

He's Playing For The Love Of The Game

Former Ram and NFL player James Hundon talks about his experiences with the Pros

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(Note: With the XFL, the World Wrestling Federation's version of professional football, nearing the end of its first season, Guardsman Sports Editor Adrian Varnedoe found a City College connection in the person of James Hundon, a former wide receiver for the Rams who now plays for the San Francisco Demons.)

Q: Did you watch football growing up?

Hundon: Yeah, that's all I did; watch football and imitate, like Lynn Swann, John Starwood.

Q: What team did you like the most?

Hundon: Growing up I liked the Pittsburgh Steeler's, because I loved Lynn Swann. Then the 49ers come up with Jerry Rice, and I was like, OK, those are the two teams.

Q: Growing up did you ever think that you would be playing in the NFL?

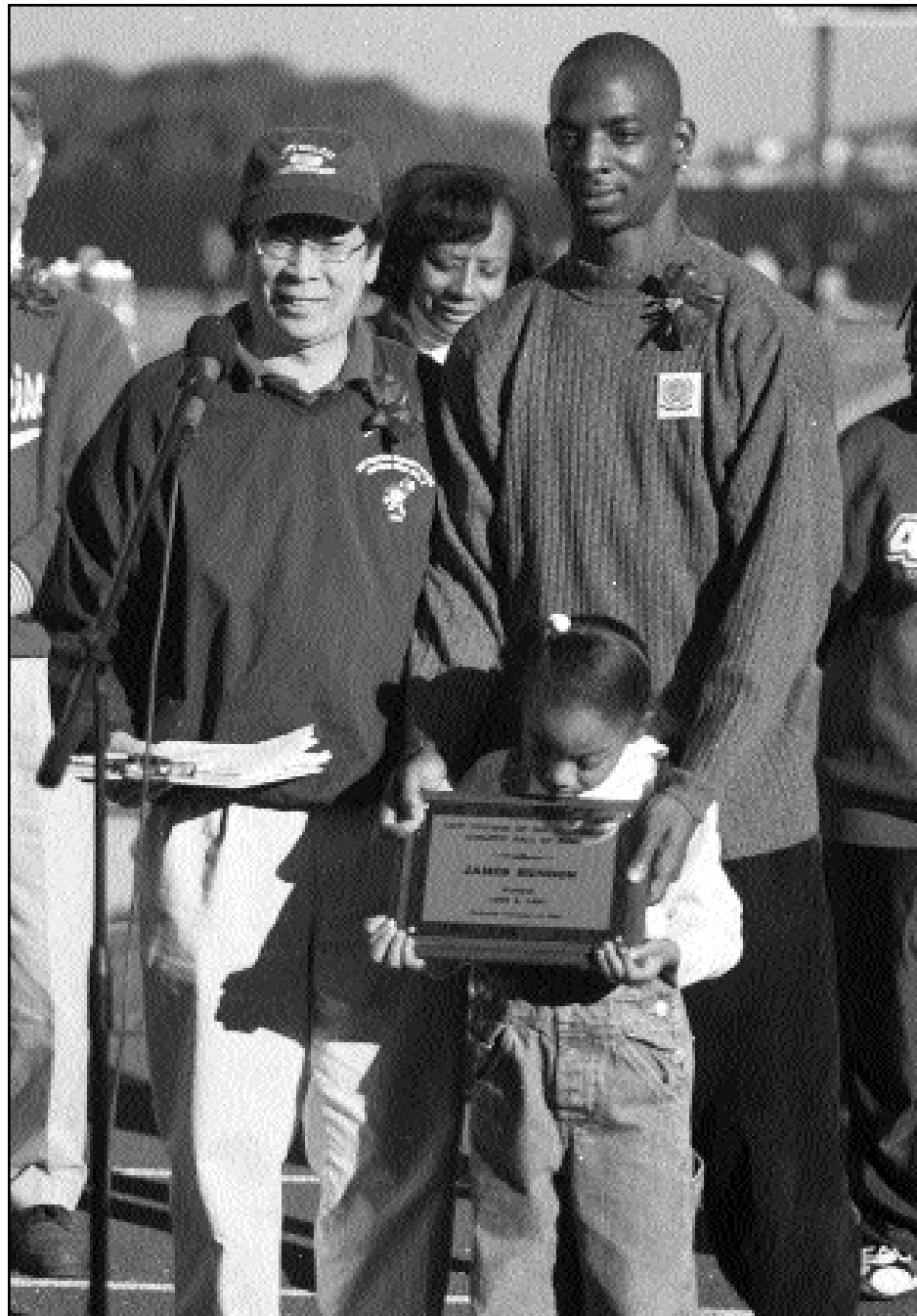
Hundon: I never thought so. It was always a dream and when things look bleak in your life, your not, like, thinking of bigger things like that. Your more caught up in worrying about what you're going to do the next day. When the opportunity started to arise and my dreams started becoming a reality, I said, 'Well, let me take this and run with it and see how far I could go.' And here I am.

Q: What did you get from City College?

Hundon: I got discipline, hard work, to be accountable for your actions. You make a mistake; you take responsibility for it. Also how to come together.

Q: What was your reasoning for going to Portland State?

Hundon: When I graduated from high school in '88, I went straight to a junior college but I didn't really play (football). I didn't play in '88, but I did in '89. I got to messing around, trying to experiment with other things in my life. Then I said, 'OK here I am, go ahead and play ball. But by the time I did, I had wasted all that time and my division one time had expired. I only had one year to play division one, but two for division two at Portland State, so I took advantage of that opportunity. As it happens, the coach at Portland State was a roommate in college with Dan Hays and they talked. Tim Wash asked me to come up to



James Hundon, City College's inductee to the school's Hall of Fame, stands with one of his two children and Frank Chong at the ceremony held at the football team's home coming game in November of 2000.

Portland State and I committed. I really have respect for City College because they really made sure that I was taken care of, not as a favor, but because I worked so hard. I did so much for them, I guess they were doing it in return.

Q: When did you know that you were headed to the NFL?

Hundon: After my junior year I ended up in the pre-draft book. I didn't feel that I had a great year my junior year and I was banged up. But there was an interest. I said, 'Hell, let me get on top of my game!' I came home, took a break, and then started training with Jerry Rice and a couple of other highly regarded athletes in the Bay Area.

Q: Where were you when you

were told?

Hundon: I was at home. I actually had a draft barbecue at my house. I knew that I was going to sign as a free agent by that time. Cincinnati called me right after their pick in the seventh round and asked me to come aboard. I was there almost four years.

Q: What player have you met that you were star struck over?

Hundon: I would have to say Jerry [Rice]. When I was in college, people started comparing me to him, saying that I looked like him, I ran like him. And when I got the chance to work out with him, I was kind of star struck, but nobody knew it, I keep it inside; 'Damn, I'm training with JERRY RICE, this is cool!' Then

after a while, it got to be a routine.

Q: What was the biggest game that you ever played in?

Hundon: I would have to say when we played the Philadelphia Eagles in '97 with Boomer E. I had five catches for over one hundred yards and two touchdowns. It proved to myself and everyone that I can perform against NFL players.

Q: When were you told that you were released?

Hundon: After the final cut this year (2001). They called me on my cell phone. Cheap huh? They weren't man enough to come and tell me. I really lost a lot of respect for the organization cause of how they did it. After I put in all these years, they could have had the decency to come talk to me or pull me to the side. But call me on my cell phone? That's pretty tacky, and a bad way to do business. Being cut didn't leave a sour taste in my mouth. How they did it was very disrespectful.

Q: Are you using the XFL as a way to get back to the NFL?

Hundon: Yea, I'm trying to get my retirement. I need four more games, so I'm busting my butt here trying to impress some teams to get back into the NFL.

Q: What team do you hope will have interest in you?

Hundon: It really doesn't matter. Most people love being on a particular team. I would love to be on a winning team but at the same time I want to be somewhere I can play, because I love the game. It doesn't matter. As long as I'm playing football, I'm fine.

Q: What do you think of Coach Rush?

Hundon: He's a great guy, we have a great relationship. A lot of people don't care for him, but you really need to get to know him to understand him.

James Hundon was born in Daly City on April 9, 1971. He now lives in Daly city and has two Daughters. He came to City College in 1992 before going to Portland State. He got his diploma in social science in 1996. He played in the NFL for four years, all of them with the Cincinnati.

The Guardsman has learned that Hundon will not play in any of the Demons remaining games due to a neck injury suffered in the Las Vegas Outlaw game.