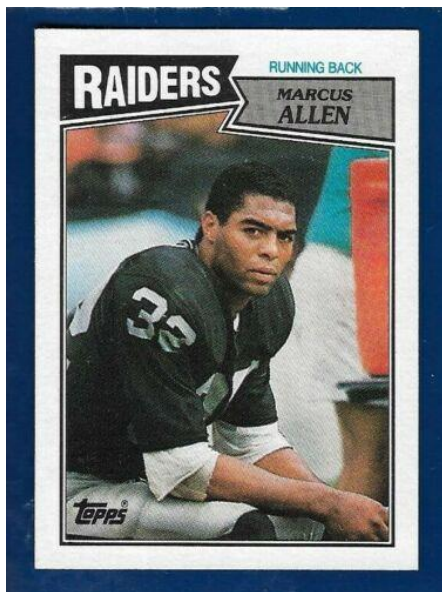


## MARCUS ALLEN

This article was written by Rich Shmelter

The greatest running back in Raiders history without question was Marcus Allen. No stranger to accolades earned on a football field, he came to the Silver & Black after one of the most incredible college seasons in history.



In 1981, Allen became the first collegiate to break the 2,000-yard rushing barrier. On his way to gridiron immortality, Allen tore through defenses for 2,342 yards, a 212.9 per game average, set 12 NCAA records and tied four others. It was no surprise that the 1981 college football awards were dominated by Allen, and rightfully so. On top of being selected consensus All-American, Marcus became USC's fourth Heisman Trophy winner, plus the recipient of the Walter Camp, Maxwell Club, and Football News Awards, all in recognition of being the 1981 college football player of the year.<sup>1</sup>

Allen did not rest on his laurels once coming to the Raiders as their number one draft pick in 1982. The awards continued to role in for Marcus during his pro career, as he became the only player in pro football history to be selected Heisman Trophy winner, Rookie of the Year, NFL Player of the Year, Super Bowl Most Valuable Player, and be enshrined in the College and Pro Football Halls of Fame. Along the way, Allen became one of the NFL's premier offensive weapons. He did whatever was asked of him, whether



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it was running, catching, blocking, or even passing, he did it all to perfection, and became one of the most complete running backs in history.

His versatility as a runner allowed Allen to conform to whatever was needed at the time. From being a fluid, finesse runner, he could then switch to the power back mode. His instincts at reading blocks and getting through small holes allowed him to quickly get into the secondary for solid gains. He was also one of the greatest short-yardage backs, especially near the goal line.<sup>2</sup> His exploits during the 1985 season proved his worth as a complete offensive weapon when he rushed for 1,759 yards and 11 touchdowns, and caught 67 passes for 555 yards and three more six-pointers. It was his greatest season as a professional, and the NFL bestowed its highest honor onto Allen by selecting him Player of the Year. His ability to rise to the occasion on the grandest stage in all of football allowed him to become a Super Bowl immortal. In the Raiders 38-9 mauling over Washington in Super Bowl XVIII, Allen ran for a then-Super Bowl record 191 yards, and scored two touchdowns, one of which being a magnificent 74-yard jaunt through the Washington defense that will forever be replayed in highlight films.

In 11 seasons with the Silver and Black, Allen led the team in rushing seven consecutive years, was All-Pro (1982, 1985), All-AFC (1982, 1984, 1985), and selected to play in five Pro Bowls.

By 1987, the tide turned for Allen as a member of the Los Angeles Raiders. With the arrival of Bo Jackson, Allen's playing time began to diminish. Over the next few years, once Jackson came to the team after his baseball season concluded, Allen became an observer while the two-sport star Jackson got the bulk of playing time. A knee injury forced Allen to miss a good portion of the 1989 season and the next three seasons were as a backup. A nasty contract dispute with Al Davis did not help, and after bitter words were volleyed back and forth between the sides, Allen wanted to be traded.<sup>3</sup>

Getting his wish, Allen became a member of the Kansas City Chiefs in 1993 after becoming the Raiders all-time leading rusher with 8,545 yards. He proved his worth by running for 764 yards and 12 touchdowns while helping the Chiefs advance to the AFC Championship Game. His performance during that season earned him the NFL Comeback Player of the Year Award. He also added a sixth trip to the Pro Bowl in 1994. Allen then finished out his long, illustrious career with the Chiefs in 1997.

When his career was complete, the numbers he compiled were astounding. In 1995, he became the first player to break the 10,000-yard rushing barrier and the 5,000-yard receiving as well. He ran for 12,243 yards and 123 touchdowns on 3,022 carries, and caught 587 passes for 5,411 yards and 21 touchdowns. In 2003, Marcus Allen became the 52<sup>nd</sup> player to gain entry into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in his first year of



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eligibility, as if there ever would have been a doubt to the swiftness of his acceptance among the game's immortals.