

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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ALL-EO FOOTBALL

Line of forceful impact

Hermiston senior put fear in opposing QBs

By MATT ENTRUP
East Oregonian

Going into his senior season, Hermiston's John-Henry Line was a third-year varsity linebacker with one career quarterback hurry.

But a position change to defensive end one game into the 2016 campaign revealed his hidden potential, and by the time he'd played his final down as a Bulldog the All-EO Player of the Year would turn in the most dominant seasons by a Hermiston pass rusher, perhaps ever.

Statistics don't go back far enough to say with certainty, but his 15.5 sacks this season is definitely the most by a Bulldog in the modern era.

Line, who at 6-foot, 195-pounds lined up at right end in a two-point stance, also showed his dominance on the field by leading the state's No. 7 defense with 22 tackles for loss, 76 solo tackles (99 total), seven quarterback hurries and a forced fumble for good measure.

Special District 1 Defensive Player of the Year and first-team honors followed, then a first-team all-state selection. His future as a football player is also looking up, as Division III and NAIA programs from around the state took notice during his breakout season.

Hermiston head coach David Faateete said his initial reasons for moving Line up in the defensive formation was a vacuum of experience created when the previous season's defensive line graduated seven seniors.

"We needed to replace our senior-heavy defensive line with guys that had played a lot of downs," Faateete said. "I think he was hesitant at first but he knew he had to make the move for his team and it ended up working out for his advantage."

"When we made the move to D-line I was knew he would step up, I didn't



Hermiston High School's John-Henry Line has been named the All EO Football Player of the Year.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Line by the numbers

15.5
Sacks

22
Tackles for loss

79
Solo tackles (99 total)

2
Touchdowns



Hermiston's John-Henry Line wraps up Ridgeview's Jace Reitz in the Bulldogs' 54-0 win against the Ravens on Oct. 7, 2016, in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

realize he would embrace it."

Defensive coordinator Scott Hammond gave Line a crash course in his new assignments, but didn't put a lot on his plate at the beginning.

"They (coaches) didn't really tell me too much, they just wanted me to play," Line said. "Just keep it simplified and let me do what I do."

Line's ability to use his hands and quickness to shed blockers didn't pay off right away, and after getting a crash course in his new position he was able to turn in a seven-tackle game but went without a quarterback hurry in a Week 2 loss to Lewiston.

"I didn't have that good

of a feel the first game, but then that second game I started figuring it out and I had a pretty decent game. I was like, 'Dang this is pretty fun.'" Line said of his 11 tackles (nine solo) and one tackle for loss in a 35-21 win over Mountain View.

Line didn't get his first sack until Week 4, which was also the first of six multi-sack games as he dragged down Summit's John Bledsoe behind the line of scrimmage twice.

"I knew it was a great thing and I knew the crowd loved it, everybody loved it, so I just wanted more," he said.

He had 10 tackles, two for a loss, in a win over Hood River the next week, but was shut out in the sack category. It would be the last

time in the season.

Over the next two weeks he had 3.5 total sacks and five tackles for loss in wins over Ridgeview and Bend while the defense gave up a combined seven points and Hermiston put itself in control of its own playoff destiny.

By that point in the season Line had started to draw double teams, and teams started running their offense away from him. It only made him want to try that much harder, he said.

"All I wanted to do was make plays and help our team win."

His season-high 14 tackles and three sacks against Redmond came in a loss, but Hermiston would cap its regular season the next week with a thrilling

13-12 win over rival Pendleton thanks in no small part to a monster output from Line.

He terrorized Buckaroos quarterback Nick Bower for five sacks and four quarterback hurries in front of a standing-room only crowd at Kennison Stadium. Pendleton found itself in third-and-long the entire game thanks to Line and his cohorts, and finished the game with just 114 yards.

"That was by far my favorite game, senior night, stands crowded, it was just awesome, a great atmosphere," Line said.

Hermiston's season ended with a 12-7 loss to St. Helens in the first round of the playoffs. Despite a wide offensive-line formation

designed to spread out the pocket, Line was still able to rack up 12 tackles (10 solo), two sacks, two tackles for loss and one quarterback hurry.

"At the beginning of the season I tried finesse moves, but towards the end I was just bull rushing," he said. "Both worked out pretty good."

"I faced a lot of good linemen, some of them were pretty big. But after every game they'd pretty much tell me I was the best defensive lineman they'd ever played. Just to hear that from another player, I thought that was a pretty good feeling."

And even though it's his defensive skills that are attracting interest from schools like George Fox, Western Oregon Eastern Oregon and Southern Oregon, it wasn't all defense for Line this season.

He carried the ball in short yardage situations five times for 11 yards and scored touchdowns against Hood River and Bend.

"I really enjoy playing defense but I like carrying the ball," he said. "Scoring touchdowns is fun. I wish I could have done more running but it is what it is."

Line said he's getting the sense teams will want him to play either linebacker or a hybrid end-linebacker position in college, and Faateete said they'd not only gain a superb athlete, but a great teammate.

"He's a great kid, coachable, always willing to listen and learn," he said. "You get a kid with a great work ethic who puts it all on the field for his team. John-Henry's not very vocal, he does more of his talking with his pads and his play. He's got that silent warrior mentality."

Line's experience this past season may be influencing his approach to other sports as well. Along with joining the lacrosse team as a goalie, he decided he wanted to take up snowboarding this winter and dove into the powder head first.

"I'm learning pretty fast and I'm enjoying it. My friends and I are just going down the hill," he said. "I feel like it's a better way to learn too."

Contact Matt Entrup at mentrup@eastoregonian.com or (541) 966-0838.

2016 ALL-EO FIRST TEAM



Andrew James
Quarterback
Hermiston, soph.



Logan Grieb
Running back
Heppner, senior



Thyler Monkus
RB/DB
Stanfield, senior



Shaw Jerome
WR/DB
Pendleton, junior



Dayshawn Neal
Wide receiver
Hermiston, junior



Dylan Grogan
ATH/LB
Stanfield, senior



Jose Garcia
OL/DL
Stanfield, senior



Noe Sanchez
OL/DL
Stanfield, senior



Kevin Murray
OL/LB
Heppner, senior



AJ Fernandez
Offensive line
Hermiston, junior



Kaden Caldwell
Offensive line
Hermiston, senior



Alec Williams
Defensive line
Umatilla, senior



John-Henry Line
Defensive line
Hermiston, senior



Trent Durfey
Linebacker
Umatilla, soph.



Vaemu Ena
Defensive back
Hermiston, senior



Joey Gutierrez
Defensive back
Hermiston, junior



Kirk Scott
Punter, soph.
Weston-McEwen



Sebastian Corona
Kicker
Pendleton, senior

SECOND TEAM

DEFENSE
DL — Wyatt Steagall, jr., Heppner
DL — Damian McLeod, sr., Hermiston
DL — Tim Jaca, sr., Heppner
DL — Greg Lee, jr., Pendleton
LB — Morgan Holcomb, sr., Pendleton
LB — Bradlee Guitsee, sr., Hermiston
LB — Johnathan Hinkle, jr., Hermiston
DB — Justin Keeney, jr., Stanfield
DB — Logan Grieb, sr., Heppner
DB — Tyler Rohrman, jr., Hermiston
DB — Kaden Webb, jr., Umatilla
P — Damian McLeod, sr., Hermiston

OFFENSE
QB — Nick Bower, jr., Pendleton
RB — Trent Durfey, soph., Umatilla
RB — Deven Page, sr., Pendleton
WR — Brody Woods, jr., Stanfield
WR — Tucker Salinas, sr., Hermiston
ATH — Jerry Ramirez, sr., Hermiston
OL — Alec Williams, sr., Umatilla
OL — Braydon Postma, sr., Pilot Rock
OL — Beau Blake, sr., Hermiston
OL — Spencer Wells, sr., Mac-Hi
OL — Hunter Sater, sr., Weston-McEwen
K — Kirk Scott, soph., Weston-McEwen

HONORABLE MENTION

DEFENSE
DL — Donnie Clark, sr., Mac-Hi
DL — Elijah Pine, sr., Umatilla
DL — Beau Blake, sr., Hermiston
DL — Trevin Horne, sr., Heppner
LB — Kolby Curran, sr., Heppner
LB — Grant Kennedy, jr., Pendleton
LB — Cade Anderson, sr., Pendleton
LB — Sam Carlson, sr., Mac-Hi
DB — Chris Weinke, jr., Pilot Rock
DB — Jacob Speed, jr., Weston-McEwen
DB — Riley Chester, sr., Mac-Hi
DB — Nick Lani, sr., Pendleton
DB — Jake Lindsay, sr., Heppner
P — Brody Woods, jr., Stanfield

OFFENSE
QB — Kaden Webb, jr., Umatilla
OB — Brett Speed, jr., Weston-McEwen
RB — Johnathan Hinkle, jr., Hermiston
RB — Carlos Zacarias, sr., Irrigon
RB — Adrian Renner, jr., Stanfield
RB — Coby Dougherty, jr., Heppner
WR — Nick Lani, sr., Pendleton
WR — Justin Maret, sr., Umatilla
WR — Chris Weinke, jr., Pilot Rock
WR — Cam Sandford, soph., Pendleton
ATH — Devan Craig, soph., Echo
ATH — Cord Flynn, sr., Ione
OL — Elijah Pine, sr., Umatilla
OL — Tristan Cole, jr., Umatilla
OL — Hunter Barnes, sr., Stanfield
OL — Wyatt Steagall, jr., Heppner
OL — Tim Jaca, sr., Heppner
K — Enael Angel, sr., Stanfield