

Meet Gavin Graham, Texas State linebacker

by John Harris Jr. | VILLAGER Sports Writer

After every football game he played at Anderson High School, Gavin Graham would sit with his father in the family kitchen and discuss his performance.

Considering that his father, William Graham, was a star defensive back at the University of Texas who played six seasons with the NFL's Detroit Lions, those words meant a lot.

"After every high school game, we'd sit at the kitchen table and stay awake until 2 or 3 in the morning just talking about the game," said Graham, now a junior linebacker at Texas State who has played in all five games this season and recorded five solo tackles in the opener against Rutgers. "The very next morning he would have filmed the game and there was a sheet from the first play to the last play where he wrote down every aspect of the game."

Those late-night talks with Dad paid off. Gavin Graham received All-State honorable mention recognition after registering 139 tackles and three interceptions as a senior at Anderson. He considered attending the Air Force in Colorado Springs where his brother, Hayden, was an All-Mountain West bas-



Gavin Graham

ketball player, but settled on Texas State, which is closer to family and friends.

"Coming to Texas State, it was almost like being at home," Gavin said. "Having that close connection where all your friends back home and your relatives come support you add a nice element to it."

"My father has been my idol and role model my entire life. From a sports aspect, having a father like that, who did great things in his sports career, it was always motivation to try to follow in his footsteps and see if I could one-up him in everything I've done."

William Graham ranks among the career interception leaders at UT, tying for ninth all-time with 11 picks. His seven interceptions in 1981 equals a school single-season record.

Gavin Graham applied some of that fatherly wisdom when he arrived at Texas State for his first season in 2016. Originally a safety, Graham was asked to move to linebacker for the first time.

"When I got here, I was a safety," he said. "I gained weight during the summer so when we came to camp they moved me to outside linebacker. I had always played safety, so it was a huge adjustment getting down and using my hands and shedding blocks. It was a rough year but it was a great experience because I got a lot of playing time. Last year I felt like I made steps in the right direction. This year I definitely feel more comfortable. I've progressed from just understanding the scheme to playing with better technique and knowing how to play."



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