

Higgins ready to explode on Glenn

A lot of games seem personal when it comes to football because of the nature of the sport, and the emotion that goes along with it.

There's no question that Friday night's Atkins and Glenn game is going to be personal for Atkins senior tight end Austin Higgins. He played for Glenn last year, but chose to transfer to Atkins because of a family situation. But he wasn't exactly allowed to exit smoothly. As a matter of fact, he's had to miss most of the season due to the situation at Glenn.

Higgins played his first game for Atkins two weeks ago when he exploded on the Reagan defense for more than 90 yards receiving and a touchdown. He also played big for the Atkins defense. I decided to talk to Austin this week to see what his thoughts were heading into the big showdown with Glenn on Friday.

He and I also talked about his days at Winston-Salem Prep, East Forsyth's Danny O'Brien, Parkland's Nick James, ECU, his top 5 players and a few other things. Austin was a little apprehensive to say some of the things he's told me off the record. But he still kept it real and shared some surprising things.

Take a look at some of the things he and I talked about on Tuesday night.

Anthony: Austin, what's going on?

Austin: Nothin.' Just chillin.'

Anthony: I hear that. You've got a big game against your former team this week. (Smiles.) What are your thoughts on that?

Austin: Just getting ready for it. I'm taking it as another game.

Anthony: (Smiles.) Is it just another game for you?

Austin: Not really. It's a little personal.

Anthony: I bet. Why did you leave Glenn?

Austin: I left Glenn because my grandfather is sick. My momma wanted me to be a little closer to home. I'm driving now. But I don't drive to school everyday. Sometimes my friends pick me up. Sometimes I'll catch the bus. But my mom wanted me closer. Besides, Atkins is my residential school. There aren't any buses that I can catch to Glenn. I used to ride to school with George Richardson last year.

Anthony: I see. But things weren't that easy for you when you wanted to leave Glenn were they? I mean, you are just getting back on the field.

Austin: Uh, they weren't really happy about me leaving. We even had to go to court about it.

Anthony: Like, real court? (Smiles.) Like, downtown?

Austin: Yeah. I have to go back Thursday (today) to see if I can play the rest of the season. They're making a big deal about it.

Anthony: I heard Glenn wanted you to play on the offensive line too.

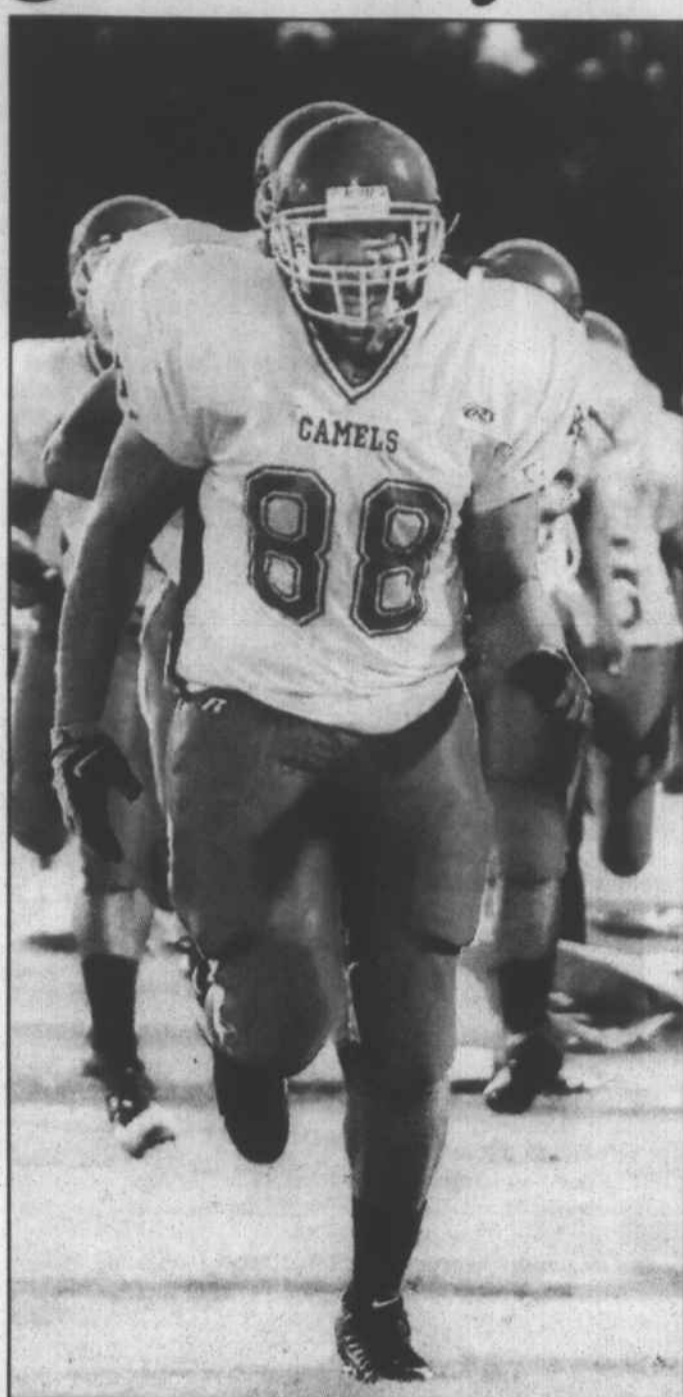
Austin: I didn't really have a problem playing on the offensive line. They think I left because coach Cline told me to play on the offensive line. But I really didn't. He asked me how I felt about playing offensive guard.

I said, "You know, coach. I play tight end. Colleges are recruiting me to play tight end. I don't really think that's a good move for me." He was giving me these stories and things. Then, he asked me what the difference was between an offensive guard and a tight end that never got the ball. I just said, "Nothing." He said exactly. That was pretty much it.

Anthony: So, you would've moved to guard?

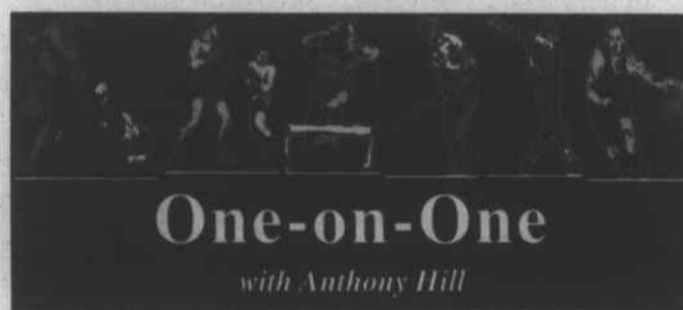
Austin: Yeah. I would've moved to guard. I wouldn't have had a choice.

Anthony: Are you



Atkins senior tight end Austin Higgins, who transferred from Glenn, is turning into a big time prospect.

Photo by Charlie Pfaff



One-on-One

with Anthony Hill

happy that you're where you are now?

Austin: Oh yeah. I'm real happy to be here. I didn't really want to go to Atkins, but it was a family decision. I had to do what my mom said. Now I'm happy to be here. I love it at Atkins.

Anthony: Are the colleges still looking at you?

Austin: Yeah, I've got a few colleges looking at me.

Anthony: Name your top three schools of interest.

Austin: East Carolina, Elon and Winston-Salem State. Winston-Salem State offered me last week.

Anthony: Your coach put you out there by saying you were the best tight end in the city last week. What did you think about that?

Austin: (Smiles.) Oh yeah. I think I am the best tight end around. I work hard. I have good hands and great feet.

Anthony: Speaking of feet. Talk about that life-changing experience that you went through at the age of 9.

Austin: I was stuck between two cars. One day my mom asked me to get something out of her trunk. My step dad usually warms the car in the morning. It was cold. My step dad's truck popped out of gear when

I was getting something out of the trunk and pinned me in between. All of my veins were dead in my leg. They thought they were going to have to amputate it. But they ended up taking my vein from my right ankle and putting it behind my right knee.

Anthony: (Smiles.) Now you have some of the best feet around. I know you're hyped about football season. But how excited are you about basketball as well?

Austin: Oh, I'm gonna have the best season yet.

Anthony: Let me ask you this. Do you sometimes wish you would've stayed at Prep and won a state championship with those boys?

Austin: Always. I miss

Prep too. I talk to coach Gould and them all the time. I wish I could've stayed there, but I wanted to play football. I planned on spending four years at Winston-Salem Prep. I've always wanted to get back on the football field, though. I figured I had a better shot at going to school to play football.

Anthony: How good can this Atkins team be?

Austin: Real good. We have a lot of good players like Joel Oglesby, Charles White. We have a lot of good players. And, we work hard.

Anthony: OK. What are you usually doing when you're not in school or balling?

Austin: I volunteer at the hospital. I work out. I'm also a Crosby Scholar. And, I go to church.

Anthony: That's what's up. Are you still doing the little Kappa thing?

Austin: (Smiles.) Yeah, I'm still doing that.

Anthony: Maybe you'll get smarter when you go to college and look at the Alphas. Let's see. How are the ladies treating Austin Higgins?

Austin: (Smiles.) Lovely, lovely. I talk to an Atkins cheerleader, though.

Anthony: That's cool. Give me a top 5 of football players in the city.

Austin: They all come from Atkins.

Anthony: Whatever, man. Keep it real.

Austin: OK. (Smiles.) The best quarterback is Danny O'Brien from East. Best linebacker doing it is Joel Oglesby. Best defensive lineman is Charles White. The best tight end has got to be Austin Higgins. My cousin from Parkland, Nick James. We used to play one-on-one in the yard. We grew up together.

Anthony: That's cool. Let's close out with free association. Uh, Big Reggie.

Austin: The best big man doing it.

Anthony: Winston-Salem Prep.

Austin: Friends.



Higgins

Anthony: Atkins.
Austin: Family.
Anthony: Cedric Williams. (Atkins quarterback)
Austin: One of the best quarterbacks doing it.
Anthony: Jeremy Peterson. (Reynolds stand-out)
Austin: Phenomenal young man.

Anthony: Austin Higgins.
Austin: Best tight end.
Anthony: 2A State Champs.
Austin: Atkins High School.
Anthony: That's what's up. (Smiles.) Good luck to you this year.

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