

Tres

Bien



Rutgers football fans agree that
Tres Moses is very, very good

By Bill Glovin

The Scarlet Knights quarterback rolled out to his left and launched a 55-yard prayer across the Rutgers Stadium field. Tres Moses and a defensive back, running stride-for-stride down the right sideline, both leaped for the ball. At 5'10", Moses out-jumped the defender, snatched the ball out of his arms, and raced into the end zone with an 87-yard touchdown pass.

The catch brought the Knights to within seven points and put them back in the game, but Rutgers eventually lost 41-35 to the Connecticut Huskies. Moses (UCNB'06) would complete his day with seven catches for 168 yards and two touchdowns. "That was probably my biggest catch of the year, but I had some other big ones, too," says Moses, who caught the pass from backup quarterback Terrence Shawell (UCNB'08). "The way I look at it is, if I can see the white stripes on the football, it's my ball and I'm gonna get it."

In a 2004 season that ended a disappointing 4-7 for the Knights, the man his teammates call T-MO was consistently productive. By year's end, Moses had set Rutgers' single season records for receptions (81) and receiving yards (1,056), breaking marks that were established by All-American tight end Marco Battaglia (RC'96) in 1995. He also received the Homer Haze Trophy as the team's most valuable player.

Moses also established himself as one of the top receivers in the nation. He was first team All-Big East, having led the conference in receiving with 7.3 catches per game. Moses' 81 catches were the second-highest total in Big East history behind only Larry Fitzgerald, the former Pittsburgh standout who was the third pick in the 2003 NFL draft.

For Scarlet Knights fans, the best part is that the player with the T-MO tattoo on his forearm will be back in a Rutgers uniform and building on his record-breaking accomplishments next fall. "I thought about leaving school early and applying for the NFL draft, but I haven't accomplished my number one goal, which is to get to a bowl game," says Moses. "I know our fans have been through a lot, but we are working tremendously hard on the field and in the classroom, and have come a long way in

talent and togetherness.” His commitment has a spiritual quality to it when he adds, “I feel God has a plan for this program and that our time will come.”

All this from a student-athlete who was recruited by only one Division I football program: Rutgers.

Raised by his grandmother and uncle in Boyton Beach, Florida, Moses preferred basketball to football growing up. “I didn’t like the hitting drill,” he admits. His uncle, Stokes Hunt, only nine years older, liked taking his nephew to the playground with him to play basketball. “Tres [pronounced with a hard s] was a good player, but too small to play on the Division I level,” he says. “He was competitive, tough, and fast and I felt that he could be a standout football player, but he complained that the high school football team wasn’t any good. I told him that he should go out for the team and make them good.”

Moses was soon the quarterback for the Atlantic Community High School team. “The first pass I threw was an interception; I ran on almost every play,” he says, laughing. His smile reveals a set of gold incisors—a sure sign that he has taken a jolt or two since he was a kid avoiding the hitting drill. In Moses’ junior year, the coach moved him to receiver when his boyhood friend Omar Jacobs transferred to the school and became the quarterback.

“Omar has a great arm; he’s now the quarterback at Bowling Green,” says Moses. “We passed half the time and whenever we missed a ball, our coach made us do fingertip pushups. So anytime I do pushups now, I use my fingertips. That may be where the strength in my hands comes from.” Atlantic Community rarely lost while Moses and Jacobs were on the team, going to the semifinal round of the state championship tournament. Yet while Moses was selected to play in All-Star showcase games in Florida and California, college recruiters showed little interest in him.

When the defensive coordinator for the Miami Hurricanes, Greg Schiano, saw Moses at a high school practice in 2000, he was impressed by his speed, explosiveness, and the big red swoosh on his sneakers. When Schiano became head coach at Rutgers the next year, he invited the kid with the swoosh to come to Rutgers for a visit. Says Moses, “I loved the

vibe; it was like one big family. Coach Schiano later came to my house in Florida and shared his vision for the program with my uncle and me. By the time he was done talking, I was ready to run through a wall for Rutgers.”

As a first-year student that fall, Moses caught 13 passes for 159 yards and one touchdown and was named to the *Sporting News*’ Big East All-Freshman Team. The following season he hurt his knee early in the season, which allowed him to gain an extra year of eligibility as a redshirt. Says Schiano, “Tres needed to lose a little weight. He came back that next year as a more mature individual.” Adds Moses, “Sitting out helped me realize what it takes to really succeed. I began to hit the weights more and stopped eating fried foods.”

His new attitude paid off in 2003 when he emerged as one of the top receivers in the Big East, amassing 52 receptions for 536 yards and five touchdowns. He also returned his first punt 60 yards for a touchdown in the season opener against Buffalo. Despite sharing the team’s most improved player award, the season ended on a sour note when Moses fumbled a crucial punt with the score tied at the end of the game against Connecticut. Rutgers, 4–4 at the time, lost any chance it had of a winning season when the Huskies took advantage of the turnover and scored the winning touchdown in the final minute.

That miscue made him even more determined to come back strong in 2004. “This year I was able to better read defenses and coverage at the line of scrimmage,” he says. “There were many times when the play called for a certain



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route and I knew it wouldn’t work. Ryan [Sands (ENG’05)] would change the play at the line of scrimmage, which was crucial to me catching a lot of passes. It’s crucial to have good rapport with your quarterback, no matter who it is. Me and Ryan have great rapport.”

Moses believes he can compete in the NFL. A criminal justice major, his fallback plan is to work for the Secret Service. He also plans to eventually settle in Atlanta, his favorite city. Schiano thinks Moses can accomplish whatever he sets his mind to. “If Tres has a problem, it’s that he’s so intense that we sometimes need to calm him down,” says Schiano. “I’ve watched him grow as a player and a person, and that’s been enormously satisfying.”

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