

Former Warrior prepares for a new challenge at D-1 Lindenwood

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Former Del Norte linebacker Anthony Slayton is backing himself to succeed at the next level after accepting a preferred walk-on to play football at Lindenwood University in Missouri.

Slayton, who played a pivotal role on the Warriors' march to a state bowl game in 2019, is coming off two big years at Shasta College and feels he's ready to take his talents to the Division-I FCS program.

"I've been here before, kind of betting on myself, and it's worked out," he said. "It's a situation I've been in before, and I feel comfortable being the guy who has to work that little bit harder."

The 2020 Del Norte graduate showcased that work ethic while playing for the Warriors and was named co-Defensive MVP of the Little 4 during his senior season.

He carried that mindset to Redding where he was equally influential for the Knights.

Not only was Slayton named Shasta's Defensive MVP in both full seasons he played with the team, but he was also among the state leaders in tackles each year.

In the fall of 2021, he finished with a state-high 61 solo tackles and 14 tackles for a loss, and he followed that a year later with a state-best 16 tackles for a loss.

Even more impressive was the way he overcame a huge setback on his way to success.

Slayton suffered a torn ACL in the final game of his freshman season, but battled back to recover in time for the 2022 season opener.

"I really had no idea how it was going to go," he said. "That first game, it was just a relief to be out there and to get to play a game again.

"With how severe it was, it all turned out as well as it could."

The move to Missouri is a big one for the California native, who has never lived far from home.

But it's also a move he's excited about.

"It's my first time out here," he said after moving there earlier this month. "It's definitely a little different, but different is good. I really like it so far."

He also likes his new teammates.

"I've met just about all the guys and they're all very welcoming," he said. "It's been a very smooth process, and I'm excited for what the future holds."

Slayton ended up choosing Lindenwood after the Lions hired linebackers coach Will Finley, who had first tried to recruit the Del Norte star during his time at Waldorf University in Iowa.

Finley remembered Slayton and reached out to him after moving to Missouri.

"Throughout the recruiting process, I was just talking to coaches from everywhere," Slayton said. "And one of the coaches I was talking to (Finley) moved to Lindenwood and he recruited me from there."

In addition to trying to make an impression at middle linebacker this summer, Slayton also is hoping to showcase his talents on special teams, which might give him an edge in the battle for a roster spot.

The Lions were 7-3 last season, including a 1-3 record in the Ohio Valley Conference.

They open the 2023 season at home against the University of Wisconsin-Stevens on Aug. 31.

