

# AFL's "Best Back" Plays Here

WHEN THE OAKLAND RAIDERS meet the Houston Oilers at Cashman Field a week from Saturday night (Aug. 29), local football fans will be provided with a close-up look at the American Football League's counterpart to the National Football League's great Jimmy Brown.

In fact, there are some astute observers who claim that if Clem Daniels of the Raiders had the same supporting cast accorded Brown, he would be acclaimed the finest all-around offensive back in pro football. Considering Jimmy's awesome record in the senior circuit, that's quite a tribute to the former Prairie View A&M star who was a major factor in lifting the once-despised Oakland club out of the sports world's deepest dungeon last season.

Daniels' value to the Raiders is evident when you examine Oakland's league record last year. The ten Raider victories in 1963 were one more than the club was able to accumulate in its three prior seasons in the AFL. And the four Raider losses came while Clem was on the sidelines nursing a severe thigh bruise.

Ironically, the Raiders defeated all five of the other AFL Western Division teams twice last season, including the champion San Diego Chargers, who squeezed into the league playoff game with the Boston Patriots on the strength of an overall 11-3 record compared to 10-4 for the Raiders.

DESPITE HIS ENFORCED ABSENCE from the four games with Eastern Division teams, the 218-pound, 6-1 Daniels broke the 1,096-yard rushing record of Buffalo's 245-pound fullback, Cookie Gilchrist, by two yards. Clem's total of 1,098 yards is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the entire Oakland rushing output came to 1,594 yards.

In averaging 5.1 yards in 214 carries last year, the husky former Army Lieutenant with a sprinter's speed and a weight-lifter's strength, scored eight touchdowns, five of them on pass receptions. He caught 30 aerials for 685 yards, finishing the season second in yardage and touchdowns to Oakland's other great Negro scoring threat, end Art Powell, who racked up 16 six-pointers.

Daniels can take them short and run them long or go deep for the bombs tossed by Tom Flores and Cotton Davidson. His longest touchdown romp in 1963 was a twisting 74 yards and he scored another on a 73-yard pass reception.

Oakland's AFL Coach of the Year, Al Davis, calls Clem "the finest receiving halfback in football," claiming that his ability to snag the long ones from his halfback position "adds a scoring weapon that perfectly complements Powell's threat at the flank."

DANIELS' GREAT SEASON earned him the AFL's Player of the Year award for 1963 in a poll conducted by The Sporting News among 24



CLEMON DANIELS

### AFL's Player of Year Performs Here August 29

sportswriters in the eight league cities. He nosed out quarterback Tobin Rote and flanker Lance Alworth of San Diego for this honor after the Charger stars had been designated as Most Valuable Players in premature wire service polls.

Daniels, who went to Oakland from Dallas in 1961, apparently didn't learn much about pro football in his first two years with the hapless Raiders. But when "miracle-worker" Davis took over as coach last year, the part-time Oakland school teacher really came into his own.

"When I came to Oakland," Davis recalled earlier this year, "I felt that Daniels had the physical equipment to develop into a 'dream halfback.' But he was very inexperienced and lacked confidence in his ability. His pride and courage, his intelligence and eagerness to learn, soon came to the fore, however. Despite his great 1963 season, I believe he has yet to achieve his potential. Barring serious injury, he has a brilliant future in front of him."

Davis seems to have known what he was talking about. Last weekend Daniels racked up two touchdowns as the Raiders downed the Denver Broncos, 20-7. His first score came on a 12-yard pass from Davidson and the second was the result of a 62-yard pass-play with Flores on the throwing end.

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