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# White may transform Spartans into winner

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*By Bob Pille September 8, 1987 Publication: Chicago Sun-Times Page: 93 Word Count: 586*

EAST LANSING, Mich. Lorenzo White still drives a 1978 Olds with a transmission that needs more than arthroscopic surgery, public proof he rejected the lure of easy money shoved at him by controversial agent **Norby Walters**. That distraction settled, he is burning to prove he is the All-America Lorenzo White who ran for an NCAA sophomore-record 2,066 yards in 1985, not the 633-yard struggler with ankle and knee injuries he was in 1986.

"When I hear people say I'll never be as good as I was as a sophomore," he says, "I have to prove them wrong."

White, a healthy 208 pounds of speed and destruction, makes no small plans. "There'll be a lot of surprised people if I rush for 2,300 or 2,400 yards," he says.

His goal is to surpass Marcus Allen's NCAA record of 2,343 yards at USC in 1982. "That's what I've got in mind," says White. "I always shoot for the impossible."

He will never hear a discouraging word from MSU coach George Perles, admittedly his players' biggest booster. Instead of recoiling as most coaches do, Perles will utter "Heisman Trophy" with only moderate prompting.

The publicity mills that have helped push 39 MSU players onto All-America

teams in veteran sports information director Nick Vista's 33 years on campus are ready to grind with Perles' blessing.

"We were playing catchup on the Heisman in 1985 because Lorenzo didn't have enough (pre-season) publicity going for him," says Perles.

"We have our bases covered and the stage set last year, and he gets hurt. So all those things are in drawers, filing cabinets, and (film) cans ready to come out. If he does well, all people have to do is dust them off, and he will be back in the picture."

Perles hastens to add White will be back in the picture "on his own merits . . . humble, with his goals second to teams goals."

"Making the Rose Bowl my senior year would be one of the best things to happen in my life," says White. "It'd be one of the best Christmas presents I ever had."

A more successful Spartan team could mean less of White than the 419 carries that resulted in all those sophomore yards. Backup Blake Ezor earned an opportunity by running for 337 yards in the second half of last season. There will be running plays for quarterback Bobby McAllister, who can throw 70 yards.

Where departed four-year starter Dave Yarema was a dropback passer who ran only in fright, McAllister is a sprint-out quarterback and some of his maneuvers are designed running plays.

"He gives our offense another dimension," says Perles. "He'll definitely run with the football."

McAllister is the Spartans' offensive key, a junior whose multiple talents must replace Yarema's school-record 5,809 career passing yards.

McAllister, from the same Florida neighborhood as White, was 1-5 as a fill-in starter when Yarema was hurt in 1985. "That was a long time ago; he was only a freshman," says Perles.

But Perles can't put quarterbacking worries out of mind until he sees passes consistently finding All-Big Ten split receiver Andre Rison, who last year caught 54 for 966 yards, both school records.

New coaches ask for five years to rebuild, and this is Perles' fifth. He is 23-22-1 with two bowl teams and the painful memory of last year's expected postseason berth wrecked by November upset losses to Indiana and Northwestern.

"The program is where it should be except for needing more fifth-year seniors in the line," he says. "Our (new) facilities are second to none, and we're a good team getting better."

NEXT: Michigan.

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