

Bo Don't Know Squat (and I don't mean weightlifting)

The Scene: My frolicky freshman year, in the Hinton James 4th floor lounge o' social intermingling.

The Event: Monday Night Football, that impenetrable male ritual, the one that elicits cheers equal in happiness to fatherhood announcements and screams equal in anguish to That Skiing Guy on Wide World of Sports (I'm sure).

It is early second quarter, and I re-establish my place on the couch with a fresh bag of Doritos and some Grape Soda. The rest of the guys, chit-chatting, grow silent as the last commercial jingle fades into the perennial blackness that underlies all television programming (I used to wonder if the Bogyman lurked down there).

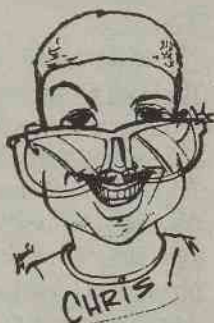
Of course, I am in the minority as usual—the only Seahawks fan in the place. Not that everyone else are diehard Raider fans, they are simply anti-Seahawks. Besides the rising cost of Dorm life, this is probably my major complaint with Carolina: too many anti-Seahawkers in James during my freshman year. Not to worry, though, my boys have just scored and my lone whoops of vengeance give me hope that this may be a night to remember.

Bo, was it.

The Raiders line up from their own 9, second down and eleven. The much heralded number 34 is in the backfield, but I have no fear because giant-killer Kenny Easley counters his presence in the Seattle defensive secondary.

"Give it to Bo," someone said.

They did. I've run this play through my head a million and one times, but I still can't figure out what happened faster—my heart sinking into the vicinity of my bowels or the streaking mass of sliver-and-black muscle outrunning Easley, who ain't slow, and not stopping until he reached the showers (it's true). Now, I'm sitting there with



Point After Touchdown

By Chris L. Brown

half a Dorito hanging attractively from the corner of my lips, staring at the replay, while about six guys—Gary, Steve, Mike, Jason, John, and Cliff—victoriously dance around, fists of victory in the air, wanking R.A.s in Alderman with their pro-Bo cheers. That's all I heard for 48 hours: "BO!"

I thought it was bad, because the villainous Seahawk-haters hailed a triumph over all that was good and clean and wore number 45. But the lighthearted teasing was the least of my worries; It was the dawn of the Era of Bo, as I'm sure it will be remembered.

I'll admit that Bo Jackson is a modern wonder. When we get older and married and sprout a few young ones, I'm sure I'll proudly answer my kids' inquiries about the dual-sport athlete who set America on it's side, as we watch the holographic image of "Football's Greatest Moments" on ESPN. He is the kind of phenomenon in the same boat as Babe Ruth and Michael Jordan. Have you ever seen him break a bat over his monstrous thigh or on his head? He has so much talent in both sports that it is almost unfair. He is glamorous and good, a rare combination in sports (just ask Deion "Prime Time" Sanders). He deserves to be viewed with much respect.

And in modern day sports, stardom comes hand-in-hand with endorsements. Commercials about everything and anything imaginable. To a point,

this is understandable, even admirable. Then came the "Bo Knows" commercials.

These advertisements are composed of shots of Bo attempting a sport, then having a bigshot from that sport confirm that Bo 'knows' that sport. There are different endings, one of the more popular being the honorable guitarist Bo Diddley announcing that "Bo, you don't know Diddley!" This lack of dominance in one area couldn't possibly be allowed by NIKE, so during the Super Bowl, the new version of this commercial aired: Bo Jackson is successful in strumming Diddley's tunes, thus concluding that Bo indeed does know Diddley.

Know what I think? Bo doesn't know squat. These commercials are amusing and all, but what do they tell black children? The stereotype of the African-American male being solely a physical threat is being furthured. Even his new commercial for AT&T, "Bo knows telephones," is not in a positive direction. I hear kids saying that they want to be like Bo Jackson when they grow up, but what about Jesse Jackson? What about Douglas Wilder? What about all the influential African-Americans who strive to make a difference in more than the digital scoreboard? I'm not saying that athletes should be downplayed; our achievements in that area are unequalled. I'm saying that we've got to teach our kids and ourselves that the

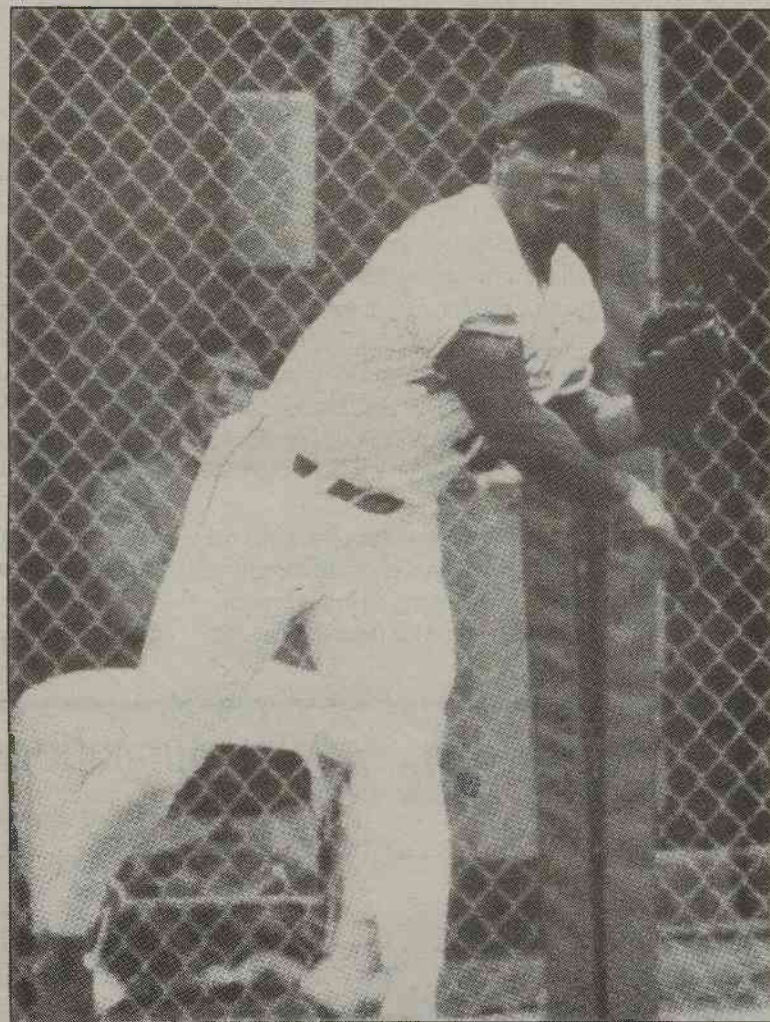
real difference, the true road to respect, is paved through intelligence, education, and combined action. I'm not saying that Bo is stupid, because I've seen him in an interview and his head is actually in the right place. But how would we ever know through these commercials?

As I always try to do, I offer a solution. Let's see Mr. Jackson do a series of non-profit commercials on topics such as illiteracy and alcoholism. "Bo knows how to read." "Bo knows not to drink and drive." Even "Bo knows about safe sex." The attention that he so easily and deservedly snares could be directed to a more positive and serious direction than what type of

shoes one should choose.

I'm a big 'moving image' guy, because movies and television and video tapes are strong mindset formers in America. People see something through one of these media, and figure that enough to base their attitudes on. It is important to convey the positive, constructive aspects of our community through this large vein, because if we don't the opposite view will permeate. If Bo knew anything, he'd get his agent to counter the single-dimensioned image that he's portraying.

Also, he'd do something to stop the Seahawks' four-game winning streak against the Raiders (YEAH!).



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