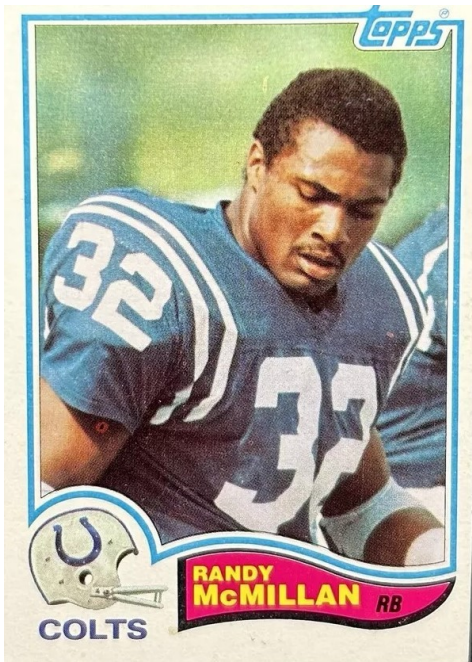


## Randy McMillan

**This article is by Matt Keddie.**

Randy McMillan was a bruising, yet versatile fullback who played six NFL seasons (1981 to 1986) with the Baltimore/Indianapolis Colts. Drafted 12<sup>th</sup> overall in the 1981 NFL Draft, McMillan was elated to return to his home state of Maryland.<sup>1</sup> Upon hearing his name called he said, “Coming to the Baltimore Colts is like a dream come true. I used to go out and watch the Colts when Coach Shula was coaching. I had a funny feeling it was going to be the Colts who picked me.”<sup>2</sup>



McMillan became an immediate starter at fullback, where he teamed with running back Curtis Dickey to anchor the team's rushing attack. With the exception of the strike-shortened 1982 season, the duo combined for at least 1,200 rushing yards in 1981, 1983 and 1984.<sup>3</sup> As a rookie, he totaled 1,063 yards from scrimmage and four touchdowns, running 149 times for 597 yards and catching 50 passes for 466 yards.<sup>4</sup> His 466 receiving yards was third on the team. Meanwhile, the Colts went 2-14 in 1981, and were the worst team in the NFL.<sup>5</sup> Their only two wins of the season occurred against the New England Patriots, in Weeks 1 and 16. A bright moment for McMillan was in the first match up with New England. It was a thrilling, back-and-forth contest, where McMillan ran 16 times for 146 yards and two touchdowns, one of which held up as the winning score in the fourth quarter. His performance of 146 yards rushing was a career best.<sup>6</sup>



## Professional Football Researchers Association

www.profootballresearchers.com

A player's strike shortened the 1982 season, which brought even less success for Baltimore. The Colts finished 0-8-1, becoming the third team since 1960 to complete a season without a win.<sup>7</sup> Prior to the season, head coach Mike McCormack was fired, after just two seasons. McMillan averaged a career low 3.0 yards per carry and scored just one rushing touchdown.<sup>8</sup> The Colts were rarely competitive under new head coach Frank Kush. Their closest margins of defeat were a four-point loss against the Miami Dolphins and a three-point loss at the hands of the Cincinnati Bengals. The offense was extremely anemic, averaging a mere 12.6 points per game, while allowing over 26 points per contest on defense.<sup>9</sup>

The Colts rebounded to 7-9 in 1983, led by McMillan's 802 rushing yards and five rushing scores.<sup>10</sup> Center Ray Donaldson and rookie guard Chris Hinton anchored a solid offensive line, paving the lanes for Baltimore's second ranked rushing attack. Curtis Dickey led the team with 1,122 rushing yards and seven total touchdowns.<sup>11</sup> The Colts were 6-4 midway through the season, but endured a five-game losing streak that ended any postseason hopes. Dickey and McMillan's combined 1,924 rushing yards ranked first in the AFC.<sup>12</sup> In the 1983 off-season, the Colts relocated to Indianapolis, where McMillan remained the team's starter at fullback.<sup>13</sup>

In the first regular season contest as the Indianapolis Colts on September 2, 1984, McMillan ran eight times for 32 yards in a 23-14 loss to the New York Jets at the newly constructed Hoosier Dome.<sup>14</sup> McMillan topped the one-hundred-yard mark just once on the season, on September 30 against the Buffalo Bills when he rushed 16 times for 114

- 1 "Randy McMillan," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Randy McMillan Stats, Height, Weight, Position, Draft, College | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 2 Morris, Jim. "When Randy McMillan was growing up, he used to..." UPI.com, April 29, 1981, accessed January 1, 2025, [When Randy McMillan was growing up, he used to... - UPI Archives](#).
- 3 "Indianapolis Colts Franchise Encyclopedia," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Indianapolis Colts Team Records, Leaders, and League Ranks | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 4 "Randy McMillan," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Randy McMillan Stats, Height, Weight, Position, Draft, College | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 5 "Indianapolis Colts Franchise Encyclopedia," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Indianapolis Colts Team Records, Leaders, and League Ranks | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 6 "Baltimore Colts at New England Patriots – September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1981," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Baltimore Colts at New England Patriots - September 6th, 1981 | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 7 "Indianapolis Colts Franchise Encyclopedia," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Indianapolis Colts Team Records, Leaders, and League Ranks | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 8 "Randy McMillan," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Randy McMillan Stats, Height, Weight, Position, Draft, College | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 9 "1982 Baltimore Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1982 Baltimore Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).



## Professional Football Researchers Association

www.profootballresearchers.com

yards and two touchdowns. His performance led the Colts to a 31-17 victory.<sup>15</sup> His 31-yard rushing touchdown in the fourth quarter held up as the winning score. Despite his success, the Colts slumped to a 4-12 record.<sup>16</sup>

McMillan turned in his strongest statistical output in 1985. With an injury to Dickey, he teamed with running back George Wonsley to anchor the Indianapolis running game.<sup>17</sup> McMillan ran 190 times for 858 yards and seven rushing scores. Wonsley added 716 yards and six rushing touchdowns. Their combined production caused the Colts' rushing attack to rank fifth in the NFL.<sup>18</sup> Their 5.0 yards per carry as a team was tops in the entire league. The Colts record improved to 5-11 under first year head coach Ron Dowhower, from 4-12 the year before. However, the defense still struggled and there was not an answer at quarterback on an offense that averaged about 20.0 points per game.<sup>19</sup>

McMillan's final season with the Colts was 1986. He again led the team in rushing with 609 yards and three rushing touchdowns. Indianapolis significantly regressed, starting out the season with a 13-game losing streak.<sup>20</sup> Dowhower was fired after the start, being

- 1 0 “Randy McMillan,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Randy McMillan Stats, Height, Weight, Position, Draft, College | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 1 1 “1983 Baltimore Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1983 Baltimore Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 1 2 “1983 Baltimore Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1983 Baltimore Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 1 3 “History by the Decade – The 1980s,” colts.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Indianapolis Colts History: 1980s | Indianapolis Colts – colts.com](#).
- 1 4 “New York Jets at Indianapolis Colts – September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1984,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [New York Jets at Indianapolis Colts - September 2nd, 1984 | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 1 5 “Randy McMillan,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Randy McMillan Stats, Height, Weight, Position, Draft, College | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 1 6 “Buffalo Bills at Indianapolis Colts – September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1984,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Buffalo Bills at Indianapolis Colts - September 30th, 1984 | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 1 7 “1985 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1985 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 1 8 “1985 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1985 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 1 9 “1985 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1985 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).
- 2 0 “1986 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1986 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees | Pro-Football-Reference.com](#).



## Professional Football Researchers Association

www.profootballresearchers.com

replaced by Ron Meyer, who led the team to wins its final three games. McMillan's production dipped as he averaged only 3.2 yards per carry.<sup>21</sup> In the off-season, he suffered a fractured leg while attempting to cross a street, being hit by a vehicle. His mother, Edna McMillan, commented, "He was very agitated by all of this. He said it was a dumb thing. He didn't see the car at all."<sup>22</sup> It was said McMillan was displaced 17 feet from the impact caused during the collision.

The injury caused him to miss the entire 1987 season.<sup>23</sup> As a result, Jim Irsay refused to pay McMillan's salary for the season because the injury was not football related, saying, "What we're saying [to McMillan] is, 'Why don't you go after the guy that hit you?' That's where his case is, not with me. We pay him what we're supposed to when he works. If he doesn't work, he has to go out and get another job."<sup>24</sup> Irsay went on to say it was a liability issue, "Because of the present situation with the tremendous number of grievances and lawsuits, it forces management to go by the letter of the law in our agreement [with the player's union]."<sup>25</sup>

On the situation, McMillan's agent, Reggie Turner, said, "You've seen Randy McMillan for the last time in a Colt jersey. What he's [Irsay's] saying is that Randy is history."<sup>26</sup> The premise was confirmed during October 1987 when the Colts traded for future Hall of Fame running back Eric Dickerson. The three-team deal between the Colts, Los Angeles Rams and Buffalo involved the Colts relinquishing running back Owen Gill, first and second round draft choices in the 1988 NFL Draft and a second-round selection in the 1989 NFL Draft.<sup>27</sup>

McMillan was cut by the club prior to the 1988 season, when Ron Meyer said, "We're going to keep four backs and Randy didn't figure in those four."<sup>28</sup> He left the Colts as their fifth all-time leading rusher with 3,876 rushing yards. Following his release,

---

2 1 "1986 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees," ProFootballReference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1986 Indianapolis Colts Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees | Pro-Football-Reference.com](https://www.profootballreference.com/indianapolis-colts/rosters/1986).

2 2 "McMillan faces leg surgery," *The Indianapolis News*, April 27, 1987, 17.

2 3 "Comments by Irsay draw a typical reaction: McMillan wants out," *The Evening Sun*, June 1, 1987, 23.

2 4 "Comments by Irsay draw a typical reaction: McMillan wants out," *The Evening Sun*, June 1, 1987, 23.

2 5 "Comments by Irsay draw a typical reaction: McMillan wants out," *The Evening Sun*, June 1, 1987, 23.

2 6 "Comments by Irsay draw a typical reaction: McMillan wants out," *The Evening Sun*, June 1, 1987, 23.

2 7 "Randy McMillan," ProSportsTransactions.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Football Transactions Search Results](https://www.prosportstransactions.com/player/randy-mcmillan).



## Professional Football Researchers Association

www.profootballresearchers.com

McMillan signed with the Miami Dolphins on August 11, 1988. He was released shortly thereafter, ending his NFL career, on August 25, 1988.<sup>29</sup>

Randy was born as Lewis Lorando “Randy” McMillan on December 17, 1958 in Havre De Grace, Maryland. He played basketball and football, and ran track & field at North Harford High School.<sup>30</sup> As a senior in 1976, McMillan led the team in rushing and earned All-County and high school All-American honors.<sup>31</sup> He went on to play college football for two years at Harford County Community College in Maryland.

His play was a key factor in the success the team experienced in 1977 as a freshman. The Owls recorded their first unbeaten season in school history with a 14-7 victory over the Wesley Wolverines.<sup>32</sup> McMillan ran 16 times for 116 yards, but sustained an ankle injury in the second half. Harford head coach Dick Fordyce commented, “It isn't a real serious type of injury. He [Randy] just has a hairline fracture in the ankle and he'll be in a cast for about four weeks.”<sup>33</sup> McMillan totaled 1,002 rushing yards that earned him Maryland Junior College All-Region honors.”

The following season, Harford once again repeated its outstanding performance by going undefeated.<sup>34</sup> McMillan led the Region in rushing with 1,546 yards, 20 touchdowns and an average of 8.2 yards per carry, as well as in scoring with 120 points. His performance led him to be named All-Region, All-State and National Junior College All-American honors.<sup>35</sup> He then signed with the University of Pittsburgh to continue his college football career. McMillan had been actively recruited by Pitt head coach Jackie Sherrill and assistant head coach Dave Wannstedt.<sup>36</sup> On choosing the Panthers, McMillan remarked, “I've always liked Pitt. Tony Dorsett became my idol when he played for Pitt...”<sup>37</sup>

McMillan came to Pittsburgh when the Panthers were widely recognized as a national football powerhouse. Off a recent national championship season in 1976 and Tony Dorsett's Heisman Trophy, Pitt earned three straight Top 10 finishes in the AP rankings, as well as four consecutive bowl game appearances.<sup>38</sup> At the University of Pittsburgh, he

---

2 8 “Colts cut veteran Randy McMillan,” *The Indianapolis News*, August 5, 1988, 19.

2 9 “Randy McMillan,” ProSportsTransactions.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Football Transactions Search Results](#).

3 0 “Looking for a healing touch,” *The Baltimore Sun*, December 11, 2009, D6.

3 1 “Harford Owls Dominate All-Star Grid Voting,” *The Aegis*, December 15, 1977, 97.

3 2 “Harford Owls Nail Down First Unbeaten Season, Wesley Crew Wilts, 14-7,” *The Aegis*, November 24, 1977, 77.

3 3 “McMillan Suffers Broken Ankle,” *The Aegis*, November 24, 1977, 77.

3 4 “Harford Dominates Region XX Grid Statistics,” *The Aegis*, November 30, 1978, 86.

3 5 “Harford Dominates Region XX Grid Statistics,” *The Aegis*, November 30, 1978, 86.

3 6 “McMillan, Owls' Fullback, Inks Pact With Pitt,” *The Aegis*, December 14, 1978, 87.

3 7 “McMillan, Owls' Fullback, Inks Pact With Pitt,” *The Aegis*, December 14, 1978, 87.



## Professional Football Researchers Association

www.profootballresearchers.com

teamed with future Pro Football Hall of Famers Dan Marino, Russ Grimm and Rickey Jackson.

In Pitt's 1979 season opener against the Kansas Jayhawks, McMillan ran for 141 yards on 21 carries.<sup>39</sup> On the effort, he said, "I'd call it a job pretty well done. But I figure I can do better."<sup>40</sup> He did in the regular season finale against archrival Penn State University. In the contest, McMillan accounted for three total touchdowns, one of which was a 50-yard scoring reception, that spurred two Panther comebacks.<sup>41</sup> He added 93 receiving yards and 114 rushing yards to pace the Panthers' offense to a 29-14 win.<sup>42</sup> The win gave the Panthers a nine-game win streak, clinched a berth in the Fiesta Bowl against the University of Arizona, and netted the Lambert-Meadowlands Trophy, given annually to the top team in the East. McMillan rushed for 633 yards on 134 carries and scored 9 touchdowns in his first season as a Panther.

The 1980 season was full of high expectations for the Panthers. Coming in as the third ranked team in the pre-season polls, Pitt was poised for another exciting season. Many of the team's skill position playmakers returned from the 1979 club, including a Top 10 scoring defense, quarterback Dan Marino and a solid offensive line.<sup>43</sup> Pitt took care of business until a mid-October 36-22 loss to the No. 11 Florida State Seminoles that set them back outside of the Top 10 in the rankings. Pitt blew out its next five opponents by an average margin of 29 points, setting up a showdown with archrival Penn State University.<sup>44</sup> In a game that featured snow flurries and freezing rain, the Panthers ground out a 14-9 victory in State College, Pennsylvania, that clinched a berth in the Gator Bowl.<sup>45</sup> McMillan's best game on the season was a two touchdown, 126 rushing yard performance in a 43-9 win over Syracuse.<sup>46</sup> He rushed for 721 yards as a senior and scored 10 total touchdowns for the 11-1 and No. 2 ranked Panthers.

---

3 8 "Pitt Panthers School History," sports-reference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [Pitt Panthers College Football History, Stats, Records | College Football at Sports-Reference.com](#).

3 9 Smizik, Bob. "Panthers 'Still' Jayhawks, 24-0," *The Pittsburgh Press*, September 16, 1979, D1.

4 0 Smizik, Bob. "Panthers 'Still' Jayhawks, 24-0," *The Pittsburgh Press*, September 16, 1979, D1.

4 1 "Pitt rallies twice," *Eugene Register-Guard*, December 2, 1979, 7E.

4 2 "Pitt rallies twice," *Eugene Register-Guard*, December 2, 1979, 7E.

4 3 "1980 Pitt Panthers Stats," sports-reference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1980 Pitt Panthers Stats | College Football at Sports-Reference.com](#).

4 4 "1980 Pitt Panthers Schedule and Results," sports-reference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1980 Pitt Panthers Schedule and Results | College Football at Sports-Reference.com](#).

4 5 "1980 Pitt Panthers Schedule and Results," sports-reference.com, accessed January 1, 2025, [1980 Pitt Panthers Schedule and Results | College Football at Sports-Reference.com](#).

4 6 "Trocano, Pittsburgh pummel Syracuse," *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 2, 1980, 26.