

Stanford football: It's a snap for sixth-year senior

by Tom Fitzgerald, San Francisco Chronicle

A long, long time ago Andrew Fowler was a linebacker and long snapper at Williams College in Massachusetts. Then he decided to transfer to a less expensive school, Stanford.

No, it wasn't for the (slightly) cheaper tuition. As a high schooler in San Diego, Fowler had been recruited by coach Jim Harbaugh for the University of San Diego. When Harbaugh got the Stanford job in 2007, Fowler contacted him. He had wanted to try the East Coast, but with the Harbaugh connection he switched to the Farm as a walk-on.

Long snapper Andrew Fowler finally landed an athletic scholarship this year.

Until this year, he had appeared in just three games in four years at Stanford. Now he's the Cardinal's long snapper on punts and placekicks, and the coaches think he does the job well enough he might have a future in the NFL.

"The funny thing is, the only time you're noticed is when you mess up," Fowler said. "So the specialists try to fly under the radar, do our jobs and be as professional as possible."

He red-shirted the 2007 season after transferring and got another year of eligibility as a medical redshirt because of a concussion. He backed up snapper Zach Nolan for three years.

He is listed as a "sixth-year senior," but he has a degree in art history with a minor in economics and is working on his master's in management science and engineering.

"My adviser told me I was the only (Stanford) football player who had ever majored in art history," he said. "Whether or not that's a good thing, I'll tell you in a couple of years."

"I'd love to somehow incorporate the business principles I'm learning in the master's to the art world, whether it be in an auction house or some other capacity."

You've got to applaud his perseverance. And Stanford did: At the end of August, he was finally awarded an athletic scholarship.