

Always a Raider

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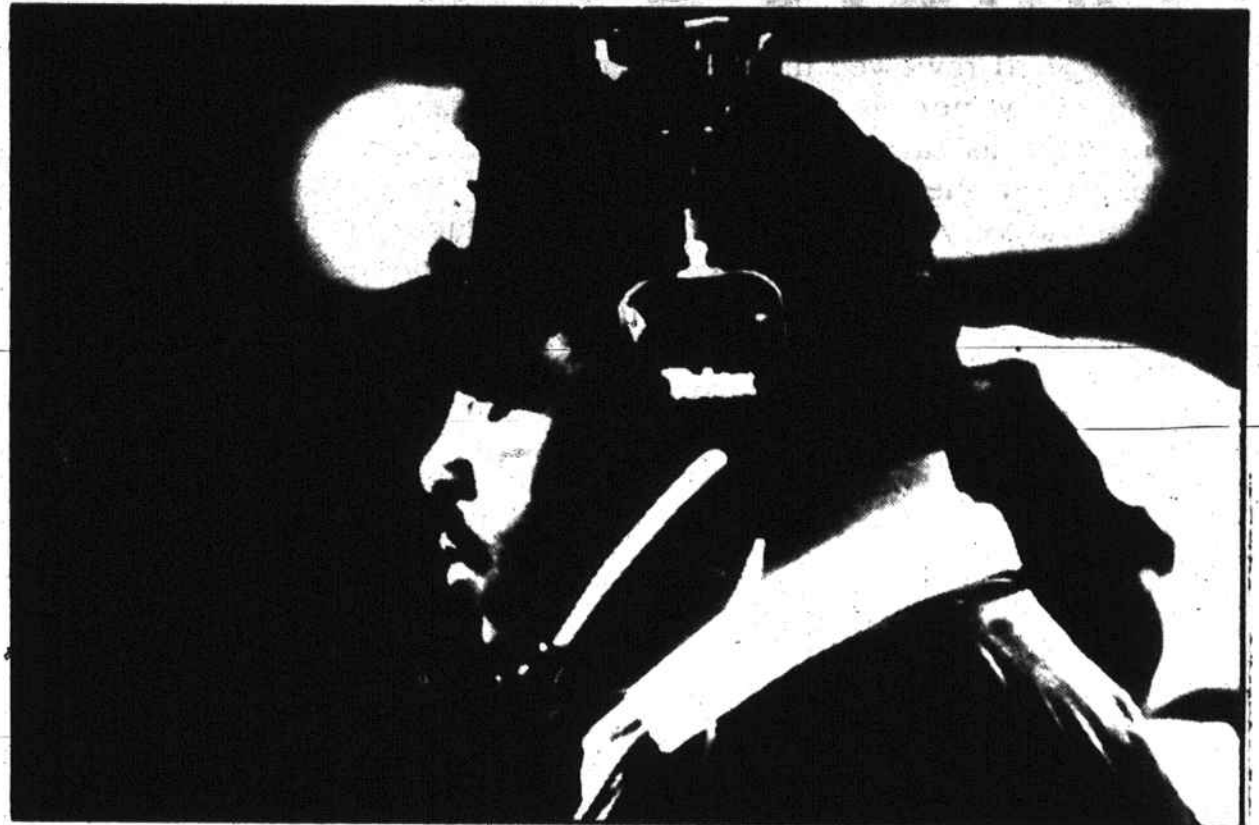


Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Raiders

"We should be OK this year. But the most important thing is getting this team out of training camp healthy. We'll be decent."

Shell is confident that in time, Marinovich, a.k.a. "Robo Quarterback", will make his mark. "He's a good, heady kid," the coach added. "He's smart and has a very accurate arm. We just have to make sure that he keeps his head in the game. Our future will be very bright with him. He can be a phenomenal player in this league."

Achieving the phenomenal is a Raider trademark. Shell should know. As a player, he manhandled opponents in the trenches as a 6-5, 300 lbs. offensive tackle. In 15 seasons, he teamed with tackle Gene Upshaw to lead the Oakland Raiders to two Super Bowl titles and 11 playoff appearances. He was an eight-time Pro Bowl selection, the most for any Raider.

In retrospect, it's obvious that Shell's hiring as the man in charge had more to do with his familiarity with the Raider philosophy as opposed to skin color. He retired as an active player at the end of the '82 season, and has stayed with the organization since that time as a coach. When it comes to football, Shell's thinking is 100 percent skull and crossbones.

That, in part, explains why the Raiders have risen from mediocrity during Shell's tenure. Bo knows fame and fortune. But Shell knows what team owner Al Davis expects. He's also well-schooled at pushing the right buttons to get his players to perform to their maximum.

Much of Shell's coaching focus, especially after he took over, cen-

tered on restoring Raider pride. As a griot of sorts, he is adept at reciting Raider folklore to the young players (it's called going back to the "Twilight Zone").

Art's method works. His guys are looking more like the Raider teams of yesteryear — a bunch that doesn't have chips, but boulders on its collective shoulders.

"I didn't make any major adjustments when I became head coach," Shell insisted. "I just went back to doing what we had done in the past. We attack on offense and defense. We'll stuff the ball down your throat and when needed, go over the top with the pass from time to time.

"My biggest job was to get our people to understand that you should play hard, but have some fun. We weren't having any fun before I took over. When you play hard and have fun, you don't worry about mistakes and you'll eventually win."

The Raiders coach realizes that his team can improve and still not equal or surpass last season's win-loss record. But the main goal for his team is to always continue to get better. The same goes for him.

"I want to be able to make adjustments on the spot," he said. "I don't want to wait until halftime. Teams that can make changes right then and there are the teams that will win."

Shell knows the art of victory. It's no accident. Once a Raider, always a Raider.

— Craig T. Greenlee



BCSR File Photo

Grand Prix Leader

Nigerian sprinter Mary Onyali is up to her old tricks again. The former Texas Southern star is the world's Grand Prix leader in the women's 100 meters. She heads the women's list with 25 points. Gwen Torrence of the U.S. is in second place with 23 points. Early this month, Onyali prevailed in a showdown race against Torrence at the International Grand Prix meet in France. Onyali nipped her U.S. rival at the tape, winning in 11.04. Torrence clocked 11.06.