

Raiders draft Dorn in 4th

By Steve Kowaleki
staff writer

In less than a year's time, Torin Dorn already realizes the benefits of playing in the defensive secondary at the University of North Carolina. Dorn's body can feel the difference, and in time so will his wallet — which is bound to get bigger. Dorn, who spent the first three years of his collegiate career getting battered and bruised at tailback, was taken in the fourth round of Sunday's NFL draft by the Los Angeles Raiders.

A 1986 graduate of Southfield High, Dorn was moved to cornerback last fall because of several nagging injuries he suffered on offense. He made an instant impression on scouts, intercepting three passes during the season and one more in the Blue-Gray All-Star game after the season.

Reached Monday at his apartment in Chapel Hill, Dorn was still ecstatic, 24 hours after the Raiders made him the 93rd pick on the board.

"The whole Raiders organization is one I'd like to be affiliated with," Dorn said. "It's a dream team, you know, with the mystique they have, and getting the opportunity to play for the Black and Silver."

DORN GAINED 1,071 yards on 222 carries as a tailback at North Carolina, but because of an assortment of injuries, there were no guarantees he'd be drafted at that

football

position into the NFL. He missed 11 games and played limited minutes in several others his first three years on campus.

Dorn accepted the change to cornerback and looks forward to a new challenge with the Raiders. He'll report to the Raiders rookie mini-camp, May 7-10.

"Being drafted is only a stepping stone," he said. "They've shown their interest and right now I have to earn my keep and produce on the field."

"I miss the limelight on offense, but it's more of a challenge to be a defensive back. I tell you one thing, it's better to hit, than get hit. Your body feels better, at least you're able to cuddle with your girlfriend after games without saying 'ouch and ouch.'"

Raiders scout Jon Kingdon said he expects Dorn to make the team's final roster. The Raiders have 14 defensive backs currently on their roster and will carry eight or nine during the season, he said.

Garry Lewis, a seventh-round pick from Alcorn State, was the only other corner back taken by the Raiders during the 12-round draft.

"TORIN was drafted in the position that if he didn't make the team, we'd be disappointed," said Kingdon,

a 12-year Raiders scout. "The thing that really stood out about Torin was this was his first year on defense and it looked like he was someone who played there a few years. He has good size (6-foot, 200 pounds), and ran in the neighborhood of 4.5 (in the 40-yard dash)."

"He showed enough skills and potential to us and also is involved in the physical nature of the game, tackling and not backing down — which is crucial as a cornerback."

Because of his limited experience in the secondary, Dorn wasn't sure where he'd go in the draft. He watched the first 24 rounds of the draft Sunday on ESPN at his apartment until the telecast ended at about 6:30 p.m.

After washing his car outside, Dorn returned to make dinner inside when the telephone rang about 7:30. It was the Raiders, calling long distance.

"It was their secretary, saying the Raiders were about to draft me," recalled Dorn. "She said, 'Welcome to the family, now here's your coach Art Shell.' At first I thought it was one of my teammates making a prank. After it sunk in, I thought, 'Wow, I'm a Raider.'"

As a youngster, Dorn dreamed of being a Cowboy, but now his eyes are fixed on being a Raider, whether it be in L.A. or Oakland. The Raiders are discussing the possibility of moving back to Oakland, where they won two of their three Super Bowls.

"The Raiders are a whole lot better team with the mystique and black and silver," Dorn said. "Back then, the Dallas Cowboys were 'America's Team.' Now the Raiders are T.D.'s (Torin Dorn) team."

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— Torin Dorn
NFL draft pick

Thomann to stay at Salem

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Pred Thomann figured it was a can't-lose situation. For that reason, he said he was not disappointed for long after learning he didn't get the job as Western Michigan University women's basketball coach.

Thomann was one of five finalists for the WMU position, but the university announced Tuesday it had hired Pat Charley Elliott, a 31-year-old assistant with the Broncos and former WMU player.

Thomann, who has been one of Michigan's most successful high school coaches for nearly two decades at Plymouth Salem, said he's happy to continue in his present role as Salem girls' coach.

"I looked at it as if I had the best of both worlds," Thomann said. "It was a great opportunity for me. But, if I didn't get it, I still have a great job at Salem and plan to pursue that and work at that."

THOMANN, 41, only male coach among the finalists, said there was initial disappointment when he learned Monday of WMU's decision, but he quickly put that behind him.

"I was disappointed I didn't get the job, but I'm also comfortable with the job I have, the team I'm coaching and the players we have in the program."

"Yesterday, I was disappointed. Today, I'm elated," Elliott replaces Jim Fless, who resigned in March after compiling a 104-113 record in eight years as coach.

Michelle Fortier, a former Plymouth Canton standout who played for Thomann's AAU team last summer, started at point guard for the Broncos as a freshman last season.

"I was familiar with the program, and I thought I had something I could offer," Thomann said. "A lot of the kids who play there either played for me in the AAU program or played against my teams in high school."

"I FELT honored they even brought me in for an interview. It was good for me, because it forced me to

girls basketball

prepare and put together a resume. I had to be ready for questions like 'Why are you doing this?' and 'What do you like about this?' I had to think through a lot of things I haven't had to do in a long time."

Thomann has been considered for other positions in the past. He was interviewed for the Eastern Michigan University men's basketball position in 1979 — a job eventually given to Jim Boyce. Thomann accepted the athletic director's position at Ypsilanti High School two years ago but reconsidered a few days later.

"I've been happy at Salem," he said. "If a job comes along that plagues my interest and presents a challenge to me, I would apply for it, but those jobs don't come along very often."

"I have an interest to coach at the college level, but I've never been one to go out and poll for a job at the expense of not getting my next team ready."

In applying at WMU, Thomann had to weigh the appeal of that job against the time he has invested in his career as an educator. He has taught and coached for 25 years and can retire in five years with retirement benefits.

"I would have been giving that up, but I also would be in a position to be doing what I want to be doing five years from now," he said, adding a teacher in that situation has the option to buy those remaining years.

"MY LONG-range goal is to get those five years in and coach basketball somewhere. This job opened up unexpectedly. It took me by surprise, but it's also a job that has some untapped potential."

Thomann added the WMU experience was good, because it helped him to prepare for that time when he does look to coach full time. But he reiterated he is content with his present situation at Salem.

"I feel good about what I have," he said. "We're going to have a helluva team next year."

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