

Atwater switches to defense for Coe

Written by Christine Ebekebrede
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Linn-Mar graduate Mark Atwater, the backup quarterback the past two years at Coe, has switched to being part of the defensive team as a linebacker this season.

Atwater suffered from a concussion his freshman year and tore the PCL ligament in his knee as a sophomore. He is back in good health, but said he made the switch to defense partially because of his injury problems.

“I wanted to play as much as I could,” he said.

Atwater's first chance to play defense for the Kohawks will come Saturday in their season opener at Wheaton College.

Atwater, a physical education major, loves football and wants to make it his career after his playing days are done. “(I want to) get in the coaching world and basically see how high I can get and hopefully be a D1 coach some day,” he said.

Atwater picked Coe because of his family. His father, Larry, and older brother, Jordan, are both coaches for the Kohawks. Larry Atwater is the defensive coordinator and Jordan Atwater is the new defensive backfield coach following his own career at Coe, so all three Atwaters are on the defensive side of the ball.

“(It’s a) lot of fun for all of us,” Mark Atwater said. “We hang out every day and do what we love.

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It's a great experience for our whole entire family."

Larry Atwater described the coaching dynamic between himself and Jordan as a peer-to-peer relationship, not a hierarchy. He said it is nice to be related because "you share more with him behind closed doors," giving them an opportunity to talk about the team during the off-hours.

The Kohawks expect to have another good team this year.

"I have high hopes," said Mark Atwater, who starred as a quarterback and linebacker at Linn-Mar. "I think we have a really good team and our defense is very good."