

The Honolulu Advertiser's PREP REPORT

Iolani's York gets his man

Sack dance has taken over for the slap dance

By Stephen Tsai
Advertiser Staff Writer

Iolani School Rod York remembers his first high school dance.

It came in the football season opener last autumn.

York, a nose tackle, stalked St. Louis quarterback Mike Malava and brought him to the Aloha Stadium turf with a pad-popping takedown. York then walked to the side and did his best M.C. Hammer imitation.

It was an out-of-character act for the usually reserved York.

"A sack is the greatest feeling," said York, who is 5 feet 11 and 240 pounds. "It's like a slam dunk."

"Trying to get the quarterback play after play ... when you do get him, it gives you a spark inside. It makes you feel like dancing."

York has been cutting the turf often this season. He has 10 sacks in eight games and averages about 10 tackles per outing. Some college scouts have ranked him among the five best senior linemen in the state.

This is a remarkable development for a high school senior who could have earned a living as a professional dancer.

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When he was in the third grade, York belonged to his father's dance troupe. Rod York Sr. — known professionally as Rod Tanu — is a co-star of entertainer Al Harrington's show.

York specialized in slap dancing and Maori moves.

Two years later, York was introduced to football. It was a physical attraction.

"I love the contact," York said. "I like giving hits. I love to make somebody say, 'Oomph.'"

York was an offensive lineman until the summer of '89 when offensive coordinator Wendell Look was put in charge of the Iolani defense.

"He's a hell of an athlete," Look said. "I decided I was going to take him with me."

In football, the nose tackle is

the closest thing to a human sacrifice. Nose tackles face double and triple blocks. They are held. They are chopped at the knees.

York doesn't seem to mind.

"I like it because you're in the middle of everything," York said. "You're in a position where you can cause a lot of things. You clog the middle, you screw up blocking schemes."

"... You get people coming at you from different angles all of the time. But that's what I like. If you can fight it off, it becomes more fun."

York said he learned most of his techniques from his father.

"Mainly every Sunday he tries to put me in front of the TV and watch the pros, especially Howie Long (of the Los

Angeles Raiders)," York said. "Also my coach, Wendell Look, emphasizes those moves my dad teaches me."

York said he relies on two maneuvers — the swim and the rip. In the swim, York fakes an offensive lineman to the side and then pushes him away with a sidestroke motion. In the rip, York drives his shoulder pads against a lineman's chest and either spins around him or speeds past him.

The end result has been phenomenal. York amassed four sacks against Pac-Five, which used as many as four blockers on him. Even St. Louis, with the biggest line in the Interscholastic League of Honolulu, has resorted to double-team blocking.

"He just seems to have the moves for football," Iolani head coach Glenn Young said.

Perhaps York's most important contribution came near the end of the ILH's first round. Iolani lost its first four games and two of its senior captains to injuries.

"He was the last captain around," Look said. "He kind of picked the team up on his own. He had talks with them. He tried to bring the younger kids around. He has been the silent kind of leader for this team."

Prep Football Matchups

OIA QUARTERFINALS

By Stacy Kaneshiro

Friday at Aloha Stadium

□ Kahuku (8-0) vs. Radford (5-3), 5:45

p.m.: Radford didn't beat a team with a better than .500 record. But the Rams could have easily been unbeaten as well; their three losses — Waipahu (14-7), Millilani (21-20) and Lollehua (9-6) — were by a combined 11 points. Kahuku won most its games rather handily, but was pushed to the limit by Kaiser, Castle and Farrington.

Kahuku's obvious strength is its ground game with Mark Atuala. But keying on him leaves WR Itula Mili open. Mili, hampered by injury most of the season, is "full go," Kahuku coach Doug Semones said.

Actually, the best way to stop the Kahuku offense is to keep it off the field. The Rams will need long drives from their run-oriented

wealth among a number of backs. QB Glenn Freitas gives the Seairiders a formidable passing attack, while RBs Wade Kamaka (6.5 yards per carry) and Joseph Wigfall (9.3) provide a potent ground game.

Walanae has the best defense in the West.

Despite missing half the season because of a wrist injury, QB Gilbert Rezentos always presents a threat. He refuses to let the Surfriders die. WR John Limahai is a clutch receiver.

Kailua has the best defense in the East. Walanae's offense explodes off the line and Kailua's defense relies on quickness. Should be an interesting match.

On special teams, Walanae's Ronald Peterson is one of the best in the league on punt returns.

Walanae is healthy. RB Laramie DeSoto (thigh) is still questionable for Kailua. He didn't suit up for last week's game.

Both teams are healthy.

□ Farrington (7-1) vs. Mililani (7-1), 8 p.m.:

These two teams met in a preseason scrimmage and played "pretty even," according to Trojans' coach Sanford Kawana. But Farrington has a great size advantage over the Trojans. The Govs' offensive line averages 266 pounds. No one on Millilani's defense weighs more than 200 pounds.

Farrington's offense is led by RB Randall Okimoto, who hits his holes quickly. In the open field, he can run with anybody. Though Govs were second in total offense, they were last in the division in passing yards (506). A key for Millilani is to get the lead early and force the Govs to throw.

The Trojans, who operate out of the spread, were third in the West in total offense. QB Rich Vidal was fourth in the West in total offense. But the big yards come from SAs

the first round if it wins and Damien loses this week. Punahou, Damien and second-round winner St. Louis shared the first-round title, forcing the league to use the standings of the second round to determine the first-round positions. Iolani earned a place in the special playoff by winning three in a row. The Red Raiders are 4-0 in games in which Ryan Hoopll has started at running back. Iolani's defense also has been stubborn, holding opposing offenses to under 200 yards in each of the last two games. Despite the production of Rowney Martinez, the ILH's top rusher with 939 yards, the Monarchs have lost two in a row and three of their last four.

□ St. Louis (4-0, 8-1) vs. Pac-Five (1-3, 2-7) at 8 p.m.:

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