

The Unlikely Captain

By Ivan Maisel
ESPN.com
([Archive](#))

Updated: September 12, 2007

Appalachian State's victory at Michigan on Sept. 1 might be the biggest upset in college football this season. Then again, it may not.

Last month, the Baylor offensive and defensive players voted for their respective captains. All the Bears voted for a special teams captain. When the Baylor coaches counted the players' votes, the captain of the special teams was senior Jonathan Weeks, the deep snapper.



Rod Aydelotte, Waco Tribune-Herald

Jonathan Weeks (right) joined Brandon Whitaker and Joe Pawelek as Baylor's 2007 captains.

That's like a pinch-hitter being named MVP of the American League. Just ask Weeks.

"It was kind of a shock," he said, "just something completely unexpected."

It is true that Baylor lost All-American punter Daniel Sepulveda and placekicker Ryan Havens from last year's team. Weeks is a steady influence on freshman punter Derek Epperson and freshman placekicker Shea Brewster.

But anyone who plays special teams can be elected captain. That's why players on both sides of the ball vote. The vote reflects the respect accorded Weeks, a four-year starter whom coach Guy Morriss awarded a scholarship after his freshman season.

"I was happy for Weeks," Morriss, a former All-Pro center himself, told the Waco Tribune-Herald after the team vote, "because he's a kid that does everything you ask him to do as hard as he can."

Weeks played both ways at Mountain Ridge High in Glendale, Ariz., and won the Curley Culp Award as the state's best defensive lineman in 2003. But he knew that if he wanted to play I-A football, it wouldn't be as a lineman. As a 21-year-old senior, he is 5-10, 251.

Ben Bernard, a coach at Mountain Ridge who had sent long snapper Joe Maese to New Mexico and the Baltimore Ravens, told Weeks, "If you do what I tell you to do, you will get a college scholarship."

Weeks began long-snapping at Mountain Ridge, at home, whenever and wherever he could.

"Six days a week, 250 balls a day," Weeks said. "I did that for four years. As I have gotten older and more comfortable with it, my reps have gone down."

As a senior, Weeks said, he snaps anywhere from 75 to 125 a day, depending on the Bears' practice schedule. His average time, he said, is from .66 to .70 seconds. Anything under .80 is considered NFL-worthy.

One dream at a time.

Ivan Maisel is a senior writer for ESPN.com. Send your questions and comments to Ivan at ivan.maisel@espn3.com.