DEVELOPING LINNENKOHL AND FINDING THE LIGHTSWITCH

After a lackluster redshirt year, Linnenkohl found himself bouncing between guard and center. Things didn't improve for him much as he entered his freshman season, and he still didn't have a spot on the 2-deep. And then his football career took a wrong turn as Spring Camp approached.

Linnenkohl entered spring practice last year buried deep below the surface of the depth chart. There was already an absence of healthy linemen, and Coach Ungerer decided to pull Alex away from the reps and routines on the offensive line to become the program's long snapper. Coach Cav wasn't excited about this move, but the battle to bring him back wasn't waged until after the spring campaign.

During fall camp Linnenkohl rejoined the offensive line. Ryan Pohl was moved to guard and Linnenkohl had a home at center. Tragically Marcus Henderson fell to illness at the beginning of fall camp, and suddenly Linnenkohl emerged as a legitimate competitor. His teammates were extremely impressed with his progress and by the end of Summer Camp he was entrenched as the starter.

Playing center isn't easy. You have to make assignments, point out potential blitzes, make a clean snap, and then block your opponent. In the Oregon State offense it's not uncommon for the center to pull so the man in the middle has to be multi-talented.

Linnenkohl went on to have a great season and showed progress throughout the year. He was surrounded by talented linemen, and this group rallied to become one of the most productive lines in recent Oregon State history.

RETROSPECT

So what do we call that magical moment when an athlete seemingly transforms from an ordinary participant into a contributor? Off the record Mike Riley described Linnenkohl's transformation as, "the light just came on for him".

That term works. Each year we'll have an "Illumination Award" for Offense and Defense, and Linnenkohl deserves the trophy for the 2008 Offense.

Other athletes like Remmers and even Jaquizz (who arrived at OSU with the light on) should also be honored, but Linnenkohl seemed to make the biggest and brightest leap compared to expectations. We'll discuss the development of Johnny Hekker in a subsequent article for his special teams' heroics, but for offense Linnenkohl earned the "Illumination Award".

NOTES:

Some people feel that in recent years Oregon State athletes have benefited more from the additional practices allowed during bowl season. This gives the younger athletes a springboard as they head into the spring campaign. Others feel that the year between the Redshirt freshman season and sophomore season is where they mature the most as players in a new system. That's how it worked for Linnenkohl.

The Beavers linemen are blessed with a great offensive line coach and an environment where older athletes can mentor the younger athletes. Big Roy Schuening and Kyle Devan played a major role in Linnenkohl's development. And looking back over the entire journey there is always a degree of hard work and luck.

BeaverBlitz is eager to bring some of these stories from behind the scenes. If you want to know more about an athlete or story, please let us know. If we

have insight we'll share it in the Lodge. In the spirit of Spring Practice 2009, who would you chose to emerge by next year?

Cliff and Linda Berglund and their two son's (Jared and Sean) have supported the Barton Football Academy for 7 years. Jared played quarterback at Barlow High School and is now the punter and starting linebacker at Lewis and Clark College. He will be a senior this fall and is one of the team leaders.

Sean played quarterback at Barlow High School where he became one of the top quarterbacks in Oregon as a junior and senior. Sean just signed with Carroll College in Montana. Carroll College has won the NAIA National Championship 5 times over the last 9 years. They are truly one of the top football programs in the country. One of our coaches in Portland is Nick Colasurdo who played wide receiver at Lincoln High School. Nick played four years at Carroll College and believe this or not, his team won the National Championship every year he was there.

Congratulations to the entire Berglund family. Jared and Sean have both worked very hard to get to where they are at. Both are very good students and they have always had a great support system at home with their parents.

Cliff sent me an interesting article a few weeks ago. I want to share this with all of you.

An excerpt from
[The Power of Discipline](#)
By Brian Tracy

Why are some people more successful than others? Why do some people make more money, live happier lives and accomplish much more in the same number of years than the great majority?

I started out in life with few advantages. I did not graduate from high school. I worked at menial jobs. I had limited education, limited skills and a limited future.

And then I began asking, "**Why are some people more successful than others?**" This question changed my life.

Over the years, I have read thousands of books and articles on the subjects of success and achievement. It seems that the reasons for these accomplishments

have been discussed and written about for more than two thousand years, in every conceivable way. One quality that most philosophers, teachers and experts agree on is the importance of self-discipline. As Al Tomsik summarized it years ago, "Success is tons of discipline."

Some years ago, I attended a conference in Washington. It was the lunch break and I was eating at a nearby food fair. The area was crowded and I sat down at the last open table by myself, even though it was a table for four.

A few minutes later, an older gentleman and a younger woman who was his assistant came along carrying trays of food, obviously looking for a place to sit.

With plenty of room at my table, I immediately arose and invited the older gentleman to join me. He was hesitant, but I insisted. Finally, thanking me as he sat down, we began to chat over lunch.

It turned out that his name was Kop Kopmeyer. As it happened, I immediately knew who he was. He was a legend in the field of success and achievement. Kop Kopmeyer had written four large books, each of which contained 250 success principles that he had derived from more than fifty years of research and study. I had read all four books from cover to cover, more than once.

After we had chatted for awhile, I asked him the question that many people in this situation would ask, "Of all the one thousand success principles that you have discovered, which do you think is the most important?"

He smiled at me with a twinkle in his eye, as if he had been asked this question many times, and replied, without hesitating, "The most important success principle of all was stated by Thomas Huxley many years ago. He said, '***Do what you should do, when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not.***'"

He went on to say, "***There are 999 other success principles that I have found in my reading and experience, but without self-discipline, none of them work.***"

Self-discipline is the key to personal greatness. It is the magic quality that opens all doors for you, and makes everything else possible. With self-discipline, the average person can rise as far and as fast as his talents and intelligence can take him. But without self-discipline, a person with every blessing of background, education and opportunity will seldom rise above mediocrity.

This winter has been a lot of fun for myself and all of the Barton Football coaches. Whether it be in Oregon (Salem, Lewis and Clark College, or Portland) or Washington (Foster HS in Tukwila, Kent-Meridian HS in Kent,

AC Davis HS in Yakima or in Seattle at the University of Washington), we have had great young men. The attitude and work ethic of the players and the support of the families has been terrific. Thank you to every player, parent and football fan for being there each and every week.

SPRING CAMPS ON THE WAY

We are excited about going to the University of Oregon to kickoff our spring training camps. We will be indoors in the Moshofsky Center, located next door to Autzen Stadium. Then it will be on to Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. We will be outdoors in the Lewis and Clark stadium. Then we move to the University of Washington where players will experience the indoor Dempsey Center and Husky Stadium.

I enjoy the spring sessions because players from Seattle will come down to some of the camps at the U of Oregon and Lewis and Clark College. Players from Southern Oregon will come up I-5 to compete in the U of Oregon camp. Then players from Oregon will drive up north to participate in the U of Washington spring camp. Simply a great opportunity for players to see different players from around the Northwest.

Please go to www.bartonfootball.com to learn more about our spring camps.

When you go to the Barton Website, please take a good look at our Marketing Workouts that are going to be held in May.

Let's keep working.

Greg Barton