

Hall escaped mean streets of Chicago

Written by Jim Ecker

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Terrance Hall went through some rough times when he was living on the southwest side of Chicago a few years ago, always knowing trouble could be right around the corner.

"I've been robbed before, I've gotten in a fight before," said Hall, a fullback and linebacker for the Kennedy High School football team. "Guys tried to jump on me and rob me.

"It's rough. You have to be a little bit suspicious every time you go outside," he said Friday. "You've got to know your surroundings, know what stuff is about to happen. You have to be smart."

Hall and his family visited Cedar Rapids each summer to spend time with his cousins in the Dixon family - Herschel and Dalvin Dixon, who played football at Kennedy in recent years. Hall enjoyed those visits and liked Cedar Rapids, so he was receptive when his mother suggested they move here.

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"The city was starting to get bad," he said, reflecting on his days in Chicago. "My mom wanted to get me away from that. I told her I'd be up to going to school down here. We decided to start over."

Hall and his family moved here in 2011 for his freshman year at Kennedy, about two weeks after school had begun. He got promoted to the varsity football team last year as a sophomore and has become a key member of the team this season, helping the Cougars compile a 7-3 record and reach the second round of the Class 4A playoffs.

Kennedy will face Davenport Assumption (9-1) at Brady Street Stadium in Davenport Monday at 7 p.m.

Hall is a hard-nosed player who loves the game. He's currently playing with a cast on his right arm to protect a broken wrist, but he's determined to play and has not missed a game.

"The nice thing about Terrance, he is an unbelievable leader that has earned respect," said Kennedy Coach Tim Lewis. "He can say whatever he wants on the field and everybody listens to him.

"He's a great kid and just an unbelievable story."

Hall has carried the ball 43 times for 253 yards and three touchdowns this season, for a healthy average of 5.9 yards per carry. He's also an effective blocker for tailback Miles Moa and quarterback Derek Jacobus in Kennedy's Stack-I running attack. On defense, he has 51 tackles and two sacks.

Hall hurt his right wrist against Jefferson Oct. 4, but nobody knew the extent of the injury at first. His arm swelled up and he couldn't put pressure on it, but he continued to practice and play.

"The doctors didn't really know if it was broken or not," he said. "The put me in a pre-cast for

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two weeks. After the pre-cast, they determined it was broken."

Hall has a hard cast on his right arm now, covered by thick padding and tape that runs from his elbow and covers his right hand. He's learned how to cradle the ball with his left hand and protect it with his right so he doesn't fumble.

"At first the coaches were skeptical about me playing on offense. I played mostly defense then (after the injury happened)," he said. "But as the weeks went by, they're starting to trust me more with the ball. I'm coming out and running more.

"In practice, they say treat the ball like it's a baby. That's what I do," he said, smiling.

Hall ran 12 times for 61 yards when Kennedy defeated Prairie, 42-14, in the opening round of the Class 4A playoffs Wednesday. He enjoys getting the ball in short-yardage situations to help Kennedy keep moving the chains.

"I like it," he said. "I like contact a lot. I like to call myself 'The Bruiser' in the running-back set."

Hall has to show his right arm and all his padding to officials before each game, to make sure it's legal.

"Make sure I'm not having any brass knuckles in there," he said, laughing. "That's what the ref always says: 'You're not carrying any brass knuckles, are you?'"

Hall doesn't plan to let a broken wrist slow him down. He's too excited about playing football for Kennedy and enjoying a peaceful life after what he experienced in Chicago.

"Football is a way for me. Football and school," he said. "I'm actually pretty glad I moved out

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here. I'm glad I became a Cougar and get to play football with my new brothers out there.

"Yeah, it's pretty good," he said. "I don't regret it at all."