

A full-page photograph of Michael Roos, a Tennessee Titans offensive lineman, standing on a green football field. He is wearing a white jersey with blue accents and the number 71. He has a determined expression and is holding a white football helmet in his left hand. The background shows the field's yard lines and a clear sky.

Holding the Line

Michael Roos in the **NFL**

By Teresa Conway

Michael Roos remembers the excitement of his first playoff game at Eastern Washington University. It was unlike anything he'd experienced before. That is until the NFL came along.

"The atmosphere is just unbelievable," says Roos of his first NFL playoff appearance earlier this year. "It's insane. We were at an away game in San Diego, so fans were booing and screaming, and every play matters. It's not something where you have a bad play and you're like, 'oh well, we'll get them next drive' or 'we'll see them again.' You know if you lose, you don't see anybody again."

While that latter playoff experience with the NFL's Tennessee Titans is undoubtedly the most exciting for Roos, it's the former one as an Eastern Eagle that helped get him where he is today.

Roos was a high school basketball player when former Eastern football coach Paul Wulff spotted him. "He was really recruiting someone else from my high school football team and saw me and had the vision to turn me into an offensive lineman right away," says Roos. "I didn't know it at the time, but he saw it, took a big chance and just went with it."

Roos went on to become the highest draft choice in Eastern history when he was taken in the second round of the 2005 NFL Draft. He helped the Titans go from a 4-12 record as a rookie in 2005 to an 8-8 mark in 2006. This past season, the Titans finished 10-6 and advanced to the NFL Playoffs for the first time since 2003. Roos started his 96th-consecutive

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game when the Titans lost in the first round to San Diego on Jan. 6, 2008. In May, he signed a six-year extension on his contract with the team, making him the third-highest paid left tackle in the NFL.

Not bad for a guy who immigrated to the U.S. from Tallin, Estonia, in 1992 at the age of 10 and didn’t handle a football until he was a senior in high school.

“If I had decided not to pick up that football scholarship and maybe taken a basketball scholarship at some junior college – I’ve thought about it every now and then, and I really don’t want to know what life would have been like,” Roos says.

Roos knows he’s fortunate for the opportunities he’s had and the position he’s in. That’s why he’s returned to eastern Washington the past two years to host a fundraiser for the Michael Roos



Foundation. It supports local nonprofit organizations, including EWU’s Eagle Athletic Association, Special Olympics in Washington and Boys and Girls Clubs of Spokane County. Last year, nearly \$40,000 was raised.

It’s another achievement for a guy who’s truly worked his way to the top.

“I’m living proof that even though you’re playing in a small school, you can make it to the NFL,” says Roos. “Just keep working hard and you have a chance.” E



Titans photos courtesy Michael Roos