

Goncalves comes of age

'Young Blood' has Taunton poised for big run

By MIKE DEL ROSSO

TAUNTON — Across the back of Cabrinni Goncalves' football helmet reads "Young Blood."

The 6-foot senior earned the nickname as a freshman, the youngest player in the weight room working hard to establish his place on the Taunton football squad. Two years later, Goncalves finally got the chance to prove himself.

"We lost our star tailback to a torn ACL in a pre-season game, so that brought Cabrinni up sooner than expected," coach Mark Hannon said.

Though a three-way coin toss would deny the Tigers a playoff berth, Taunton came away with a share of the Old Colony League title, and a crew of then juniors demanding retribution in their 2010 senior year. At the heart of this movement stands one Cabrinni Goncalves.

Running for a total of 1,263 yards on 155 rushes last year, Goncalves averaged 114.8 yards per game. The then 170-pounder punched in 23 touchdowns and, as Hannon put it, was the key in all Tiger games, win or lose. Taunton finished with a 6-5 record and tied with Barnstable and Bridgewater-Raynham for the OCL top spot.

But these are just numbers to the returning running back, who is 10 pounds heavier and sporting a 40-yard time just under 4.5 seconds after training diligently in the offseason.

"I just come out every day and do what I do and, hopefully, I do something good," Goncalves said. "I don't really think about stats."

I just go out and play football with the team."

"When it comes down to it, Cabrinni is 100 percent for the team," senior fullback Jose Rodriguez said. "The numbers don't matter. If we're winning, he doesn't care if he gets 200 or 20 yards."

Rodriguez, who's been playing with Goncalves since Pop Warner days, perhaps knows better than anyone else how connected Goncalves is to his teammates.

"Since we have been playing (together) for so long, we kind of know what each other feel," Rodriguez said. "Say if we have two blockers coming at us, I'll know to block the second guy because I know Cabrinni can beat the first guy. It'll give us a jump over the defense."

Goncalves and Rodriguez help each other on and off the field, because for both of them, "It's not just a football thing," Goncalves said. "We're friends, we're always learning from each other. (The advice we give each other) is never negative, it's always positive."

He may be all about team, but Goncalves still stands out distinctly.

"His instincts carrying the football (make the difference)," Hannon said. "He's a football player." And a motivated one at that.

"We're not even ranked in the state, so no one respects Taunton," Goncalves said. "I just want to (win a championship) for Taunton and put us on the map. Everyone's hungry from last year."



STAFF PHOTO BY MATT STONE

A REAL TIGER: Taunton senior Cabrinni Goncalves is ready to help his team make some noise this season in the Old Colony League.



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