

# LINE OF TRUST

JUNIOR MICHAEL ENGLISH DEVELOPS RELATIONSHIPS AND SKILLS THROUGH HIS NEW OFFENSIVE LINE POSITION

**Michael, can we talk to you real quick?**

Then sophomore Michael English walked over to his football coach, Mark Simoneau, rethinking his every move from the past two weeks.

What did he do wrong? Was the team in trouble?

"Hey, we're going to look at you playing center."

No. Way.

Used to playing left guard on the JV team, playing center on the varsity team was a huge change for English. A scary change.

This year, the football team was different in almost every aspect – their relationships, coaching styles and the team's energy. Now that the class of 2024 had graduated, it was all on the rising upperclassmen to take charge of the team. This meant mid-day and early-morning weights – even in the summer.

But for English, preparation for this season meant more than just some extra weights classes, it meant

perfecting an entirely new position and learning how to work with a new set of guys all in one summer.

As one of only three starting juniors on the offensive line, English knew that there were high expectations for him this year. The rest of the team didn't know his skill level yet, or if he could even play center. To gain their respect and trust in him as a player, English had to if not meet, exceed his teammates' expectations.

"Michael stepped into this leadership role as center. He took charge of the O-line," senior Anderson Wood said. "And now that we're 2-1, I feel so much confidence with Michael."

Throughout the summer, varsity O-line coach Jamie Fournier pushed the boys to become closer to each other. Whether it was just the "Nuclear Abominations" group chat they made, or their trip to Texas Roadhouse – where they pranked sophomore Mete Ozkan by telling everyone in the restaurant it was his birthday – and they formed unbreakable trust and chemistry that would help them

"Those experiences just made us gel together so much better," English said. "Because we're actually all friends beyond just football, I feel like I would be friends with them no matter what."

The confidence the O-line had in English carried on through the entire season. Varsity was 5-5 – winning almost double the last year's games – setting them up to win their first playoff game in six years.

The mid-day and early-morning weights in the summer, extra focus and determination during the season and the relationships they had built all year long had paid off.

In the playoff game against Lawrence, English had his hands set at the exact seams on the football that they had been all season, ready to snap it back to varsity quarterback, junior Jack Reeves, whose hands were waiting right over the ball, ready to take it and start the game.

"Down, ready, set." "Go!"



FOOTBALL PLAYERS SHARE THEIR OPINIONS ON WATCHING FILM

"I enjoy watching film on my own. I think it gives me an advantage, so that's why I like watching it." **DAVIS EAKES | 11**

"I feel like film definitely makes us a lot more confident and watching with the team definitely brings us closer, because we can realize that we all make mistakes." **LUKE BARTALOS | 12**

**STRATEGY EXPERTS**  
**9** HOURS WATCHED / WEEK  
**8** GAMES A SEASON  
**6** PRACTICES A WEEK  
**97** PLAYERS ON THE TEAM



**RUSHING IN** above Moments before kickoff, senior Bo Morrissey rushes onto the field carrying the American flag. "It was pretty cool to carry the flag since only five people got to carry it," Morrissey said. "We have a Lancer flag, and that flag gets passed down and this year it's Brady Haughton. Brady gives someone the American flag every week. You have to show some sort of leadership on the team and in the locker room." **photo by Josie Mangine**

**TOUCHDOWN CELEBRATION** above At a varsity football game against Olathe North, senior Brooks Moore celebrates with senior Chris Beikmann after he scores a touchdown. The final score was 39-14. "I was under a lot of pressure because it was the first touchdown of the game," Beikmann said. "I think the whole team was under a lot of pressure because it was an important game and we had to win." **photo by Maggie Wells**

**MAKING A BREAK** above Attempting to run the ball into the end zone, junior Jack Reeves uses senior Henry Nelson's block to get around the Seaman defense. The final score was 35-7. "I was feeling so cool," Reeves said. "I felt like I was gonna score." **photo by Maggie Wells**

**FIRST TIME TURNOVER** top Before halftime at the first game of the year, senior Brady Haughton picks off a Freestate player running a "go route". In the go route, the player faded to the side and ran toward the end zone. "That was my first interception of the year, so I was super happy, excited and I was proud of myself," Haughton said. "I knew that I would get a pick sometime in the year but not the first game." **photo by Maggie Wells**

**FNL FEELINGS** Before the Friday Night Lights scrimmages, senior Mason Schnurr cheers on the freshmen while they storm through the tunnel. "We want to make a good impact on them and kind of show them how to be good here at East," Schnurr said. "It's great to watch the middle school kids and the freshmen get to play." **photo by Emmy Barrett**



**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST MEMORABLE WIN?**  
 "The football game this year against Lawrence because we haven't won a playoff game in many years. It was a big deal and felt really good."  
**SAM RAYFIELD | 12**