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Thompson becoming leader on both sides of ball for Mt. Bethel

By Jack Martin MDJ Sports Correspondent

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Mt. Bethel's Ronin Thompson brings down an Eagle's View running last Friday.

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Mt. Bethel Christian is gearing up to face its second Georgia opponent of the year, Lanier Christian Academy, on Friday.

The Eagles (5-1) are coming off a 17-6 win over Eagle's View Academy of Jacksonville, Florida, on Friday.

In Mt. Bethel's first full varsity football season, many players have helped lead the way, but one stands out.

At the center of the Eagles' success is sophomore quarterback and defensive end Ronin Thompson, a two-way standout who leads the team on both sides of the ball.

Mt. Bethel coach Micah Hughes said Thompson already has had quite a journey.

"Ronin is from Alberta, Canada," he said. "He's played football since he was little. They (his family) are very proud Native-Americans, and he grew up playing lacrosse and football. I think when he started he was more of an athlete who played a lot of different positions, then he transitioned to quarterback within the last five or so years of playing."

Hughes said Thompson became a quarterback-defensive end hybrid in hopes of getting his name out to recruiters.



“When he came over here, he was really trying to get a lot of film,” he said. “He wants to play at the next level in college, so he’s trying to get as much film as possible and he really wanted to play both ways. He plays defensive end and quarterback, which is obviously a weird combination for a lot of places, but he leads us in almost all defensive statistics.”

Thompson leads the team in several major categories, including total touchdowns (six) on offense. On defense, he leads in sacks (six), forced fumbles (five) and fumble recoveries (three).

It’s not often a player leads their team in those categories, but Hughes said it can be attributed to Thompson’s work ethic and character.

“His work ethic is tremendous,” he said. “He comes in and works so hard, and it forces the other kids around him to do the same thing. He’s not an overly vocal kid, but he really puts his head down and goes to work.”

Hughes said Thompson does what he is supposed to do, and players love to rally behind him.

“He’s a phenomenal kid and a great leader,” he said. “It just goes back to in the weightroom, on the field and in the classroom. He does what he’s supposed to do and other kids see that and fall in line with what he’s doing, and how he’s doing it. That’s

kind of how his leadership is.”

Hughes said Lanier Christian’s physicality jumps off the film for him. He pointed to the Lightning’s rushing attack as a defensive focus for Mt. Bethel.

Lanier Christian (5-1) is led by its senior running back, Ben Hargis, who has accounted for seven of the Lightning’s 11 touchdowns this season.

This game will be a big test, as it will impact playoff seeding. Hughes said nothing changes for how the team will approach this game.

“It’s a very tough test for us, and I think this is one of the better teams if not the best team we’ve played this season after watching them on film,” he said. “They have a lot of talent both offensively and defensively. I think for us we need to continue to hang our hats on defense, matching their physicality. Offensively it’s taking what they give us and capitalizing on those things to create some big plays.”

