

How he fits: Third-round pick Isaac Yiadom

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
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As is often the case with cornerbacks taken after the second round, special teams represents the first area in which No. 99 overall pick Isaac Yiadom can make an on-field impact.

"He's really long and can run, and really does a nice job on the deep balls. He's physical and we think he'll be a really good special-teams player," President of Football Operations/General Manager John Elway said.

Yiadom's size and length -- a 6-foot-1 inch frame with a 75 3/4-inch wingspan -- allowed him to win more than his share of one-on-one matchups during Senior Bowl week, when he played for the North team coached by Denver's staff.

"Isaac was a guy that got better every day," Head Coach Vance Joseph said. "He certainly fits our profile at corner. We want long corners with long speed because we're a press [coverage] team."

Yiadom's 40-yard dash time of 4.52 seconds at the Combine placed him 20th among the 36 cornerbacks who ran there. But his length helps compensate for that. Only two cornerbacks drafted so far this year -- Isaiah Oliver (Atlanta, Round 2, pick No. 58) and Carlton Davis (Tampa Bay, Round 2, pick No. 63) -- boast a longer wingspan than Yiadom.

Those attributes will help him on special teams immediately, giving him a chance to be one of the team's gunners in the wake of the departures of Bennie Fowler III and Cody Latimer.

"[Yiadom] is a smart guy and he's going to be great on special teams for us as a tough tackler," Joseph said. "He definitely fits our bill at cornerback."

On defense, Yiadom finds himself in an intriguing spot, dropped into a competition for the No. 4 cornerback role with second-year players Brendan Langley and Marcus Rios. Langley, like Yiadom, was the Broncos' final pick of the draft's second day.

But after playing extensively against the Raiders in relief of the suspended Aqib Talib, Langley was deactivated for three consecutive games last December, while Rios played in each of the final five games.

The potential of each as a cornerback to become one of the Broncos' top three players in that position group will be the primary factor in determining the long-term plans for Yiadom, Langley and Rios. Special-teams proficiency could be the factor that decides which one of them gets on the field most often this year.

NFL Draft: Former Doherty High and Boston College star Isaac Yiadom awaits where he'll be selected

By Rich Gavern

Telegram.com

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Isaac Yiadom graduated with a degree in communications and wrapped up a terrific football career at Boston College in December.

Since then, he has been putting his classroom and on-field education to use, conversing with and marketing himself to highly interested teams in advance of the 2018 NFL Draft.

Yiadom, an all-state player who led Doherty High to the Division 4 state championship as a senior in 2013, is a physical cornerback and special teams standout who is projected to be drafted as early as the third round.

No matter when he hears his name called, Yiadom is eager and enthusiastic to see where he'll continue his football career.

"For a while, I was really calm, but it's just now hitting me that this is like a dream come true," Yiadom said Monday after a workout at Exceed Sports Performance & Fitness in Westboro. "So I'm excited. I just can't wait to find out where I end up."

The draft gets underway at 8 p.m. Thursday with Round 1 from AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas. That's the first of three days in which 256 players will be selected over seven rounds.

Yiadom, who will watch the draft with family and friends at his parents' home in Worcester, is predicted to be selected in the third round (99th overall) by the Denver Broncos in a mock draft by cbssports.com. He's headed to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the third round (102nd) by nfldraftscout.com.

Strangely enough, even though Yiadom is ranked 15th out of 41 cornerbacks by nfl.com, the league's website doesn't have him being drafted at all.

As for Yiadom, he has no sense of where he'll land as he seeks to become the first player from Worcester to be drafted since the Tennessee Titans took cornerback Yawin Smallwood, who also starred at Doherty, in the seventh round in 2014.

"I've talked to almost every team, which I guess that's how the process is," Yiadom said. "But nobody really tells you exactly where they want to grab you, so it's hard to tell. But I'm for whoever takes me."

Yiadom has had private workouts with the Houston Texans, New Orleans Saints, San Francisco 49ers and Titans. The Patriots got a good look at him when they ran the individual drills at Boston College's pro day last month, which included Yiadom meeting with defensive backs coach Josh Boyer for a film session.

Yiadam also got plenty of exposure at the Senior Bowl in January and the NFL Combine in February. It's been a learning experience made easier thanks to the guidance of former BC teammates Matt Milano and John Johnson, who play for the Buffalo Bills and Los Angeles Rams, respectively.

"I've had so many people help me along the way, telling me what to expect and how to go about the process," Yiadam said. "But I've had my ups, and I've had my downs. I expected to do a little bit better at the combine, but at the end of the day, everything happens for a reason.

"I mean, I did all right, but I have really high expectations for myself. But at the end of the day, we'll find out what happens."

The 6-foot-1, 190-pound Yiadam led the Eagles with 10 passes defended as a junior, and collected 53 tackles, two interceptions and an additional seven passes defended while starting all 13 games as a senior. In addition to excellent size and proven production, he has solid speed (4.52) for his position, great length and tons of toughness.

Yiadam also has extensive special teams experience, which makes him additionally attractive because it'll provide him with the opportunity to contribute as a rookie.

So there's much for the pros to like.

"Well, a lot of teams obviously like my film because I hustle to the ball and stuff like that," Yiadam said. "My special teams play has been helping me out a lot. That's something I take pride in. I'm thankful I got a chance to play so much special teams at Boston College because now it's paying off.

"Of course there is some stuff I have to work on, but it's mostly my special teams' value, my size and my physicality."

Yiadam has had plenty of communication with NFL teams over the last three-plus months. Now he's waiting for someone to take action and draft him.

Profile and Interview of Draft Target CB Isaac Yiadom

By Patrick Sheldon

Fansided

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After filling a number of holes on the offense through free agency, the focus now turns to the defense. At the moment, the Chicago Bears own seven picks in the 2018 NFL Draft. The expectation is they will spend the majority of those on defense. Isaac Yiadom, the senior defensive back from Boston College would be a great addition.

Granted, the Chicago Bears resigned Kyle Fuller, Prince Amukamara, and Marcus Cooper. However, it is still an area of need. In today's NFL, depth at cornerback is critical. The "11 personnel formation" with three wide receivers, one tight end, and a running back is by far the most prevalent. Therefore, teams need quality and depth at the cornerback position.

Isaac Yiadom would provide both. He played all four years at Boston College, though his freshman year was primarily on special teams. Each season he earned more playing time at cornerback. He started all 13 games his senior season, though he had his best game against then No. 2 ranked Clemson. He finished with eight tackles and an interception.

Yiadom is currently projected as a mid-round pick. He could be available when the Bears select twice in the fourth round. If so, he is someone that would certainly make sense for the Chicago Bears. Below we take a look at his strengths and weaknesses. We also go one on one with Yiadom to learn more about him as a player.

Now in Charge of Secondary, Isaac Yiadom Gets Shining Moment

By Michael Sullivan
Eagle Action
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Under head coach Steve Addazio, Boston College football's best NFL feeder hasn't been on the offensive line or at running back. The real success stories have been in the secondary, where draftees Justin Simmons and John Johnson have become highly effective pro safeties. This season, it appeared as if the next draftee-in-waiting would be Kamrin Moore, with Lukas Denis taking that role the following year.

But with Moore's injury, another name who has been there this whole time is getting his chance to shine in the spotlight: Isaac Yiadom. The defensive back from Worcester, Mass. has started for much of the same time as Moore, but has rarely received the same credit despite a similar output. Now, with Moore unable to accept his bid to the Senior Bowl because of a shoulder injury, Yiadom will get that chance to make a push toward the NFL.

"It gives people another chance to see who I am and how I play," Yiadom said.

This season, Yiadom has 51 tackles and two interceptions but will now be tasked with leading the man-to-man coverage against Iowa in the Pinstripe Bowl. His head coach doesn't worry about that, though.

"I think he's being recognized for his ability," Addazio said. "He's a fantastic player, really, and he's come a long way in developing."

Former Doherty High Standout Receives Prestigious Leadership Award from Boston College

By Ken Powers

This Week in Worcester

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Leadership, team dedication and a competitive spirit is what the folks at Boston College look for when they annually select the defensive back worthy of receiving the Jay McGillis Award. The honor is presented in the memory of McGillis, the Eagles' safety who passed away in 1992 from leukemia.

This year's recipient is senior Isaac "Ike" Yiadom, the former Doherty High standout who set many personal records this season while helping to lead Boston College to a 7-5 record and a berth in the New Era Pinstripe Bowl against Iowa at 5:15 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 27. The game will be played at Yankee Stadium.

"I was honored and humbled when I learned I was going to receive with the Jay McGillis Award," Yiadom said. "I was honored because the DBs that have won it before me – guys like Justin (Simmons, the 2016 recipient) and John (Johnson, the 2015 recipient) were great players here and they have gone on to be great players in the NFL. They were great people here at BC and well respected. I'm just happy to follow in their footsteps.

"I was humbled by the award because I know the background about Jay McGillis; I'm just happy that I got the chance to wear his jersey," said Yiadom, referring to the fact that the award recipient wears McGillis' No. 31 during the Eagles' game on Senior Day. "He was a great dude here. This award means so much here at BC. As a senior defensive back if you receive the Jay McGillis Award it means you fill all the characteristics of being a great player and teammate on and off the field."

Yiadom was selected to receive the McGillis Award at the conclusion of the Eagles' spring practices back in May, but the honor wasn't officially announced until Dec. 10 at the team's senior awards banquet.

Boston College coach Steve Addazio said Yiadom, like those who have won the McGillis award before him, is a very deserving recipient.

"The Jay McGillis Award is a prestigious award that our kids all recognize," Addazio said. "It's got a lot to do with being an outstanding defensive back, but it also has a lot to do with the way the recipient carries himself and demonstrates his leadership and his character. Ike has been all of the above at an A-plus level."

Sean Mulcahy, Yiadom's coach and mentor at Doherty, was thrilled – but not surprised – that his former player won such a prestigious honor.

"It didn't surprise me at all that he won the McGillis Award, and that's a huge honor, I'm really proud of him. Isaac is an unbelievable competitor and leader. He was that way with us and he carried that with him to BC," Mulcahy said. "As good as his talent was, he hated to lose; maybe even more than he liked to win. We saw that competitive spirit his first day of practice as a high school freshman. He practiced

very hard and he hated to lose any drill that we ran in practice. Isaac was a track guy, too, so he made sure he never lost a sprint.”

As for Yiadom’s leadership, Mulcahy was reminded of it this past season when Yiadom came back from Boston College to be on the sidelines when the Highlanders played St. John’s in the Central Mass. Division 3 playoffs.

“First of all, I was really impressed that as a senior in college on the one Friday night that he had all to himself during the season Isaac took the time to come home and go to a Doherty game and be on the sidelines,” Mulcahy said. “And he got involved in the game right away, too. St. John’s had scored first and there was a little bit of bickering going on as our kids were coming off the field. Isaac stepped right in and got in their faces – and one of them was his brother Paul who was a junior on the team – and told them stick with it, to keep their cool, that it’s a long game. He told them all the things you want to hear from a captain or a coach.

“Isaac jumping in like that meant a lot to the kids,” Mulcahy continued. “He is a great example for our kids. Isaac is a quality kid and a great ambassador for our school and our football program.”

Yiadom received another impressive honor earlier this week when he was officially invited to participate in the Reese’s Senior Bowl, which will be held Jan. 27 at Land-Peebles Stadium in Mobile, Ala., and televised live on the NFL Network.

“I’m very excited about being invited to the Senior Bowl,” Yiadom said. “It gives me another chance to show a lot of people who I am and how good I can play. I just want to go out there and let them see what I can do.”

Addazio believes the NFL scouts at the Senior Bowl are going to be impressed by the 6-foot-1, 195-pound Yiadom.

“Isaac has great physical size and fantastic speed; a lot of guys at the next level are recognizing that,” Addazio said. “I think he is finally being recognized for his ability. Ike’s a fantastic player and he has really come a long way.”

This season for the eagles Yiadom recorded 51 total tackles, including 32 solo stops. He was in on eight tackles (six solo) against Clemson, he intercepted two passes (one against Clemson, one against Virginia Tech) and recorded seven pass breakups, including two each against Clemson and Virginia.

His senior year at Doherty Yiadom helped lead the Highlanders to the 2013 Massachusetts Division 4 title with his rushing and receiving prowess. Yiadom carried the ball 37 times, gaining 420 yards (11.4 yards-per-carry) and scoring four touchdowns. He also had 42 catches for 940 yards (22.4 ypc) and seven touchdowns. On defense he recorded 107 tackles – seventh highest in CMass. – and intercepted two passes.

Also on the state title team for Doherty was Alfred Adarkwah who is now playing wide receiver at UMass-Amherst. Adarkwah finished the 2013 season for Doherty with 31 receptions for 586 yards (18.9 ypc) and 12 touchdowns, one more than Yiadom scored that year. Mulcahy said Yiadom and Adarkwah competed against each other every day in practice and he feels it made them both better.

“Isaac was very competitive in a good way with Alfred; they made each other better,” Mulcahy said. “They are very good friends but they were friendly competitors, too, in terms of just being good receivers who pushed each other.”

Mulcahy said he and the rest of the Doherty coaching staff knew early on that Yiadom would be able to not only play college football, but at the highest level of college football.

“We knew he was fast enough,” Mulcahy said, “but when we saw what a good football player he was overall, we knew he was definitely someone who was going to play at a pretty high level of football. He just kept getting better and better.

“We used him differently than they use him,” Mulcahy continued. “As fast as he was we used him as a strong safety so he could be up in the box to make tackles. We knew in college they would probably put him where he is now – left-side corner. It seems like BC’s opponents didn’t throw at him very often and when they did he was able to make plays. It seemed like he was getting very little action in terms of the ball coming his way.”

Yiadom said an opponent not throwing the ball in his direction was something he couldn’t control.

“I feel like they threw at me the same amount at the end of the year as they did at the beginning of the year,” Yiadom said. “For me making plays is just a matter of being around the ball when the ball is thrown. I just have to run to the ball and good things will happen. That’s what I can control.”

Mulcahy believes Yiadom’s decision to enroll at Boston College in January of 2014 instead of finishing out at Doherty has played a key role in his development as a player.

“Like a lot of Division 1 schools BC recommends to their incoming freshmen recruits that they enroll in January of the year before they are officially a freshman at the school so they have an extra half a year to get adjusted to the school and the routine of the football program,” Mulcahy said. “It’s a smart move by the colleges that are able to do it.

“Because he was enrolled at BC for that semester Isaac was able to get a whole year of spring ball in so when he competed in the fall he had already participated in those 16 practices where they install everything,” Mulcahy said. “Any kids that weren’t able to do what he did – and I don’t know how many kids in his recruiting class weren’t able to enroll in January – they’re arriving at BC in August and having to learn it all on the fly. Because of that Isaac was way ahead of some of his peers and was able to compete early. He obviously impressed them in preseason practices because they didn’t redshirt him as a freshman and he actually played a decent amount that year.”

Yiadom played in all 13 of the Eagles’ games as a freshman, mostly on special teams (127 plays) and finished with 13 tackles on the season. His first career tackle came against UMass in the first game of the year. He recorded a career-high (at the time) four tackles against Virginia Tech and also he also made two tackles against Colorado State. Yiadom also recorded two tackles that year against Penn State in the New Era Pinstripe Bowl.

Yiadom enrolling early at Boston College almost didn’t happen, however.

“In Worcester the graduation requirements state a student must take four years of English, so obviously Isaac needed to take English as a senior in order to graduate. You can’t take two as a junior which I guess you can do in some school districts,” Mulcahy said. “So it looked like he wasn’t going to get the opportunity to graduate early.”

As a Doherty student Yiadom was a member of Worcester School Superintendent Dr. Melinda Boone’s Advisory Committee.

“After one of their Advisory Committee meeting Isaac met with Dr. Boone to discuss the situation,” Mulcahy said. “He explained to her how he was going to be behind because the majority of the kids in his recruiting class were graduating early and would be up at BC in January and he’d still be here at Doherty finishing his graduation requirements.

“Dr. Boone looked into it and saw that this was going to be an obstacle for him. So, she allowed him take a college-level English course at Becker, a course that would finish in December and substitute it in for the year-long English course he would have taken at Doherty,” Mulcahy said. “Isaac left us in December. He came back for prom and graduation, but he left us as a student in December and was at BC in January.”

Addazio said BC’s recruitment of Yiadom began in earnest when he attended BC’s football camp the summer after his junior year at Doherty.

“We’re big on camp. That’s my philosophy. You get a guy in camp and you get a chance to coach the guy on the field,” Addazio said. “Film is a part of it, no doubt. But sometimes film on DBs is hard, especially in high school. What helped us was the fact his high school coach was fantastic and his program was great.

“When you work a guy out at camp you get a real sense of the guy. You can tell the intangibles as well as the skills. Then you go ahead and put him through all the DB drills and you watch him play man coverage,” Addazio said. “And you get to see how he takes to the coaching and can he translate that to the field. We saw real promise on film; we backed it up with what we felt was a good camp experience and we felt terrific about Ike from Day 1.

“At that time we were really into trying to get bigger corners and here was Ike, a tall corner who could run,” Addazio said. “He was raw, very raw, but he was tough and he could run. Isaac has developed every year. If you haven’t spent some time around Ike you should. He is a beautiful kid. What a guy he is. He’s just fantastic. He’s a great role model who represents Boston College in an excellent way.”

Yiadom said attending the BC camp confirmed what he already knew.

“After my junior year at Doherty I felt like I had the ability to play at the Division 1 level, it was just a matter of somebody giving me a chance,” Yiadom said. “I knew I was pretty tall, had good size for a corner and I’m pretty fast. At my position those are the things you need. So, when they gave me a chance at camp I knew it was a great opportunity and I had to take advantage of it.”

Yiadom’s strong senior season, his being the recipient of the prestigious Jay McGillis Award and his being invited to the Senior Bowl have all greatly improved his chances of playing on Sundays next year.

"I think it has," Mulcahy said. "I'm starting to get feelers on his character from a handful of NFL teams. Several teams have sent a questionnaire to me and to Wendy Marshall, who was his track coach here at Doherty, as well as others at Doherty to fill out on his behalf.

"The questionnaires are mostly character questions," Mulcahy said. "They ask a few football questions but a lot of it is centered around rating him on off-the-field stuff – punctuality and things of that nature. Isaac's off the charts with that stuff. He would have gotten into Boston College as a student – not taking into account his football ability; he was that good of a student."

Between teaching and coaching at Doherty and helping chauffeur his three nephews and niece around town, Mulcahy doesn't get much time to just sit and watch Yiadom and Boston College play. Mulcahy, in fact, was able to actually watch just one of Yiadom's games this season, the Eagles home game against North Carolina State on Nov. 11.

"The game had already started when I turned it on and of course I'm looking for No. 20 (Yiadom) and I see No. 31 playing his position so I'm thinking Isaac must have gotten hurt," Mulcahy said. "So, I watched the entire game and No. 20 isn't in for even one play. And, what's worse is this kid, No. 31, he's pretty good. I start thinking, 'wow, I hope this kid doesn't end up taking Isaac's job.'"

After the game Mulcahy was informed that it was Yiadom who was wearing No. 31 in memory of Jay McGillis.

"I worried the whole game that Isaac got hurt and that he's going to lose his starting spot to this No. 31 and the whole time it was Isaac," Mulcahy said with a laugh.

"Isaac is an awesome kid, he deserves everything he's gotten," Mulcahy said. "Coach (Jim) Reid, BC's defensive coordinator came through recently on his recruiting tour and he said that Isaac is by far one of the Eagles top character guys. Isaac, coach Reid said, is one of the guys that the coaching staff points to for recruits to be like."

Boston College football notebook: Eagles cornerback Isaac Yiadom earns spot in Senior Bowl

By Rich Thompson
Boston Herald
December 19, 2017

Boston College cornerback Isaac Yiadom's college football career will extend beyond the New Era Pinstripe Bowl game against Iowa on Dec. 27 at Yankee Stadium.

The 6-foot-1, 190-pound senior from Worcester was tendered an 11th-hour invitation yesterday to participate in the Reese's Senior Bowl on Jan. 27 in Mobile, Ala.

Yiadom was the third BC player selected, joining preseason All-America defensive end Harold Landry and cornerback Kamrin Moore but could be the only Eagle in uniform on game day.

Worcester's Yiadom primed for big senior season for Boston College football

By Joe Parelo
Worcester Sun
August 23, 2017

From the moment he stepped foot on Boston College's campus, Isaac Yiadom has done his part for the Eagles.

That part may get significantly larger this season, however, as the former Doherty Memorial star has been getting talked up by national media, and perhaps more importantly, by fifth-year BC head coach Steve Addazio.

Ever since Addazio mentioned that Yiadom had the potential to be an all-conference player in an interview with ESPN, Yiadom's name has come up a lot more in talks about the powerful Atlantic Coast Conference, and college football in general.

But to the Worcester native, that's all just noise.

"I don't really listen to any of that, I just have to keep doing what I always do, and that's work on what I'm not good at," Yiadom said.

A humble thought, though it does bear mentioning that, when asked what he isn't good at, Yiadom responded with a smile and said, "Not much."

Indeed, Yiadom has every reason to be confident. He was an immediate contributor on special teams as a freshman in 2014, and has started 15 games over the past two seasons. Now a senior, Yiadom is entrenched as a starter at cornerback, and seems primed for a breakthrough season.

"(Isaac has) developed physically and fundamentally, but there's also a mental part of the game," Addazio said. "Sometimes when you're a young guy, the enormity of (the game) can weigh you down. Or, maybe you get beat on a route and you can't stop thinking about it and move on. When you're a veteran guy, you know what that's like, and you can move onto the next play. It's the experience factor."

The physical part of the game has come quickly to the 6-foot-1 Yiadom, who has a unique blend of long limbs, quick feet and fluidity that make him a natural defensive back. Once considered too light, Yiadom has put in work in the weight room and bulked up to about 190 pounds, and he's never been shy about coming downhill to take on the run.

In fact, a stop in run support may be the biggest play of his career so far, and the moment that inspired the confidence of coaches and teammates.

On a critical 4th-and-1 for Maryland, BC's opponent in last year's Quick Lane Bowl, Yiadom stayed at home on a broken play, and managed to corral a Maryland ball carrier who received a desperation pitch

from his quarterback. Yiadom's tackle gave the ball back to BC with a nine-point lead and 10 minutes to play, and the Eagles held on for a 36-30 win, their first bowl victory since 2007.

"Being a senior now, things are different and a little easier," Yiadom said. "I know the playbook, so I don't have to stress about that, and now I'm the one talking to the younger guys, telling them they have to study, they have to learn."

Most local fans will remember Yiadom as one of the most electric players to ever come through Central Massachusetts.

During his senior campaign, Yiadom led Doherty to the Division 4 state championship, culminating in a big win at Gillette Stadium against Dennis-Yarmouth. As a senior, Yiadom starred on both sides of the ball, as a receiver and defensive back for the Highlanders, and he even played quarterback in certain "Wildcat" packages.

Yiadom still carries the pride of that historic Doherty team, and takes great pride in having played in the Heart of the Commonwealth.

"Me and Davon (Jones), are really close here," Yiadom said of the former St. John's star and likely top running back for the Eagles. "I think of him as my little brother, and I take care of him, and he takes care of me. It's great to have someone from Worcester on the team, cause the [New] Jersey guys always talk smack about Mass. football.

"We just tell them, 'Worcester is different.' "

Yiadam and Adarkwah: Big brothers in the big time, legacy lives on at Doherty

By Joe Parello
Worcester Sun
September 11, 2016

The surnames Yiadam and Adarkwah have become revered in recent years at Doherty Memorial High School.

In 2013, Isaac Yiadam and Alfred Adarkwah teamed to lead the Highlanders to their first Central Mass. title in more than 30 years, and made Doherty the first Worcester city school in several decades to win a state championship in any sport when they led Doherty past Dennis-Yarmouth for the Division 4 state title at Gillette Stadium.

Throughout that season, Yiadam and Adarkwah led a Doherty secondary that made life miserable for opposing offenses, and combined to form the most lethal pair of wide receivers in the state.

Shortly after Doherty's early December Division 4 state title win, Yiadam enrolled early at Boston College, where he currently starts at cornerback for the Eagles. Adarkwah then moved west to Amherst, to play for UMass.

Yiadam and Adarkwah became school legends that December afternoon at Gillette, the same venue where they faced off against each other Saturday, as BC defeated UMass, 26-7, thanks in no small part to a vicious hit by Yiadam that forced a Minuteman fumble.

But, back in Worcester, it is their brothers' turn to suit up for the Highlanders, and each younger sibling is doing his best to tune out the noise and carve his own path.

"Man, it's hard, because everybody knows what our brothers did, and they want us to be just as good," junior tight end and linebacker Phil Adarkwah said. "But I just have to be my own player. I'm a little different than Alfred, but my goal is definitely to be as good as him.

"Maybe better."

"People around Worcester see the names Yiadam and Adarkwah and expect a lot from these kids," Doherty coach Sean Mulcahy said. "But I told them they haven't accomplished anything yet. And that isn't a knock on them, it's just the truth. They're each in their first year starting. Their names are Smith as far as I'm concerned.

"They know they have to earn everything they get here, and both are hard-working and always trying to improve;" he said.

They may not invite the comparisons, but it's hard not to see the similarities. Sophomore Paul Yiadam looks physically similar to his accomplished older brother at this point in Isaac's high school career. He even plays Isaac's old positions, wide receiver and safety.

Like Isaac, Paul has speed to burn, and is comfortable both catching the ball and running with it on jet sweeps. Still, the younger Yiadom is very much his own player, and is using his jersey number to both distinguish himself from Isaac, and honor his late mother.

Rather than wear Isaac's old No. 1, or Isaac's current No. 20, Paul Yiadom will wear No. 12 in honor of his mother, who was born on the twelfth and died Nov. 12, 2010.

That event shook up the brothers' lives, as they moved from Virginia to Worcester to live with their father, Isaac Sr. Isaac had already been a starter as a freshman at Robert E. Lee High School in Springfield, Virginia, while Paul was a fifth-grader nervous about leaving his childhood home.

"It was a big change," Paul Yiadom said. "Back in Virginia, we had open space and could kind of go where we wanted with our friends. Now, in a city like Worcester, getting places is tougher and things are complicated."

Phil Adarkwah, meanwhile, will wear No. 16, the same number Alfred wore at Doherty. Still, the brothers' games are far from the same.

Two inches shorter than Alfred at 6-foot-2, Phil, a junior, is wider and stronger than Alfred was at this point in his career. While the elder Adarkwah made a name for himself leaping over defenders for red-zone touchdowns, expect the younger to make a name for himself by grabbing passes in traffic and making tackles in the box on defense.

Both younger brothers have also cleared their own path on another field. Each of them has followed Phil's and Alfred's sister Linda Adarkwah's lead on the lacrosse pitch, with both contributing to Worcester's combined lacrosse team last season as defensive midfielders.