

Headline: Georgetown football doubles up on FOJ love

By Michael J. Lewis

It's a great dilemma for the Georgetown University football team, and one that no other Friends of Jaclyn squad has at the moment.

When it's time for their adoptee to come and visit the locker room, they have to decide which adorable child that loves them to hang with.

Do they chill with 8-year-old Jackson Dundon, a full of life kid who used to be shy around them but now can't stop trading high-fives and bragging about his latest T-ball home runs?

Or do they gravitate toward 11-year-old Elijah Davis, another vivacious boy who cracks jokes and teases the other members of the team with a delightful, prankster's smile?

Jackson or Elijah? Elijah or Jackson? It can be tough to decide, but fortunately, there's a "system" in place.

"It just seems to have worked out that when they're both in the locker room, the offense plays with Jackson and the defense takes over Elijah," said Hoyas special teams coach Kevin Doherty. "But really, everybody plays with everybody."

Georgetown's double dose of Friends of Jaclyn love came about as almost a happy accident; Jackson, who was diagnosed at age 2 ½ with a brain tumor, had been hanging around the Hoyas program with his family for a while before Georgetown formally adopted him in Feb. 2014.

It was around that time that Elijah was recommended to the Georgetown program by Friends of Jaclyn, and he began developing a fast friendship with Doherty, who's also Georgetown's defensive backs coach.

Elijah was also adopted in Feb. 2014 and quickly became extremely close to Doherty. The coach has Elijah over for sleepovers on Friday nights with his family, and Elijah sometimes attends coaches meetings as well.

Armed with this "inside info" on the team, Elijah is quick to rib his buddies about their mistakes.

"When we mess up, he'll come up to us the next day and be like 'what happened?'" senior linebacker Matt Satchell said with a laugh. "We tell him, 'don't worry buddy, we'll fix it for the next game.'"

As the boys have gotten close to the team, the Georgetown players say they've enjoyed every moment Jackson and Elijah are around.

Kevin Liddy, a senior offensive lineman, has a favorite memory from last winter, when he and Elijah went to a Georgetown vs. Butler basketball game.

"We're sitting in the front row, and (Georgetown) hit a 3-pointer to win the game, and I look over at him and he's basically hyperventilating he was so excited," Liddy said. "To watch how excited he gets over things ... it's just so humbling to see how appreciative he and Jackson are."

Unfortunately, the two Georgetown adoptees are having different health experiences right now.

Jackson just celebrated his five-year anniversary of being cancer free, a wonderful moment that was acknowledged and cheered by his friends on the Hoyas football team.

But Elijah has had some setbacks lately, having to be hospitalized at Johns Hopkins in recent months. Some of the Hoyas have visited him there.

“It’s not easy watching someone you care about go through all that,” said Kevin Liddy, a Georgetown senior offensive lineman. “You just try to be strong for them when you talk to them, and let them know everything’s going to be OK.”

“When we go there,” Liddy added, “they tell us that on the day we’re going to come, it’s all Elijah talks about.”

The Hoyas, like almost every FOJ team, say they’ve gotten way more out of the relationship than Jackson and Elijah have.

“To watch their courage and how they push through things, it’s so inspiring,” Satchell said. “I think we’ll be a part of their lives forever.”

