NO PAIN, NO GAIN

How the love for the game can come at the sacrifice of the body. By David Duenes



Shamus is ready for the playoff game as he seeks redemption for the loss against the Caprock Longhorns.

Shamus McCloud stares intensely at his play-book as he prepares for his very first playoff game. The 4'7", 85 lbs., Randall Raider Defensive End has had a tough season this year. It started with him fighting off sickness, losing a starting position, and last week losing an important game 32-0. The blowout hasn't shaken his confidence, however. If anything, it has made him even more focused.

"We have a chance to correct a mistake in our first playoff game," said Shamus about the upcoming Caprock Longhorns game. "We beat ourselves the first time around, and now we have a chance to redeem ourselves," he said. Many mistakes led to the overtime loss against the Longhorns a few weeks ago, but Shamus is confident that this game will not be a repeat.

Shamus strives for excellence, hence his A-B honor roll record in school although his only 'B' is an 89 and he plans on remedying that this six weeks. He holds himself and his teammates up to a very high standard.

"It doesn't matter if I'm starting or on the sidelines, we are a team and we win together and lose together," he said.

They currently have a 6-2 record losing one game early in the season to the aforementioned Longhorns. Their second loss was in the final regular game in a huge loss to the Hereford Hostile Herd.

"It was a tough game," said Shamus, as he thinks about the events that transpired that day. "We were overconfident and they outplayed us. Simple as that." When asked about his health, he said, "I feel great, but no matter what happens, I am there on the sidelines, sunshine, rain, sleet, or snow." His commitment to his team is inspiring and doesn't go unnoticed, especially by his trainer, Espe Ransom.



Espe helps Shamus get ready for the upcoming game.

"Sometimes it's hard to get him to focus on himself and his health," said Espe. "He is his team's biggest fan and his concern with them will always precede his concern with himself." Espe hesitates when asked about the future of his career. "I think it's important that he take the correct steps in making sure he is 100% healthy before he exerts himself on and off the field because he could do some real damage to himself," said Espe. "He pushes himself so hard that I think he forgets his body has limits."

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Earlier this season, Shamus was diagnosed with bronchitis that in turn developed into pneumonia. On heavy medication and breathing treatments, Shamus continued to study his play-book, review game tape, and cheer his team on from the sidelines. He returned to the field against his trainer's wishes and plans on playing in the upcoming playoff game. "I can't make his decisions for him, so I'll be right here when he needs me," said Espe. "Hopefully it will be in celebration of a victory instead of carting him off on a stretcher."

Before leaving, Shamus sits his play-book down, the one he had been looking at throughout the interview, and looked out the window for a moment. "I know I can't do this forever," said Shamus. "Whether it's tomorrow or 20 years from now, I know my time will be up. Just not yet." After shaking hands, he seemed to float out of the room with the confidence and an intensity of a winner. This playoff game might be something worth checking out.

Numbers at a Glance

2014 - Rookie year

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25 - Yards

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16 - Tackles

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8 - Assists

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5 - Sacks

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1 - Interception