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- Photos by James Neiss/staff photographer THE DOCTOR IS IN: Grand Island lineman Tommy Doctor (55) has anchored the Vikings up front this season, both offensively and defensively. --



Discussion

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[Grand Island's Doctor leads way defensively](#)

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Niagara Gazette — GRAND ISLAND — If it takes seven years to get a doctorate, Grand Island's Tommy Doctor has played enough football to earn a title befitting his last name.

Doctor has played football since he was 8 years old, which is pretty average for a high school varsity starter. What sets him apart is how engrained the sport is in his life, thanks to the professional careers of his father, Tom, and uncle, Sean, who both spent time with the Buffalo Bills in the late 1980s.

Tom Doctor Sr. played linebacker for the Bills, while Sean Doctor played tight end in college at Marshall before moving to fullback in Buffalo.

“I come from a family of athletes,” the younger Doctor said. “Sometimes it’s hard to live up to those guys. Just seeing their jerseys and helmets hanging up, it’s always been a dream for me to play football.”

Doctor, listed as 6-foot-4, 235 pounds, has been at the forefront for a GI team that takes pride in controlling the line of scrimmage. After starting at offensive and defensive tackle as a junior, the senior moved to defensive end and tight end in some heavy run packages this season.

He’s also provided filled a leadership void on defense created by the graduation of DE Chris Connors and linebacker Anthony Zogaria, who led the unit last year.

“He put in a lot of work over the offseason,” said GI coach Dean Santorio. “He put on 15-20 pounds, maybe grew an inch. You can definitely tell he looks bigger on the field.”

Doctor said he can thank his father for this year’s improvements.

“He helps me out a lot,” he said. “We watch film together and go over my game. We’re always going to the gym together and training.”

With a solid senior season, Doctor said he hopes he’ll have the opportunity to play collegiately. While he hasn’t been in contact with any schools yet, Santorio said there’s a great chance Doctor will be playing at another level next year.

“I’m sure with his size and ability, he could play for any Division III program,” Santorio said. “Once the season’s over, we’ll talk to him, put together (game film) and send it out wherever he’d like. If (a D-I or D-II) school is interested, maybe they could offer him a scholarship.

“People sometimes look at D-III programs and forget that it’s a huge accomplishment to even play at that level. Buffalo State, Brockport... they are some very good players playing for those teams.”