

EPHLIGHT – AUSTIN LOMMEN '16

by Eric Hirsch '19

After A Year of Adjustments Seeks to Lead the Ephs to Successful Season

WITH A FULL YEAR UNDER CENTER at Williams already under his belt, senior quarterback and captain Austin Lommen hopes to lead the Eph football program to a turnaround season. The Boston College transfer believes that senior class leadership will help get the team back on the right track. After two consecutive losing seasons, the 18 Eph seniors had extra motivation to improve in the off-season. According to Lommen, the senior leadership has been especially evident in the linebacking core (four seniors) and on the offensive line (five seniors).

The Ephs will count on Lommen to provide leadership from the quarterback position. Offensive Coordinator Kyle Smesko said, "Austin came in from day one and wanted to lead the team. He understands that is what the quarterback position is about and what it needs to be. He leads by example and wants to perfect in everything he does."

The Minneapolis native played football, basketball, and baseball for the Breck School. "In basketball, I played center, and in baseball, I played every position but catcher, though I miss pitching the most," said Lommen. At Williams, he joined the JV basketball team and has strongly considered trying out for baseball. Despite his love for baseball and basketball, Lommen always dreamed of playing Division I football. As a result, football drove his college search. "Towards the end of my freshman year in high school the idea of playing in college became more real to me, and the recruiting process began to take shape," said Lommen. His college decision would ultimately come down to taking a preferred walk-on position at Boston College or pursue a post-graduate year opportunity at a prep school. He chose Boston College.

After spending two years on the sidelines at Boston College, Lommen considered transferring. "I wanted to find a place where I felt like part of a team again, somewhere where I could get a chance to get back on the field, and somewhere where I would be challenged academically," said Lommen. Out of high school, several NESCAC schools showed interest in him. Naturally, when Lommen first thought about transferring, he reached out to former high school teammate Steven Kiesel '15. "When I called Steven, he told me he thought I would really fit in at Williams, and after talking to the coaches I decided to come out for a visit," said Lommen. After visiting the

Purple Valley and interacting with the current players, Lommen transferred to Williams. "I really appreciated the pride that the Williams football players took in truly embodying the term "student-athlete," which was sometimes muddled at the Division I level. Since making the change, I'm absolutely sure it has been the right choice, and I'm extremely thankful to be here," he said.

Lommen earned the starting quarterback role in his inaugural season as an Eph. The 2014 season kicked off with a week one, 36-0 victory over Bowdoin in the first game played on the newly constructed Farley-Lamb Field. Lommen connected on 18-27 passes for 184 yards and a touchdown in the game.

The Ephs could not build on the initial success, as they would win only one of their remaining seven games. Lommen finished the season 157-256 (61.3 %) for 1,495 yards with seven touchdown passes and nine interceptions. Despite a disappointing won-loss record, Williams was only a few breaks away from a winning season. Four of the Ephs' six losses were by eight or less points. In addition, injuries hindered the Ephs on both sides of the ball. Those players are now healthy and the Ephs start the 2015 season with more depth on the offensive line, defensive line, and at tight end.

Lommen looks to improve upon the 2014 season and help Williams achieve the ultimate goal of winning the NESCAC. "Austin possesses natural leadership qualities. He is the true definition of student-athlete on and off the field and when your quarterback can lead by example, the team tends to follow," said quarterbacks Coach Kijuan Ware.

Coming from a Division I football team to a small Division III academics-driven institution has been an adjustment. Football-wise, Division I athletes possess more physical gifts than their Division III counterparts. "The biggest difference is obviously the speed, size, and strength of the competition. However, I've been really thrilled to be surrounded by guys that are equally passionate about the game here at Williams," said Lommen.

Lommen's biggest adjustment was the step up in academic rigor at Williams. "Classes here push you to have original thoughts and think outside the box, and though I've really enjoyed being pushed, it was certainly a challenge to come in the fall and get used to a new school, new environment, new teammates, and a new way to think – all at once," he said. Lommen is an Economics major and a Leadership Studies concentrator. "This past year I've become particularly interested in policy issues, which I plan to continue studying this fall in 'Behavioral Economics and Public Policy,' and in a tutorial called 'Wealth in America,'" he said. After graduation, he hopes to find a job in investment banking.

Lommen describes himself as a pro-style quarterback. "I can run enough to keep the defense honest, but I am definitely a pass-first quarterback," he said. A good portion of his job occurs before the ball is even snapped. The quarterback must make sure the right personnel is in the huddle, evaluate the defensive alignment, either confirm or change the play, and then snap the ball and execute the play. "[Austin] has come in and been an impact and leader on and off the field," noted Eph head coach Aaron Kelton. "He accepted his role and fought everyday to get in the position he is in. He is a true student of the game and a good communicator. He is a competitor and loves and believes in his teammates." 🐾



Q + A

FAVORITES

FOOD	Steak
TV SHOW	Friends
CARTOON	Tom & Jerry
BOOK	Excellent Sheep by William Deresiewicz
ACTOR	Denzel Washington
WILLIAMS PROFESSOR	Satyan Devadoss
PRO ATHLETE	Peyton Manning
SPORT OTHER THAN FOOTBALL	Baseball
NFL TEAM	Minnesota Vikings