

Lane might win a job

Continued from 1B

in practice. We like what we see so far."

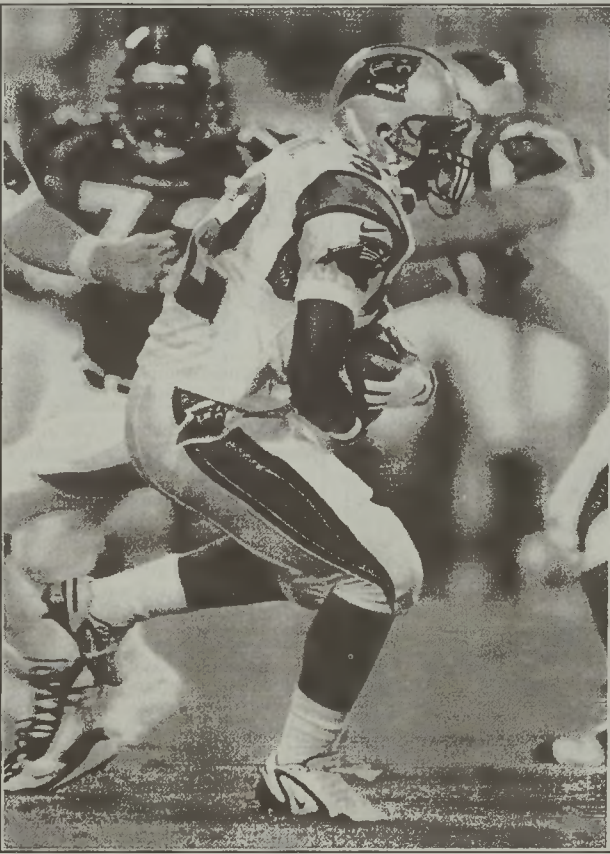
Football is in Lane's blood. His father, Fred Sr., was a star back at Tennessee State and later played for the Washington Redskins.

"They called him Night Train," the younger Lane said. "They called me Little Night Train."

Little Night Train chugged through defenses at Lane, a Division II school. As a junior, he finished second in the nation in rushing in 1995 with 1,833 yards and Lane finished 8-2. Lane's senior season was curtailed by injuries, but he managed 825 yards, good enough to convince Carolina general manager Bill Polian to sign him to a free agent contract. Although Lane never gave pro football much thought, he earned a shot at the big time.

"I was just having fun playing black college football because it was a lot of fun," he said. "I never thought I'd be in the NFL playing in front of all these people doing my thing."

Lane's thing has been impressive. At 5-10 and 205 pounds, he's shown power and speed during the preseason. "He has natural instincts to play the game," Harris said. "He has a burning desire to get the ball to the goal line." The pros is "a whole different world," from the college game, Lane said. The complexity of offenses was confusing at first, but he's adjusting quickly. The results can be seen on the field, where Lane has shown bursts of power between tackles and the speed to outrun defenders.



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Fred Lane has been the biggest surprise of the Carolina Panthers' preseason.

"I'm way better than the first day of minicamp," he said. "The first day, I was lost. It was like I was in a foreign country or something. Now it's coming along."

Harris wouldn't tip the Panthers' hand as to whether Lane would make the opening-day roster. But his impressive showing on offense and work on special teams works to Lane's advantage.

"He's right in the middle of things," Harris said. "A running back in a backup role has to be able to play several roles. He's

done well on special teams.

Biakabutuka and Johnson aren't likely to be supplanted as Carolina's top running backs, and Lane knows it. What he wants is the chance to prove he belongs on an NFL roster.

"I've got to work harder than they do because they've been in the league longer than I have and they're more experienced," Lane said. "I've just got to sit back and pay my dues, then when I get my chance to get in the spotlight, then go ahead and do it." Quietly, of course.

Ramsey brings versatility to plate

Continued from 1B

than most of the guys in the gym, so they were excited."

After beating up on men in Golden Gloves tournaments, Ramsey had three bouts lined up against women, but got a call from Diamonds coach Judy Martino to try out. She had to put boxing on the back burner.

"I said I'd be right back in a couple of months, so just keep me in mind," Ramsey said.

The move to Charlotte has had its ups and downs. Ramsey gained valuable experience playing fast pitch, becoming a pioneer in a new league. But she had bad luck early in the season, injuring her right knee sliding into second.

"It's been great to me so far except for the injury and it's bothered me the whole season," she said. "So I haven't been able to produce the way I want to. I've had to play on it because we didn't have enough players."

Despite the injury, which won't fully heal until Ramsey rests her knee during the off season, she is still the answer to a Diamonds trivia question. Ramsey hit the franchise's first home run at UNC Charlotte.

"I'm glad I had it," she said. "I didn't expect it, especially in that at-bat, but I guess the coach can see me progressing, the bat speed and the timing."

Martino has seen it. Ramsey's bat has come alive in the second half. By early last week, she had raised her average to .248 with 32 hits, 3 doubles and 5 RBIs.

"Lisa is a raw athlete, she plays every sport," Martino said. "She's just a tough athlete, some things she does in softball are not pretty but she gets them done."

Ramsey's life also hasn't been the easiest. The Lake Wales, Fla., native is raising her 10-year old daughter, Alysia, by herself while

trying to find a home and lay down roots.

"I like the Charlotte area and I was hoping I would find some teaching job or something," she said. "If the Diamonds ask me back, that would be good, then I can learn the city and learn the people but if not, I'm going back to Florida and find something."

This season hasn't played out the way the Diamonds expected. A decent first half, (16-19), was followed by a two-week losing streak that knocked the Diamonds from the playoff race but the team has shown improvement of late and point to year two as being better.

"We have some great players," Martino said. "Now but we have to get a little more consistent."

At the moment, Martino's plans for next season include Ramsey.

"Her primary role is as a designated player, that she would do a lot of hitting," Martino said. "She's a good base runner (but) a little shaky in the field so we have a few things for her to work on over the winter."

For Ramsey, the season has been an eye-opener.

"I haven't seen this great an amount of talent except at the Olympic team. I never went to college at the Big Ten schools, I played one year (at Florida A&M), so I've never seen the best of the best."

Now Ramsey has and she hopes to stay awhile.

Littlejohn wins Open

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Donald Littlejohn won the Par-Buster Open Golf Tournament Sunday at Eastwood Golf Course in Charlotte.

Littlejohn won with a two-round total of 140. Andre Robinson was three strokes back in second place and Tom Polito third at 147.

Robert Brown took first in first flight play with 152, two shots better than Melvin Jackson and four ahead of Otis Worthy.

Results from the Par-Buster Open Golf Tournament at Eastwood Golf Course:

Championship flight: Donald Littlejohn 140; Andre Robinson 143; Tom Polito 147; Buddy Holson 148; Donnell Davis 149.

First Flight: Robert Brown 152; Melvin Jackson 154; Otis Worthy 156; James Glenn 157; John Neely 158.

Second flight: Doug Beamer 157; Wanda Green 158; Aquil Shamsid-Deen 74; Robert Patterson 161; Paul Cooper 161.

Third flight: Dan Bentley 164; Reggie Sellers 164; Mike Sharpe 169; Charles Shivers



PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Mike Sharpe putts during the Par-Busters Open golf tournament at Eastwood Golf Course in Charlotte. Donald Littlejohn won the tournament with a two-day score of 140, three shots better than Andre Robinson. Tom Polito was third at 147.

169; Dale Suggs 170. Fourth flight: Paul Cunningham Jr. 179; Earl Moore 180; Walter Burgess 184; William Schenck 185.

Former JCSU star going to S. Korea

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Robert Boykins' success in the U.S. Basketball League has landed him a job with a South Korean professional team.

Boykins, a former Johnson C. Smith standout, has signed with LG Sakers in South Korea's premier league. The fifth pick in the league's draft of American players, Boykins' contract, including incentives, can top \$100,000. Although he doesn't know much about LG Sakers, Boykins said the chance to play professionally is an opportunity too good to pass on. "All I know is it's in Korea and the pay is pretty good," he said.

Boykins helped the Atlantic City Sea Gulls to the USBL title this year with a 26-26 record. Playing small forward and power forward, he averaged 16 points and five rebounds a game, in addition to defending opponents' top offensive threat. "Whoever their scorer was, I

had to check him," Boykins said. "It let me know something that the coach thought enough of my defense to put me on the best player."

The 6-7 Boykins has worked on fine-tuning his overall game in summer leagues like the Charlotte Pro-Am and minor leagues like the USBL and CBA. In college, he concentrated on scoring; as a pro, the emphasis has shifted to the fundamentals.

"My outside shot has improved and my ball-handling is better," he said. "I'm more focused. I guess it comes with age and experience. I'm playing like I'm playing for fun."

Boykins, who was with the CBA's Shreveport, La., franchise in 1995, would still like to take a crack at the NBA. South Korea isn't the U.S., but it's a stepping stone. He leaves for his new job on Sept. 1.

"It's always been my dream to play in the NBA," he said. "Hopefully, by playing in Korea,



FILE PHOTO

Former Johnson C. Smith standout Robert Boykins will play in South Korea.

someone in the NBA will see me.

"It's not a live-or-die situation if I don't get to the NBA. It's like in Jerry Maguire - show me the money."



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