

Featured: FAMILY MEMORIES: Clarke Central High School quarterback Lucian Anderson III, a senior, poses with his father, assistant varsity football coach Lucian Anderson Jr. in Billy Henderson Stadium on Oct. 6. Anderson III began playing football in the third grade and since the start of his high school career, has been coached by his father. "I feel like the biggest lesson (I've learned from my dad) is really just to be yourself and to give everything that you have into what you want," Anderson III said. "If (I) really believe that (I) can do it, (I) can."
Photo by Lucas Donnelly





Featured: BE THE BEST: Clarke Central High School quarterback Lucian Anderson III, a senior, stands with his father, assistant varsity football coach Lucian Anderson Jr., during the Gladiators' football practice on Sept. 26. Anderson III has been the CCHS starting quarterback for almost two years, but with college on the horizon, Anderson Jr. has not changed his expectations of his son. "The goal is the same that we've had for him since the first day of school. I'm talking about kindergarten, preschool, whatever it was, we only want him to do his very best in whatever he chooses to do," Anderson Jr. said. "If he does that, then he's gonna be fine (and) we're gonna be proud of him." Photo by Lucas Donnelly

FOOTBALL'S IN THE FAMILY

CCHS quarterback Lucian Anderson III's football journey has always been intertwined with his father, assistant varsity football coach Lucian Anderson Jr.

STORY AND LAYOUT
BY WYATT MEYER
Sports Editor

As Clarke Central High School quarterback Lucian Anderson III, a senior, looks back on his football career, there's been one person who's been with him the whole

time: his father.

Anderson III started playing football as a third grader in 2013, playing recreationally on the Classic City Cowboys in the Northeast Georgia Youth Football League.

However, assistant varsity football coach Lucian Anderson Jr. didn't initially want his son to play football.

"I wanted him to want to play, (to) show me that he wanted to play for himself and work at it," Anderson Jr. said.

"(I told him), 'Show me (football) is something that you want to do, and then you (can) go out there.'"

Anderson III's football journey wasn't linear, as he took a couple of years away from the game before returning to it in his eighth-grade year. As soon as

his son decided to come back to football, Anderson Jr. knew he was serious about the game.

"I would always tell him if he does his part,

then we'll do our part. It starts with him," Anderson Jr. said. "Seeing him practice with the school and then go and take away his free time to go get extra training (and) extra practicing in, says that, 'Okay, if you're willing to do that, then we're willing to take you wherever you want to go.'"

During this time, Anderson III was attending school at Prince Avenue Christian School, but he made the switch to CCHS before his sophomore year in high

school to further his footballing development.

"I wanted to play football on one of the highest levels that you can play on," Anderson III said. "I wanted to play against big-time schools

"I wanted to play against big-time schools and (play) big-time games and just get my name out there as best I could. I felt like Clarke Central was the place for me to do that."

-- LUCIAN ANDERSON III,
CCHS quarterback and senior



Above: CURRY'S COACH: Clarke Central High School assistant varsity football coach Lucian Anderson Jr. celebrates with members of the varsity football team during the Gladiators' 40-0 win over Cedar Shoals High School in the Classic City Championship on Aug. 18. CCHS middle linebacker and running back Kendrick Curry, a junior, has credited Anderson Jr. with developing his offensive game. "He has improved my stamina while (I'm) in the game to run the ball and (improved) my footwork to make cuts and get through holes," Curry said. "He has (had a big impact) and I think everyone can vouch for that." Photo by Lucas Donnelly

and (play) big-time games and just get my name out there as best as I could. I felt like Clarke Central was the place for me to do that."

Anderson III's switch to CCHS coincided with Anderson Jr. accepting an offensive assistant position on the Gladiators' coaching staff. CCHS head varsity football coach David Perno is glad the pair made the switch.

"The whole mentality of (our program) and the whole perception of the program, Lucian (Anderson III) and his father have had a tremendous influence on changing that and creating the type of environment and culture that we're looking for," Perno said.

Further to that point, CCHS middle linebacker and running back Kendrick

Curry, a junior, credits Anderson Jr. as encouraging Curry to continue playing running back after he had focused more on his defensive responsibilities as an underclassman.

"(Anderson Jr.) has improved my stamina while (I'm) staying in the game to run the ball and (improved) my footwork to make cuts and get through holes," Curry said. "It doesn't matter if it's in practice or a game, he always wants 100%."

As both Andersons have sacrificed more and more to be a part of the varsity football team, the two still try

"Lucian (Anderson III) and his father have had a tremendous influence on changing that and creating the type of environment and culture that we're looking for."

-- LUCIAN ANDERSON JR.,
CCHS assistant varsity football coach

to find time to be a family outside of football.

"(My dad) talks about football a lot, but he also talks to me just in general a lot too, and I really appreciate that," Anderson III said. "But, once you love

something like football so much, it's hard to stay away from it."

After having worked with the duo for three years, Perno sees similarities between the two that he believes will serve Anderson III well at the next level.

"They're both very structured and very disciplined in the way they go about their work, they don't take anything for granted and (are) very thorough in their details," Perno said. "They have been two shining lights in our program for the last three years."

Despite the similarities between them, Anderson Jr. wants his son to go above and beyond his achievements as a former University of Georgia wide receiver.

"I always tell him, 'Dude, to be good, you have to be better than me because I'm good,'" Anderson Jr. said. "(He has) the opportunity to be better than I could ever be as a man."

Anderson III's ability to separate his work from his family is what Anderson Jr. thinks will enable his son to succeed at the next level.

"(Coaches will) ask me, 'Well, is he a workaholic when it comes to football? Does he just put everything into it? Does he live and die (for) the game?'" Anderson Jr. said. "What I tell them is 'What I see that's gonna make Lucian great, which gives him the opportunity to be such a really, really good football player, is (that) he puts all the time in it when it's time to put all that time in, but he knows how to shut it down and get away from it.'"

As the Gladiators chase down a fourth consecutive Region 8-A title,

Curry believes that Anderson III's performances will be key to their chances.

"Lucian plays a big role on our team and is doing a great job at the quarterback spot, especially when he runs," Curry said. "(I) hope he plays great and (is) able to get a state championship ring at the end of the season."

Beyond high school, Anderson III hopes to continue his football journey in college, but until that time comes, he is focused on his final season in Athens.

"We haven't really had a checklist of things we want to try to get done before he goes to college, we just know that's a part of his development," Anderson Jr.

-- LUCIAN ANDERSON JR.,
assistant varsity football coach

said. "We just try to keep teaching him as long as he's in our house, try to just be in today, be in the moment. (Don't) look so forward to college because then you're gonna miss out on high school."

As the sun sets on Anderson III's high school career, both Andersons will look to make their final CCHS season together a special one. But, no matter if he's in high school, college or beyond, Anderson III knows that he will have his family's support to guide him.

"I feel like the biggest lesson (I've learned from my dad) is really just to be yourself and to give everything that you have into what you want," Anderson III said. "If (I) really believe that (I) can do it, (I) can." **O**

Below: FINDING FOOTBALL: Clarke Central High School quarterback Lucian Anderson III, a senior, evades Cedar Shoals High School defender during the Gladiators' 40-0 win against their crosstown rivals. Anderson III didn't always play football, only becoming fully committed to the sport in his eighth-grade year at Prince Avenue Christian School before moving to CCHS for his sophomore year in high school. "When I was playing (junior varsity) and I saw love and family with the high school team, I knew that it was going to be even better at the next level," Anderson III said. "I just knew I really wanted to be on a team at the next level." Photo by Lucas Donnelly

