

Doles excited for next step with Ottawa football



Louisburg senior Desmond Doles had a good season for the Wildcat football program and it translated to an opportunity with the Ottawa University football program this fall.

Just two years ago, Desmond Doles was nowhere to be found on a football field.

After playing football as a freshman, he decided to take a break from the sport as a sophomore and focus his energy on other things.

“That turned out to be a big mistake,” Doles said.

Still, Doles learned from his miscue and went back out his junior season and fell in love with the sport. It turned out to be a good decision, because after a good senior year with the Wildcat program, Doles is ready to continue his career on the gridiron at the collegiate level.

Doles made it official on Feb. 14 when he signed his letter of intent, in front of family and friends at Louisburg High School, to play for Ottawa University.

It was a difficult decision for Doles as he had another offer to walk-on at Emporia State, a Division II program, but he felt Ottawa was going to be a better fit.

“My dad went there when I was first born and he played basketball there,” Doles said. “So we were all familiar with the scene at Ottawa. We got more information about it and it turned out to be a pretty good school. It was a tough decision because I had two schools that I wanted to go to, but I felt I was more wanted at Ottawa and would be more successful playing for the Braves.”



Desmond Doles signed his letter of intent to play football for Ottawa University on Feb. 14. Desmond is seated next to his parents Desiree and Bryan, along with his brother Brandon. Standing (from left) is Louisburg head football coach Robert Ebenstein and Ottawa offensive coordinator Curran White.

Doles played wide receiver and defensive back for the Wildcats and earned honorable mention all-Frontier League honors on both sides of the ball. He was the team's leading receiver with 284 yards through the air with five touchdowns.

On defense, Doles also finished with a team-high three interceptions to go along with 29 tackles. However, it is on offense where Doles plans to take the next step in college.

“Ottawa is more of a passing team and they said I would fit right in as a receiver and be able to help them,” he said. “They didn’t have the personnel they would have liked last year and they had a couple guys down that are going to be back this year and I think there are a lot of components that will make Ottawa really good next year. They got a new strength and conditioning coach and guys got stronger during the season, and I think the program looks very bright.”

The Ottawa coaches also made a big impact on Doles and his decision to join a Braves program that finished with a 3-8 record a season ago. The Braves, under head coach Kent Kessinger, hope to take a step forward in the coming season as he has taken his program to the NAIA Championship Series six times.

“Coach K (Kessinger) is an awesome guy,” Doles said. “He is super energetic and loves what he does. I really like that about him. He was just really interested in me and I felt wanted. I really like the coaching staff and they are all nice and super excited to have me.”

As excited as Doles is to start his collegiate career, he knows playing football in Louisburg helped him grow as a player.

“My junior year, I got to see the field for varsity and I didn’t think that I would get to,” he said. “I just loved playing with those group of seniors. Even though it was mainly a run offense, it was still fun to be able to go outside and be considered a skinny offensive lineman as some wide receivers are called. This year we started throwing the ball more and it just made it so much more fun. It was a lot of fun.”

“When I get to Ottawa, my goal is to just get stronger and faster. I want to work on coordination and footwork and being the best that I can be.”