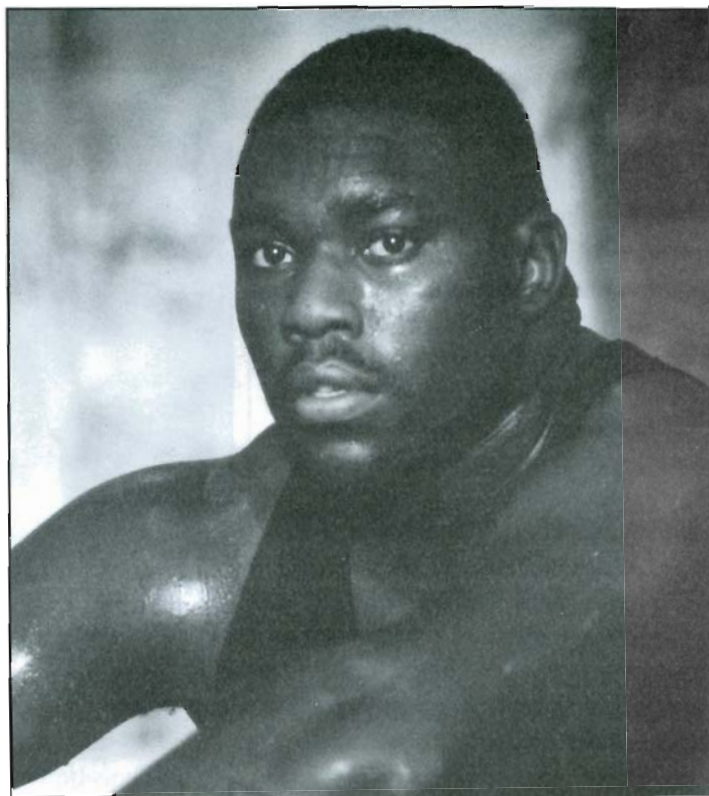


UNIVERSITY OF Miami



Warren Sapp



Top Lombardi and Outland Candidate

By Dr. Greg Shepard

"Death is what you see when you stare at us. When you go to prison and go down death row, you see nothing possible but death. That's what we want our opponents to see when they come to the line," says Warren Sapp serious as a priest at the midnight hour. Warren was the youngest of six children and was not allowed to play youth-league football because his mom thought it was too dangerous. It was not until Warren's sophomore year at Apopka High School that he put on the pads for the first time. He was 6-0 and 210 pounds and a friend asked Warren to play. He did not play in the first game because he came out late. However, he did start the second game at linebacker on the JV team. Warren knocked out the quarterback on the first play. The poor kid — at least on death row you have a chance to prepare for your demise.

"I didn't even know how to celebrate," remembered Warren. "They tried to move me up to varsity but I didn't think I was ready." Warren did make the varsity basketball team as a

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sophomore but he never lifted weights. Warren played on the varsity football team as a junior and started at tight end for the first game and got a TD pass. "There was lots of dissension on the team," Warren related. "We had 15 Division I prospects and went 5-5. I quit after a few games. I just didn't want to be part of the team."

Warren's basketball season went better. He was now nearly 6-2 and weighed 215 pounds. He averaged 16 points and 11 rebounds per game and without lifting weights entered his senior year at 6-2 and 230 pounds and ran a 4.65 forty. "The coach came to me and made me captain. He urged me to weed out the problems."

Head Football Coach Chip Gierke felt Warren had been underachieving

and needed to bring things up a level. "Here's how it's going to be bud," Gierke said. "Here's what I think you can accomplish. What are you waiting on? Me and you are not going to make it past the first game if I don't see that happen."

Warren met the challenge. He led the team to an 8-2 record and was named to the Florida-Georgia High School All-Star game and was an Honorable Mention USA Today All-American as well as being a first-team Florida All-Stater. Warren caught 14 passes for 425 yards and 4 TD's. He made 52 solo tackles, 35 assisted tackles and two interceptions. He punted 20 times for a 43.5 average.

Coach Gierke praised, "Warren put together a senior year that was unbelievable. He played on a high school



football team that had average talent and every time he had to step up and make a big play he did it. Warren did everything for us.”

Warren also had a great year in basketball averaging 17.2 points and 11.3 boards per game. In addition, Warren earned two letters in track. He also held down a 2.7 GPA. Warren, however, never did lift weights. “I thought they would adversely affect you,” laughed Warren. “If I were a high school coach now, I’d definitely have my team lift. It adds so much and keeps you from fatigue.”

Warren is now really hooked on weight training and conditioning and gives high praises to Miami strength coach Dana LaDuc. “Coach LaDuc will never let me cheat. That’s what I like. He smiles when I make gains. He’s fun to be around. I love my one-on-one sessions with Coach LaDuc.”

When it came to choose a college, Warren deferred to his mother. “My mom liked Miami for the care they take with the education of their athletes. I really didn’t care where I went. I just wanted to make her happy,” said Warren. It also helped that the University of Miami was competing every year for the national championship. In fact, in the last 11 years, Miami has won four national championships and compiled a record



“Warren sure does disrupt things. He’s as dominant right now as anyone we’ve had since I’ve been here and that includes our past first round draft picks Russell Maryland and Cortez Kennedy. I’m glad he’s on our side. Warren is all over the damn place.”

Dennis Erickson
Head Football Coach
University of Miami

of 116-17 (.817). That is the most wins of any school in the country!

As a freshman, Warren weighed 315 pounds. That’s why they put him at defensive line. “I knew I was too fat so I worked hard. I lifted weights. There was no choice. We lifted five days per week. I saw that I had been an idiot for not lifting.” Warren red-shirted his freshman year and was able to really concentrate on the weights. As a result he made massive gains. “I got up to a 315 pound bench,” said Warren proudly. “Whee, three plates on each side. For me, that was monumental.” Warren was able to gain muscle and lose fat. In fact, he quickly worked his weight down to a lean 267 pounds. He soon was able to Parallel Squat over 500, Power Clean

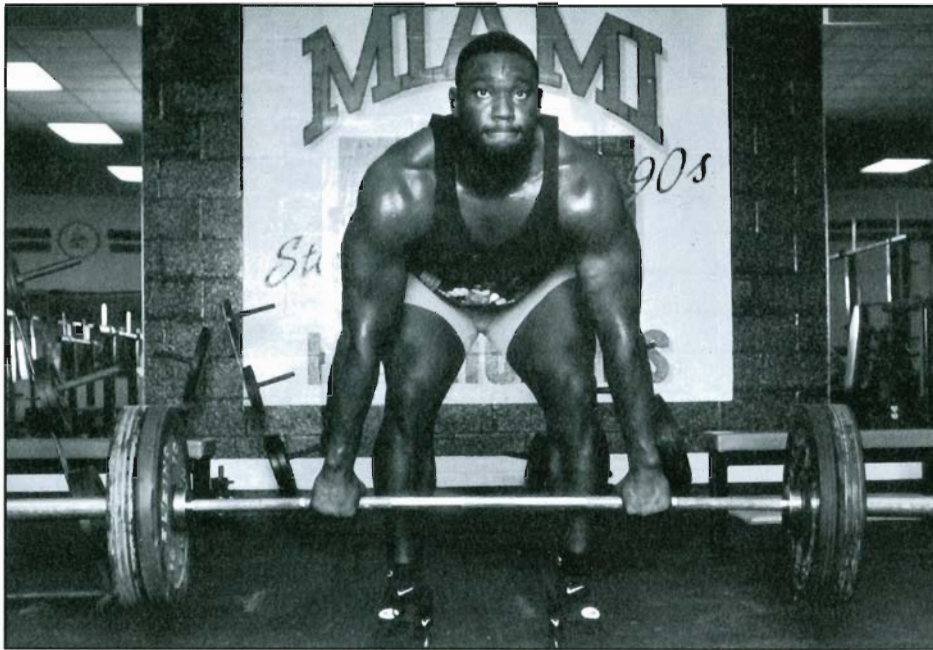
264 and Snatch 231 pounds. “I have strong legs,” said Warren. “Your legs are what carry you, so I worked on them.” Warren is now a junior defensive tackle. He stands 6-3 and weighs 285 pounds at only 13% bodyfat while running a 4.69 forty. His lifts have also gone up: Squat 580, Bench over 400 and Clean 320 pounds.

As a freshman in 1992, Warren earned a varsity letter recording 17 solo tackles and sacks. He blossomed as a starter last year with 27 solo tackles and six sacks. Warren was named to the All-BIG-EAST first-team in 1993. His defensive line coach, Rick Petti, said, “Warren’s biggest assets are his speed, quickness and ability to get off the ball.” The preseason polls for this year were also laudatory of Warren’s talents. Many named him as an All-American. The Sporting News tabbed him as the nation’s number one defensive tackle. In addition, Warren was the only underclassman to be named captain on this year’s Hurricane squad.

The following are my favorite Warren Sapp quotes, “It’s tough to block a person like me one on one unless you’re ready to go four quarters with an animal. No way are you going to get underneath me. I’m physically and mentally stronger this year. I’m going to get beaten every so often but then I’ll come back and beat you and I’ll get to your mind. It never gets boring. It becomes a game within a game. It’s always fun to see if you can make an offensive lineman fall down without touching them. Offensive linemen are so clumsy.

“People hate us whether we go 9-3, 10-2 or 1-11. They hate us, but they can’t do anything about it. Miami’s always going to be a big deadly weapon and every time you step up to it, you better be ready to go down. I look into their eyes and I see fear. They know Miami is like a big machine. I don’t think the teams around the country have the confidence to say we can beat Miami.

“I really don’t get banged around



that much. If you do it properly, you barely get touched. The only thing you touch is maybe your hand and your helmet. That's it. If you do it right, you'll be free and you'll be running after the quarterback or chasing the ball carrier or something. Trust me.

"I thank God when it's 3rd and long. They're probably passing. That means I'm probably going to get a single block. I'm hoping. If it's 4th and one and the other team decides to go for it? No . . . No. That is really disrespectful. That really makes me angry. They think they can get one yard? That is so disrespectful and that really ticks me off."

Warren is fun to interview and get his unique perspective. He has a lot of fun and he obviously enjoys his work. However, Warren has another side from all this psych talk. He has a caring attitude towards others and has pondered important social issues that go far deeper than a QB sack. "Athlete's in the 90's have lost touch with how many lives they influence and how many people wake up Saturday morning just waiting for the game to come on. If a kid comes up to me, I try to be as nice as I can and just be myself. I tell them to work hard and whatever you dream you can

be."

Warren is on line to graduate and is majoring in criminology and has strong views on gangs. "We have got to take away the attraction of being in a gang. We must teach values at home. If that can't be done, we've got

Warren Sapp is one of the very best athletes I've ever seen for a big man. He's a tremendously dedicated athlete and I put him right up there with the very best. It's a lot of fun to work with guys like Warren who love to work hard and are also talented. That's a hard combination to find.

Warren runs like a deer. I mean he's like a tight end or a receiver. For conditioning, we run sixteen 110-yard sprints with a 45 second rest between sets. Warren is amazing. He beats the other linemen by twenty yards. He could backpeddle the last 30 yards and still beat them all. Warren could run those sprints with the defensive backs and at 285 pounds he has a 33-inch Vertical Jump and his Power Clean as of October is now 340 pounds.

**DANA LADUC
STRENGTH COACH
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI**

to help out." Warren hopes to play in the NFL but as he does that and after his football career, he wants to help kids. "Many have lost perspective. A lot of kids know crime and are running the streets. I don't think there are enough people reaching these kids and showing them there's more, much more, to life than the streets."

Warren gives his mother the credit for keeping him in line as a youth. "I'd rather be called a punk than face the wrath of my mom. I never wanted to disgrace her. She taught me to be a good example."

Peer pressure was never an issue with Warren. "I never knew what that was until I took a sociology class. Anyway, it's not them that makes my decisions, it's me. I couldn't even fathom doing drugs. I don't drink at all at Miami. Steroids? I came all this way without them and I don't need them now. Success comes with hard work. Just keep steppin'. Never look back. I give praise to the Father because He's the one who gives you strength."

We thank Coach LaDuc for his great help on this article and express our appreciation to Warren for sharing his Upper Limit attitudes without reserve.

Editor's Note

Coach LaDuc was hired by UM in 1993. Before that, he was the head strength coach for the University of Texas from 1977 to 1993. Coach LaDuc was also a six-time Track All-American and was the 1976 NCAA Shot Put Champion for the University of Texas.....□

FLASH UPDATE
Sapp, at this writing, has 19 solo tackles and 23 assisted tackles, 5 sacks for a -27 yards, 4 tackles for loss of 9 yards & 3 recovered fumbles. Player of the Game by ABC (vs. Washington) ESPN (vs. Florida State), & Rutgers, Big East Player of the Week.