

SPORTS

# Raiders' Cherry defies odds, gets master's degree

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Oakland Raiders defensive back Je'Rod Cherry wasn't supposed to make it through high school, let alone earn a college degree. And certainly not an advanced degree.

But on Saturday he receives his master's in education from the University of California at Berkeley. Yep, Berkeley, the brainy school across San Francisco Bay.

Cherry joins an elite class of NFL players with advanced degrees: San Francisco quarterback Steve Young, law degree from Brigham Young; Atlanta linebacker Jeff Kelly, master's in juvenile probation from Kansas State; Tampa Bay linebacker Derrick Brooks, master's in communications from Florida State; and Kansas City linebacker Donnie Edwards, master's in education ad-

ministration from UCLA.

There are no official records of the number of players with advanced degrees. But the NFL says several more are working toward master's degrees, including Cleveland Browns offensive tackle Roman Oben, who is studying public administration at Farleigh Dickinson in New Jersey.

When he was in ninth grade, Cherry was barely scraping by in school.

"I struggled because I had that mentality," he said. "I had that 2.0 mentality — as long as I have a 2.0, I'll be cool."

But the promise of football, a smart girlfriend, and a good, hard look at his surroundings snapped him out of it.

"Growing up poor, I knew why I was poor and I didn't want to make the same mistakes,"

he said. "My parents weren't educated, and they couldn't get jobs because of it. I didn't want that to happen to me."

That was the end of the 2.0 mentality.

Cherry went on to graduate from Berkeley High School and attend Cal, where he starred in football and track.

He earned an undergraduate degree in political science with a 3.2 grade-point average.

Cherry, 6-foot-1 and 215 pounds, was drafted in the second round by the New Orleans Saints in 1996. In February, he signed with the Raiders as an unrestricted free agent.

During his years in New Orleans, Cherry attended Cal mostly through the Internet, keeping up with reading and class notes and sending his papers by e-mail.

UC Berkeley education professor Herbert Simons said it took four years for Cherry to complete his work, but he was resolute in his desire to finish.

"He's an incredibly determined student and he has incredible self-discipline," Simons said. "He's just a dedicated student and a fantastic person."

As for his grades? Simons said Cherry did "very well."

The well-spoken 26-year-old said he's not finished yet. He hopes to start work toward his Ph.D. soon — probably in history with an emphasis on African-American studies.

Some day, his teammates might be able to call him Dr. Cherry.

"There are things I want to do beyond football," he said.

# Jones sticking to goal of five golds in Sydney Olympics

HOUSTON (AP) — Marion Jones is sticking to her goal of an unprecedented five gold medals in Sydney.

Another disappointing long jump over the weekend in Japan didn't do anything to dissuade Jones from her plan to compete in — and win — five different events in the upcoming Olympics.

"I just want to go there and win everything I'm entered in," Jones said Monday.

"To me, it's not a big deal."

To others, it is. Jones may be the fastest woman in track, but she has yet to translate that speed into consistently good long jump efforts.

And she has been criticized within the sport for possibly jeopardizing her sprints by placing too much emphasis on trying to win a gold medal in the long jump.

"It's quite frustrating," Jones said. "When you're in the public eye it seems everything is criticized. You have

to walk a narrow line."

The charismatic Jones easily won the women's 100 meters Saturday at the IAAF Japan Grand Prix in Osaka, running a 10.84 into a wind as part of her preparations for the U.S. Olympic Track & Field Trials in July.

But she finished fourth in the long jump with a leap of 20 feet, 7 inches, well behind the 21-11 3/4 by winner Guan Yingnan of China.

It was another frustrating effort for Jones, who has

struggled trying to tame her speed down the runway to find a takeoff point she is comfortable with.

"I just had a miserable performance," she said. "I didn't jump well at all."

Jones, a two-time world champion in the 100, has been vocal since last year about her plans to win gold medals in the 100, 200, 400 relay and 1,600 relay as well as the long jump in Sydney.

She acknowledged Monday, while appearing at an

Olympic media summit here, that she may have been a bit too vocal.

"At times, perhaps, I wish I would have left it as a surprise, maybe kept it quiet a little longer," Jones said. "Then maybe I wouldn't be getting some of the criticism I get."

Jones went into last year's world championships with similar plans, setting a goal of four gold medals in Seville, Spain.

She left with only one —

in the 100 — and a bronze in the long jump, after pulling up with a back injury in the semifinals of the 200. Rival Inger Miller won the 200, the first time since 1997 that Jones has lost in the race.

The 24-year-old Jones is well aware that a similar fate could befall her in Sydney.

"I never said I would go to Sydney and it would be a piece of cake," she said. "If it was so easy to win everything, it wouldn't be that special to me anyway."

The average summer daytime high temperature is 103 degrees.

The average summer nighttime low temperature is 73 degrees.

You do the math.

Water between 2 am and 5 am.

MAY

6 days per week  
 2 times a day, between 2 am-5 am  
 5 minutes each watering

\*The actual amount of time you water may vary due to different soils, sprinkler systems and weather.

It's a fact: if we water in the summer heat, we can lose thousands of gallons a month to evaporation. The time has come to change your watering schedule to the cool of the early morning, between 2 am and 5 am. You'll also want our free Lawn Watering Guide that will show you how to change

your watering schedule each month to save the most water.

Call the Water Conservation Hotline at **258-SAVE** for your Lawn Watering Guide and information on other free water-saving programs and services. You can also dial **\*H-2-0** on your cell phone (it's a free call) or visit **snwa.com**.

