

Former UNLV quarterback stars in commercial

by Mark Landwehr
Sports Editor

Former University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) all-American quarterback and current NFL star, Randall Cunningham is starring in a new commercial campaign for Diet Coke called, "The Melt."

Cunningham, who starred for UNLV until 1984, holds 12 different UNLV football records for his passing efforts. This is not to mention the hundreds of yards he gained rushing the ball after eluding would be tacklers.

The 6-4, 203 lb athlete was a two-time all-American at UNLV, passing for 8290 yards in his stint as a Rebel signal caller. He compiled this yardage while maintaining a UNLV record career completion percentage of 58.1.

Cunningham continued his success in the National Football League (NFL) with the Philadelphia Eagles. "Runnin Randall" has led the Eagles to two division titles while leading the team in both passing and rushing.

In 1988, Cunningham threw for just under 4000 yards, and

ran for 624 more. He topped off the year by being named Most Valuable Player (MVP) in the Pro Bowl.

Last year, Cunningham's numbers slipped a bit due to an injury to star receiver Mike Quick. He still threw for 3400 yards and rushed for 621, in an "off" year.

It's not too much of a mystery why Diet Coke chose the multitalented Cunningham as one of only seven NFL stars to be in their new campaign, "The Melt".

"The Melt," filmed at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, depicts action at summer training camp. The temperatures rise above 100 degrees, (114 actual temperature), and players begin to melt into the playing field. Our heroes are saved, however, by Cincinnati Bengals' quarterback Boomer Esiason, who gives his fellow players Diet Coke to refresh and restore them.

The promotion is interesting because Diet Coke teamed up with Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) to pull off the special effects in the spot. ILM did the effects for such movies as "Raiders of the Lost Ark," "Star Wars" and "The

Abyss," to name a few. "The Melt's" melting effect is done using the same technology ILM employed in creating the "pseudopod" creature in "The Abyss," (Academy Award, Best Visual Effects, 1989).

Aside from the technology used to melt the players, the techniques used to reassemble them are just as complicated. Using effects tricks learned from the movie, "Willow," called "morphing," the players are transformed back to their original form after consuming the Diet Coke.

The effects portion of the 30 second spot took three months to fully prepare and complete.

"The Melt" will air throughout the fall on ABC's Monday Night Football, NBC Sports Sunday Football Games, and other national television shows.

The promotion is being used to kickoff Diet Coke's 25th Anniversary of the Super Bowl campaign. It includes "The Melt", game boards and pieces and prizes of \$25,000 in cash and tickets to the Super Bowl in Tampa.



Boomer Esiason (right) comes to the rescue with ice-cold bottles of diet Coke for teammate Randall Cunningham (12) in a new commercial entitled "The Melt".

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