

Green Wave defense, Marley style

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"I'm a different person on the field," says sophomore student-athlete Nico Marley, whose 5-foot-9-inch stature doesn't limit his intense style as a linebacker. He is from Weston, Florida. (Photo by Parker Waters)

For a star NCAA Division I linebacker, Tulane University sophomore [Nico Marley](#) is a pretty chill dude. But perhaps that shouldn't be a surprise ? he is the grandson of Jamaican reggae legend Bob, after all. Yes, *that* Marley.

Off the field, his slow drawl and even-keeled manner embody the relaxed Jamaican nature. But he plays with the same fiery instincts and tenacity of his father, Rohan

Marley, who led the University of Miami Hurricanes with 95 tackles in 1993.

"I'm a different person on the field," Nico Marley admits. "I'm not chill at all on the field. It's kind of two opposites with me."

He doesn't get hyped until he enters the stadium gates. His pregame song doesn't have a big bass drop or frenetic beat. In the locker room, he listens to his grandfather's reggae anthem, "Redemption Song."

"I don't really need to get pumped up," he says. "I listen to the 'Redemption Song.' It kind of soothes me out, gets me focused. I don't need anything to motivate me to play. As soon as I'm on the field, I'm ready. I do a lot of thinking before the game about my assignments and all that."

Rohan Marley played in the Canadian Football League for a few seasons before founding an international coffee business, Marley Coffee, in 2009. Nico Marley, a business major, could one day take the reins on the global empire, although he's no coffee drinker.

"I always wanted to do a business major," Nico Marley says, "especially seeing my dad take off with it."

For now, he's carving out his own destiny under the Marley name. A dynamo at 5 feet 9 and 200 pounds, he anchors the Green Wave defense, and on Sept. 15 was recognized by the Louisiana Sports Writers Association as [Defensive Player of the Week](#). He and his father were featured in a recent issue of [Sports Illustrated](#).

"I'm just doing whatever I can," he says. "I know I want to be remembered."

Johanna Gretschel holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Tulane University. She is a freelance writer living in New Orleans.

“I don't need anything to motivate me to play. As soon as I'm on the field, I'm ready.” -- Green Wave linebacker Nico Marley