

HighSchools

Woodinville defense chokes foes with power of 'Dark Side'

FOOTBALL | Woodinville faces Richland Saturday for the 4A state title.

By **MATT MASSEY** / *Special to The Seattle Times*

They always make sure they've got each other's back.

They're a Band of Brothers.

Their bond has been a big reason that the Falcons' defense has soared to nearly un-touchable heights. The link in the chain has been strongest with the front four of the Woodinville football team's defense, nicknamed "The Dark Side."

The dominant defensive line is a big reason the Falcons take a 13-0 record and 8.8 points-per-game-allowed average into the Class 4A state-championship game against Richland (13-0) on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in the Tacoma Dome.

"They've done a great job versus the run and the pass," said Woodinville coach Wayne Maxwell, who is also the team's defensive coordinator, leading a defense that has three shutouts. "It makes everybody's job behind them much easier. We have a nice look of different bodies up front that can be pretty difficult to match up with and block and stay blocked."

Comprising the primary front four for much of the season — after a couple of



TONY OVERMAN / THE OLYMPIAN

Woodinville defenders Seth Pregler (left) and Nash Fouch force a fumble from Sumner running back Alex Fraser during the 4A state football semifinal in Puyallup.

changes during the season — are senior defensive ends Jake Baillie and Ben Pryor and defensive tackles Quinn Schreyer, a senior, and Dylan Lewis, a junior.

The front four has also included Myles Walker (knee) and Jared Eisenbarth (broken left fibula), both of whom were injured during their senior seasons.

The feared foursome just digs in and does the dirty work. Not one needs credit individually, preferring to take credit as a group.

"Every sack is a team sack for us," Baillie said.

The Woodinville defense has registered 45

sacks, 23 interceptions and combined with special teams for 13 fumble recoveries. The Falcons are coming off a 10-0 shutout of a high-scoring Sumner team in the Class 4A state semifinals.

"They're a machine running well, and Maxwell does a great job getting them ready," said Eisenbarth, who will primarily play offense after returning from an injury that occurred in Week 5 just 1 yard away from a touchdown.

Eisenbarth came back last week at the H-back position and played about half the team's snaps after eight weeks of recovery

from the broken bone in his left leg.

Up front in the team's 4-3 scheme, Schreyer and Baillie lead the way, combining for an eye-popping 32½ sacks. Schreyer, a 6-foot-2, 215 pounder, set a season school record with 16½ sacks with Baillie, a 6-foot, 220 pounder, right behind with 16. Baillie was named KingCo 4A Most Valuable Player on defense. Schreyer leads the team with 59 tackles heading into Saturday's final.

"We try not to focus on it, because we're trying to play for the team and get the win," Baillie said of the sacks race with Schreyer. "A lot of the sacks we both make are because of the other guy. I really don't need to talk to him that much on the field."

"We just kind of look at each other and know what we want to do."

Said Schreyer: "It's a friendly competition. It's nothing bad. But definitely we help each other strive to get more."

Lewis (6-2, 245) and Pryor (6-3, 205) have meshed well with Schreyer and Baillie, giving the Falcons an athletic mix on the defensive front. "When one guy gets a sack, it's great to see how they celebrate with one another," Eisenbarth said. "They're just so happy for each other. There's not selfishness on that defense."

The group of defensive linemen spend a lot of time together outside football.

"Football has brought us very close," Baillie said. "As a D-line, we almost do everything together. We spend a lot of time with each other, and football is definitely a big part of that. Our big thing, it's pretty funny, we go on Xbox and play Snipers against each other. We just try and hang out every week."

Schreyer thinks the off-the-field bond helps on the field. "We're all just very close," he said. "We hang out all the time, and that definitely helps with like just how we play."