

# und Rap Around Rap Around Rap Around



Photos by Susan McKinney

Above, Buffalo Bills scrimmage on home turf while at right Bobby Chandler discusses his strategy as wide receiver. There's no mistaking the Chandler confidence as sprints from scrimmage to beat the defense, pull in a pass and head for the goal line. He accomplishes this more than the opposition likes.

## Meet Bobby Chandler ... A Cool Pro

By JOAN M. SMITH

When the Buffalo Bills' wide receiver, Bobby Chandler (81) takes off down the field during a game he has one thing on his mind . . . to catch that football!

Nothing which goes on around the field concerns him, he just watches the ball. He maneuvers to beat the defense — twisting, turning and then leaping for the ball, completely ignoring the footsteps behind him.

It takes phenomenal concentration to mentally block out defensive cornerbacks bearing down, but that's Chandler's claim to fame . . . concentration plus his ability to catch the ball "in a crowd." Once his fingers touch that football and he has it tucked against him, whether he's off and running for the goal line or flat on the ground beneath 400 pounds of muscle and equipment, the ball is his.

Chandler credits his powers of concentration, even under the most awesome of defensive pressures, to his realization he's going to get hit whether he catches the pass or not, so he might as well catch it . . . it looks better.

How does he manage to pick himself up after these confrontations? "Very slowly," he grinned and admitted he takes a few moments after the collisions to make sure all his bones are in the right place. His philosophy about these encounters is, "After

you've been hit a few times it gets easier."

Chandler's expert performances as wide receiver make it look as if he's played the position all his life which isn't the case. During his football years with Whittier High School in Whittier, Calif., he played quarterback, and then went to the University of Southern California as a defensive safety.

In high school he didn't confine his athletic talents to football but participated in all major sports — baseball, track and basketball. In fact, he indicated that if he'd received a basketball scholarship he would be playing that instead of football.

Chandler took time from his reminiscences to stress the importance of today's high school athletes playing all types of sports. In his opinion it's the way to keep in "the best of shape."

As to his past quarterbacking abilities he commented, "I wasn't a great quarterback, and I wasn't fully recruited because I wasn't highly qualified."

He was, however, recruited by Brigham Young University and was in the final stages of accepting that offer when USC came through with a scholarship and Chandler was on his way to "Pacific Eight" football.

He remembered being excited

and "scared to death" about being associated with the prestigious USC football complex, but not overawed. "I had faith in myself, and I knew I was as good as anyone."

Though he had plenty of self-confidence in what he could do Chandler laughed as he recalled, "The irony is that it took three receivers getting hurt at the same time before they played me in that position."

That was in his college sophomore year and he's been a wide receiver ever since. This despite the fact early coaching position charts indicated because of his size and apparent lack of speed he wouldn't be successful in that position.

"It was a bad rap," he declared and was adamant in his disagreement with scouting preferences. "I think they're too preoccupied with size and speed and not whether you're a good football player." It's Chandler's opinion many good players are missed because of these particular recruiting requirements.

His biggest thrill was being named "Player of the Game" in the 1970 Rose Bowl where USC defeated Michigan. A great embarrassment was his winding up in the professional drafts as a seventh round choice.

Chandler came to the Bills knowing it was going to be hard for him to make the team. It was big league competition at its fiercest.

He explained the adjustment from college to pro ball as "mentally a lot different. There's more pressure on you to perform."

He noted that in college you can have a bad playing year, but because of scholarships you know you'll be back next year. With the pros, if you have a bad day in tryouts you won't be back the next. Apparently, Chandler

had all good days because he's found a home with the Bills.

He may look lonely out there in that flank position, but he loves it and though he realizes there's a few menacing defensesmen just waiting to pounce on him he relishes the challenge. If he had his way he'd be prime receiver on every pass play and says so with typical Chandler perkiness. "I want the ball all the time."

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