

Wrigley reaches end of successful football career



Lincoln University senior, and Louisburg High School graduate, Brenton Wrigley will play his final collegiate football game next Saturday after spending the last two years with the Blue Tigers as the team's long snapper.

In a little more than a week, Brenton Wrigley will put on the pads one final time.

Football has served Wrigley well the last four years as he has spent time at two colleges and worked his way onto a Division II program as a long snapper. It hasn't always been easy for Wrigley, but then again, life as a college football player isn't supposed to be.

Wrigley, who is a 2015 Louisburg High School graduate, will be honored next Saturday when his Lincoln Blue Tigers host McKendree on Senior Day. It figures to be an emotional day for Wrigley and his family as he says his goodbyes to the Jefferson City, Mo., program.

"It will be a little bittersweet, and I don't think it will hit me that football is over until after the season," Wrigley said. "My mind set is to be the best that I can be and help this team with anything they need. I'm definitely going to miss the workouts with my teammates and waking up at 5 a.m. to grind with them."

Being a long snapper isn't a position that has a lot of glory – in fact – most people don't even notice them out there at times. However, it has been one that Wrigley has embraced in the last decade and one that has helped find playing time at two different schools.



Brenton Wrigley

Following graduation from Louisburg, Wrigley made his way to Fort Scott Community College for two years and then eventually moved onto Lincoln, where he has helped the Blue Tiger special teams.

"I've always been a long snapper and my dad (Ryan Wrigley) taught me when I was at a young age," he said. "I'm still getting it down and it is a work in progress. A bunch of technique is required and I'm always learning from either watching the pros or watching film on YouTube."

Wrigley honed in on his craft at Fort Scott and he enjoyed his time with the junior college program, which he believed prepared him for the Division II level.

"The best memories for me came from juco because we were all grinding to make it out of Fort Scott," Wrigley said. "I made some incredible friends there like Chris Flowers, Andrew

Carter, Austin Wolfe, Logan Edwards and Dakota Crichton. These people are my family and making it out of the struggle with them is something that I'll never forget."

As seamless as Wrigley made the transition seem from Fort Scott to Lincoln seem, it wasn't always that easy.

"When I first got here, Lincoln was kind of challenging because I was the like the new kid on the block and I didn't know anyone on campus," he said. "But now that I have been here for a while, I've gained more friends on and off the football team. College football has its ups and downs, but it is fun playing with a bunch of individuals that have the same common goal as you."

The normal grind of school and football is hard for many student athletes, but when you have to worry about your health on top it, its adds another level of stress.

Wrigley is diabetic and he has had to deal with the disease for a little more than a decade. It is something that presents its fair share of challenges, but nothing he hasn't been able to overcome.

"In almost 11 years of having diabetes, it was struggle early dealing with it because I was new to it all," Wrigley said. "It's still hard because my blood sugar fluctuates depending on the amount of activity I do. I've learned to check my blood sugar before games, during halftime and when I get back to the locker room after the game. I always carry fruit snacks, or something like that around all the time to make sure I am ready to go."

Working hard on the football field isn't the only thing Wrigley has shined at during his two years at Lincoln. Before the start of the season, Wrigley was awarded the Division II Academic Achievement Award by the Athletic Directors Association.

To be eligible for the award, student-athletes must have a cumulative grade-point average of 3.5 or higher and have completed at least four semesters at their institution.

It is an honor that Wrigley, who also earned academic awards while at Fort Scott, takes pride in as it is challenging to find a balance between athletics and academics.



Brenton Wrigley has long snapped the last four years, including two at Fort Scott Community College and two at Lincoln.

“It is difficult because my whole day is taken up with football and meetings from 5 in the morning to around 5 or 6 at night with classes in-between,” he said. “I try to spend the hours I’m not doing anything football related in the library doing homework or studying for a test.

“I take my classes very seriously because at the end of the day football won’t always be there, but that degree will. I’m very proud of those honors that I’ve received. I strive to perform well on and off the field.”

Wrigley knows the opportunity he has received at Lincoln wouldn't have been possible with the support of his parents, Ryan Wrigley and Krista Stramel, previous football coaches and Lincoln head coach Steven Smith.

"I've made many more friends here at Lincoln and the coaches will always be here for me no matter what the situation is," Wrigley said. "Coach Smith is the one that got me to Lincoln University. He believed in me and I can't thank him enough for the opportunity that he has given me."