

Jackson makes switch

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performance.

"I feel I'm doing pretty good on picking up pretty quick on the linebacking position as far as responsibility," he said. "But the big work comes in the summertime."

Instead of switching positions out of necessity, however, he is moving around to provide the defense an edge by dropping into coverage or rushing from either spot. By moving Jackson around, Smith coaches hope to create mismatches that can lead to big plays.

"He's going to have to do some standing up," Harkness said. "It's not new, he did some last year. He's just getting a head start on the spring and getting more comfortable with it. We'll have some defenses that he'll be able to stand up and give us a little more of an impact from the stand-up position."

Jackson is light for a defensive end, but quick enough to rush quarterbacks or drop into coverage as a linebacker. His quarterback sack on a two-point attempt sealed Smith's only win last season, a 21-19 homecoming win over Livingstone.

"It's a little difficult being an end so long, but I really just need to do the opposite of what ends do on some plays," Jackson said. "Once I get the drops, I'll have it pretty much down pat."

Jackson's value isn't limited to defense. He's played receiver in limited situations, which convinced Harkness Jackson has the attributes to succeed wherever he lines up. If the change works, Smith's defense stands to benefit.

"He's a football player," Harkness said. "He has a football mind. We've looked at him at the tight end spot, some receiver situations. He's a football guy. You put him in a position and just coach him, and he adapts to it."

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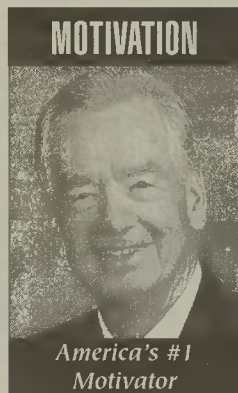
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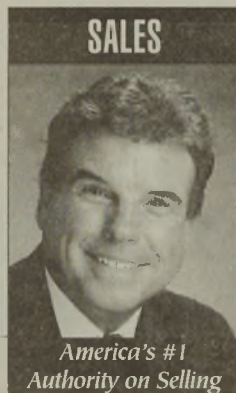
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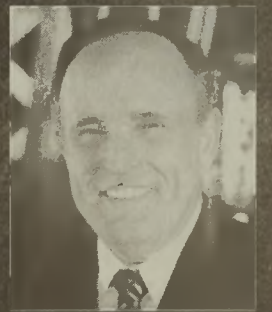
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