

# David Bakhtiari making best of intense competition

By Martin Hendricks, Special to the Journal Sentinel  
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**Green Bay** — No matter how intense the competition, David Bakhtiari will do his best to enjoy the journey and sport a positive attitude.

The Packers fourth-round draft choice from Colorado is vying for a roster spot in one of Green Bay's most competitive position groups.

After the team's final minicamp practice last week, Bakhtiari explained his approach to fitting in and earning employment in the National Football League.

He also received some advice from his older brother, Eric, a linebacker who has played with six NFL teams since 2008 and is currently a free agent.

"At least for me, I can't perform (at my best) if I'm stressed out or crabby," Bakhtiari said. "My brother said you have to work hard, and it's an awesome experience. You're going to love it. Enjoy it while it lasts, for some people it doesn't last that long, so cherish it. Always come ready to work with a smile on your face."

Not every Green Bay offensive lineman may be smiling, as the competition will be intense in training camp to secure starting positions and roster spots.

Green Bay's two best linemen — guard Josh Sitton and tackle Brian Bulaga — were switched to the left side to protect Rodgers' blind side. Former starting left tackle Marshall Newhouse will compete for a right tackle spot along with T.J. Lang.

The right tackle spot will be up for grabs, along with backup spots at every position. Suffice it to say, Bakhtiari is getting a crash course in techniques, assignments and Green Bay's vast playbook.

In addition, there is also the typical rookie transition to the strength and speed of the NFL game.

At 6-foot-4 and 300 pounds, the athletic Bakhtiari is slightly undersized for a left tackle, the position he played his final two seasons at Colorado, where his team did not experience much success.

Bakhtiari is enjoying the winning culture of Green Bay and the high expectations.

"The Super Bowl — that's what we strive for here every year," he said.

"We only won about nine games in my college career. I love being here in a winning atmosphere because I think that brings out the best in players. They hold you to high expectations. You get out what you put into it."

Bakhtiari, who skipped his final collegiate season, ran the 40 in 5.09 and benched 28 reps of 225 pounds before the draft.

He has plenty to learn to compete at the NFL level, but he could grow into a backup role at both the guard and tackle spots in 2013.

Bakhtiari can only guarantee that he'll give it his all and bring a positive attitude to work every day.

"If I get beat or have a bad day, I'll sit down and watch film and learn from it," he said. "The worst thing you can do is make the same mistake twice."

"I've been enjoying every second of it and trying to grow every day. You can always get better. There is no ceiling, I think, for a player. You can always set the bar higher."

**Born:** Sept. 30, 1991 (21).

**Hometown:** San Mateo, Calif.

**College:** University of Colorado.

**Major:** Communications. Second-team academic all-Big 12 as a redshirt freshman.

**Status:** Single.

**Nicknames:** Big Germ, Big Perm, Big Worm. I don't know where that comes from — maybe the hair? In college, I was just called 'Bak.' (pronounced 'Bock') for short. Whatever they want to call me is fine.

**Nationality:** Persian descent from my dad's side. Persian and Icelandic. My mom's side is just kind of mixed.

**What I'm watching on TV:** HBO series like "Entourage" and "Game of Thrones." I'm all over the board: from "Family Guy" to ESPN. I'm a connoisseur of TV shows.

**My favorite movies:** The Batman trilogy, "Step Brothers," "Pitch Perfect." If it's a good movie, I'll like it. "Conception" was awesome.

**My ride:** I have a Jeep; I got it in college. It gets me to point A to point B so I don't see any reason to get another one unless it breaks down. The guys are trying to tell me to get a truck.

**My favorite books:** Right now, I'm reading "The Great Gatsby." I don't want to see the movie; I want to read the book. My buddy told me the book was better. I wasn't the biggest reader when I was younger, but I'm enjoying it now.

**My favorite foods:** I pretty much like anything. I like steak, I like chicken, I like fish. I'll eat sushi. I'll eat pizza from time to time. I haven't been to all the restaurants in Green Bay yet; I'm just dipping in and trying places out.

**My favorite video game:** I play Xbox a lot. FIFA, the soccer game, is my favorite.

**Favorite football player and team growing up:** Joe Staley of the 49ers. I used to be a Niners fan. I tried to play like him. He has great feet.

**Other sports I enjoy:** I played lacrosse and football in high school and tennis and soccer before that. I didn't start playing football until I was in high school.

**Where did your athletic talent come from?** My dad is 6-1, 215, he was a wide receiver in high school. My mom is about 5-foot-7 and was more athletic. We give Dad crap for that. In high school, my mom was a quarterback in powder puff football. Nothing too serious.

**Who are your role models?** My father and my brother. They've been there for me all my life. I try to take the positive things (character, work ethic) that worked for them. My brother made a huge impact when I started to take football seriously as a career. He helped me grow as a player and a person.

**What are your impressions of Green Bay and Packer fans so far?** I grew up in the Brett Favre era. I just know of the great history here, Lombardi, the Super Bowls. Such a rich history. I just didn't know how crazy the fans are here, in a positive sense. I'm still learning about how passionate they are. I think it's awesome having a great fan base. I've never seen so many fans come around all the time.

**Observation from his rookie season:** I keep quiet and just do whatever the veterans say until they accept you. I don't want to get on their bad side....I just do what I can. I was a younger brother too, so I kind of understand how it works. Just keep working hard and enjoy the experience.

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