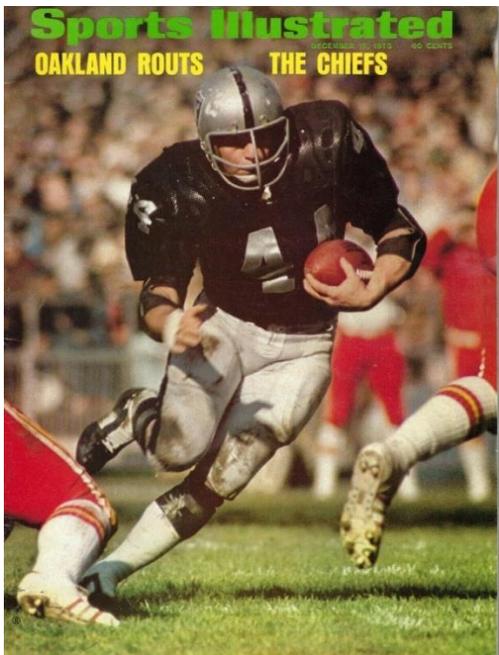




Marv Hubbard

This article was written by Rich Shmelter

A battering ram who punished defenders with bone-jarring bursts, Marv Hubbard was one of the toughest offensive weapons of his time. He came to the Raiders out of Colgate University as their 11th round selection of the 1968 draft but was cut before he had a chance to play in a regular season game. At the time, Hubbard lacked speed and blocking skills. The team already had Hewritt Dixon at fullback, and Roger Hagberg as his backup. He then tried to latch on with the Denver Broncos during training camp. With Floyd Little as their power back, coupled with Hubbard having a problem with a teammate, he was released on August 19, 1968.



In an attempt to hone his skills, Hubbard went back east and played minor league football with the Hartford Knights of the Atlantic Coast Football League. He signed with the Knights in early September and was in uniform by the second game of the 1968 season. Hartford's coach, Fred Wallner, was a firm believer in the running game, which was a perfect fit for Hubbard. His 220-pound frame exploded off the snap, dropped his shoulder, and made it difficult to get at his ground-pounding legs. Needless to say, this punishing approach was very impressive, and he became a favorite among his teammates.



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The Knights finished the regular season at 11-1 and captured the ACFL Northern Division crown. On November 30, 1968, Hartford claimed the league championship, 30-17, over the Virginia Sailors. Hubbard ran for 71 yards and scored on a 4-yard run. In addition to winning a championship, Hubbard also led the ACFL in rushing with 899 yards on 167 attempts for a 5.6 yards-per-carry average and five touchdowns. He was an easy selection to the All-ACFL team at fullback.

After a solid season, he began receiving offers from the pro ranks. Oakland still owned the rights to him, brought him back to the west coast, moved Roger Hagberg over to tight end to create a spot for him, and Hubbard remained a die-hard contributor for the Raiders from 1969 to '75.

Hubbard established himself as a tough, brutal runner who inflicted punishment with his thrusts into an opposing defense. He was especially dangerous pounding the ball between the tackles to wear the defense down. When the plays "68 and 69 Boom Man" were called in the huddle, Hubbard's face was engulfed with a huge smile. For he knew that the ball was going to be placed in his hands, and that within a few seconds, his body was about to slam into one of eleven defenders and inflict more pain on them than on himself.

To absorb as much impact as possible, Hubbard wore a big set of shoulder pads usually designated for linemen. He tested equipment out to see how it would hold up to his punishing thrusts into the heart of the opposition and padded himself to provide extra protection from jolts. He also broke about a dozen helmets throughout his career due to his bone-jarring jaunts. Hubbard gave his all in every game he played, but always seemed to step it up a notch against the hated Kansas City Chiefs.

His punishing play alone earned him his rightful place in Raider lore. However, he decided to add to it off the field by displaying a unique brand of celebrating after an Oakland victory. After enjoying some liquid spirits at a local watering hole, Hubbard would leave the establishment, walk next door to a dry-cleaning business, and then thrust his fist through the front window. He always prided himself in being able to remove his hand without cutting it on the jagged glass. He accomplished this for some time until Oakland head coach John Madden finally put an end to it after the owner of the business threatened to call the police. It was probably on Madden's mind that his power keg in cleats might have his luck run out, and that his hand could come out of the incident looking like ground meat, which would have put a damper on his availability.

After leading the team in rushing from 1971 through '74, he was hampered by a shoulder separation that never healed and spent the 1976 season on injured reserve. He did, however, receive a Super Bowl ring when the Raiders won it that year. He returned for



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one more year in the NFL with the Detroit Lions in 1977. After seeing reduced playing time with the Lions, Hubbard retired following the 1977 season.

He was so proud and smitten to be an integral part of the renegade Raiders that if he did not have to take his uniform off after a game, it would always have remained on him . He loved the experience, and all those in Raider Nation who witnessed his performance felt the same way.

After his playing days were complete, Hubbard briefly became a country musician and songwriter. In 1978, he released a song called, "Fullbacks Ain't Supposed to Cry." He played in celebrity golf tournaments, was a computer programmer, and worked for a few insurance companies in Hartford, Connecticut. On May 4, 2015, just three days shy of his 69th birthday, Marv Hubbard died from complications caused by prostate cancer in Walnut Creek, California.