

Melton's size, attitude earn him a starting job

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Editor

The world of the three-point stance is pretty awkward, maybe even a little crazy.

A football lineman prepares to wreck havoc on the man before him. But he doesn't take a running start. No, he has his back to the sky.

If you stand 6-foot-6 and weigh 270 pounds, you might wonder if your body is not better suited to another sport.

Not James "Plug" Melton, who's every bit that big, and good enough to earn a starting job at right guard on the Winston-Salem State offensive front as a freshman. First-year players rarely start for the Rams, but Melton's talent was too big for Coach Bill Hayes to ignore.

"You don't get too many Danny Moores or James Meltons in your entire coaching career," Hayes said. "I plan to get four good years out of James. There's no point in putting him on a waiting list. He's a quality athlete."

It's not as if Melton didn't have the opportunity to play another sport, either. In addition



James Melton earned CIAA Rookie of the Week honors last week for his role in the Rams' win over Virginia State (photo by James Parker).

to being an all-stater in football, Melton led Norfolk's Booker T. Washington High to back-to-back Class 3A Virginia basketball championships. He was recruited by several Division I basketball programs.

Indeed, basketball was his first love.

"For a long time I didn't want to play football," Melton said. "I didn't like all that hitting and hard work. Cal (Davidson, Washington's football coach)

take football more seriously.

"I could write a book about Cal Davidson," Melton said. "He always encouraged me. I already miss the guy, even though we had some bad times when he cussed me."

Like the time Melton could barely finish a lap around the track.

But Melton got serious the summer before his senior year. He started to run hard and kept running up until preseason practice last month. Ah, youth. He's often first in line running sprints or hills these days.

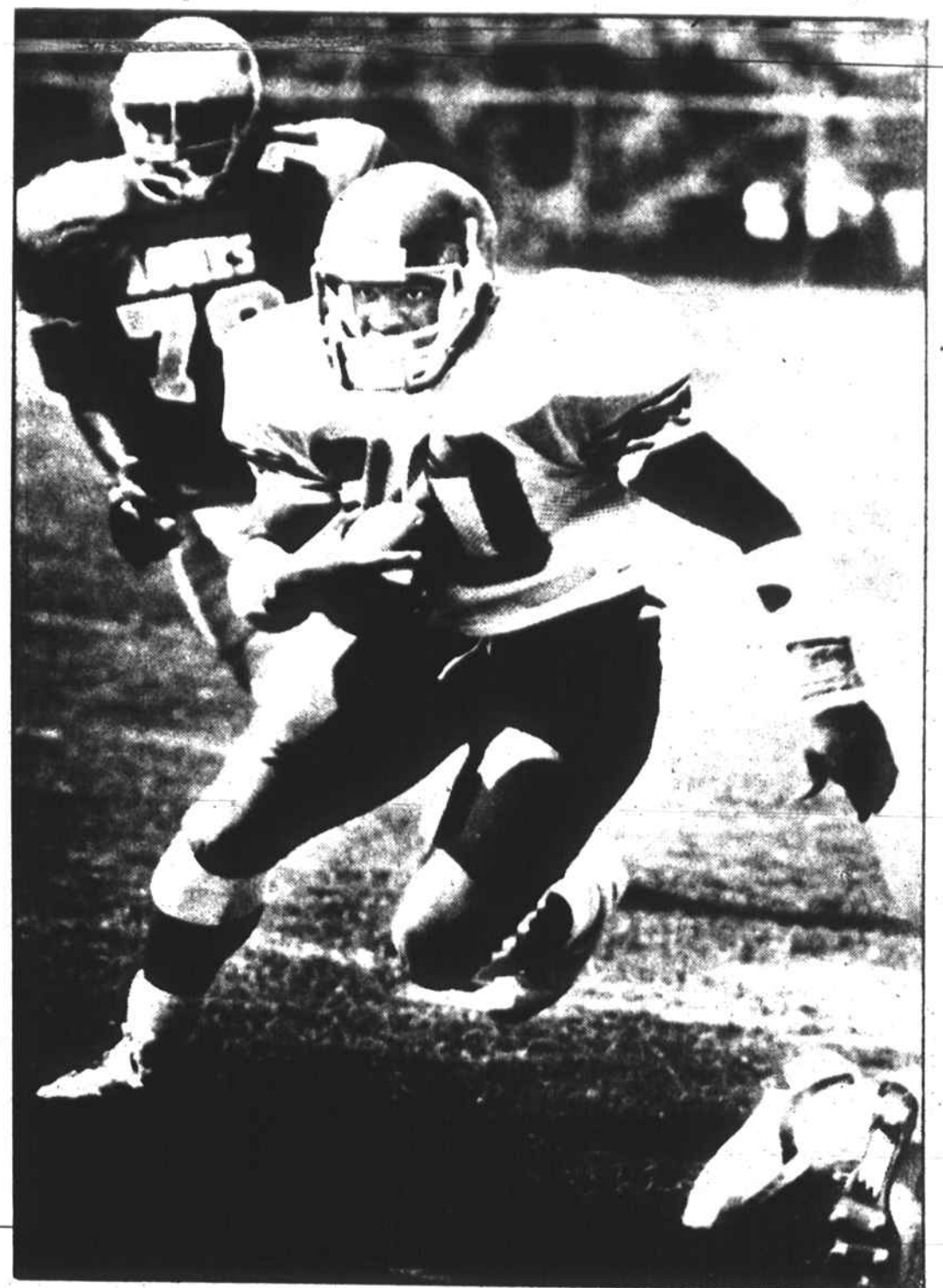
Melton decided on football after some close encounters with 7-footers in AAU ball. WSSU, Hampton University and Norfolk State were his main suitors.

"Norfolk and Hampton are too close to home," he said. "They have excellent football programs, but I wanted to get away from home."

So Melton chose WSSU and was surprised when Hayes made him a starter.

"Don't get me wrong; I was ready to play," he said. "I just wanted to watch and see what's going on for a while."

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Lonnie Pulley looks for some daylight in the A&T secondary during the Aggies' 28-21 win over WSSU (photo by James Parker).

Prep Football

McKinnie leads West to victory over Glenn

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Editor

CLEMMONS -- Herman McKinnie ran for 113 yards on 22 carries and scored a touchdown to lift unbeaten West Forsyth past Glenn last Friday night.

That sets up a battle of 3-0 teams Friday night, when West hosts Carver at 8 o'clock. The Titans won last year's game 21-8 as Derrick Byers completed 15 of 20 passes for 134 yards.

The Titans seemed relieved to get past the previously unbeaten Bobcats, who drove to the West 5-yard line in the game's last two minutes before tailback Randy Jones was stopped inches short of a first down.

"That was too close for me," said fullback-defensive back Bobby Paige, who helped stop Jones on the fourth-and-two play. "I hate stuff like that."

"We are a good team, but one of these days the penalties are going to catch up with us."

It appeared the Titans had stopped the Bobcats on a fourth-and-17 at the West 34-yard line. Brad Stanbery's fourth-down pass was incomplete, but a personal foul against Donald Scales gave Glenn a first down at the Titan 14-yard line.

Jones was thrown for a four-yard loss on first down before fullback Charlie Harris gained five. However, a clipping penalty on third down gave Glenn a third and 21. Stanbery found tight end Weymouth Jones open over the middle and Jones took the ball to the West 6.

Randy Jones received the call on fourth down, going off left guard and nearly getting the first down on a second effort.

"It was an isolation inside," said Jones, who had 77 yards on 15 carries for the 2-1 Bobcats. "I didn't see any hole and tried to punch through."

It was a disappointing near-miss for Jones, who had finally gotten the Bobcat offense untracked with a 31-yard run earlier in the drive. Backup tailback Landon Gary went 25 yards on the next play.

That put the Bobcats in field-goal range, but Jones was glad Coach Al Hooker played for the win, not the tie.

"We wanted to win or lose when we got that close," Jones said. "There's no profit in tying a non-conference game."

"Now maybe we're off our high horse because we know we can lose, and we know what we have to do to get over the hill."

The Bobcats had raced to a 6-0

lead in the first quarter after Mario Patterson intercepted West backup quarterback Doug Sakowski, playing for the injured Byers. Stanbery completed a four-play, 17-yard drive with a three-yard keeper.

Glenn tried a two-point conversion, which was successful. But an illegal-motion penalty canceled that before the kick was wide right.

The score stayed that way until Scales recovered a Jones fumble on the next-to-last play of the first quarter. The Titans then drove to the Bobcat 10-yard line, where Kevin Wendelboe booted a 27-yard field goal for a 6-3 Glenn edge.

West put together the game's first sustained drive on its first possession of the third quarter. McKinnie carried for 53 of the 70 yards, including the last 22. But Mark Cartner missed the PAT kick wide right.

The defenses dominated until the Bobcats' late march.

Linebacker Donald Carter, subject of frequent double teams, said West's defense did not get down after Glenn drove to the 14 with time running out.

"Our defense never gets down," Carter said. "We just kept on sticking it to them until the end."

The 6-foot-2, 200-pound Carter finished with a personal season-low of eight tackles, but Mark Wylam and Mark Perry picked up the slack with 10 hits each.

Paige said the Titan defensive front took control in the second half.

"The defensive line's responsibility is to keep the offensive line off Donald," Paige said. "They were sending two guys at him all night, so that made it doubly hard. But Donald had more freedom in the third and fourth quarters."

West Coach Dennis Zeiters credited Defensive Coordinator Dave McConnell with masterminding a unit that has not allowed a sustained drive for a touchdown in three games.

"Coach McConnell does a super job," Zeiters said. "It's totally his doing. They've worked awfully hard."

Zeiters' I-formation offense worked best with McKinnie sweeping, but the passing game was non-existent with Byers benched by a severe cut in his right thumb. He had hurt it on a quarterback sneak in the Titans' 9-6 win over East Forsyth last

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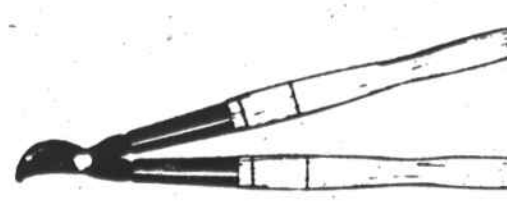
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