



THE LOCKER ROOM

Black Q.B., wave of future in the N.F.L.

By Aaron Fantress

The Professional black quarterback. A species of athlete almost non-existent through the years and with no just cause. Just a racist cause. For years blacks have been deterred from playing quarterback from as early on as Pop Warner league. Unless they can run. Through high-school and college black kids may thrive as quarterbacks in offenses that feature them as "running" quarterbacks, limiting their development as a passer and keeping them out of the National Football League. All this should change in the future.

The fact that their has been very few black "passing" quarterbacks in the N.F.L. can be attributed to different factors. The most obvious being the lack of development of young black passers during the early stages of their careers. Given the fact that every position in football, with the exception of offensive line and quarterback, are dominated by black athletes there has to be a reason other than athletic ability that keeps blacks out of the quarterback roles. For some coaches it's simply a stereotypical judgement which says that blacks lack the mental ability and leadership qualities required to perform effectively at quarterback. It's no secret that our society does not view blacks favorably in these two areas. This blatant racism has hurt blacks in many walks of life as well as in athletics, especially the N.F.L., which sports only two starting black quarterbacks and one black head coach. Blatant racism is obvious, subtle racism is less obvious and in today's sports world when black athletes have excelled so dramatically in football, baseball, boxing, basketball and track, their lies a more subtle problem which prohibits black quarterbacks from emerging in the N.F.L. I stress the N.F.L. because there are quite a few Division I star quarterbacks, the problem is why haven't these players surfaced in the N.F.L. as their white counterparts have. In my opinion the reason is due to the fact that black quarterbacks are not trained along the lines that would make

them successful N.F.L. quarterbacks. Jamelle Holieway, Turner Gill, Steve Taylor, Tony Rice, Major Harris and currently, Colorado's junior quarterback, Darian Hargan, are black quarterbacks who have received national attention for their signal calling duties at the college level. Yet non are in the N.F.L. Hargan will most certainly suffer the same fate.

All these quarterbacks will not be over looked because they are



Randall Cunningham

black, although many would like to think they have been passed by due to racism, the fact is these quarterbacks lack the skills to succeed in the N.F.L. They were not groomed as pocket passers. They were groomed as "running" quarterbacks who would only pass if they had too.

In the N.F.L. these quarterbacks have no value because teams don't want their quarterback exposed to unnecessary danger. They want them nice and safe in the pocket where they can pass and only run when that pocket breaks down. Athletically speaking all the above named college quarterback stars are more superior athletes than Joe Montana, Dan Marino, Jim Everett and Boomer Esiason, to name a few white N.F.L. star quarterbacks. So what do they have that a Major Harris does not have. Pocket passing experience since they were ten years old.

Randall Cunningham, of the Philadelphia Eagles, and Warren Moon, of the Houston Oilers, are it

as far as starting quarterbacks in the N.F.L. go. Both refused the opportunity to move to another position, stayed at quarterback and have experienced All-Pro status. Cunningham, from U.N.L.V. and Moon, from Washington, were pocket passers in college and it has helped them in the N.F.L. Cunningham is a rare example of a quarterback with both exceptional running and passing ability. Only John Elway of Denver can rival Cunningham's combination of speed and throwing ability. For this reason Cunningham has become one of the N.F.L.'s most feared players. You can't stop both aspects of his game because they are too explosive. Double trouble. Which brings us to the future. The passer who can run like a runningback. The future which could see a dramatic increase in the number of black N.F.L. quarterbacks and a decrease in the need for exclusively pocket passers.

With the current development of the N.F.L. game, sluggo quarterbacks are going to become a thing of the past. Defensive players, particularly linebackers and defensive backs, are becoming too fast and are bombs waiting to explode on non-mobile quarterbacks. To protect quarterbacks offenses are starting to gear more towards moving the quarterback out of the pocket and let him throw on the run. The "run and shoot" offense does precisely that and is a concept built around a mobile quarterback. The Detroit Lions, who possess two black quarterbacks. Rodney Peete and last years Heisman trophy winner and Detroit's number one pick, Andre Ware, introduced the offense for the first time in the N.F.L. With Peete and Ware, both of whom compliment the run and pass very effectively will cause fits for Lions opponents. In 1990 the "run and shoot" will be adopted by two more N.F.L. teams. Houston and Atlanta.

If the "run and shoot" is indeed the N.F.L.'s offense of the future. Than the speed quarterback is the N.F.L.'s need of the future. Enter the black quarterback. A runningback who can throw.

Paul Brown KNOWS THE ROPES

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

If there is any truth to the old saying that adversity builds character, then Paul Brown, President/PB Productions, Inc., has plenty of it and a great appreciation for life. Brown enjoys life because he almost lost his life.

As a former boxer, Brown has been knocked on his back a couple of times, but nothing could compare to the month and a half he spent in the hospital rehabilitating from a near fatal automobile accident. The accident cut short a very promising boxer career. From 1969 to 1982, Brown was one of the best light-heavyweights on the west coast. Brown won eight Golden Glove titles in Oregon, six in Seattle/Tacoma, and four in Idaho. He was 176-34 as an amateur fighter and fought only three professional contests before the accident. Richard "Richie" Giachetti, manager for "Iron" Mike Tyson, was Brown's cornerman at the time. He also managed Larry Holmes.

Currently employed as a Merchant Seaman, Brown threw in the towel after contemplating a comeback and ventured into the arena of promotions. He entered the area because of his contacts and love for the limelight. Browns mellow disposition won him many friends in boxings' elite circle. Don King, Ali, Michael Spinks, Butch Lewis, Archie Moore, and a host of others hold Brown in high esteem. Brown's promotional resume is also impressive. He worked as the Events Coordinator for the Trevor Berbic-Mike Tyson fight on HBO and the Michael Spinks-Mike Tyson contest. He has also organized several concerts and benefits for various non-profit organizations in Oregon/Idaho. This past June, Brown organized a highly successful benefit for the Police Activities League featuring Michael Spinks, Ali, Butch Lewis, Archie Moore, and other professional athletes. "He can make things happen on a telephone call," noted promoter Butch Lewis. Brown is currently organizing a benefit, featuring the same group mentioned above, for special Olympics this winter in Sun Valley, Idaho. Joe Frazier, who could not make the P.A.L. benefit, will join them this time.

Married eleven years (Joyce), Brown is the father of four children (Jamila, 12; Paul Jr., 10; La Tashia, 6; and La Toya, 2) and he beams when he speaks of them. He is at peace with life and himself. Brown is a happy man who is motivated, focused, and on a mission to be the best that he can be. When questioned about how the car accident changed his life, Brown, a 1978 graduate of Madison High School, reared back in his easy chair and reflected back to that moment.

"After the accident, I felt that it was the turning point of my life because I had to change directions, career-wise. Being in braces and knowing the physical/mental ability that boxing takes, I accepted that there was no chance to comeback. So, I started looking for other ventures to get into. It was tough. Boxers have great ego and it is even tougher to give up the spotlight. That's probably why I took off so fast in promotions. I had to get back into the publics' eye (laughing).

Portland Observer-What was your biggest adjustment to life outside of the ring?

Brown-"Dealing with white people in the business world. I've had white friends all of my life, but it was totally different in business. The ones that you thought were friends disappear when they see you moving into something else. I've met some good ones and bad ones. The same principle applies to black people. While I was still working at a major company locally, I went to this certain individual with a promotional idea and requested



EVERYBODY WINS - Paul Brown flips to a page in his album, picturing Muhammed Ali and himself, together as winners in the ring.

a meeting to share these concepts. Things were fine when it came to a manager-employee relationship, but it changed dramatically when it focused on business. All of a sudden, this person had no time for me and we used to go to lunch and dinner together. When you make \$25,000 a year, everything is fine. When you jump up to let's say, \$100,000 annually, people try to stop you or attempt to stop you from getting to the top.

Portland Observer-How did Paul Brown Productions, Inc. get its start?

Brown-"It started in 1981. I had a six year contract with Richie Giachetti and Larry Holmes. The agreement allowed me to fight on the Holmes undercard and have a percentage of my purse invested in properties, restaurants, and night clubs, etc...that they established. Richie said "let's make this thing work" and even to this day, he is behind me."

Portland Observer-How did you get involved with the Police Activities League?

Brown-"I didn't know about the P.A.L. here in Portland. I had dealt with them in the past as an amateur in other parts of the country. Lee Jenkins, the Director of University Park (Columbia Villa), came to me and asked for my help on a project. He said that it would involve kids and basically told me that I needed to do something for the youth. He told me point blank that I needed to do something for the kids in the city of Portland, I agreed to help."

Portland Observer-How important is the Police Activities League?

Brown-"I believe that the P.A.L. program is very important, but they are going to have to utilize the right things and do the right things in order to touch our community. Our kids are not always involved in the suburban sports like tennis, soccer, golf, swimming, and others. I believe that it's going to be difficult to reach our children who are going through the hard-knocks or are low income. We are so used to seeing our won black stars like Magic and Jordan in basketball. People like Spinks, Ali, Joe Frazier, Ray Leonard, etc...some kids believe that this is their only way out of poverty, sports. If

you go to school, do good, you can be a boxer or a basketball player. We have to teach this generation of children that they have other options aside from the traditional outlets. Play volleyball, golf, tennis, and soccer. There are a hundred ways to get a college scholarship and get a degree. Parents need to reinforce to their kids that they can do anything and go anywhere they want. If, also you study, work hard, listen to your teacher, and get good grades-placing sports second, you can go a long ways."

Portland Observer-Did the P.A.L. program reach the at risk youths you just talked about?

Brown-"I don't think that they reached them as much as they could have. I think that by it being a first time they really learned a lot. They have to market it right next year because there is a lot of competition out there getting the spotlight. Self-Enhancement, for example, is getting great national recognition. I'm going to stay busy in the community and work with people or groups that want to help young people...I think P.A.L. is doing a good job."

Portland Observer-Where do you see Paul Brown Productions, Inc. going in the future?

Brown-"I'm a promoter. Be it for P.A.L., Self-Enhancement, boxing, concerts, a gospel festival, or whatever. PB, Inc. is going to go on. I will promote anything that is legal. The company is going to receive more national attention and be busier in the future. Everything I've achieved has come as a result of being in the trenches and working hard. NOthing is easy. It's not easy for me now. If you are not in the trenches working hard, you are not going to be successful."

Paul Brown is currently working on a major project that might bring professional boxing to Portland and air on BET (Black Entertainment Television). Promoter Butch Lewis is assisting Brown with this effort. He is also working on a deal that might bring Bill Cosby here to the "City of Roses."

Late Golfing Pioneer and Founder of Leisure Hour Golf Club

Vernon Gaskin Aided Youthful Players

A. Calvin Peete would have never been able to swing high and Zina Garrison wouldn't be on the rise now in tennis. Other people, alive and dead, have paid dues and in Portland Mr. Vernon Gaskin had such an account.

The Late Vernon Gaskin was a pioneer in the field of golf and it was through his efforts that young blacks in Portland are able to play the game. Prior to his death in 1986, Mr. Gaskin stated that "In 1939 there was no organized black golf club in the city of Portland. I thought it was necessary to have some type of organization to gain some type of recognition. In the beginning it was called the Leisure Hour Golf and Bridge Club. In those days the men had their club and the women had theirs. I thought why not put them together. It lead to more interest and having a pretty lady partner meant a lot."

In 1939 de-facto Jim Crow was alive and well in Portland. Gaskin remembered, "There were some courses who did not care for our patronage. But we found all the municipal courses open.

He called golf his cardinal sin. "I say it is one of the greatest games that there is. It brings you up to a mental peak and it develops you physically and builds character. The funny thing about golfers is that you can play with the President of the United States and call him by his first name. You are just another golfer."

Gaskin stated he believed the reason why golf doesn't have the appeal of basketball or football is that it is not taught to youngsters at the high school level. He learned as a caddy and locker room boy for a private golf club. "In my day, the only thing a black man could do was caddy or shine the rich man's shoes. But since we



Mr. Gaskin is shown tutoring Market Sales in 1984 on proper golfing techniques

have progressed, we are able to play the game.

For the average man seeing the growth of his local club would have been enough. But Mr. Vernon Gaskin was not the average man and in 1953 Gaskin spearheaded The Western States Golf Association.

"In numbers there is strength. When you have the clout of 28 golf clubs extending from Texas to Wash-

ington it gives us power and recognition. We started with 8 clubs and we just grew. We started with 400 members and now we have 2,000."

The WSGA sponsors yearly tournaments which start in March and end in November. They also provide scholarships to students along the coast. In Oregon, Lisa Rankins won the scholarship for 1983.

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