

# Offensive line propels Bengals

Big group is the focus as Brighton makes plan to improve on 2011

By Martin Renzhofer  
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"We've got to get better."

Brighton established that as a goal after taking a 43-15 thumping from Fremont in the opening round of the 5A football playoffs last season — especially from the offensive line.

The Bengals' own offensive line, most of whom were sophomores, took responsibility for its performance and responded.

And what a response. Brighton, undefeated after two games in 2012, bludgeoned both opponents with a furious ground game that already has seen its top two backs combine for more than 400 yards and six scores.

Left tackle Jackson Barton, already committed to Utah, has drawn much of the attention, which will happen when you are a lean 6-foot-7 and 285 pounds.

But the junior is just a cog in a big, physical rotation of six players.

"He's such a big guy and the guy next to him is big, too," said Brighton junior center Tyson Aldridge. "[Opponents] don't realize all five of us are really good, too."

It was Aldridge who came off the field after the state

playoff game debacle that finished Brighton's 2011 season 5-4, and vowed to get better.

"He said, 'Coach, I've got to be in better shape next year. If I want to play like that, I need to be in better shape,'" Brighton coach Ryan Bullett remembered.

Barton, Aldridge, J. J. Mahe, Ethan Finlinson, Josh Menna and Nick Giles average 276 pounds, much to the delight of backs Uaea Masina and Oso Masina.

Of course, Bullett is also pleased.

"A lot of the kids got to play last year as sophomores and they took their lumps," he said. "This year they're a little more mature. They're getting better, a little tougher."

"I remember one game, the kids came back and said, 'Coach, two of those guys have full beards out there.' Them getting experience last year helped a lot."

Yet a summer of workouts and drills seemingly went for naught after the first half against Davis in the season opener, which Brighton eventually won 21-14.

An angry group of Bengals entered the locker room. The result was a dominating second half.

"The second half we just worked harder," Barton said. "I noticed they were working hard and we weren't. We had to push ourselves."

Next came Fremont and



**Jackson Barton** is the biggest of Brighton's offensive linemen and helped the Bengals' ground game.

a 27-0 victory. The game was a reminder of how far Brighton's line had come as each Masina brother gained more than 100 yards.

When a lineman looks up after a block and sees the back of his teammate toting the ball: "We feel like it's mission accomplished," Barton said.

So, is Brighton poised to make a run at its first 5A championship game since 2005? The Bengals last won a state title in 1982.

"We want to go far," Aldridge said. "We think we can do it."