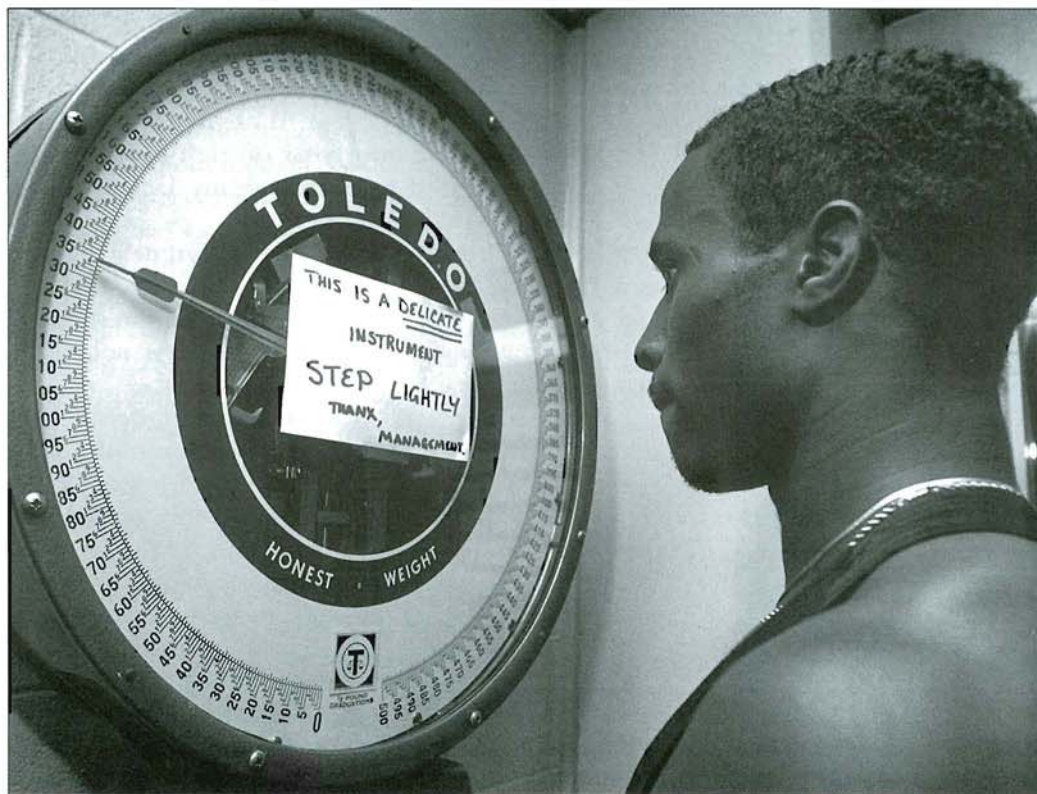


TYRONE THURMAN



College Football's Smallest Player: Tyrone Thurman

Photo by Ian Halperin

The story of Tyrone Thurman is one of the great stories in college football. The Texas Tech program describes Tyrone in bold headlines,

"TYRONE THURMAN DEFIES LAWS OF NATURE."

It's hard to believe that Tyrone at only 5-3 and weighing less than 135 pounds could play major college football. And even harder to believe is that Tyrone was selected as an AP All-America First Team Kick Returner. Still harder to believe is that Tyrone also made the Texas Tech basketball team.

They call him "Smurf" for obvious reasons. It's a nickname Tyrone doesn't mind because of Eddy and Wayne. You see they are also wide receivers. Eddy Anderson is 5-9 and weighs 168 pounds. Wayne Walker is 5-8 and 165 pounds. They are known affectionately as the "Smurf Squad" and were named as the best trio of receivers in the country by The Sporting News.

Chief of all Smurfs, Tyrone was third this past season in the Southwest Conference in pass receptions with 4.4 per game. Tyrone's 48 catches this season has been exceeded only twice in Texas Tech's history and his 726 receiving yards in 1988 also ranks third in the school's history. He was second in the conference in the punt return category and first in kickoff returns with a 23.86 yard average.

TEXAS TECH
AP FIRST TEAM
ALL-AMERICA
1988
KICK
RETURNER

CAREER
ALL-PURPOSE
YARDAGE
A RECORD
3,492 YARDS

Tyrone made a big splash, especially for a Smurf, in 1985 as a freshman at Texas Tech. He was sixth in NCAA punt return average. On his first collegiate pass reception, Tyrone caught a 20-yard pass with 11 seconds left for a winning touchdown in a 21-17 victory over Tulsa. He broke three tackles inside the five yard line after catching the ball for that touchdown.

As a sophomore, Tyrone made the All-Southwest Conference team as a return specialist. His 444 punt return yards were the most of any Division I player. Tyrone caught national attention in that 1986 season by returning a punt 96 yards for a touchdown against Texas on national television. He was named Conference Player-of-the-Week in that game as they posted a 23-21 win over Texas.

Tyrone's high school football coach was Spike Dykes. At Midland Lee High School, both Tyrone and Coach Dykes made quite a name for themselves. The team was so successful Coach Dykes came to Texas Tech and brought Tyrone with him. Coach Dykes now the head coach for the Red Raiders states, "Tyrone is a perfect example of why you are never too small to play football. He's been told all his life that he can't but he's always been taught that he could."

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TYRONE THURMAN: *Continued*



Tyrone scoring one of his 5 touchdowns in 1988

CAREER STATS

Passes	Yds.	TD's	Punt Ret.	Yds.	TD's
93	1,270	5	126	1,466	4

Tyrone helped Coach Dykes and his Midland High team to a 25-5 record in his junior and senior years. He made the All-West Texas Super Team, All-West Texas, All-South Plains, and All-District. Tyrone rushed for 1,212 yards and scored 25 touchdowns in his senior year at Midland Lee. In Tyrone's junior year his team went 13-3 and made it to the state finals. He rushed for 770 yards that year and crossed the goal line 12 times. Tyrone worked hard in high school. Coach Dykes praised Tyrone, "He never takes a lazy step. He practices well, so its no surprise that he plays well." Remembering that senior year of high school, Tyrone said, "I just wanted to overcome my lack of size by having a great senior year."

Coach Dykes continued, "When Tyrone came to us as a 10th grader, he was 5-1 and 120 pounds. He was told he couldn't play varsity ball. It took him six games to prove us wrong. I found out. You better not tell him that he can't."

Tyrone also played basketball and started all three years in high school. He played a lot against NBA Smurf Spud Webb when Spud was at Midland Junior College. He was inspired to try to dunk. The only problem was that Smurf hands can't hold on to a basketball but Tyrone did learn how to dunk a tennis ball. In his high school career, Tyrone averaged nearly 150 assists per year and 13 points per game for three years.

It was a thrill for Tyrone to play in the Texas High School All-Star game but probably his biggest thrill was when Midland played Odessa Permian High School. "It was quite an experience," stated Tyrone, "We played in front of 34,000 people."

When Tyrone was a senior in high school, he was only 5-2 and 128 pounds. His dad is 6-0 tall but his mother is only 4-11 so college recruiters were not hopeful that Tyrone would have a late growth spurt. UTEP and Texas Tech were the only colleges interested. Tyrone chose Texas Tech because it was closer to home.

At Texas Tech, Tyrone started out Bench Pressing 185, Inclinig 125, and Leg Pressing 340 pounds. Strength Coach Joe Juraszek believes there are three keys to success in training: Consistency, Intensity, and Patience. "Tyrone is a perfect example of that" maintains Juraszek, "He has achieved a Bench of 285 pounds, and now Parallel Squats 425 pounds! His Incline has increased to 260 pounds and he Leg Presses 480 pounds for ten reps."

Tyrone praised Coach Juraszek's program, "My attitude in the weight room is great because I've got a great weight coach. He makes lifting worth while and has really inspired me." The feeling is mutual. Coach Juraszek continued in his praise, "I try to make my weight room fun yet intense. Tyrone helps keep things going and keeps it going smoothly. Our attendance is 100% and Tyrone has contributed greatly to this positive attitude. Tyrone always makes time for kids by signing autographs. He talks to kids about drugs and alcohol and how to stay away from their negative influence. I'll

tell you, the kids love Tyrone. They bring him Smurf dolls. It's really been neat."

Coach Dykes agrees, "Tyrone is quite a guy. Also, you know he's never missed a play because of an injury. I believe it's because of all the hard work that he's put in the weight room."

Academically, Tyrone has been doing very well. He started out in advertising, but now is majoring in accounting. After graduating, Tyrone wants to come back and get another degree in accounting which would take a sixth year. But you ask, what will Tyrone do at Texas Tech without football. Well, he hinted to the Sports Information department after this last year of football that he still had two years of eligibility left in basketball and wanted to play. In a few days, Tech Basketball Coach Gerald Myers came knocking on Tyrone's door. The result: The Red Raiders now have a Smurf playing point guard. He made the team!

In December, Coach Myers analyzed, "I think eventually he can help us. It's just going to take time to learn some things. He can gain advantage with his quickness. He'll have a disadvantage with his height in certain situations defensively, but offensively, I don't think there's a disadvantage at all."

Tyrone believes, "Regardless of your stature, it's what's in your heart that counts. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't. If I were a high school basketball or football coach, I'd have my guys lift and improve. As for steroids, I've never been tempted. I've always thought you can get strong enough naturally."

On drugs and alcohol, Tyrone leaves this message. "Your foolish to take either one. I never took even one or two beers in high school. You can have a lot of fun without it. I never did see any "Crack" in high school but just say "No". Don't do something stupid."

Tyrone was raised a Baptist and always went to church. He states, "God gave me my ability and had helped me break the records."

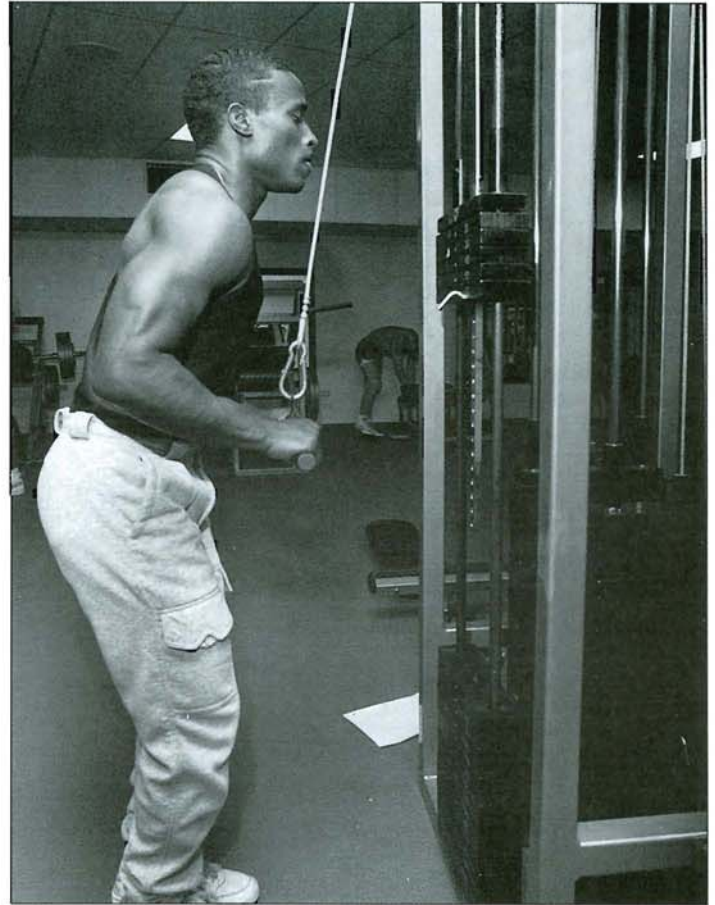
We thank Tyrone for being an Upper Limit thinker and person. We thank Strength Coach Joe Juraszek for making this article possible and Coach Dykes and Coach Myers for their contributions. Tyrone may have a Smurf size body, but everyone has to agree that Tyrone Thurman has a giant size heart.

NEWS FLASH!

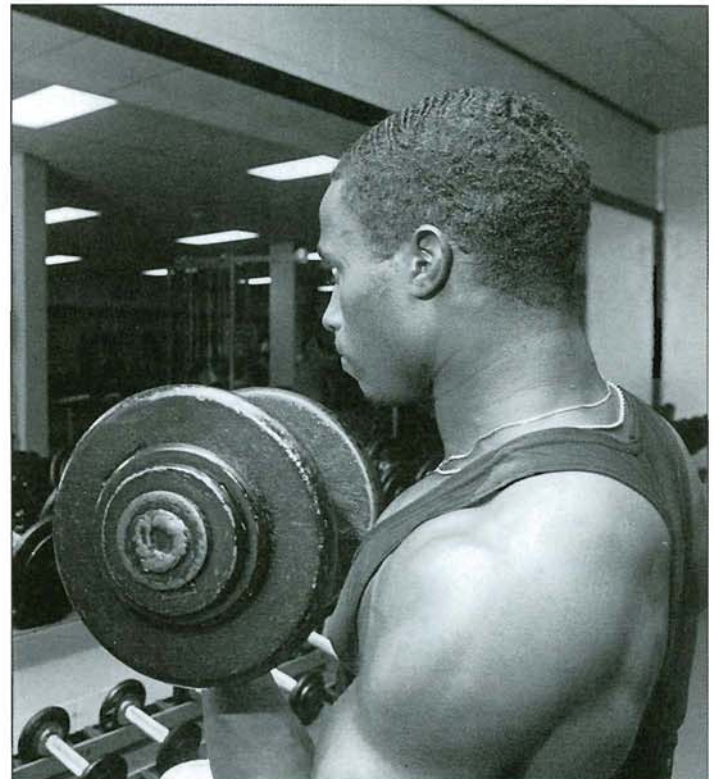
In Tyrone's first Basketball game against the University of Portland, he played only 11 minutes.

However, how's this for stats: in those 11 minutes, Tyrone had 9 assists, 2 steals and no turnovers.

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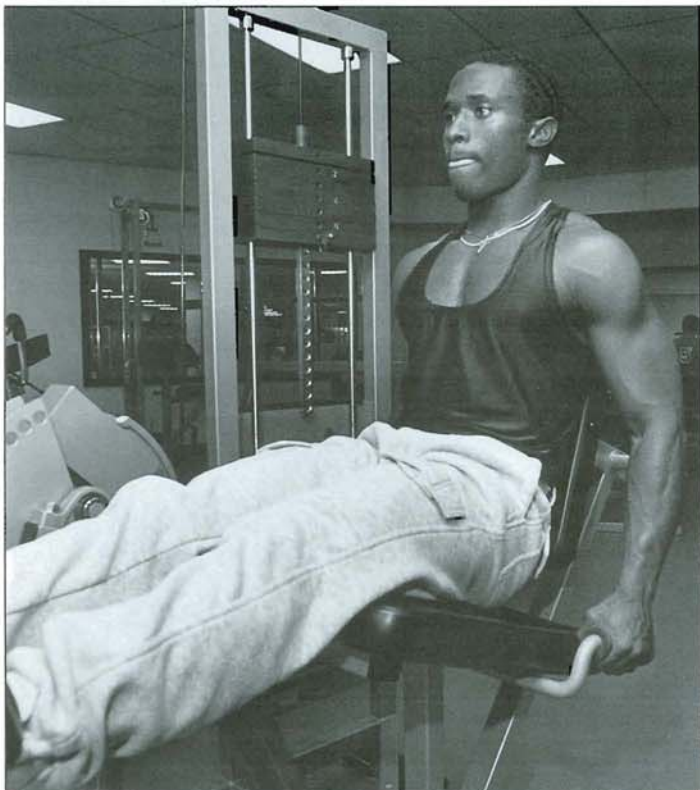


*Tyrone doing his Tricep Pushdowns, a great Auxiliary Exercise for stiff arming a tackler.
Photo by Ian Halperin*

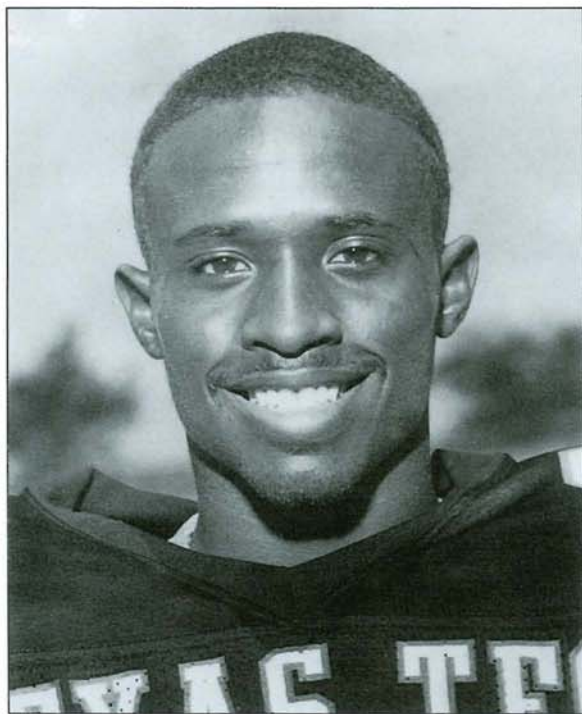


Is Tyrone doing Curls to complement his Triceps or is the Smurf getting ready for a date?

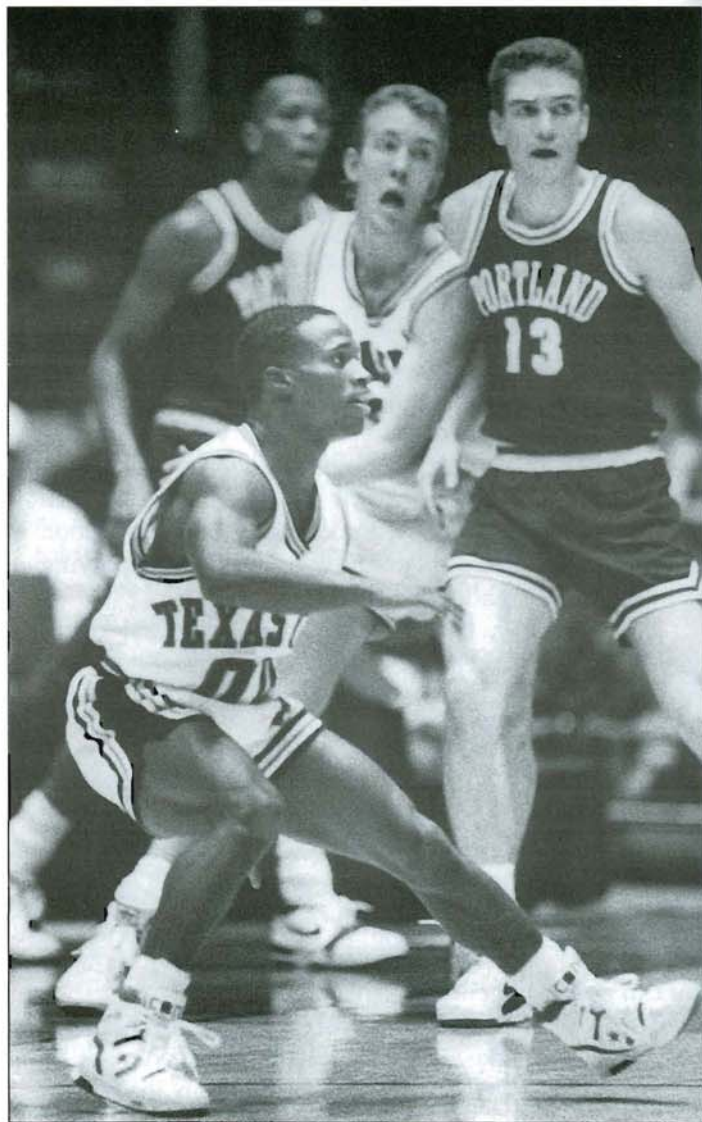
TYRONE THURMAN



*Tyrone doing Leg Extensions which helped keep his knees strong and healthy. Tyrone played in all 44 of Texas Tech's games the last four years.
Photo by Ian Halperin*



OUR FAVORITE SMURF



#81 in Football #00 in Basketball

"I have to learn the system and learn to play with the guys. But Coach Myers runs pretty much the same offense I played in high school. I think I can get it down in three to four weeks."

Tyrone Thurman, December 6, 1988

"I think eventually he can help us. It's just going to take time to learn some things. He can gain an advantage with his quickness. He'll have a disadvantage with his height in certain situations defensively, but offensively, I don't think there's a disadvantage at all."

Gerald Myers: Basketball Coach Texas Tech