

# All The Way, Choo Choo--Charlie Justice Makes Last Run

## Strictly Ad Lib

By ZANE ROBBINS

### End of the Trail

THE BLAZING heels of Charlie (Choo Choo) Justice will write finsis to one of the most glamorous careers in the long history of football this afternoon in Jacksonville, Fla. when the six-time All America captain's team of Rebels in the first annual Senior Bowl game.

Charlie, who has declined all pro football "feelers," will climax a thrill-packed 11-year grid career today after capturing virtually every major honor that this football-conscious nation of purrs has to offer.

The sensational Choo Choo was All America from the word go. He made the select circle four consecutive years while playing with the Tar Heels, had made Service All America for two years prior to that, and was an All Southern schoolboy star at Asheville's Lee Edwards high school.

His freshman year at Carolina was lived in typical storybook fashion. Fresh out of the navy, Charlie was rushed by a host of professional clubs in addition to countless colleges and universities. He listened to most of the offers, but ended up by choosing his own state university.

With the news that Justice had picked Carolina, rival coaches started tearing their hair and dreaming up defenses to halt the mighty mite. One enterprising soul went completely overboard about the whole thing and dreamed up a cock and bull story that had Charlie under contract to the Philadelphia Eagles. The story alleged that the Choo Choo had signed with the pros shortly after graduating from high school, and was ineligible at Carolina.

As things turned out, there was nothing much to the story (Justice was offered a contract with a bonus attached, but returned both before entering the navy), and things drifted slowly back to normal.

### More Fireworks

WHEN THE Southern Conference season got under way, the fireworks lost little time in redeveloping. Choo Choo held the match this time, however.

Virginia Tech was the first SIC opponent to sample Justice's phatom-like dipsy doodle style of running. The Gobblers were in top shape for the 1946 opener and surprised everyone by holding the Tar Heels to a 14-14 deadlock. They might have won had it not been for the Asheville Ambler who danced 65 yards for the tying marker.

Justice shook loose for a 68-yard teedee run against Miami (Fla.) University the next week, and followed that one up with 70 and 90-yard touchdown runs against Florida U.

Then came what many experts call the Choo Choo best's run—an electrifying 84-yard jigstep against Tennessee's powerful Vols in their own backyard, Shields-Watkins Field. It was a twisting, turning run that had the fans' hearts in their mouths. He scored, and the game movies showed that 13 Vols went for the razzle-dazzle artist during the course of his excursion. As Orville Campbell put it in his rave ditty "All The Way Choo Choo," "He took the ball, poured on the coal; ran a thousand yards from goal to goal."

### The Other Side

FAME LOST no time in seeking out Charlie Justice. The Carolina Express rolled for other long payday jaunts during that first year and failed to slow up noticeably in the years after when opposing coaches set their defense for him, roughed him up in pile-ups, and tried in every way to stop the miniature marvel.

There's another side to the story, however. It blossomed into full view during the past season. After surviving six rough-and-tumble years in the toughest of service and collegiate football ranks without missing a game because of an injury, the blow came.

In the twilight of his brilliant career, the indestructible Choo Choo's luck finally ran out, and old Dame Fortune gave him a kick in the pants that he'll probably never get over.

One week before the game that Charlie had waited a lifetime to play, he suffered his first serious injury—a badly sprained ankle that refused to respond to treatment.

And so, he sat the big one out; even cried on the sidelines of New York's Yankee Stadium while watching his mates stave off a Notre Dame landslide for the better part of the game.

### Thrills and Chills

CHARLIE HAS certainly had his share of thrills and chills during his young life. Missing the Notre Dame clash, he says, was his greatest chill—the biggest disappointment he ever had. On the brighter side again, one would think choosing his biggest thrill would come a little harder for the busy little man that cracked all kinds of records in the course of his career.

Justice has little trouble in putting his finger on his number calling that unforgettable 43-yard touchdown scamper that pulled one thrill, however. It was the 1948 Duke game, he says, re-tear the Tar Heels from the brink of disaster after half the game had gone scoreless. Final score, 20-6.

Today, Justice is the same likable little guy that led Asheville High to grid glory back in the early 40's. He never let his ability and the glory that was heaped upon him go to his head.

Someone recently asked one of Justice's very close friends how the Choo felt about missing a lot of first-team All Americas. "He feels the same about missing them as he did about making them," the friend replied. "It doesn't affect him."



As An All Southern Schoolboy Star

### Choo Choo Had Great Record As Schoolboy

Ralph James, Justice's high school coach was contacted earlier in the year and asked for data concerning Charlie's high school career.

Coach James had no official records at his disposal, but sent along an interesting letter which read, in part:

"1. The season of 1941: 17 touchdowns averaging 25 yards per (touchdown) run, leader in 11 victories, no defeats.

"2. The season of 1942: 17 touchdowns averaging 35 yards per run. Longest run, 99½ yards against Knoxville City High, champions of Tennessee.

"3. Operation for severe boil on Tuesday and two long touchdown runs on following Friday.

"4. His type of athlete made coaching a pleasure as well as successful."



He'll Always Be All America In The Hearts Of These Kids

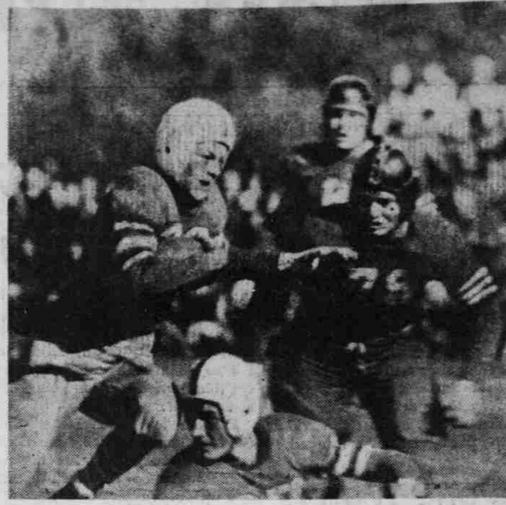
### Justice Total Reaches High Of 10 Miles

In four years of football for Carolina Charlie Justice has advanced the ball more than 10 miles.

The amazing little man ran for a net of 2,755 yards, passed for 2,299 yards, kicked for 10,439 yards, returned punts for 1,200 yards, returned kickoffs for 892 yards, returned intercepted passes for 33 yards, and has caught passes good for 232 yards.

Justice scored 39 touchdowns and passed for 25 more in his four-year career, thus accounting for 384 points.

His overall punting record of 42.6 yards per try stamps him as the best booter in the history of the game, and the record will probably stand for a long, long time.



A 99-yard Teedee Run Against Knoxville Hi

### Rival Coaches Respect Choo As Grid Great

Charlie Justice is what is known as a "player's player," which is a great tribute indeed to the half-pint Carolina All America star. More than that, however, he is a coach's player, too.

When a player wins the true admiration and praise of rival coaches, he's bound to be great. No run-of-the-mill ball-carrier would ever have prompted Virginia's Art Guepe to say, "Justice is the greatest football player I've ever seen. Bill Dudley (one of the great players in the history of Southern football) couldn't carry his shoes."

Justice's former Bainbridge coach, Joe Maniaci, had this to say: "Charlie was never a quitter, no matter how hopeless the situation." Maniaci also recalls an event in the 1944 Bainbridge-Camp Perry game. The battle, according to Maniaci, was "a whole of a defensive contest, and Charlie as well as all the backs on the squad was taking a severe beating."

However, Harry Hopp, formerly of the Detroit Lions, broke into the clear and dashed 60 yards for a touchdown. "The last block on that play," said Maniaci, "was made by Charlie—the kid that everyone thought was just a runner."

Maniaci later said, "I am proud to have had a part in starting Justice on his way to greatness, and it couldn't have happened to a better boy."

Wallace Wade, boss of Carolina's arch rivals, the hated Blue Devils, also had kind words about Charlie. "If he (Justice) played as well against everybody as he does against us," opined Wade, "they'd have to invent a new Heisman trophy. The present one wouldn't be enough."

### Justice 19th In Long Line Of All Americas

Charlie Justice is the 19th in a long line of All America grid-ders from the Old North State, but is the first three-time first team All America in North Carolina's football history.

Freddy Crawford, Duke's giant tackle, started the chain back in 1933 when he was chosen on the "dream team." Like Justice, Crawford was reared in western North Carolina. His home is Waynesville, 28 miles from Asheville.

The Carolina AA representatives are: George Barclay, Don Jackson, Andy Bershak, Steve Maronic, and Paul Severin.

Severin was first two-time selectee, receiving the honor in 1939 and again in 1940.

Art Weiner is twentieth in the long line from this state.

### Ex-Bainbridge Coach Tells About Choo's Naval Days

Many stories have made the rounds during the past few years concerning Charlie Justice's football activity at the Bainbridge Naval Station.

The stories always vary, so we went directly to Joe Maniaci who was coaching the Bainbridge eleven at the time.

Maniaci wrote the following letter describing the incident:

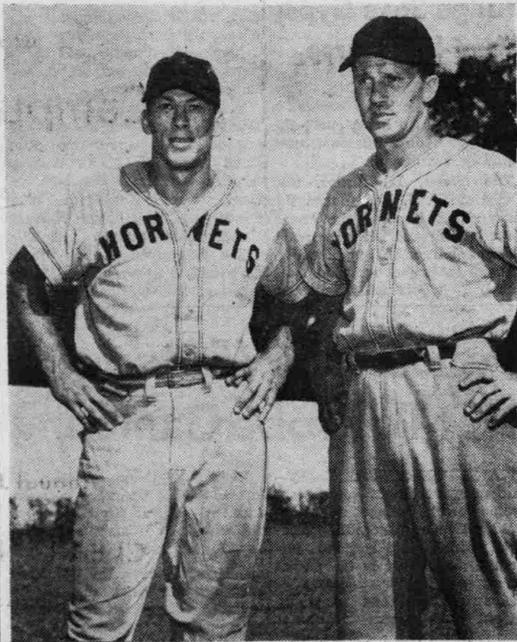
"When Charlie reported he was 18 years old, 5' 9", and weighed around 165 pounds. He was a frail youngster compared to the others that reported and I refused to issue him equipment because I was afraid he'd get hurt. He kept coming back and kept begging me for equipment, so just to get him out of my hair I gave him everything but shoes.

"... He was always the first one out for practices and the last one off the field. I couldn't help but admire him for working so hard. Of course, he still continued to pester me about the shoes and about getting in for contact work, so finally I decided to actually try him. I was still worried about him getting in-

jured and warned him about how rough the game was, but he wasn't the least concerned. The first contact work that he took part in was a punting drill which consisted of two linemen going down under a punt, and then a back would receive the kick and attempt to evade the linemen.

"When Charlie's turn came, I asked the two linemen to help me get this kid out of my hair for his own good, but to be careful not to hurt him. The two best ends on the squad were slated to attempt to tackle him.

Charlie received the punt beautifully, started toward the on-rushing linemen and, to the great surprise of everyone, got away untouched. I put him through the test again and again, but by means of his tricky running he wasn't stopped. After practice, I called Justice aside and told him to report to the equipment room because it just happened that there was a pair of football shoes there that would fit him."



And Baseball, Too — Brother Joe, Right

### Here Is The Lighter Side Of Charlie Justice Story

During his four-year tenure at the University, Charlie Justice has been probably the most talked-about young man in college circles. The seemingly endless bull sessions that always pop up when Charlie's name is mentioned have been, for the most part, serious discussions of the Choo Choo's amazing grid-iron talents, but there has been the humorous side, too.

In the ensuing paragraphs are related a few of the better-known anecdotes concerning the famous Tar Heel.

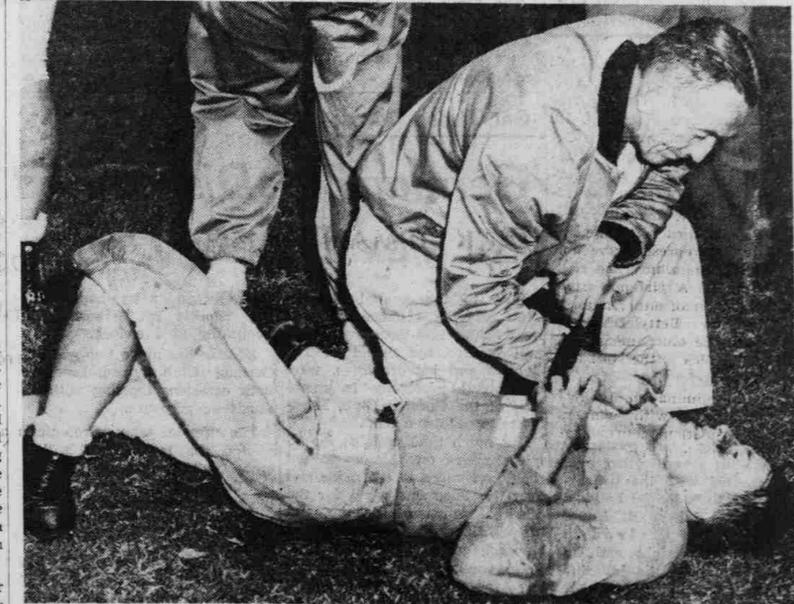
Wally Butts tells this one about a recent Carolina-Georgia clash. "We were playing North Carolina and they had this boy Justice. We had a boy who had been a guard for three years without any success, so we shifted him to end. I told him how great Choo Choo Justice was and for him to watch him.

"... In the third quarter, with the score tied, this boy was at

his end position when Justice took a punt and went around him for 75 yards and a touchdown. So I called the boy over for an interview. I thought, I told you to watch Justice, I said to him. Well, the boy shook his head and said he did. And he looked like a helluva good football player to me, Coach, while I was watching him."

Then there was the one that came out of New Orleans last year when the Tar Heels were down for the Sugar Bowl game. A drunk staggered into a Canal Street bar after a trolley had jumped the track while turning a sharp corner. "I shaw it all," he stammered, asking for a double shot of bourbon. "Sharly Justice was going the other way in a Shevvy and faked the damn thing right off the track."

There are a great many other anecdotes concerning the famous Choo Choo that are interesting, but are too long to relate here.



When His Luck Ran Out—Trainer Quinlan At His Side

(All photos courtesy Winston-Salem Journal.)



A Family Portrait: Mother, Charlie, and Sarah