


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# Three-back attack runs show for Redskins

HERNDON, Va. (AP) — You want power, we've got power. You want quickness, we've got quickness. Versatility? We've got that, too.

All of those things you see Thurman Thomas do for the Buffalo Bills every week, the Washington Redskins get from their backfield. The difference is in troop deployment.

While Thomas is doing everything and earning NFL most valuable player honors, the Redskins are using a three-headed running back. Call him Earnest Ricky Riggs. Or Gerald Byner Ervins.

"It's a pleasure to have three guys who can play like that," Redskins tackle Joe Jacoby said.

This year was Earnest Byner's third 1,000-yard season and he is an excellent receiver. He also made the Pro Bowl this season.

"Earnest is very tough, a great competitor, a slashing kind of runner," Gibbs said of the back Wash-

ington acquired in a 1989 trade with the Cleveland Browns. "He's a leader from the preparation and toughness standpoint. He is very bright, versatile and well-conditioned."

"What is unique about this team is the togetherness," Byner said. "We've had it throughout this year. There are really nice relationships between the young guys and the old guys ... all the guys."

"Our line is big and strong, and has got an attitude."

Gerald Riggs, 31, is big and strong and sometimes was accused of having the wrong attitude in his later years as an Atlanta Falcon. He was dealt to Washington in 1989 when the Falcons felt he no longer could handle a heavy load.

"He's the kind of back who can power his way in there for the touchdown," Gibbs said. "He's the classic big back who has

gained a lot of yards and still can do it. He has size and bulk.

"Gerald could play other places and I know he would like to carry the ball more. He has done everything we've asked of him."

Waived at the end of training camp and then re-signed, Riggs was asked to run only 78 times. He scored 11 times.

"There's probably a few fans who would like to see me more," Riggs said. "But that's not my job anymore."

"When I get those chances, I really have to produce," he said. "When I get the chance, I'm going to get it in there."

Ricky Ervins didn't get into the lineup with regularity until Week 7 against Cleveland.

The Redskins were seeing a big lead evaporate when Gibbs turned to the rookie from Southern Cal. Ervins rushed for 113 yards in the second half and

Washington won 42-17.

When he added 82 yards in the second half against the New York Giants, Ricky Ervins had done the unusual for a first-year Redskin.

"If I was the coach, I'd do the same thing," Ervins said.

"Ricky has great explosion," said Gibbs, who had been impressed with Ervins in training camp, but could not overcome his reluctance to use rookies. "He is the home run guy. He's got that outside speed and is a darter."

Ervins had a 4.7-yard average this year, gaining 680 yards. He also caught 16 passes.

"I asked Earnest once why he'd been so good to me, helping me all the time," Ervins said. "He said, 'Because when you get in there, I want you to help us win.'"

"That's how it is. Being a rookie doesn't mean being isolated." Super Bowl XXVI will be played this Sunday in Minneapolis, Minn.

## Bills' kicker keeps focus on this year

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — Although Scott Norwood had plenty to shout about Monday, he wasn't at Rich Stadium long enough to make much noise.

Norwood, who ended last season by missing a 47-yard field goal that would have won the Super Bowl, hit the game-winner from 44 yards out in the Buffalo Bills' 10-7 victory over the Denver Broncos in Sunday's AFC Championship.

That makes Norwood 4-for-4 in Buffalo's playoff wins over the Broncos and the Kansas City Chiefs, giving him as much confidence as he's had all season going into the Super Bowl on Jan. 26 against the Washington Redskins.

Norwood wasn't around to talk about it. The Bills had a team meeting, a brief film review of the Broncos game and did some conditioning work. By the time the media was allowed in the locker room, Norwood had left.

After Sunday's game, he professed he wasn't bothered by the prospect of having to answer two weeks' worth of questions about The Miss from last year.

"I don't dread this," he said. "It's part of the business. When it comes time to buckle it up in a couple of weeks, it will have nothing to do with it. As long as you guys (reporters) aren't out there rushing field goals and running around the football field, the hype isn't important."

Coach Marv Levy and special teams coach Bruce DeHaven both said they are recommending that Norwood not talk to the media before the Super Bowl. Judging by his quick departure Monday, Norwood took that advice to heart.

"I'd advise him not to talk about it and to concentrate on the game," Levy said. "He's talked about it up to here."

"I think that it's the best thing for him to look ahead, not back," DeHaven said.

"You know one of the big stories this week would have to be Scott Norwood because of his kick last year," he said. "I don't see how anybody could possibly do an interview with him without asking that question. And every time that question arises, that's going to be a negative."

Norwood has insisted all year long that he's put the Super Bowl miss behind him. Although he finished the season hitting a career-low 62 percent of his field goal attempts, he said he hasn't changed his technique or work habits.

"I don't need to make any adjustments," he said two weeks ago. "I've been kicking the ball good this week, so I'm not adjusting. I'm just working hard."

Adam Lingner, the Bills' long snapper, said he felt the Super Bowl miss last year has colored Norwood's work this year.

"Every time something went wrong, it was magnified, both internally on his own part and people on the outside saying things about him," Lingner said. "It became worse than it should have been because of what happened in the Super Bowl last year."

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