

4.56 speed in the 40. "He looked fluid and confident in the drills at Indy [at the scouting combine]," Kiper notes, "showing the quickness to compensate for his lack of straight-ahead speed. [Kick] return skills should come in handy while he is making the adjustment to become a true wide receiver at the pro level."

Holder runs 4.58 in the 40. The 6-0 1/4, 185 pounds receiver caught 161 passes for 37 touchdowns and averaged 18.2 yards per reception for his career. His touchdown reception total is fourth on the Division II all-time list. He also averaged 12.1 yards on punt returns as a collegian.

Holder, the nephew of Hall Of Fame baseball player Billy Williams, is a "raw, developmental-type wide-out whose return skills will provide him with a decent shot at sticking on an NFL roster," Kiper wrote.

Tillman, a 6-2 1/2 pounder with 4.59 speed, caught 58 passes for 790 yards and a SWAC-leading 11 TD catches. "He's still a little raw," Kiper points out, "but is an extraordinarily sure-handed wide-receiver. With his size and athletic ability, he deserves some attention in the later rounds."

Kiper says that Heath (6-3 1/2, 249, 4.85 in the 40) "is a fine athlete, grading out as one of the more effective pass receiving tight ends in all of college football. A major negative with Heath is that he just doesn't get the job done as an on-line blocker."

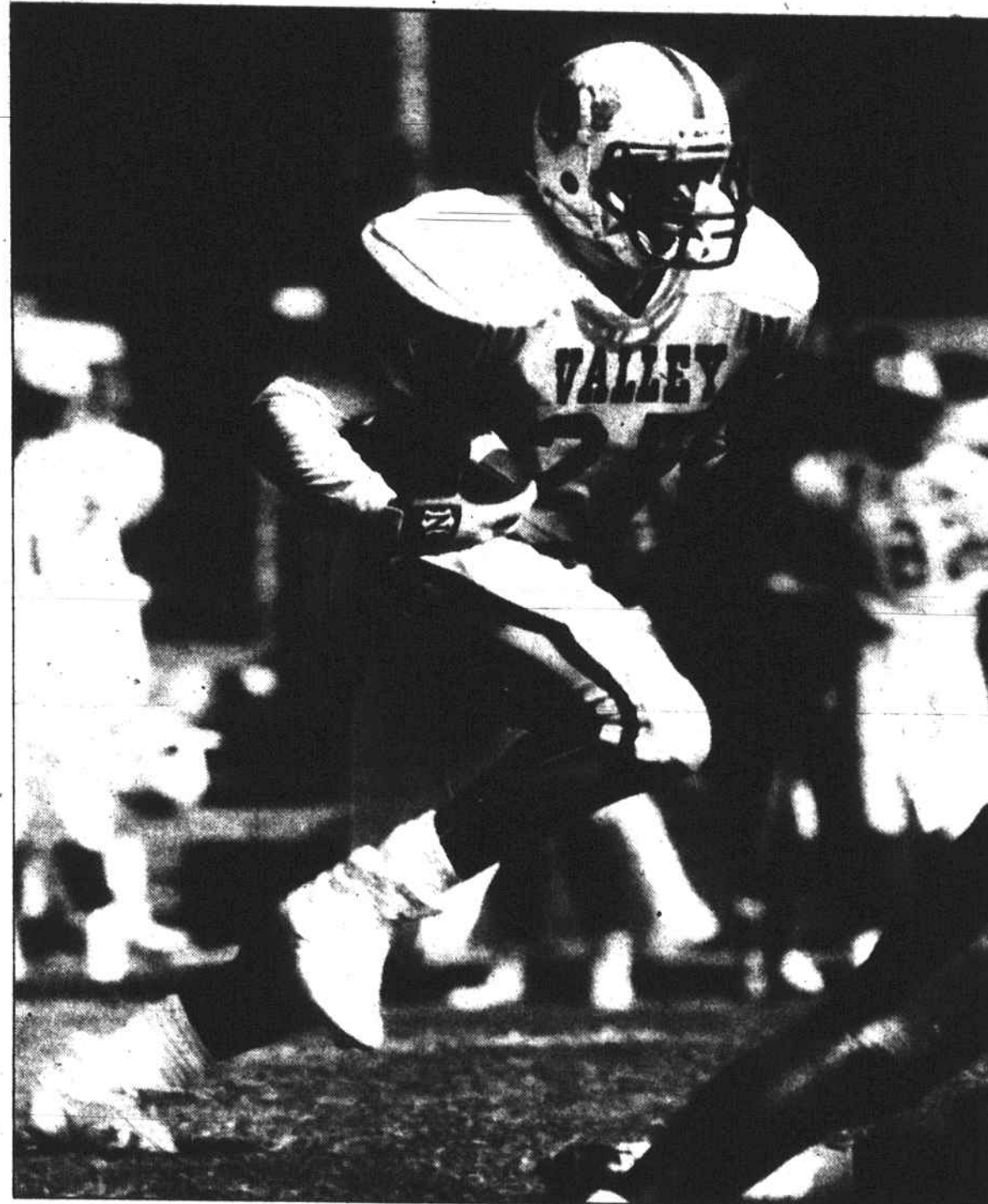
Tharpe (6-5, 295, 5.15 in the 40) is a massive specimen. Says Kiper: "He's a mountain of a man, with super-long arms and improving strength. When this guy is properly motivated, he just pancaked his opponent, evidence of which came in the Blue-Gray Game when he was able to put on quite a show, displaying his exceptional raw talent. Tharpe certainly rates as a top-notch small college prospect with the raw, physical skills NFL teams are looking for in the age of the 300-pound tackle and guard."

Brown (6-6 1/2, 328, 5.25 speed) is no munchkin. "He's huge, shows excellent straight-ahead speed and seems agile enough to eventually handle NFL-caliber defensive ends with the proper tutelage," says Kiper. "If he stays focused and works hard, he definitely has a chance to eventually earn a starting job at either tackle spot."

Kiper rates Boyd (6-4 1/2, 288, 4.91 speed) fourth on his list of guards. "His foot movement is such that if worked on in conjunction with improved technique, could make him a real neutralizer when operating against NFL defensive ends. Athletically, he's in an elite category, making him a developmental prospect that clubs should jump at in the third to fifth round."

Terry, a 6-3 1/2, 287-pounder with a 5.05 clocking, "played in a 49ers-style passing offense," Kiper said. "He understands pass blocking and has displayed a nasty streak once he straps on the pads. Attitude and a willingness to learn are all working in his favor."

Lockeridge is a 6-2 1/2, 322-pounder with a 5.29 time who "uses his massive frame to root defenders out with his initial explosion," Kiper wrote, "and was able to hold his own in pass protection on most occasions. The key with Lockeridge is



According to NFL scouts, Valley's Ronald Humphrey has a lot of raw talent and should get better as he develops.

Photo by Mark Gail

weight maintenance, meaning you have to hope that he doesn't eat his way out of the league."

Hope is 6-3, 289 with a time of 5.31. "He slides well along the line of scrimmage, getting by at a low level of competition despite his suspect position technique," Kiper observed. "He wasn't able to dominate play on a consistent basis like his former teammate Eric Williams [now with the Dallas Cowboys]."

Pilton, a 6-7, 285-pounder with 4.95 speed, has tremendous ability. But he probably would have been better off by staying at Tennessee State for his final season of eligibility. As a sophomore two years ago, he recorded 11 sacks in only five games, missing six games because of a broken wrist. Last season, he led the Ohio Valley Conference with 152 tackles, including 119 solos. "Elliot is the type that an NFL club could possibly steal in the third or fourth round," Kiper said, "when he likely would have been a solid first-round pick had he returned for another year at the collegiate level."

Wilson, a 6-2 1/2, 287-pounder with a 5.32 clocking, recorded 70 tackles with six sacks and three pass break-ups. "Bernard is a great kid with a motor that never stops running," Kiper said. "He consistently claws his way into the backfield and seems to have the heart and ability to make the transition from a lower level of competition to

the NFL."

Robinson (6-1 1/2, 233, 4.81 in the 40) maintained a 3.5 grade point average in chemistry and attended Alabama State on an academic scholarship. "Eddie is an explosive tackler," Kiper wrote, "causing fumbles and dropped passes with his teeth-loosening hits. A major negative is a lack of top instincts — appears a step slow reacting, and at times has trouble fighting his way through traffic."

Little, a 6-3, 245-pounder with a 4.75 time, recorded 79 tackles, 16 sacks and three forced fumbles in '91. "Due to his athletic superiority over the competition," Kiper said, "the coaching staff allowed him to free-lance quite a bit. However, in the NFL he will have to adjust to a more disciplined style."

Straughter, a 6-4, 238-pounder with a 4.69 time, "held up against the run OK at Jackson State," Kiper said, "but in the NFL, he will have to work on his block-shed ability, learning to protect his legs against the chop [block]. There is also a question about his durability, since he missed some time this past season with an ankle injury."

Briggs (6-2 1/2, 212, 4.54 speed) played only one season of college football. Initially a basketball standout, Briggs began as a strong safety at Texas Southern before switching to outside linebacker due to a rash of injuries that decimated the rest of the Tigers' LB corps. Last season, Briggs had 42 tackles and a couple of sacks.

"Physically and athletically," Kiper said, "there aren't many defensive backs in the draft with more raw ability. He's a hard-nosed kid with outstanding speed and jumping ability. He has a lot to learn about the position, but has been receptive to coaching and is said to have the temperament to learn."

Other players who have a chance of being drafted in the late rounds or signing as free agents include:

Carl Wright (6-3 1/4, 215), Virginia Union quarterback; Everett Norwood (5-10 1/2, 225), Winston-Salem State running back; Michael Murray (5-8, 222), Delaware State fullback; Marcus Dowdell (5-11, 180), Tennessee State wide receiver; Rob Jackson (6-1, 194), Central State (Ohio) wide receiver; Joe Washington (6-2, 193), Tuskegee wide receiver; Wendell Watson (5-9 1/2, 182), Delaware State wide receiver; Craig Thompson (6-2 1/2, 244), North Carolina A&T tight end; Fredrick Washington (6-3, 235), Mississippi Valley State tight end; Jerrod Ellis (6-4, 315), Grambling offensive tackle; Roderick Milstead (6-1 1/2, 273), Delaware State guard; Reggie White (6-4 1/4, 290), North Carolina A&T defensive end; Roosevelt Nix (6-6, 300), Central State defensive tackle; Darrell Brooks (6-4, 320), Tennessee State defensive tackle; Thomas Griffin (5-11 1/2, 236), Grambling inside linebacker; Reggie Glover (6-0 1/2, 222), North Carolina A&T outside linebacker; Ricky Hill (5-10, 163), South Carolina State cornerback; Isaac Morehouse (5-8, 169), Jackson State cornerback; Dee Moye (6-0 1/2, 189), North Carolina A&T cornerback; James Williams (6-2, 195), Mississippi Valley State safety; Everett Nicholas (5-11, 189), Mississippi Valley State safety; Leon Harris (5-11 1/2, 210), Central State safety; Charles Williams (6-1 1/2, 194), Grambling safety.

[Writer's Footnote: Four players from predominantly black schools were selected in the first round one other time, in '71.

Offensive tackle Vernon Holland of Tennessee State was taken by the Cincinnati Bengals; linebacker Isiah Robertson of Southern University was picked by the Los Angeles Rams; defensive end Richard Harris of Grambling was chosen by the Philadelphia Eagles; and wide receiver Frank Lewis of Grambling was taken by the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Three players were taken in the first round on two occasions, in '70 and '75. In '70, wide receiver Kenny Burrough of Texas Southern was picked by the New Orleans Saints; guard Doug Wilkerson of North Carolina Central was selected by the Houston Oilers; and tight end Raymond Chester of Morgan State was chosen by the then Oakland Raiders.

In '75, running back Walter Payton of Jackson was to top pick of the Chicago Bears; linebacker Robert Brazile of Jackson State was No. 1 for the Oilers; and defensive end Gary "Big Hands" Johnson of Grambling was the San Diego Charger's top pick.]

— G.D. Clay