

Lawrence Guy conquers stumbling blocks at Arizona State



Special To The Las Vegas Review-Journal: Arizona State defensive tackle Lawrence Guy, top, who is on course to graduate in 2013 with degrees in education and sociology after battling attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia, is expected to be selected in the middle rounds of next week's NFL Draft.

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Lawrence Guy was always one of the biggest kids around.

Dominating on the football field came easily for him. Seeking help for his learning disabilities did not.

The 6-foot-4-inch, 305-pound defensive tackle, a Western High School product, is expected to be a midround selection in next week's NFL Draft.

But Guy's promising career once seemed to be slipping away after a freshman season at Arizona State in which he played in all 12 games, starting eight, and recorded 10 tackles for loss. He neglected his schoolwork, spent a lot of time socializing with teammates and was reluctant to get help for his attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia.

Older brother Chris requested a job transfer from San Diego, bought a house in the Phoenix area and came to Guy's aid.

Chris got a dry-erase board, wrote down a series of goals for his brother -- academic, football and community related -- and placed it on a wall for him to see every day.

One of the goals was to become a Sun Devils Scholar Baller, which meant achieving a 3.0 grade-point average either in a semester or cumulatively.

Guy has hit that mark nearly every semester since by applying himself and seeking assistance, even if it meant overcoming the stigma of being a well-known Arizona State football player walking into the school's Disability Resource Center.

On course to graduate in 2013 with degrees in education and sociology, Guy is also eagerly awaiting the draft and the fulfillment of a dream that nearly eluded him.

"I do amaze myself, but I worked hard to accomplish everything I've done," Guy said. "I feel proud of everything I've been through. It built me into the person I am today."

Guy, who is coming out of school a year early, had 41 tackles, six for loss and 1½ sacks last season.

"I like Lawrence Guy," said Wes Bunting, draft expert for the National Football Post. "I think he would've been better served to stay (another year), but he's got a big body and a long frame. There are ... concerns with his learning disability, but he works hard and can overcome it.

"He could wind up being a starter for someone."

Guy has become an inspiration for students struggling with learning disabilities, especially since September when the Arizona Republic published an article on his experiences.

One of Guy's written goals was to become more active in the community, and the story helped him spread his message of perseverance to kids in Phoenix-area high schools.

"I like being a role model for people in my spot," Guy said. "I'll go up to Vegas and talk to kids in my situation. If I tell my story to younger kids and I can relate to them and help them, it makes me feel better."

Guy talks about having ADHD and dyslexia. ADHD makes focusing on tasks difficult, and dyslexia is a reading disorder in which certain letters aren't processed accurately by the brain.

Seven months ago, Guy was also diagnosed with dyscalculia, a disorder related to how math problems are perceived.

Chris Guy sees his brother's schoolwork issues as more basic problems. He is skeptical about the severity of various diagnoses and also thinks the common group-study setting for athletes can be distracting.

"When he starts to read too fast, words get scrambled," Chris said. "When he reads slower, you can tell he can do it. When you have a lot of people around and you're reading through something, it's a process and it takes time. To read around 10 football players is hard."

That's not to say Chris Guy doesn't think his brother faces stumbling blocks. He knows the disabilities are real but is certain they can be overcome through hard work and attention to detail.

"He learned tricks to studying," Chris said. "He would go to the Resource Center, and they would start to go through that and use those. All that (increased) his comfort level. It was a step toward being a leader.

"It was always there. It was getting him to start believing."

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