

Training Camp Q&A - Alex Debniak

by Dave Fowkes, Examiner.com

Junior linebacker Alex Debniak will play a key role on the Stanford football team this year. He'll be a key cog on special teams along with backing up both outside linebacker positions. He may even get a few carries on the offensive side of the ball.

I chatted with Debniak after practice on Thursday.

Q: How is training camp going for you so far?

This is one of the best training camps that I have been apart of since I have been here the past three years. Everyone is doing very well.

Q: You had a scrimmage yesterday, who won?

The offense really did well yesterday. I would have to give it to the offense.

Q: You are playing outside linebacker mostly right now or are you going up and down the line?

I am playing outside linebacker.

Q: How is the adjustment to the 3-4 going?

I think I am definitely coming around. I have learned a lot. Spring went really well. It has been a really big learning curve for me but I have really enjoyed this summer. Mentally learning the plays and the technique, I am really enjoying it. I really admire the rest of the outside linebackers we have. Obviously they were all defensive ends in our 4-3 schemes so I have learned a lot from them.

Q: What is the number one thing you have learned going to the 3-4 defense?

I would say pass rushing technique. I did not have to do a whole lot of pass rushing in the 4-3 scheme. In this new scheme I have to play more like a defensive end. It is a different kind of mentality trying to read on the fly. I feel I have definitely improved on that.

Q: It has to be a nice reward though, I know you are not allowed to hit your quarterback here in practice but it has to wet your appetite for the real thing right?

Certainly! (Laugh) I definitely look forward to that opportunity.

Q: Are you getting any reps at running back or is it just defense now?

As of now I have not been getting any reps at running back. But I have been talking to Coach Roman and Coach Harbaugh. I will definitely be looked at at running back. But that will be later on in camp. I am always prepared to go in and do whatever I can for the offense.

Q: I am guessing you will be a big player on special teams as well. Coach Polian mentioned you as someone he is really looking too, are you getting a lot of looks on special teams?

Oh yeah, I love special teams, especially kickoff coverage. They have me at gunner right now. I love just running down the field and just being reckless. That is the way I like to play. I appreciate the coaches for giving me the opportunity to be that kind of player on special teams.

Q: You have to play a bit crazy to in that role. That is balls out? (Laugh)

(Laugh) I appreciate that. A lot of players on the team know me for that and I think that is the biggest compliment I could ask for. I know there are a lot of players like that on this team that the coaches are giving opportunities to play like that as well.

Q: We talk about competition for offense and defense, but tell me about some of the competition for special teams?

A lot of it goes with technique, the ones that are going to never give up, the ones that are the most tenacious are the ones that are going to see the field the most. There are a lot of kids not on scholarship that are starting on special teams right now because they go balls to the wall, non-stop, so our coaches are very open minded about allowing different kind of players to play as long as you show up every practice and give it 100%, you are going to get a good shot of playing on special teams.

Q: What are the one or two things you are really focusing on for your game to take you to the next level?

I would say I need to continue to learn my technique. Right now I am trying to learn both linebacker spots. There could be a possible opening in the future depending on what happens with Keiser and Chase. So I need to learn both rush and sam. Like I said, it is a big learning curve.