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Houston lineman Anderson put the 'cold' in cold calling

By Brian Hilderbrand, www.armedforcesbowl.com



Fort Worth, Texas, December 28, 2009 - As one of a dozen out-of-state players on the University of Houston roster, and the only one hailing from Alaska, offensive lineman Jaryd Anderson made the longest trek to the Lone Star State.

A second-team all-conference player at South Anchorage High School, Anderson also made arguably the most inventive one.

Anderson, who will line up against the Air Force Academy when the Cougars meet the Falcons in Thursday's **Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl** at Amon G. Carter Stadium, used some good old-fashioned self-promotion to get noticed by the Houston coaching staff.

"It's very hard to get recruited out of Alaska," Anderson said Monday after the Cougars' first practice here for the seventh annual **Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl**. "I had someone help put together a bio and a highlight film and we put it online and waited to see what happened."

What happened was that the Cougars' offensive line coach at the time, Randy Clements, saw Anderson's presentation and contacted him.

"Coach Clements called and said 'hi' and told me to come and take a look (at the program) and see what I thought," Anderson said. "I sure was not going to turn down an offer like that from a Division I school. I made my visit and they offered me a walk-on spot.

"I was a little stressed at first, being so far away from home, but I've had a blast. I have no regrets whatsoever."

Anderson, a 6-foot-4-inch, 288-pound junior, played in three games last season as Houston earned its first bowl win in 28 years. He is one of 29 Cougars to play in all 13 games this year and started four games at left guard midway through the season. He also is listed as the second-string right tackle and said he expects to play in Thursday's **Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl**.

Anderson, who did not play in the Cougars' 34-28 victory over Air Force in last year's **Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl**, said he is relishing the opportunity to play in this year's rematch - the third time the two teams have played in the past 16 months.

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"The coaches have asked me to be ready to play wherever the team needs me," Anderson said. "I'll be playing (Thursday) and it will be great to get some bowl experience.

"Air Force is a good team with a great offense and talented players on defense. We have to be prepared to play against a team like that and I think our preparations are going great."

The Cougars will practice Tuesday at 11 a.m. for the second time since arriving in Fort Worth and then selected players will visit Cook Children's Hospital at 2 p.m. Houston will hold a walk-through practice from 4-5 p.m. Wednesday in its final preparation for Thursday's 11 a.m. (CST) **Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl**.

Also on tap Wednesday for both Houston and Air Force are the **Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl** press conference (9:30 a.m.) and the **Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl** kickoff luncheon (noon). Both events will be held at the Omni Fort Worth Hotel.



Brian Hilderbrand (bgh5959@aol.com) - Brian Hilderbrand, who will be covering the **Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl** for www.armedforcesbowl.com) currently is a media consultant and freelance writer in Las Vegas after spending more than 30 years as a sports writer covering high school, collegiate and professional sports in Southern California and Nevada. He began his journalism career in 1974 -- while still in high school -- covering local sports for his hometown Placentia (Calif.) Courier. A Cal State Fullerton alumnus, in 1979 he joined the sports staff of the Anaheim Bulletin, where his beats included the California Angels and Los Angeles Rams. After a brief stint at the Orange County edition of the Los Angeles Times, he moved to Las Vegas in 1986. He covered minor-league baseball, golf, motorsports and UNLV football during a 22-year career with the Las Vegas Sun.