

Ah You ah, yes.

Fast, tough and strong. Three qualities that are required for defensive end. But if he intends to turn his talents to fire and knife dancing he'll need those qualities and more. Would you believe Junior Ah You had to make a choice between football and dancing.

Miki (Junior) Ah You reached one of those crossroads last year, that can cause a man to look back several years later and say (a) "I'm glad I came this way," or (b) "Why didn't I take the other turn?"

Having tasted football success at Arizona State University, Junior had embarked on a professional career with Montreal Alouettes in 1972. Now he had to make a decision—football or dancing. The dancing invitation was from Las Vegas.

Before anyone says anything that could provoke a judo chop, or its Samoan equivalent, you should know Ah You's dancing isn't in the ballet category. What Junior and his wife had put together for nightclub acts in various Arizona clubs while he was at school, is a version of the Samoan knife and Fire Dance.

Las Vegas entertainment agents tried to entice him to give up football, but the Samoa-born, Hawaii-grown athlete, while tempted, rejected the bid. Step-

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Turning on his speed, the ball draws the attention of pass-rushing Junior Ah You.

AH YOU:

ping around and between knives and hot coals may not sound like much of an occupation but it could be lucrative. As well as dangerous. In football when a defensive player gets burned, it's a figure of speech. In Junior's dance, it calls for medical treatment.

Junior's chief stock in football trade is his agility and swiftness, although Tex Coulter warns that no one should underestimate his strength.

"I'd really like to see this guy in a strength test," said the one-time West Point-N.Y. Giants-Alouette star tackle. "I'll bet he can match people 30 pounds over his weight. Why when you pat him on the back it's just like feeling corrugated

steel on the move."

The agility demanded of his dancing undoubtedly contributes to his football skills. His footwork dazzles rival tackles.

"He's so quick," reports Coulter, "the offensive people against him aren't going to have much time to make their moves."

Alouette coach Marv Levy is as lyrical about Ah You's talents as Coulter. Levy feels that Junior's greatness is barely unfolding.

"He really blossomed by the end of last season," says Levy. "He played outstanding football then. He's developing into a fine pass-rusher. He's a superbly-conditioned athlete—a workout nut. He's not only a great athlete, he's a

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Junior's emergence as a full-fledged star in the Canadian

Ah You's days are busy, most times painful, (left) but life has its rewards (below).



Football League, was slowed by injuries. A sore hamstring muscle delayed him during training camp in his first year with the AIs, 1972, but he played the entire schedule or 14 games. Last year a severe charley horse sidelined him for the first six games of the season.

A three-time all star in the Western Athletic Conference, Ah You signed a three-year contract with Montreal in 1972 just before the annual draft of collegians by National Football League teams. Although he played defensive end at school, and wanted to play defensive end as a professional, Junior was rated as the fourth-best middle linebacker prospect in U.S. colleges by the Blesco-V computer.

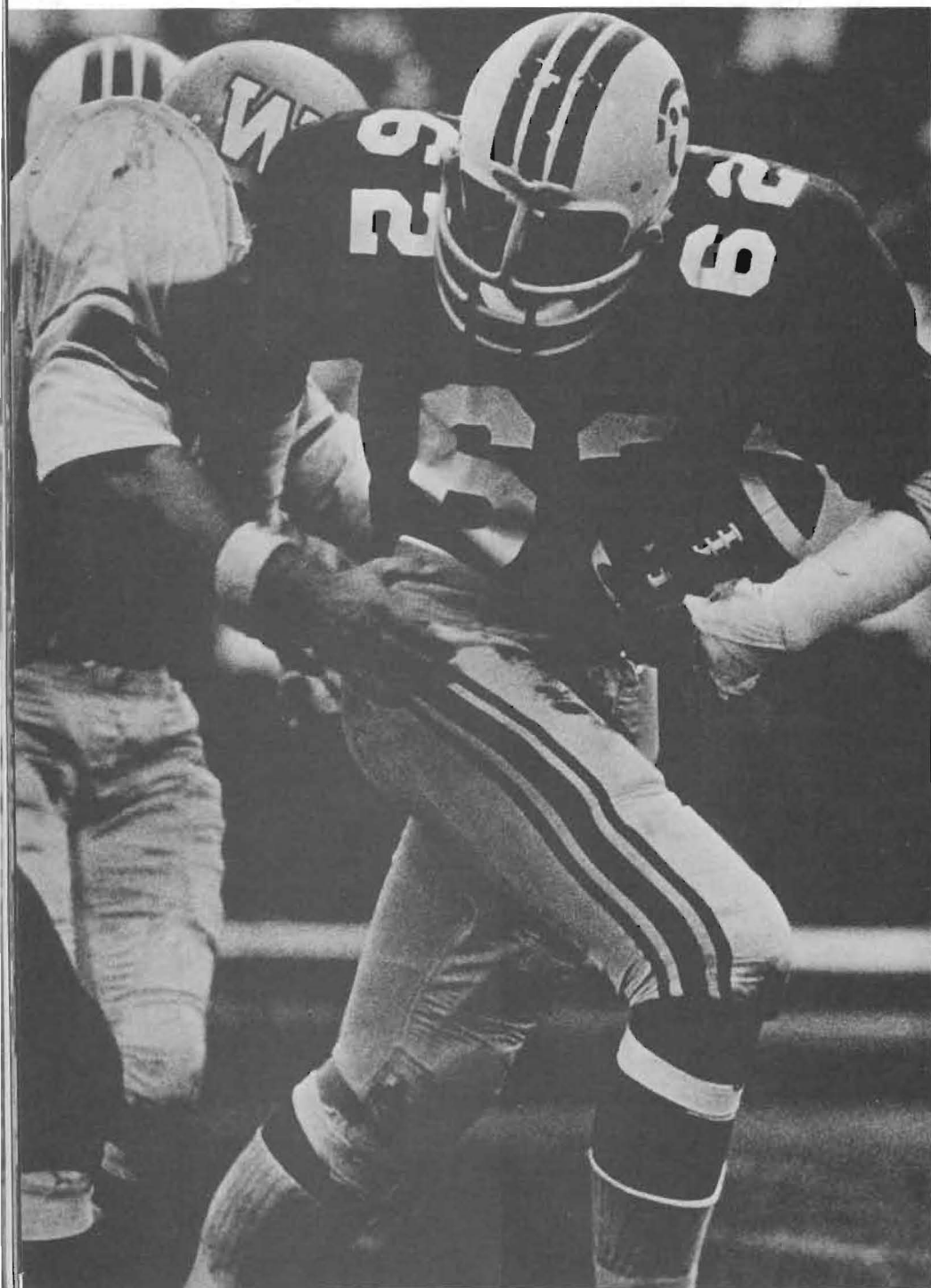
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AH YOU:

"When you play in Arizona, you work under conditions of extreme heat—it gets up to 118 degrees. You can't move around very well for very long if you carry any excess weight."



The Blesco-V gets its name from the five NFL clubs (Bears, Lions, Eagles, Steelers, Vikings) who combine their scouting reports for mutual benefits. These obviously rejected Ah You as too small for a defensive end, by NFL standards, but predicted he would be a valuable linebacker. Problem was nobody fed the computer information on what Junior thought about his career.

"It seems they thought Junior, at 6-2 and 218, wasn't big enough to play as a defensive end in the NFL," said player agent, Lindy Davis, "so they put him down as a linebacker. Frankly, I doubted if he could make it at that position right away. There's a lot to learn in a hurry if you aren't familiar with the position. Here in Canada, we figure he can continue as a defensive end."

Even coach Sam Etcheverry wasn't sure Ah You could handle defensive end chores at his weight. After all, Canadian football didn't demand 260-pounders at the job, but 218 was squeezing the minimum pretty thin. "See if you can put on about 20 pounds," he asked his prime recruit.

No problem, Junior assured him.

"When you play in Arizona, you work under conditions of extreme heat—it gets up to 118 degrees. You can't move around very well for very long if you carry any excess weight, so you try to keep your weight down."

He offered Calgary's John Helton as an example. When Helton came out of Arizona State and into the 1969 college draft, the Stampeders viewed him as a quick defensive lineman. Buffalo Bills, who picked him in the seventh round, thought he would be a strong 225-pound fullback. Helton put on 25 pounds and has never missed all-star status in his five years in Canada.

If Junior can avoid the thigh and hamstring problems that plagued him in his early days in Montreal, he can achieve the same status. He has the talent. All he needs is the health. ●

Taped hands and forearms aren't designed for ball carrying but Ah You makes like a halfback on a fumble recovery against Winnipeg.