

McCallum upholds Navy tradition

By LEE ROBERTS
Assistant Sports Editor

Talk about a set-up.

Pictures of Joe Bellino, Roger Staubach and present-day senior tailback Napoleon McCallum all grace the cover of the Naval Academy's 1984 Football Handbook. Bellino and Staubach are the only two Heisman Trophy winners in Academy history. As for McCallum, written under the photograph of him romping into the end zone in last season's Army-Navy game is the caption, "...The Tradition Continues..."

Certainly, McCallum is among the leading pre-season candidates for this year's Heisman award, along with Doug Flutie of Boston College, Bo Jackson of Auburn and Bernie Kosar of Miami. What else does Navy have to boast about? Even with McCallum finishing first in the nation in all-purpose running at over 216 yards per game and third in the nation in rushing with 1,587 yards in 1983, the Midshipmen could still only manage a 3-8 record.

But without McCallum, Navy might have even lost to Army and Princeton and — shudder to think of it — Lehigh. In fact, *Sports Illustrated* went so far as to say that "Napoleon Ardel McCallum IS Navy."

At times last season, it seemed as if McCallum was indeed the entire Navy offense. For instance, last Oct. 8, in a 44-17 loss to Air Force, the Middies picked up 275 yards rushing. McCallum gained 211 of them, including 60 on one run which gave Navy its last lead at 10-7. The next week, in a 37-29 win at Princeton, McCallum had the best game of his career. The junior tailback rushed for 229 yards, but did not even play in the last 22 minutes of the game, caught three passes for 37 yards, made a punt return of 45 yards and had a kickoff return of 21 yards. That gave McCallum 332 yards all-purpose running for the day, a Naval Academy record (one of 16 he holds). Plus he scored the first three Navy touchdowns of the game.

To top that off, the next week McCallum gained 172 yards in a narrow 21-14 loss to highly-ranked Pittsburgh. McCallum's effort was the most yards gained in one game against a Pitt team since Lydell

Mitchell of Penn State gained 181 in 1971.

Pittsburgh head coach Foge Fazio was effusive after the game. "If you want to talk about effort, then McCallum showed great second and third effort," Fazio said. "We played every one of our defensive schemes, and I'm sure our guys were keying on him, but he has great lean, good balance, and he heads for the goal line. He can play for anybody in the country."

If McCallum can play for anybody in the country, then why was he recruited by only Syracuse, N.C. State, Tennessee and Navy, and by the former three as a defensive back?

Navy head coach Gary Tranquill says that McCallum has improved tremendously since his high school days. "Everything that Napoleon has done has come through hard work," Tranquill said.

That hard-work ethic has probably come about as the result of McCallum's father, the elder Napoleon, who has been a big influence on his son. The McCallums grew up in Milford, Ohio, on an 11-acre farm east of Cincinnati. Living out in the country, there was a lot of hard work for the younger Napoleon, and life

was sometimes pretty tough, he said. There were animals to tend to, fences to mend and farm equipment to fix.

"It was pretty hard sometimes," McCallum said. "Mom would cry for us to come in, and it'd usually be real dark outside before we did."

That hard-work lifestyle helped McCallum, his father said.

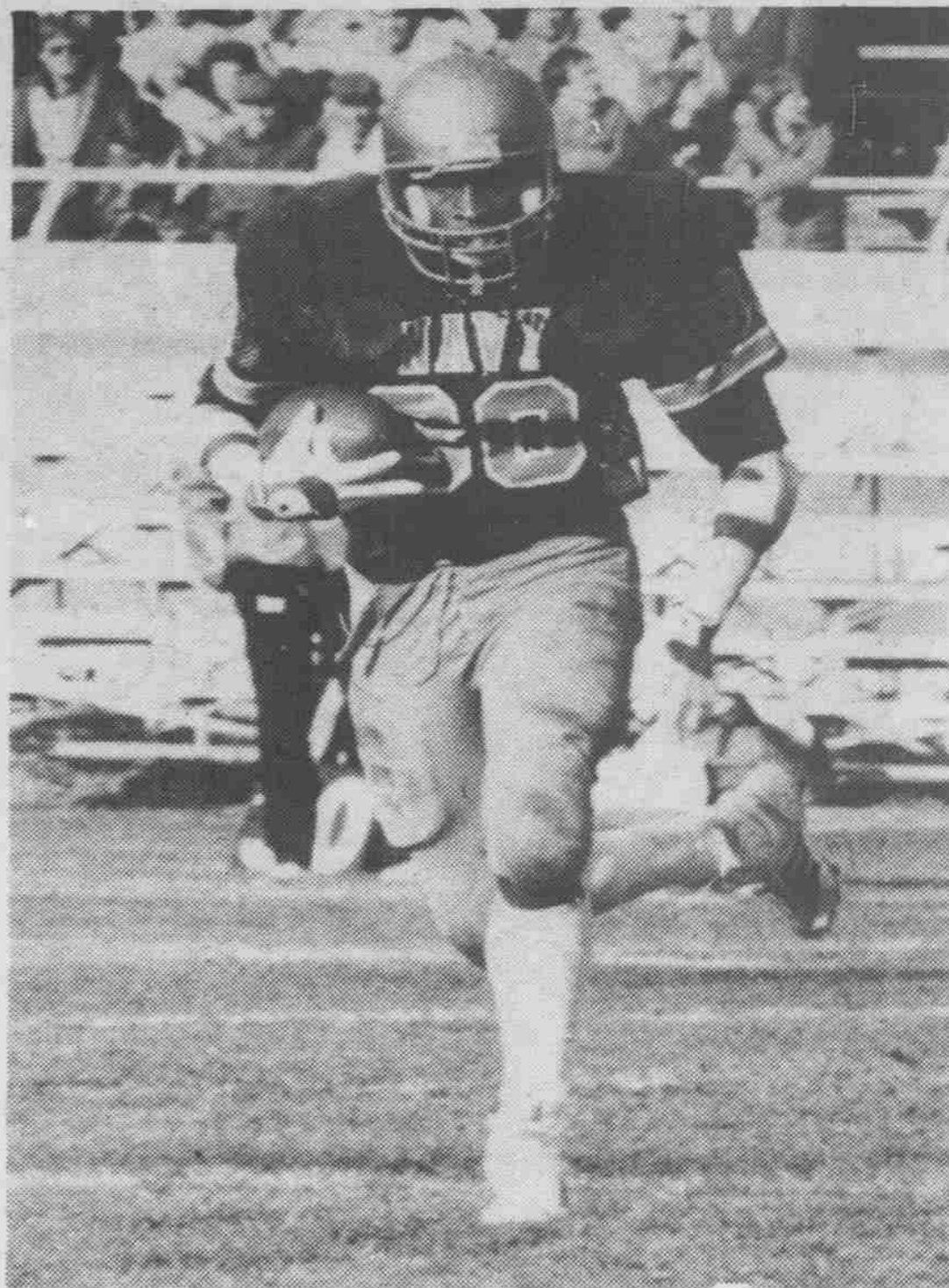
"We are country people," Napoleon the father said. "I believe he started to play sports to get away from that work. I didn't mind. I just don't believe in idleness."

As a youngster, McCallum preferred wrestling over other sports. His father was a wrestling coach at nearby Princeton High School in Sharonville, Oh. "In wrestling, you shake your opponent's hand, they ring the bell and you put him on his back," McCallum said, explaining the special challenge that he feels in wrestling.

When time came to choose a college, McCallum gave up wrestling to devote more attention to football. The few colleges that recruited him wanted him to play defense. McCallum chose Navy, where he could run with the ball.

"Here I have had the opportunity to play tailback and to start

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All-purpose runner Napoleon McCallum

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