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West Virginia

Jay Henry
Jenks Alumni



Jay Henry
Jenks Alumni

2006 Football All American - Defense

Mr. Moxie

By John Antonik for MSNsportsNET.com
August 7, 2006

ANTOWN, W.Va. — When Dan Mozes and Jay Henry were freshmen it took Mozes only a few minutes of playing Madden all with Henry to realize that he was a dealing with someone who was a little smarter than you're average bear (that's a reference to Yogi Bear

of you younger than 30). As it turns out Jay Henry is a whole lot smarter than your average bear.

I would recall all these mind-boggling things about the game," Mozes said. "He's like 'A' 'B' 'C' third and eight and 'D' going to pass." I'm trying to hit the A and B buttons and here he is diagnosing the plays and putting all these details into what's going on.

It's that "what makes him a great player also."

Players use their exceptional speed, size and athletic ability to become outstanding football players. Then there are players like Virginia University linebacker Jay Henry that resort to other means. The old timers call it moxie.

It's what it is then Jay Henry has got moxie coming out the ying-yang.

college students are happy to bring home a few As on their report card at the end of the term. Jay has never come home with one -- ever. Think about this for a moment: Jay Henry has had all As since he began receiving letter grades back in the

figure on four report cards a year (adding summer school in college) that's 52 straight all-A report cards. That makes Joe DiMaggio of grade-getters. Henry does admit to bringing home a few minuses in the conduct box every once in a while, but it's a little.

talked too much in school," he shrugged.

It's difficult not to talk a lot in class when you know just as much as your seventh grade math teacher.

On his straight-A streak, Henry says he has had two close calls in college. One was a corporate finance class and the other was an African-American studies course. You can give Henry a pass on African-American studies considering he grew up in Jenks, Oklahoma. It's hard to recall Malcolm X or Martin Luther King making any speeches there.

Corporate finance ... come on Jay, buckle down and get serious about this college thing.

Joe DiMaggio-educated Joe Theisman of NFL and ESPN fame refers to people of Jay Henry's high intelligence as being smart like Albert Einstein -- relatively speaking of course.

Virginia linebacker Jay Henry is to grade-getting what Joe DiMaggio was to hitting baseballs. All-Pro Photography/Dale Spivey

Henry swears that Henry can recall in verbatim things people said two and even three years ago. He's Jerry Lucas without the point guard. Defensive coordinator Jeff Casteel jokes that he always has to keep on his toes during team meetings with his linebackers constantly glancing in Henry's direction to make sure they're on the same page.

It's not that hard, but at the same time the coaches know so much more than the players do," Henry says. "That's their job. I answer questions every day that they can answer."

Henry's intelligence is always refreshing but never to be unexpected from smart people.

Henry, the thing about smart people is that the truly smart ones are intelligent enough to know their limitations. Knowing he's a speed burner by any stretch of the imagination, Jay Henry makes no bones about the fact that a large percentage of his intelligence is from the neck up.

My intelligence (intelligence) is a higher percentage than other players because I know that's what I have to use to get onto the field. I'm not the most athletic guy out there," he says.

Virginia coach Rich Rodriguez played with perhaps the brightest player to ever put on a Mountaineer uniform in quarterback Matt Luck. Even though the two play entirely different positions, Rodriguez sees a lot of similarities between the two.

They have a similar mentality," Rodriguez said. "Matt not only was (Oliver) a great student and a great leader of the team, but he was also respected for his toughness. I remember he sprained an ankle and it was all black and blue and everybody thought he'd be out for two or three weeks and he played the next week. He was a tough, tough guy and Jay is a tough guy, too.

Sometimes people get the notion that straight-A students are not that tough but that's not the case with Jay."

Intelligence is probably the most underrated aspect of football. Height, weight, speed and athleticism are the things people usually look at when measuring ability. A player's intelligence comes way down on the list -- if at all.

There is no such thing as a dumb football player.

the day of completely dumb player is over," Rodriguez said. "Maybe there were dumb players when I was playing. If the average fan would really research and see just how much these guys have got to learn as far as offense and defense and schematics and adjustments — you have to have some semblance of intelligence to do that. It isn't just line up, see the ball and go get it, there's a lot more involved to it."

Rodriguez says technology has dramatically changed the way the game is played.

"If you look back and watch the old games on ESPN Classic from 30 years ago and see Ohio State and Michigan or Oklahoma and Nebraska, you see one formation and one defense with wide outs in a three-point stance and there's not a lot of shifting and changing and all that," said Rodriguez.

"It's not to say the coaches and the players weren't smart then but the game has advanced so much and the biggest change is technology. It's so much easier now to teach with the way film is," Rodriguez said. "After we eat, we'll go watch film. We practice all cut up in a bright room. Back then you had to tape it, go send it off and do the 16-millimeter film thing."

One tape is Jay Henry's Excalibur. He doesn't just watch it. He consumes it. Henry says he learned how to study his opponent by observing how another pretty fair linebacker named Grant Wiley used to prepare for games.

"Just seeing the way he watched film and how much it meant to him you could tell he was passionate about the game and that's a good thing," Henry said. "That's something everybody needs."

Rodriguez says Henry is smart enough to line up the entire defense in any set the defensive coaches call out. Henry admits that studying opposing plays is almost second nature to him now. Playing on the other side of the ball against Henry every day in practice, it's a challenge for that.

"I sit and talk and I'd say, 'Yeah Jay, you watched the play before so you knew what was coming.' He'd say, 'You guys only run this play a certain percentage of the time.' I'd be like, 'What?' 'I don't even know their defenses and here he is calling out all of our plays before we even run them,' Mozes said. "He'd be saying, 'Watch the zone.' And the zone is actually going there and you're like, 'Oh.'"

Every formation gives you information and it's a matter of whether or not you can pick up on it and use that information, Rodriguez explained. "Sometimes you see a guy lined up on somebody's back or lined up outside but if you don't know what it is you can't use it. You've got to be able to notice and use it."

Consequently, intelligence can turn someone that might be a step slow into a player that is two steps faster. That millisecond that it takes to process things makes Jay Henry as fast as any linebacker in college football.

That's what Casteel was talking about that the other day: "If you run a 4.9 you can get there in 4.6 if you know what you're expecting. You know what to expect out of formations." It's a huge advantage," Henry said.

Rodriguez says intelligence can be a great equalizer on the football field.

"You've got to have something that will give you an edge whether it's the understanding of the game — intelligence or speed or power."

And timers ... they call it moxie.



By: BlueGoldNews.com

Date: March 27, 2006

Linebacker Jay Henry of West Virginia is one of the 42 top defensive players in the nation who have been named to the Lott Trophy Watch List, it was announced today.

Named after Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott, The Lott Trophy is awarded to college football's Defensive IMPACT Player of the Year. Now in its third year, The Lott Trophy is the first college football award to equally recognize athletic performance and personal character attributes of the player.

225-pound senior, Henry is an academic All-American who carries a 4.0 grade point average. He had 62 tackles and forced 10 fumbles for the Mountaineers last season.

ponsored by The Pacific Club IMPACT Foundation, the award is given to a player who exhibits the same characteristics Lott em
g his distinguished career: Integrity, Maturity, Performance, Academics, Community and Tenacity.

s for the award include selected members of the national media, previous finalists, the Board of Directors of the Pacific Clu
CT Foundation and Master Coaches, a distinguished group of former head college coaches.

inner will be announced at a gala black-tie banquet at The Pacific Club Dec. 10.



West Virginia didn't ignore Jenks standout

By JOHN KLEIN Tulsa World Senior Sports Columnist
1/7/2006

e football recruiters just weren't listening to Jenks coach Allan Trimble four years ago.

e was talking. The college recruiters were nodding their heads. For some reason, the information just wasn't getting thro

lse do you explain Jay Henry and Garrett Mills?

ory of Mills, a virtually unrecruited high school star who became a college All-American, is well documented in the revival
football.

enry's story, of an ignored 200-pound high school linebacker to starter on the Sugar Bowl champions, is just as compelling

enry is a great story because he is just a super kid," said Trimble.

was the story Trimble tried to tell recruiters four years ago. Recruiters said Henry, an all-state linebacker, was too small.

uy was listening.

Virginia assistant Todd Graham, who spent the last three years as TU's defensive coordinator and was named Rice head c
r this week, thought Henry might be perfect for the Mountaineers.

Virginia needed linebackers and Graham thought Henry might blossom into a starter.

nd up at West Virginia because it was the only school that offered me a scholarship,"

enry. "To be honest, I'm so happy it worked out this way. I love the school and the people here in the state. It is a small
everybody knows everybody. They are so friendly."

he's a full Mountaineer, a starter on a team that played in the Bowl Championship Series.

Also tied to the state and its people, no small fact as the nation mourns 12 miners lost in an accident in West Virginia this

e of us knew about (the missing miners) right before the Sugar Bowl game," said Henry. "I heard it from a friend on the p
as getting on the bus to go to the game.

When I heard this week that they had died it really hit me. It'll be a big impact on everyone in that state. Everyone in West Virginia has some kind of ties to the mining industry. I'm sure when I get back at school (on Sunday) it is going to be a huge deal."

Henry has become the kind of player and student that Trimble promised.

After a redshirt season and two years as a backup, Henry became the starter at inside linebacker this season.

Trimble had promised, a solid player and citizen, became one of the leaders on a team that went unbeaten in the Big East Conference. The Mountaineers are the first team to go unbeaten in the Big East since Miami in 2003.

In the Sugar Bowl, West Virginia pulled off one of the bigger surprises of the bowl season by upsetting Georgia, the SEC champion.

"I hope things will all work out," said Henry, who was in Tulsa for a few days this week. "I couldn't be happier.

Henry has won three Big East championships. I've been able to play in some really big games. The Sugar Bowl against Georgia was a great experience."

Happy as Henry is at his luck of landing at West Virginia, imagine the joy of the Mountaineers. They not only landed a good player but an outstanding leader.

Henry maintains a 4.0 GPA with a double major of finance and accounting.

Henry was recently named to the Academic All-America team, along with Mills, his former high school teammate.

"I haven't made a B since he's been here and it's not even been close," said West Virginia coach Rich Rodriguez.

Henry is the epitome of what you want in a student-athlete both on and off the field."

On the field he's a solid contributor. He had 58 tackles with 5.5 for losses and two quarterback sacks this season.

Henry has grown into a 225-pounder but is still considered undersized.

It doesn't matter. He's what coaches love -- a playmaker. He has a way of finding the ball and being disruptive.

Henry is no different than his high school career. In two seasons (he sustained a knee injury as a sophomore), Henry had 217 tackles and 13 quarterback sacks. He was a defensive leader on teams that went 40-1.

"I had a lot of guys recruited off those teams in Jenks," said Henry. "I'm just so excited about the way things worked out. I got to West Virginia and play.

Nothing has been kind of icing on the cake for me."

The Mountaineers could say the same of their luck in finding Henry.



LB Henry emerging as leader of WVU defense

Beckley Register-Herald

September 18, 2005
By Dave Morrison
Sports Editor

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — For Jay Henry, Saturday's 31-19 win over Maryland was personal.

The 6-foot-2, 225-pound junior couldn't clear his head from his last trip to Byrd Stadium without leaving with a win and a better performance against the Terps.

"It felt like I got manhandled a little bit," Henry said of his first visit to College Park in 2003.

"My ankle (Wiley) cramped up and I ended up playing 35 to 40 snaps. I wasn't in game shape because I wasn't used to playing in a rough game for me. It left a bad taste in my mouth.

"I wanted to get that out of my head, that last performance here."

Henry accomplished.

Henry led West Virginia (3-0) with six tackles, 2.5 tackles for a loss of 12 yards, a sack and a fumble recovery with a 14-yard return.

Henry has emerged as a leader on WVU's staunch defense.

"He's a guy who has been around the defense for really the last three years," defensive coordinator Jeff Casteel said.

"I'm getting the opportunity to play more football than he's played. He's always been a good player. He had an outstanding game today. He's a student of the game. And we're really proud of the way he's stepped up the first three weeks."

After a sack, Henry showed off his speed by blowing by a hapless running back and blowing up quarterback Sam Hollenbach for a 14-yard loss.

"That's just something we work on," Henry said. "You don't want to run in there and get cut. You want to try to make a miss. It's good to get on the quarterback like that."

Henry stopped the Terps on key third-down plays.

"I'm not that we knew what was coming," said Henry, who was asked that question. "We had certain line movements and our assignment changes. You have to go out there and fill it up, and hopefully it opens for you. Today it did."

Henry was a shade from breaking a fumble recovery for a score late in the game.

"That's something we stress, scoop and score, scoop and score," Henry said. "I had to wear a knee brace the whole game because I twisted my knee up in the first quarter. I'll blame it on that."

Henry is the team's leading tackler with 20 stops for the Mountaineers, who will lose their spot as the nation's top overall tackler but likely will still lead the nation in rush defense.

The Mountaineers (3-0) held Maryland to just 50 yards rushing on 29 attempts (1.7 per carry), and for the year, WVU has given up an average of just 48.7 yards per game on the ground.

"That's not something that we discuss in great detail," Casteel said of the ranking. "There's pride in it, but it's not something that we harp on with the kids or harp on as coaches. It's more about preparing for the next opponent."

"He only played two games coming in and one was against a I-AA team, so we didn't put much thought into that," Casteel said. "It wasn't a big thing for us."

... performance against Maryland was.

... "Just going out there and doing what you're coached to do," Henry said. "That's what we try to do every game. Make plays and do what we're coached to do."

... can't argue with the success.

... ally, the last time WVU was ranked No. 1 in the nation in defense was 1997, the last time a WVU team won at Maryland by a 14-10 win.



April 8, 2005

Jay Henry: A Success On & Off The Field

Jim Laise

WVSports.com Senior Writer

MOUNTAIN--As if Jay Henry didn't have enough to worry about, there's this "grade" thing too.

... , a 6-foot-2, 233-pound linebacker, is focusing on a seemingly new position this year. After lettering two seasons mostly at the spot for defensive coordinator Jeff Casteel's 3-5 odd-stack defense, it appears that the Tulsa, Okla., resident is being handed the middle duties this spring, replacing former two-year starter Adam Lehnortt.

... ng spots are set only in chalk in the spring of course, but the Big East Scholar Athlete is receiving the lion's share of looks in the backfield thus far after eight practices, and will be with the "1s" Saturday when WVU's football team undergoes its second official scrimmage of April.

... ch, not only does he find himself in the middle of the action, taking on centers and guards in the briar-patch, so to speak, he must relay Casteel's defensive signals to his teammates and make sure the defenders are in the right space.

... has prepped well for the spot, having practiced at all three linebacking positions for the three years he has been a Mountaineer. Most of his playing time has been spent on the edge.

... t only is Henry learning about the speed of BCS football as a potential starter, he is fighting with Gold and Blue center Jermaine Beal and potential star guard John Bradshaw in practice, among others. Hines and Bradshaw are currently running with the No. 1 defense.

... ong with hoping to become the starter on the Labor Day weekend, when Henry's Mountaineers travel to the Carrier Dome for an opening game with Syracuse, dealing with veteran Hines, and the budding Bradshaw and potential Orange interior linemen, Henry's father from Oklahoma is concerned about his studies as well.

... erned" in a relative sense. For while some of his teammates are fighting to keep their heads afloat academically, Henry is focused on one course, and what most worries him is that he might make a B.

... ee Jay Henry, every mother's dream son-in-law, has made nothing but As . . . since he was in first grade back in Oklahoma.

...n't made one yet," said the Mountaineer linebacker with a smile earlier this week following ...am's first full-scale scrimmage of the spring, "but there's always that first one. I'm worried about a finance course right now ...s right, all As since he started school," said Henry's mother and chief proponent back in Tulsa, Judy, better known as Jen ...e West Virginia Sports Dot Com message board. "I keep telling him 'Now, Jay, eventually, you're going to make a B. Soon ... you will. The courses get tougher you ...y year, there's one course that makes it tough. But all that does is make him work harder, and he always finds a way to p ... the end."

...is every reason to believe that the 21-year-old who was the 2004 team's leading tackling non-starter while playing about ... a game in the Big East championship-sharing season will do so again--on and off the field.

...u had a bunch of Jay Henrys," said his position coach Casteel, "you wouldn't have anything to worry about."

...played three seasons for one of the nation's most bally-hooed high-school football programs at Jenks (Okla.) High School ... gendary Allan Trimble. During the time that Henry occupied the linebacker position for the Trojans, Trimble's teams won t ... Class 6A (largest) state championships, losing just one of 41 games.

...s named to every all-state team imaginable and he and his squad were honored in tuxedos his senior season at the Jim T ... s when former Oklahoma defensive back Roy Williams (now with the Dallas Cowboys) nabbed the hardware as the nation ... sive back.

...was recruited hard by hometown Tulsa, but then Mountaineer co-defensive coordinator Todd Graham had ties to the tale ... r state, and won the battle for the services of the team's MVP. Jay matriculated to Morgantown where he won the 2002 D ... tten Award, emblematic of the scout team's top defensive rookie his redshirt season.

...l under the spell of ultimate linebacking All-American Grant Wiley, which was a boost for what was to come. Graham, by t ... left the WVU staff the following year to go to Tulsa, ironically enough.

...in 2003 that Henry said he spent his most practice time in the middle behind Ben Collins and Lehnortt. Yet when it came ... g time on the field, it was mostly behind Wiley that he got his snaps. Playing behind an All-American meant little time on ... et Henry still played in all 13 games, coming up with 38 total tackles and one for a loss.

...season, Henry backed up each of the three starting linebackers, played in 11 games, and ripped off 39 tackles, 21 of which ... He also recorded 2 tackles for losses, 1 sack and 1 fumble recovery.

...has made Henry valuable, said Casteel, is that he can play all the positions and play them well. Too, he can translate wha ... sive coordinator calls "book smarts" onto the field.

...of guys as intelligent as Jay can't always translate it over to the field of play, but Jay can," ... ne coach. "Some guys are smart off the field, but not on it. Really, Jay has both."

...-time Big East All-Academic, Casteel said it is Henry's brains that make him one of the Mountaineers' steadiest players.

...g fit into the position this spring, Henry said Monday that he is becoming more comfortable "with the speed of the game. ... can feel myself reacting without thinking about it. Nobody's giving me the job, and I'm still fighting for it, but I think each ... tting used to what it takes."

...is every reason to believe that Henry, who put on 15 pounds of muscle in strength and conditioning coach Mike Barwis' o

n program, will have a breakout campaign in his junior year of eligibility. For one, he is bigger and stronger. Also, he said the in-state secondary is getting bigtime leadership out of free safety Jahmile Addae, and WVU defensive line coach Bill Kirelavich. "I think he has about seven brutes who can help keep the big uglies off Henry and the offense. I don't know if there's ever else plays 'backer for the Gold and Blue.

ing on the outside and inside have their differences. They're subtle maybe, but they're there. "On the outside, you're taking blocks from different angles. Outside, you're maybe focused on a tackle or a tight end. In the middle, it's brute strength. But I'm getting the feel of it; I'm learning what to do."

in has never been a problem for the son of Judy and Larry Henry. Playing for Jenks, he learned quickly what teamwork was. While putting in time for one of the nation's elite programs, he also bonded with a handful of Trojans who have all made it onto college football teams. Judy Henry said that Blaine Cooper (Army), Kurt Seifried (Oklahoma State) and Garnett Mills (Texas) all are excelling right along with Jay. Another teammate and close friend started for Texas as a freshman, but has since transferred to the Longhorn team due to injuries.

were really close in high school. They all hung around together and were in touch all the time--they still are," said Judy.

formed a similar bond when he came to WVU. Immediately he fell in with senior bandit-spur Mike Lorello, junior guard Dan Hines and walk-on bandit Aaron Meckstroth.

Henry saw the fraternity which had formed and purchased a house in Morgantown where all moved into in their second year. They could call it the Brain House. Rarely in Morgantown will you find this kind of academic acuity living under one roof.

is in finance, as is Lorello, a consecutive Athletic Director's Honor Roll member; Mozes is a Big East Scholar-Athlete in communications and Meckstroth, a 6-foot, 190 pounder from Huntington Spring Valley, is a biology major with aspirations of attending med school. Throw in Hines, another AD's Honor Roll student in business, economics and foreign language, and you have some multi-watt brainpower. Hines is an honorary member of the frat, since he spends time at the house. All the student-athletes' parents gather for tailgating during the season, and even throw a Thanksgiving banquet for the young men at the house each year.

are all friends just like Jay was with Blaine, Kurt and Garrett back in high school," Judy Henry said. "I mean even when they're away from each other, they're calling each other two and three times a day, just to keep up with what's going on."

Henry is a story in herself. Though she lives about 15 hours away in Tulsa, she drives roundtrip to selected games throughout the season. She likes to arrive on Fridays about an hour before head coach Rich Rodriguez takes Henry and the team to Lakeview for their pregame stay. She then heads for the parents' tailgate prior to kickoff. Afterward, she gets to see her son again on Saturday night. Then she packs up her Honda Accord early on Sunday morning and makes the long drive back.

owns her own business in Tulsa, and thus during the season calls her own shots. "Everybody knows that on Thursday evening I'll be there when I can," she said.

time, she sees little of her son except for maybe two stints per year in Oklahoma. "With football and offseason and everything, he won't get away for much. Their school is paid for during the summer and so they take advantage of it by taking classes," Mozes said.

es of which her son is obviously taking advantage. Judy expects Jay to go to graduate school at least during his fifth year in Morgantown, but after that, she's unsure. "Make a lot of money I think is what he wants," she said with a laugh. Henry once had

ed of playing in the NFL, but after what he has seen his friend Wiley go through in trying to make it into the league, now e. "The latest is, he's talked about being an agent for Mike and Dan when o," she said with a laugh.

ver his calling, you can bet when Jay Henry makes it, he will do his best. When contacted earlier this week, Jenks coach e's secretary said, "Oh, you're calling about Jay. Tell 'em we all love him out here." A sign of affection it would appear ev S.

F he can get this one finance professor at WVU to join in when finals come down the line in three weeks, Henry can keep h eated record in tact. He hopes to help the team do the same next fall.