

# DAVID LEE:

## STRIKING FEAR INTO QUARTERBACKS ACROSS THE NATION

By: Todd Devlin

Having participated in three of them already, David Lee is no stranger to Homecoming games at Western. But the senior defensive end says the special game never loses its appeal.

"It's a game that you look forward to for the atmosphere," said Lee, whose first homecoming experience came in 2008, his rookie season. "It's usually packed, and the stadium is electric. To be able to play in that environment is quite a treat."

In fact, Homecoming is doubly special for Lee, a London native who grew up rooting for the Mustangs. And the fact that many of the former players that Lee once cheered for will be on hand at TD Waterhouse Stadium on Saturday has the fourth-year player excited.

"Their eyes are going to be on you, and it's your chance to keep the tradition going and to make your mark on the school," he said. "There's nothing like that."

Lee hopes to show the alumni just how far he has come as a defensive end. Now in his third season at the position following a switch from linebacker, the 21-year-old not only feels right at home on the defensive line, but he has emerged as an anchor on defense for the Mustangs.

"When we recruited him, we always thought that if linebacker didn't work out, he'd have the frame to become a real good defensive end," said Mike Circelli, the Mustangs' Defensive Line coach. "He had the mentality, and he had the speed -- which is probably his best attribute."

But even Circelli has been impressed with Lee's development over the last two

years. The coach credits the youngster's dedicated efforts to spending more time in the weight room and more time watching game film.

"He's bulked up from about 225 pounds to around 255, and he's able to run with the extra weight at the same pace," Circelli said. "For a big man now, he runs really, really well. And his overall game has improved [from watching more film] because his reads are so much better."

Lee says he is definitely seeing results from his extra work off the field.

"I'm watching it translate onto the field right now," he said. "I get up there, I prep, and I see what the other teams are doing. It's making this season a whole lot easier knowing my stuff."

Lee's 2011 season got off to a blistering start. In Western's home-opener against



Waterloo, he recorded a sack on the first possession of the game. It pinned the Warriors deep in their own end and led to a safety for the Mustangs' first points of the year. He later added two more sacks during Western's 86-22 lopsided win.

Two weeks later, in a rematch of the 2010 Yates Cup, Lee had a team-high six tackles and forced a key fumble late in the third quarter against the Ottawa Gee Gees, which led to a Western touchdown and a three-score advantage. Heading into Saturday's homecoming affair against the York Lions, the senior has a team-best four sacks and 18 total tackles, which ranks second on the squad.

"It's definitely been a quicker start than last year, which I've been pleased with," Lee said. "I already passed my sack count [from

2010], and my tackles are getting up there too."

He does have some statistical goals in the back of his mind -- reaching double digits in sacks and finishing top 10 in the CIS in tackles, for example. But the numbers, he says, are not how he grades himself.

"It's how I feel at the end of the game," he said. "If I'm extremely tired and I come off the field with not an extra ounce of energy, that's how I measure myself. Because that's the one thing I can control -- how hard I work."

He'll certainly be working hard on Saturday afternoon at Homecoming, as the Mustangs look to improve to 5-0 this season. And, of course, he'll be looking to impress the alumni in the stands. Perhaps Lee will pull off another multiple-sack performance like the season-opener?

"If I could get another three sacks," he said, "that would make my day."

