

JOEY KLUNDER | MICHIGAN FOOTBALL Ø<BÈ

Hi I'm Joe Er I'm a junior defensive lineman for Michigan football The best advice I've been given is to do whatever it takes I uh I was very undersized going through high school and making my way up especially as a defensive lineman I originally started playing football as a quarterback back in eighth grade and uh going into high school I was super skinny and a lot of people told me that I couldn't play division one football or football at the next level at all because of my size Um and I had coaches that told me uh it was something that was in my control and they told me to do whatever it takes to get there And that's what I did sleep is a really big thing for me in my training regimen I feel that I when I recovered I I play so much better and I perform so much better in the weight room and on the field Um I also have a just a different confidence in my game when I've been sleeping a lot and making sure I'm taking care of my nutrition off the field Yeah I'd say that was definitely the the biggest thing in just getting looks was uh I went into my freshman year of high school 100 and 50 pounds I was like 62 100 and 50 pounds playing defensive end My sophomore year I was 100 and 70 pounds And then when COVID hit I took advantage of all the time we had indoors and I jumped 60 pounds in five months I played my junior year at 230 senior year at 240 And that's really what gave me the push to really get looked at by uh coaches and bigger schools was just putting on that size And honestly the the dedication that it showed when I did that I think really uh helped a lot of coaches change their mind on me when I was getting recruited One of the biggest things was my mom She cooked uh basically seven meals a day for me every day while we were in lockdown So shout out mom But yeah it's just uh the consistency Like I was doing crazy things uh to gain that weight I was drinking a gallon of milk a day and eating seven meals Uh there was a point in time where I woke up at like three in the morning every day for about a month just to eat more food and go back to bed Um because I was really really committed to getting bigger uh because I knew that's what I needed to play that season at the next level Going into 21 and 22 all in person recruiting was suspended So you were sending coaches videos of your your hand width or your your wingspan and things like that And they're just trying to do everything they could to verify how big you were because they couldn't see you in real life And the the eye test didn't exist So they finally opened up in-person recruiting in June of 20 June of 21 I think And there was a mega camp at Fair State where there was like 30 D one

schools there and Michigan was one of them And I went to this camp I had a lot of Ivy League offers a lot of FCS offers but I really wasn't talking to any big power five or FBS schools Uh And I knew that this was gonna be my big break or like my big opportunity really get in front of some coaches because there were so many there So what I did before this camp is I went to the print store like a block away from the Ferris Stadium and I printed out about 200 business cards uh with my football stats on it instead of uh like your business information So I had my height my weight my vert my GPA sat score like my stats from the year my Twitter handle everything like that And I literally handed out to every single coach that I could find I remember before the camp started they had everybody in a gym and everybody was sitting down waiting for like some of the headline coaches to speak before the camp Um And so like it was coach Harbaugh was up there I think some other big coaches around the country and all the other coaches were lined up against like the back wall of the gymnasium and everybody was just sitting down waiting for them to start talking and all these coaches were just standing there So I literally went down the line of every single coach and introduced myself to everyone and handed on my card And one of them happened to be coach Noah the Michigan defensive line coach And I think a lot of the coaches took a liking to that initiative and they were looking out for me that camp because they I had already spoken to them and already gave them my information and he coach N ended up inviting me to the Michigan camp the next day And I had a visit at Central Michigan Planned uh but when Michigan comes knocking obviously you answer So I canceled the visit to Central and I went to the Michigan camp and I had a great camp and I ended up going up to coach Harbaugh after the camp and I shook it like they weren't really saying anything to me I wasn't sure if they really wanted to recruit me when the camp was over because I won D line MVP But no like no coach is coming up saying like hey like let's get you out for a game day visit whatever whatever And I was like yeah this is my opportunity Just take one last Hail Mary And I went up to Coach Harbaugh and I shook his hand I said hey my name is Joey Calender and I want to play football here and I was expecting him to laugh or like shoot me down But he literally just said OK like that was it I it was just one word and then he looked over at his other assistant coach He's like hey can we get this guy spot And they nodded Yeah and committed the same day That was that the academics with the football culture like you really can't get anything better We won the national championship and the degree that you leave here

with is gonna set you up for 4050 years My brother goes here my older brother and I'm I live about an hour away So proximity of the family is a really big thing too I uh family is a big part of my life and being close to them and seeing them every weekend is something that I really cherish and it it really was a no brainer when I had the opportunity to come here Just because everything really aligned with what I wanted to experience and what I wanted to do in college One of the biggest differences in college versus high school is uh how much film is watched and how much your actual reps are recorded in high school You'll watch game film and go over it and correct the mistakes But in college you'll have film from every single rep of every single practice whether it's an individual drill or inside run every single rep is on tape Like even our walkthrough sometimes are on tape and we'll watch those Um So just really like the the minute details of every single thing that you get to watch over and see from a third point of view really changed the game compared to high school And I think that really um helped elevate everybody's skill and really speeds up the development process I think the biggest takeaway I've had from being on the national championship team is just uh how effective good leadership can be Um And being a good teammate we had so many older guys that ended up getting drafted that they led by example they led by spoken words by their play on the field And I think that we had an elite group of leaders just like mentally like not even like how they played on the field but just the way that they came together in the locker room and the way that they encourage us all to just fight through adversity and just block out all the outside noise was something that really changed the way I view success uh as a team like that's really it's really top down leadership roles And the way it just it all came together was uh something special and something I never experienced in high school just trust the process Our coaches always tell us this phrase It's the the future favors those who press on Right So when things get hard there's always gonna be light at the end of the tunnel and being here it's taught me that like the harder you work the better your outcomes will be And as long as you just stick to the process those who stay will be champions and that's ring true to me and all my teammates the whole time I've been here