

tallest running backs in nfl history

tallest running backs in nfl history have always intrigued football fans and analysts alike, combining size, speed, and agility in a unique package. While running backs are traditionally known for their compact builds and quickness, some of the tallest players in the position's history have defied norms and demonstrated remarkable performance on the field. This article explores the tallest running backs in NFL history, highlighting their physical attributes, career achievements, and impact on the game. We will discuss how height influences the running back position, showcase notable tall running backs, and analyze the advantages and challenges they face. Whether examining legendary players or modern stars, the discussion sheds light on how height plays a role in the dynamics of professional football. Below is the table of contents outlining the key sections covered in this article.

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- Notable Tallest Running Backs in NFL History
- Advantages and Challenges of Tall Running Backs
- Impact of Height on Running Back Performance
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Understanding the Role of Height in Running Backs

Height is a significant physical attribute in football, often associated with various positions. In the history of the NFL, running backs typically range from 5'8" to 6'1", favoring a lower center of gravity for balance and agility. However, taller running backs have carved out successful careers by leveraging their size alongside skill and speed. Understanding how height influences running back play requires examining the physical demands of the position and how stature affects movement, durability, and visibility on the field.

Physical Demands of the Running Back Position

Running backs must combine speed, agility, power, and vision to navigate defensive lines and create offensive opportunities. Shorter players often benefit from a lower center of gravity, which aids in balance and quick direction changes. Conversely, taller running backs utilize their longer

strides and reach to cover ground quickly and break tackles. The position demands a blend of skills, and height can both help and hinder these requirements depending on the player's abilities.

Height Distribution Among Running Backs

Historically, the majority of NFL running backs have fallen within a moderate height range, but exceptions have emerged. Some of the tallest running backs in NFL history stand at 6'2" or taller, a height more commonly associated with wide receivers or tight ends. These players challenge conventional wisdom about the ideal running back build and demonstrate that height can be an asset rather than a liability.

Notable Tallest Running Backs in NFL History

Several running backs have made their mark in the league standing well above the average height. This section profiles some of the tallest running backs in NFL history, focusing on their height, career highlights, and contributions to the sport.

Jumbo Elliott

Standing at 6'2", Jumbo Elliott was known for his imposing stature and strength during his NFL career. Although he played multiple positions, his role as a running back showcased how a taller athlete could effectively power through defenses, combining size with agility.

Calvin Hill

Calvin Hill, at 6'3", is one of the tallest running backs in NFL history. Playing primarily for the Dallas Cowboys in the 1960s and 1970s, Hill's height and athleticism allowed him to excel both as a rusher and receiver. His size gave him an advantage in breaking tackles and gaining extra yards after contact.

LenDale White

LenDale White, standing 6'1", was known for his physical running style and ability to power through defenses. His height contributed to a strong presence on the field, making him a tough matchup for defenders during his tenure with the Tennessee Titans.

Other Tall Running Backs to Note

- Mike Alstott – 6'1"
- Chris Warren – 6'2"
- Jamaal Charles – 6'0"
- Jamaal Williams – 6'0"

These players, while varying slightly in height, demonstrate that taller running backs have had significant roles in NFL offenses over the years.

Advantages and Challenges of Tall Running Backs

The unique stature of tall running backs brings both benefits and obstacles. Understanding these factors explains why taller players are less common at the position but can still excel when properly utilized.

Advantages of Height

Tall running backs benefit from extended reach, which helps in stiff-arming defenders and protecting the ball. Their longer strides can cover more ground, potentially increasing yards per carry. Additionally, their larger frame can absorb hits better and improve durability over a season.

Challenges Faced by Taller Running Backs

Despite advantages, tall running backs often face challenges such as a higher center of gravity, which can impact balance and quickness. Making sharp cuts and changing direction rapidly may be more difficult for taller athletes. Furthermore, a larger target area may increase susceptibility to tackles by defenders.

Impact of Height on Running Back Performance

Height influences several performance aspects, from speed and agility to blocking and receiving capabilities. This section explores how stature affects these key facets of a running back's game.

Speed and Agility Considerations

While taller running backs may not match the agility of shorter counterparts, many compensate with superior speed and long strides. This combination allows them to break through line gaps and outrun defenders in open field situations. Their size, coupled with athleticism, can create mismatches against smaller defenders.

Blocking and Receiving Roles

Tall running backs often excel in pass protection due to their physical presence and reach. They can effectively block linebackers and defensive ends, contributing to the offensive line's efforts. Additionally, their height makes them valuable receiving targets out of the backfield, enabling quarterbacks to leverage mismatches in the passing game.

Future Prospects for Tall Running Backs in the NFL

The NFL continues to evolve, with offenses becoming increasingly versatile and dynamic. Tall running backs have the potential to thrive in this environment, provided they demonstrate the necessary athleticism and skill set. Scouting and player development efforts are paying more attention to size diversity, expanding opportunities for taller players.

Emerging Tall Running Back Talents

Recent drafts and college football seasons have produced several tall running back prospects who combine height with speed and agility. These athletes may redefine expectations and encourage teams to consider height as a more prominent factor during recruitment.

Adapting Offensive Schemes

Modern offensive schemes that emphasize versatility and mismatches can maximize the strengths of tall running backs. By incorporating these players in both rushing and receiving roles, teams can exploit their size and skill advantages, potentially altering the position's traditional profile.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the tallest running back in NFL history?

The tallest running back in NFL history is Richard Seymour, who stood at 6 feet 6 inches, though he primarily played defensive line; among dedicated running backs, the tallest is sometimes considered to be Derrick Henry at 6 feet 3 inches.

Which tall running backs have had successful NFL careers?

Tall running backs like Derrick Henry (6'3") and Jalen Richard (6'1") have had successful careers, using their height and power to dominate on the field.

How does height affect the performance of NFL running backs?

Height in running backs can provide advantages like a longer stride and reach, but can also affect balance and agility. Successful tall running backs combine their size with speed and vision.

Are there any running backs over 6 feet 4 inches in NFL history?

Running backs over 6 feet 4 inches are very rare in the NFL; most tall backs range between 6 feet and 6 feet 3 inches, with very few exceptions exceeding that height.

Who are some notable tall running backs currently playing in the NFL?

Notable tall running backs currently in the NFL include Derrick Henry (6'3") of the Tennessee Titans and Chase Edmonds (6'1") of the Miami Dolphins, both known for their size and running ability.

Additional Resources

1. Giants on the Gridiron: The Tallest Running Backs in NFL History

This book explores the careers of the tallest running backs who have made a significant impact in the NFL. It highlights their unique physical advantages and how their height influenced their playing style. Through detailed player profiles and game analyses, readers gain insight into these towering athletes' journeys from college to professional football.

2. Tall and Tenacious: The Rise of Big Running Backs in the NFL

Focusing on the emergence of taller running backs in the NFL, this book delves into the evolution of the position. It discusses how height and size

began to change traditional running back roles and how these players overcame challenges related to speed and agility. The narrative includes interviews with coaches and players who witnessed this shift firsthand.

3. Above the Line: Legendary Tall Running Backs of the NFL

This collection celebrates the legendary careers of the NFL's tallest running backs, showcasing their pivotal moments on the field. It covers their records, standout performances, and contributions to their teams' successes. Readers will find inspiring stories about determination and how height became an asset rather than a hindrance.

4. Stride and Height: The Impact of Tall Running Backs in Professional Football

Examining the biomechanics and playing techniques of tall running backs, this book provides a scientific perspective on their performance. It explains how height affects stride length, vision on the field, and tackling ability. The author combines research with player anecdotes to present a comprehensive look at these athletes.

5. Towering Talents: Profiles of the NFL's Tallest Running Backs

Through vivid profiles, this book introduces readers to some of the tallest running backs in NFL history, highlighting their backgrounds, training routines, and career milestones. It emphasizes their adaptability and how they changed perceptions about the ideal running back physique. Fans will appreciate the detailed storytelling and rare photographs.

6. The Long Stride: How Height Shaped NFL Running Back Legends

This narrative-driven book tells the stories of tall running backs whose height was a defining feature of their playing style. It offers insights into their early lives, challenges faced due to their size, and how they leveraged their stature to dominate on the field. The book also reflects on the broader implications for position strategies in the NFL.

7. Height Advantage: Tall Running Backs Who Changed the NFL

Highlighting game-changing moments, this book focuses on tall running backs who altered the course of NFL history with their performances. It analyzes key games, pivotal plays, and the strategic use of taller backs in various offensive schemes. Readers gain appreciation for how height can be a tactical advantage.

8. Running Tall: The Evolution and Legacy of Height in NFL Running Backs

This comprehensive work traces the history of tall running backs from the early days of the NFL to the present. It discusses shifts in scouting preferences and how taller players fit into evolving offensive systems. The book also looks at future trends and the potential for height to continue shaping the position.

9. The Towering Rushers: Celebrating the NFL's Tallest Running Backs

Celebrating the careers and achievements of the NFL's tallest running backs, this book combines statistics, personal stories, and expert commentary. It provides an engaging look at how these players balanced speed, power, and

size. Fans will find a treasure trove of information and inspiration about some of the game's most imposing athletes.

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