

Greg Toler

2009 Arizona Cardinals Draft Selection

Round 4, Selection 31 – 131st Overall

CB – St. Paul's College (VA) - 5-11, 191

OVERVIEW:

Toler was one of the premier athletes in the Washington D.C. prep ranks, but the talented defender never got the opportunity to wear a college uniform, much less earn a high school diploma.

Toler exhausted his first chance at football stardom at Northwestern High School because of poor grades. Once recruiters from Division I schools viewed his high school transcripts, they were not interested. His grades made it a struggle to stay eligible for his senior football season.

At the end of his senior high school season, Toler was ineligible to attend high school all-star games, missing a chance to earn an athletic scholarship from a major university.

"I never took my grades seriously like I should have," he said. "My coaches kept telling me that education's first, that you'll never be a student-athlete unless you're a good student."

After graduation, Toler wound up as a storeroom clerk at JCPenney, stocking shelves and sweeping aisles. He was living at home with his mother and older brother, knew he had the potential to be a college athlete, but that opportunity, he figured, was gone. That was until he met Wilson High School football coach Mark Martin, who recruited Toler for his semipro football team, the D.C. Explosion.

After a few games with the Explosion, Toler was approached by Kevin Grisby, a defensive coordinator at Saint Paul's College, the historically black school tucked into the Blue Ridge Mountains of southern Virginia. Budget cuts killed the college's football program in 1987 but wanted back in, billing itself as the place giving recruits a second chance. It was a school where players with Division I talent could continue to play despite previous off-field problems.

Grisby immediately found a disciple in Toler, whose father had died in the Lorton prison while serving time for drug possession, and he used the one year that St. Paul's competed as a club team to focus on his grades.

"It started off rough, but we worked his grade-point average up, meeting once a week just to talk about his academics," said Grisby, a former NFL safety with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Toler quickly grabbed a starting position at left cornerback, going on to start his next 40 contests. He set school career records with 14 interceptions, 36 pass breakups and 50 passes defended (average of 0.80 passes defended per game was the top career mark for active Division II players in 2008).

In his first college season Toler garnered All-CIAA first-team honors in addition to making the league's All-Rookie squad. In 10 games, he recorded 38 tackles (24 solo) with three stops for loss. He recovered a fumble in the endzone for a touchdown and broke up 13 passes in 2005. His six interceptions tied for 18th in the NCAA Division II ranks, while his total of 19 passes defended placed third nationally.

In 2006, Toler produced 35 tackles (24 solo), picking off one pass while batting down three others. He bounced back with a banner junior campaign, receiving All-CIAA first-team honors. He had an interception with seven pass deflections, averaging 8.2 yards on ten punt returns and 16.8 yards on six kickoff returns. He also ranked eighth on the team with 37 tackles (16 solos), as he did not allow a pass reception in four of the 10 games he started.

The left cornerback earned All-CIAA and Little All-American first-team honors in 2008. He placed fourth on the team with a career-high 51 tackles (37 solo), including 4.5 stops behind the line of scrimmage. He tied for ninth in the nation and second in the league with six interceptions and set the school record with three blocked kicks, returning one blocked punt for a touchdown. He knocked down 13 other passes, as his total of 19 passes defended tied for the CIAA lead while ranking second nationally.

HIGH SCHOOL:

Attended Northwestern (Washington, D.C.) High School...The two-time All-Metro choice competed as a cornerback, wide receiver and return specialist...Ruled academically ineligible for post-season competition after his senior campaign.