

Southern grad Glenn Carson settles in at Linebacker U.

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PHILADELPHIA - College football is new to Glenn Carson. New schemes. New plays. New speed.

New clothes, too.

The 2009 Southern Regional High School graduate - now a Penn State University middle linebacker - needed a suit for when the team travels.

His father, Glenn Carson Sr., found a store going out of business and bought his son two new suits for college.

"This is the first real suit I've ever owned," said Carson of his navy-blue pinstripe attire after Penn State's 14-10 win over Temple on Saturday afternoon.

"When I was younger, I kept growing out of them," Carson said. "I'm not really growing anymore."

Perhaps not physically, but the 20-year-old is still learning football on the college level.

Carson, a sophomore, worked his way into the starting job this preseason. He was initially listed as the team's number-two middle linebacker behind Mike Mauti, but Carson's development came on so quickly, Mauti was moved to the outside in favor of Carson.

Carson, who played in three games last season at fullback, had his best game of the year against Alabama on Sept. 10. He had a career-high 11 tackles, besting his mark from six last season. Alabama plays into Carson's style, as he is better at stopping the run. The Crimson Tide ran the ball 41 times against Penn State.

Carson only recorded three tackles and was in on a forced fumble against Temple, but the Owls ran the ball 30 times and were held to 74 yards.

"We had to step up on defense and give the offense some time to step up and put some points on the board," Carson said. "Once we got a turnover, it started coming. It just showed it was like a domino effect."

Carson stood on the sidelines during Penn State's final defensive stand, watching as his teammates preserved the victory. The team used a nickel package, which is designed to stop the pass, with five defensive backs and just two linebackers in the game.

"It's extremely difficult. I was itching to get on the field," said the 6-foot-3, 239-pound Carson. "It was a huge drive. I just wanted to be a factor in there. But we were in a nickel package, so I had to bite my tongue over there on the sidelines."

After Penn State's defense ended Temple's hopes, Carson clapped, turned away from the field then patted his teammates on the shoulder pads as they came off the field.

Carson developed that type of patience during his high school wrestling career. He was the state runner-up for two straight years - losses that inspired him to work harder.

His senior year, Carson finally won a state individual wrestling championship at 215 pounds and was named The Press Wrestler of the Year.

But Carson was hurt at the time. He had two herniated discs and needed back surgery. That forced him to defer enrollment at Penn State for a semester, a process known as grayshirting.

Even though he craved to get back on the field, Carson doesn't regret taking the time off.

"Knock on wood, but the back feels great," Carson said. "I didn't want to rush into things, and so far it has worked for the better."

Carson's drive is one of the reasons the team moved him into the starting lineup. After every practice, he eats dinner and then immediately heads back to the film room to watch video from practice. Sometimes he's with the other linebackers.

Most of the time, he's by himself.

"Every practice, I take the opportunity to get coached by a great coach," said Carson, who had a number of family members including his father, mother and sister at the game against Temple. "I itch to watch film every single day after practice."

Tom Bradley, Penn State's defensive coordinator, said Carson is still getting used to the pace of college football, with so many different formations and strategies.

"Glenn is learning a lot of new aspects of the game, and because of that, the game is moving at a faster pace for him," Bradley said. "As he continues to develop, everything will slow down."

Carson prides himself on being part of Linebacker U, playing for a school that's developed NFL linebackers such as LaVar Arrington, Dan Connor and Paul Posluszny.

"Maybe for a second, but then I just continue to work hard," he said. "I don't like to sit back and look at what I have accomplished until it's all said and done. I am happy with where I am, but I am not satisfied."

Note: St. Augustine Prep graduate Jack Crawford had a tackle for Penn State at defensive end.

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