

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Leathernecks have big plans for BC grad



By John Terhune/Journal & Courier
Western Illinois linebacker Sam Power, formerly of Benton Central, looks to make a play on special teams.

By **SAM KING**
 sking@jconline.com

Living just eight minutes from Purdue's campus, Sam Power grew up cheering for the Boilermakers.

But staring down Purdue quarterback Robert Marve from his middle linebacker spot on Saturday, it was evident the former Benton Central standout no longer had a Boilermaker allegiance.

"I'm a Leatherneck now, so I had no mixed emotions at all," said Power, a sophomore at Western Illinois.

While Power didn't record any statistics, he rotated in on defense to relieve senior Kyle Glazier, a pre-season honorable mention All-American by Consensus Draft Services.

The plan is to have Power take over what Western Illinois calls the Leatherneck linebacker spot when Glazier graduates.

Coach Mark Hendrick-

son recruited Power with the idea in mind. Both Power and Glazier were physical high school quarterbacks with athleticism. The Leatherneck linebacker is the team's defensive leader who makes all the play calls and has to know what every defensive player's assignment is.

It's a role Hendrickson thinks Power will be ready for after Glazier, an All-Missouri Valley Football Conference selection the last two seasons, graduates.

"Kyle is very intelligent. He knows the game inside and out by game time and knows that opponent inside and out," Hendrickson said. "There's no question he is helping Sam pick up on those same tendencies going through his weekly process in dissecting an offense.

"Sam, wow, we are fortunate he is a Leatherneck. When it is his turn to be No. 1, we know we can count on him."

Power played in six games as a freshman during a 1-10 season.

In the season opener against Valparaiso last week, he finally got enough playing time to get a feel for the defense in a game situation. He recorded six tackles, including two for loss.

It was a performance that showed Glazier that his mentoring is paying off.

"Sam has grown up in the last year," Glazier said. "He knows the defense a lot better. I think he feels a lot more comfortable out there.

"Last year, he was a little quiet with the older guys. This year I feel he's more of a leader, which he needs to be at the position he's at. He's going to be a really good football player for the next two years."

Power grew up in Fowler before moving to West Lafayette when he was 11. He prepared for Purdue like any other game.

Glazier could see, though,

that Power was "a little amped up for this game."

After the 31-21 loss to the Boilermakers at Ross-Ade Stadium, Power was briefly able to relish the moment.

"I was very excited to see this game (on the schedule)," Power said. "I kind of had to control myself and get my composure. You have to prepare for it like it's a normal game, but I was excited to come back home and play."

During the game he had to block out friends and family in the stands.

Friday night, Power got a chance to walk into an empty Ross-Ade Stadium.

"Ever since Monday I've been looking forward to the game," Power admitted afterwards. "It was kind of eye-opening when I walked out.

"I didn't want to focus too much on this being my hometown and it's Purdue, but I really enjoyed it out there."