



Williams senior Alex Brandeis got into Williams because he brought authentic southern fried chicken for the coaching staff on his official recruiting visit. Well, truth be told, that's not the only reason why the cornerback has been wrapping up opponents in the most ferocious of ways for the past three years in the Purple Valley. For Brandeis, his journey to Williams began when he was turning coaches' heads at the Boston College and Brown football camps as a high school stud out of Roswell, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta. He quickly caught the eye of Ephs' former secondary coach, Aaron McGinty, who is also from the Atlanta area. Coach McGinty was the reason Brandeis brought fried chicken up to Williamstown on his visit as it was the treat McGinty missed the most about the south. If Williams and Brandeis hadn't clicked, it would have been a shame. The Ephs would then be missing their leading tackler from a year ago and one of the top cornerbacks in the conference.

It is tradition to start playing football as a toddler in the deep south. For Brandeis, his tackle football career began at age five, but the first time he stepped on the gridiron was a year before that. "I started playing flag football at the age of four. When I kept tackling the players and then ripping their flags off, my father and mother decided it was time to move me to tackle football,"

A Nose for the Football

Brandeis commented. Brandeis once told his mother at a young age, "Scoring a touchdown is great and all, but hitting other people as hard as I can is what I really like!" One thing is for certain, Brandeis has not stopped hitting hard since he got to Williamstown in the autumn of 2013. Even though head coach Mark Raymond has only been in Williamstown since March, Brandeis immediately made a name for himself. "Alex is the type of guy who will make an instant impression on you. He's a hard worker and a great student. Additionally, he's done a great job of being a leader," Raymond noted.

Brandeis is evidently an exceptional individual, however he credits a lot of his success to his parents who have been there with him since day one. "One thing I would like to mention and highlight is how supportive and incredible my parents were throughout my entire football career. They have never missed one of my games, ever. From 4 to 22, they have never missed a single one. For the past three years (and of course this upcoming year), they rent a house up here for the season and help out with the Purple People Feeders, go to the Sideline Quarterback Club meetings, and sometimes go to practices. So, I would just like to thank them for their amazing support throughout the years, and I am so grateful to have parents like them. I would not be here at this great institution if it wasn't for them," praised Brandeis.

In discussing his parents support and guidance, Brandeis noted his father taught him how to tackle. "Personally, I consider my ability to tackle in the open field to be my best attribute as a defensive player. As a free safety I have to tackle a wide receiver or a running back one-on-one in the open field multiple times a game. Last year, I led the team in tackles and tied the school record for the most solo tackles in a season. I owe my tackling ability to my father. When I was younger, I was always undersized, and so my father taught me to tackle low, and

hit the legs or waist. He would tell me over and over again, 'They can't run without their legs!' So after years of practicing and hitting low, I became a defensive tackling machine, which has carried over into college," observed Brandeis. While Brandeis hopes to improve his production from last year, merely repeating his 2015 statistics would please his teammates and coaches. Brandeis believes the team as a whole can, and will be different this year. He claims, "A major strength of this team is our heart. I wholeheartedly believe that a major part of this game deals with heart, and having a fiery passion for the game of football. Heart also involves believing in yourself and the guy next to you, no matter what the circumstances. This team, and especially the seniors, have been through some tough times these past three years, but not once did we lose our passion for the game nor our desire to win. This year we have more heart than ever and are ready to play the game we love." In addition to the surplus of fortitude this year's squad possesses, new Ephs head coach, Mark Raymond, has already inspired Brandeis without having coached a single game for Williams yet. "What I am looking forward to most about playing for Coach Raymond is the high standard he has set and holds us to each and every day. One thing we struggled with last year was a lack of discipline and mental toughness, and Coach Ray has addressed these and brought a new standard of Williams football with him. He has showed us how special the Williams football tradition is, and how we should act as both players and men. Likewise, this new standard is also something I believe will help get Williams football back to its successful ways. Coach Raymond's standard pushes us and breeds excellence on the field. Discipline, toughness, effort, enthusiasm, accountability and a respect for your teammates are the foundations on which Coach Raymond has built this 2016 team," Brandeis noted.