



## **At 21, Matthew Carrillo Is One Of The Monarchs Elder Statesmen JUCO transfer called on for his leadership**

Junior tight end Matthew Carrillo

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A native of La Mirada, California, Matthew Carrillo had never been further east than Wyoming. However, the junior college transfer jumped at the opportunity to travel more than 2,700 miles away from home to become a part of Old Dominion University's football program.

In Carrillo the Monarchs coaching staff saw a player with two years of college football experience that could come in and help lead the young ODU squad comprised mostly of freshmen. Carrillo fell in love with the facilities, the chance to play right away and the university's academic reputation, but it was the excitement surrounding Monarch football that sealed his decision.



"I liked the fact that everyone was excited about ODU football," added Carrillo, the 6-foot-4, 250 pound tight end from Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, California. "Not only the coaches and the people on campus, but the community as well. During my recruiting visit we went out to eat and it seemed like everyone already knew who we were."

During that initial visit, Carrillo formed a bond with another junior college recruit and a fellow California native Logo Maluia. The two kept in touch throughout the recruiting process, often discussing the pros and cons of the schools that they were considering. In addition to ODU, Carrillo was drawing interest from San Jose State, Marshall and Nevada, but during a talk with Maluia the pair decided to become Monarchs.

With ODU's first game not until Sept. 5, 2009, the Monarchs spent this fall practicing and scrimmaging against one another, and the coaching staff called upon the 21-year old Carrillo to set an example and mentor the younger players on the roster.

"When the coaches were recruiting me they told me that they wanted me to help lead the young guys," said Carrillo. "It was tough at times because they were used to high school football, but the coaches were constantly talking to me, my roommate Logo (Maluia) and the older guys about taking charge and that's what we tried to do."

Now that practice has concluded for the fall, the Monarchs will now shift their focus to off-season conditioning. An aspect of college football that Carrillo knows is all too important if a team is to improve year to year. And he's welcoming the challenge of leading in the weight room as well.

"Maturity wise the team had to change throughout the year and we did. Now that we're entering the off-season, we have to be more disciplined and focus on getting in better shape and I plan on setting the example by getting in better shape myself. The coaches are always talking about picking up the intensity and finishing strong, and that applies in the weight room too."