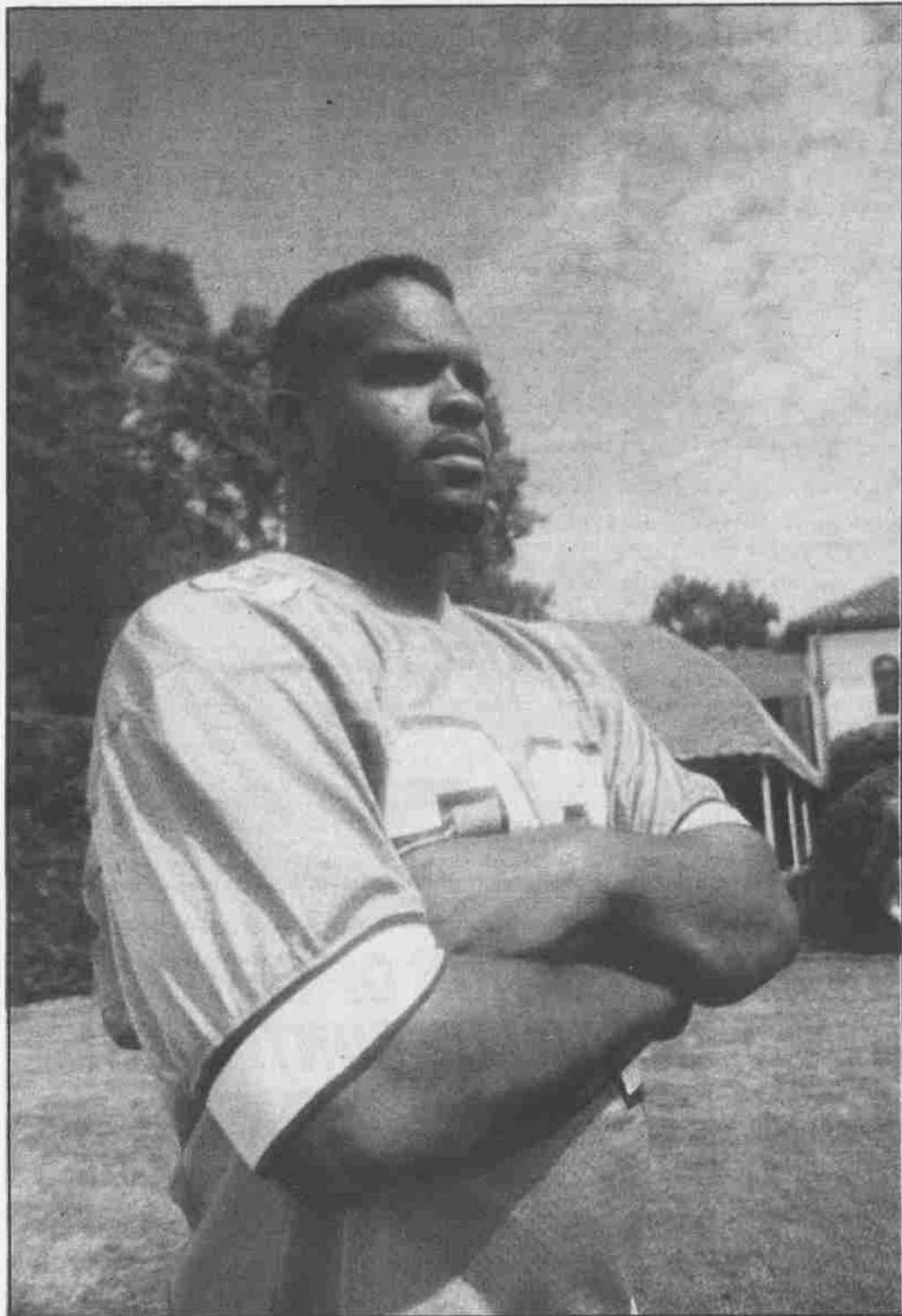


You want hits? Try taking aim at these running backs



DTH/Erin Randall

Wake Forest head coach Bill Dooley on tailback Natrone Means: "That's the biggest human being I've ever seen, and he can run"

Means, Jordan, Faulkerson, Henderson: Tar Heel backfield bold and bruising

By Eric David
Assistant Sports Editor

Americans love a good fight. This nation was created because of good old-fashioned bull-headedness. The King wants to tax us; we don't want to pay. Let's kick his ass.

This same spirit carries over into sport. Bo Jackson is arguably the most famous football (non)player in the world. But what moments in his brief career do we remember? Do we remember him juking some defensive end and then running past the rest of the defense?

No. What Americans will always remember about Bo Jackson is his confrontation with Seattle Seahawk linebacker Brian Bosworth in a Nov. 30, 1987 Monday Night Football game. Jackson could have avoided Bosworth as he came to the goal line in that game, but he chose not to. He instead buried his helmet in Bosworth's chest and knocked him into the end zone.

America falls in love. That being the case, UNC junior running back Natrone Means should be President come November.

"I'd like to run around people," Means said. "But I can't, so I have to run over them instead."

Means does this better than anyone in college football. "If you're a defensive back, and Natrone rounds the corner, there's only so much you can do except get on your knees and say a little prayer before he gets there," said North Carolina senior linebacker Tommy Thigpen.

"I've seen him punish defensive backs and I've seen him punish linebackers. You're not going to bring him down by yourself. It takes one person to stop him and another person to jump on him."

It seems, in fact, that Means' body was made to punish defenders. With 230 pounds packed into a 5-foot-10 frame, Means looks like a refrigerator with legs.

Those legs, though, are where the power lies. Means possesses 29-inch thighs. He holds the UNC record in the leg press, pushing an amazing 750 pounds. It is a package that adds up to mayhem for ACC defenses.

"By gosh, it looked like the side of a mountain running up there," said Wake Forest coach Bill Dooley after Means had strafed the Deacon defense for 167 yards and two touchdowns in UNC's 24-10 victory last Oct. 12. "Damn, that's the biggest human being I've ever seen, and he can run."

Don't feel bad, Bill. Means did that

to a lot of people in 1991. The Harrisburg native led the ACC with 1,030 yards and 11 touchdowns, earning first-team All-ACC honors. In the process, Means became the 20th 1,000-yard rusher in UNC history. In fact, after only two years, Means is the 10th-leading rusher in UNC history with 1,879 yards.

Only Amos Lawrence (1977-80), the Tar Heels' all-time leading rusher, carried for more yards in his first two years.

Watch Means run in the first half of a game and you may be mildly impressed. Watch him in the fourth quarter and you will be in awe. "With Natrone, the tired he is, the better he is," said Thigpen.

"I want the ball every time," Means said. "I wish Coach (Mack) Brown would just keep giving me the ball."

"The thing I've been impressed with is he runs better in the last four minutes of the game than he does the first four," Brown said. "And the more you hand him the ball, the better player he becomes."

In 1992, there may be no other choice but to give Means the ball. With a young, inexperienced offensive line in front of him and an unproven passing attack, Means knows that the fortunes of his team may rest on his broad shoulders.

"There is a lot of pressure on me," said Means. "But to be effective, I can't let the pressure get to me."

In an effort to ease this pressure, Brown has tried to diversify the offense in the preseason.

"Our offense was too predictable last year," Means said. "This year we have more receiver sets. Hopefully we can break the mold this year."

Also helping Means shoulder the load will be senior running back Randy Jordan. In 1991, Jordan returned from a year lost to injury to rack up 618 yards rushing (seventh in the ACC) and seven touchdowns.

Whereas Means leaves defenders gasping for air, Jordan leaves them grasping at air. If Means is "Crash", Jordan is "Flash." Jordan is one of the fastest players in the conference, having run a 4.25-second 40-yard dash.

This speed provides a contrast to the bruising style of Means. "It's good to know we can interchange and not skip a beat," said Means. "It's a good one-two punch."

"I feel like I can give the offense a spurt," Jordan said. "I can take any handoff all the way."

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STARTERS

Natrone Means, TB Mike Faulkerson, FB

North Carolina's Twenty 1,000-Yard Seasons

Year	Player	G	Att.	Yds.	Ave.	TD	Year	Player	G	Att.	Yds.	Ave.	TD
1969	Don McCauley	10	204	1,092	5.4	8	1980	Amos Lawrence	11	229	1,118	4.9	11
1970	Don McCauley	11	324	1,720	5.3	19	1980	Kelvin Bryant	11	177	1,039	5.9	12
1973	Sammy Johnson	11	183	1,006	5.5	7	1981	Kelvin Bryant	7	152	1,015	6.7	17
1974	James Betterson	11	209	1,082	5.2	9	1982	Kelvin Bryant	10	228	1,064	4.7	3
1974	Mike Voight	11	203	1,033	5.1	11	1983	Ethan Horton	11	200	1,107	5.5	8
1975	Mike Voight	10	259	1,250	4.8	11	1983	Tyrone Anthony	11	184	1,063	5.8	7
1976	Mike Voight	11	315	1,407	4.5	18	1984	Ethan Horton	11	238	1,247	5.2	6
1977	Amos Lawrence	10	193	1,211	6.3	6	1986	Derrick Fenner	10	200	1,250	6.3	6
1978	Amos Lawrence	11	234	1,043	4.5	2	1988	Kennard Martin	11	193	1,146	5.9	11
1979	Amos Lawrence	11	225	1,019	4.5	9	1991	Natrone Means	10	201	1,030	5.1	11

Note: North Carolina has the most 1,000-yard seasons of any team in the NCAA. Southern California is second with 19.