

USF freshman QB Eveld learns on fly

Photo courtesy of USF



USF coaches have been impressed with Bobby Eveld's maturity, and the backup has passed for 121 yards and a TD.

By ADAM ADKINS | The Tampa Tribune
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TAMPA - University of South Florida quarterbacks coach **Peter Vaas** has made one thing crystal clear to freshman quarterback **Bobby Eveld**. Being a typical freshman is a luxury **Eveld** simply doesn't have.

In the usual scenario, a first-year college quarterback would be given ample time to get acclimated to the game. Coaches would be able to string him along slowly and show him the ropes. With **Eveld**, however, things are vastly different.

While the **Jesuit High** product may have walked into the program only three months ago, he is now the backup to B.J. Daniels. In other words, he is one snap away from being the Bulls' starting quarterback.

So everything in the process of learning how to be a Division I quarterback must be accelerated, including **Eveld's** mentality and that of his coaches when it comes to preparing him.

"He's got to think of himself as being an upperclassman, and we've got to think of him as being an upperclassman," Vaas said. "And as far as how you deal with him, in the back of your mind you have to understand that he is just a young kid, but at the same point in time you can't lower your expectations where he's a freshman that you can wait three years for. You have to maintain that high expectation level, that 'Hey, we've got to get it done yesterday. We can't wait until tomorrow.' "

Eveld had high hopes coming out of high school, and he had some scholarship offers from Division II and III programs. However, he believed he was capable of playing for a Division I program, and that he just needed the opportunity.

So he decided to turn down those offers — as well as a chance to play professional baseball (he was a 50th round pick by the New York Mets in June's MLB draft) — and accept a preferred walk-on spot at USF, intent on proving just that. It wasn't long before he received affirmation.

Early in camp, **Eveld** was locked in a battle with another true freshman, Jamius Gunsby, for the backup role behind Daniels. Gunsby suffered a hip injury that caused him to miss some time, and "Bobby just really took the opportunity and ran with it," **Bulls coach Skip Holtz** said. Eveld earned the No. 2 spot on the depth chart.

"I think that actually helped me a lot, just motivation," Eveld said of being a non-scholarship invitee. "All the extra hours that I put in, that was kind of the thought process that I needed to prove to everybody that I deserve a shot even though I didn't get the same scholarship as maybe some of the other players."

Coaches see plenty of upside in the 6-foot-5, 200-pounder, who has impressed not only with his skill set but also with how he has responded to everything that has been thrown at him.

"He's just a very mature, poised kid. He really is. That's very gratifying," Vaas said of **Eveld**, who has seen action in USF's first two games and has completed 10 of 15 passes for 121 yards and a touchdown. "He asks intelligent questions, and when you ask him a question, he gives a legitimate answer. He doesn't try to BS you. He'll tell you when he doesn't know, and he'll tell you what he was thinking. Thus, for a kid as young as he is, he has a very good insight and feel for what's going on on the field. I'm excited about what the future holds."

Naturally, **Eveld** is excited to be in his current situation. He can't think of a better way things could have worked out. At the same time, he's doing his best to maintain a level head and keep things in perspective.

"When people say that you're one snap away from being the starter, I don't really try to blow that way out of proportion," he said. "I just try to think of it as, it's just a game, and I have to just go out there and try to have fun if I get that opportunity."