

Lane thinking large for 1998

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my face when I'm doing good but if I mess up or something, they'd be snickering and telling me 'I knew you were not going to be nothing and stuff like that.'"

If it sounds like Lane has a chip on his shoulder, he does. But not against any of his current Panther teammates, especially the man he's battling for the starting halfback job, Tshimanga Biakabutuka. Right now the job is Lane's to lose but if Biakabutuka regains the form he showed during his college career at Michigan, Lane could be in for a real battle.

"I don't hate the man because when I came here he took care of me, so I got nothing but love for him," Lane said. "I didn't know anybody so he brought me over to his house, he fed me a little bit now and then, stuff like that, gave me some encouragement."

"When he goes out there and does a good job, I pat him on the back and when I do a good job he pats me on the back."

Lane has set lofty goals for this season — rush for 1,500

yards and make the Pro Bowl. But he knows he has to be on the field to make that happen.

"Goals don't mean a thing unless I hold onto the starting position, so once I conquer keeping the starting position, then I can go into my goals," he said.

Lane isn't worried his goals may be a little high for a second year back.

"If you don't set your stakes high then what?" he asked. "I'm going to set them high so I can raise my level, so I can reach them. If I leave them low, then my level's not going to go that high and I'll still be a mediocre guy."

The Panthers' new West Coast offense should be anything but mediocre. It's a quick strike offense, utilizing the skills of the running backs and receivers in a series of fast, short plays, designed to move the ball rapidly up the field. It's

an offense that should suit Lane because he's not a one-dimensional running back, he's an all-purpose back, more than just a ball-carrier.

"For running backs the biggest thing is they have to be all-round," Panthers new Offensive Coordinator Gil Haskell said. "They can't just be a blocker, a runner and if you're a pass receiver, you don't play so they have to be all three."

"We've done very well, you have to like our two backs (Lane and Biakabutuka); those two guys and (Anthony Johnson) and Scott (Greene)...we're in good shape."

Does Lane worry that he might be too well known around the NFL and won't catch defenses off guard this season?

"No, not really, football is football, the coaches is going to give a great offensive plan for the game and we've got to execute. If we execute it's all good."

It sounds like Lane is ready to put to rest all the doubts "they" have about him.



Lane

Feeling better, Biakabutuka is ready

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"Last year was frustrating to set on the bench and look at the guys play and have fun, but at the end of the season, my knee was in worse shape than we thought it was," he said. "If I had played more, maybe I would've hurt it more. But it was a blessing. It was an opportunity for Fred to make his own money and have fun." Although they are the focus



Biakabutuka

of the preseason's hottest competition, Biakabutuka helped Lane adjust to the NFL even as Lane became Carolina's top runner.

"We were close from the first minicamp," Biakabutuka said. "Fred's a good guy and there's no hate between me and him."

Biakabutuka is a backup for now, but Panthers coach Dom Capers isn't declaring a clear-cut No. 1 just yet. With training camp opening next month and four weeks of preseason games, there's no need to rush a decision.

"We don't get too caught up in depth charts right now because we're going to evaluate people, and there's going to

be a lot of time for that to work itself out," he said. "Fred Lane finished the season as our starter and right now he lines up with the first group, but I wouldn't read too much into that...because things will change."

"That'll all work itself out. We have talent at that position, guys that we think are very capable, and I don't think you can have enough good running backs."

Biakabutuka agrees. "I think coach Capers is looking for wins," he said. "Whoever comes ready and shows he can carry the team the farthest will be the best running back."

1968 Olympic team one for the ages

By Bert Rosenthal
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW ORLEANS — The 1968 U.S. men's Olympic track and field team had a certain magic. It was also immensely talented and controversial.

"It was a very special team," long jumper Bob Beamon said. "This team was so great. We could do so many things. Anyone running the mile on down could run the 100 meters and win."

That year, the United States was rocked by the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy, civil rights demonstrations and anti-war protests.

Into the mix came the Olympics in Mexico City. Black Americans and Africans threatened to boycott the games, and shortly before the opening ceremony, 30 students were killed during a student rally in the host city.

But the games began on schedule, and the United States brought its greatest track and field team ever.

Tonight, 23 medalists from the team will attend USA Track and Field's 30th Anniversary of America's Champions, sponsored by Xerox, in New Orleans, site of this weekend's national championships.

There, they will be able to relive their memories — good or bad.

The men would win 12 of 24 gold medals in Mexico City and the overall team would set eight world records, including Beamon's remarkable 29-foot-2 1/2-inch long jump, Lee Evans' 43.86-second clocking in the 400 meters, Jim Hines' 9.95 in the men's 100 and Wyomia Tyus' 11.08 in the women's 100.

Winning performances also included Dick Fosbury in the men's high jump with his unique "Fosbury Flop," a style that revolutionized the event, and Al Oerter, the men's discus gold medalist for the fourth consecutive time.

This was a close-knit group, having trained for two months in Spartan conditions in South Lake Tahoe, Calif. And it was caught in the social upheaval of the day.



FILE PHOTO

Bob Beamon was one of many stars from the 1968 Olympic track and field team. Beamon set the world long jump record of 29 feet, 2 1/2 inches, one of several records set by Americans. Some team members also were singled out for their political stances.

Most prominent was the black-gloved demonstration on the medals podium by Tommie Smith and John Carlos, the first and third finishers in the 200 meters.

Their gesture was interpreted as too political, and Smith and Carlos were expelled from the Olympic Village by the U.S. Olympic Committee, following pressure from the International

Olympic Committee. "It was so unfortunate that we took a nonviolent activity that devastated two fine athletes," Beamon said. "The same thing could happen today and it could have a different meaning. It's unfortunate how it was interpreted. It was not planned."

Vince Matthews, a member of

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Southern Renaissance Restaurant



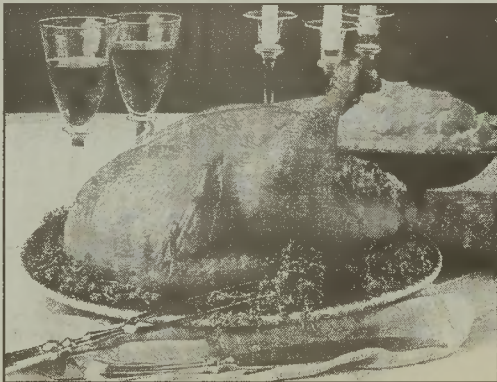
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