

Tate - A Throwback to The Days of Leather Helmets & Solid cars

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There was a time, not so long ago, when cars and football players were both built like tanks. It was a time when air bags were something one floated on in a pool, and roughing the passer was just part of the game.

Tarveres Tate, senior defensive tackle for the Golden Knights, is a throwback to those days of big cars and even bigger football players.

Even Tate's choice in cars reflects the feeling that he is a player from another era. Tate drives a 1961 Ford Falcon, without air conditioning, or any of the power features taken for granted in the cars of today. Looking at Tate and his Falcon, one would have to believe they would both withstand a collision with a brick wall.

“Everybody calls me ‘old school,’” Tate said. “They say my car’s old. They say I’m an old man because I’m already banged up and I’ve got such a deep voice. I guess that nickname suits me. I’m not supposed to be a good runner so I really shouldn’t be around playing defensive tackle. Somehow, though, I’ve made it through and been playing four years now. I guess my car and I are a lot alike. On the road, I’ve got to compete with all those fast cars. On the field, I have to compete with all the fast players.”

After being redshirted in 1992, Tate made his presence felt early on for the Golden Knights by leading the team with three fumble recoveries. Tate was also a member of a Golden Knight defensive unit which set the school record for the fewest rushing yards allowed per game during his first season in 1993.

Throughout Tate’s life, both on and off of the field, one person has been his biggest influence and supporter.

“My dad’s my biggest role model because he always stayed on me and was real tough on me,” Tate said. “My dad and I have a good relationship. I can talk to him about anything. He always calls and asks me how I did in the games. He always comes to the home games and he’ll be coming to some of the road games this year.”

Like a true player from a forgotten era, Tate’s motivation for playing sounds just like something Vince Lombardi or Bear Bryant may have said to motivate their players in seasons past.

“Just playing on Saturday is motivational for me,” Tate said. “I like being around all the fellas, too. When they’re out there giving 100%, it makes me want to give 100%, too. Going hard on every play and just playing for my coach. A good coach. I like going out on the field and knowing I have a good relationship with my teammates and my coach. The main motivation though, definitely is just knowing I’ve got a job to do on the field every Saturday.”

Not only has Tate's playing style earned him the respect of other players, his coaches are equally impressed with his performance.

"Tarveres is a finesse guy with a lot of intelligence. He reminds me of a guy who played in the '60's, Deacon Jones. He's very dependable. He's just a great kid," Golden Knights Defensive Line coach Andy Cox said. "If I had a daughter, she could date him. Tarveres is one of the guys you want to keep in touch with once they finish as a player."

Tate's football career began early on when he started playing Pop Warner football in the sixth grade. Besides being a standout in football, Tate batted .495 for the Avon Park High School baseball team.

"When I got to college, I had a choice between playing football or playing baseball. I chose football because of my size," Tate said.

During the off season, Tate worked out in the weight room and added 15 pounds to his frame. Currently, Tate is listed at 6'2" and 260 pounds. His car is slightly heavier.

Tate's most memorable moment as a Golden Knight came against McNeese State in 1993. Tate recovered a fumble and returned it 74-yards. However, he was tackled before reaching the end zone. A fact some people won't let him live down.

"I took the ball down 74-yards and I didn't score. I got tackled at the 4-yard line. Everyone still picks on me all the time about that one," Tate said. "That was my most memorable moment just running with the ball again after switching over from tight end."

Off the field, Tate is a business major at UCF and hopes to one day own his own business, but he hasn't really had too much time to think about where he'll be in five years.

"Hopefully, I'll still be playing football in five years, but, if I'm not playing, I hope I have a job or own some type of business. That's my biggest long-term goal at this time."

Tate's more immediate goals are helping the Golden Knights during their inaugural season of Division I-A competition.

Cox believes that with a little extra work, Tate's football career will extend beyond UCF.

"He's got a chance to play at the next level if he gets in the weight room," Cox said. "He's got as much talent as Kavika Pittman (1996 second round draft choice of the Dallas Cowboys, who Cox coached last season at McNeese State). He just needs to get into the weight room and work hard."

No doubt drivers would be a little intimidated seeing Tate's Falcon barreling towards them in the rearview mirror. Quarterbacks get the same sensation watching Tate rumbling towards them at full speed, realizing that he is built like that old Falcon and no one has a chance of surviving the collision unscathed when "old school" is in the driver's seat.