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colorado classics

Colorado Classics: Shay Davis, former high school star athlete

By Irv Moss
The Denver Post

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The idea of being an accomplished football player hasn't totally disappeared from Shay Davis' mind.

Davis still thinks about scoring touchdowns for the University of Colorado and even dreams about playing in the NFL.

"Every once in a while those thoughts will pop up," Davis said from his art studio in Los Angeles. "Even though I still dream about it, I don't think I'd want to be a 10-year veteran in the NFL."

Davis happily has learned that 10-plus years in a career of painting in oils, while not as profitable, isn't as hard on your shoulders and knees as is playing pro football.

"Artwork is a little harder to judge than play on a football field," Davis said. "There's no scoreboard, but it's competitive in its own way."

Being competitive took Davis a long way in sports. He was a star running back at Green Mountain, which played in the state semifinals twice in his high school career.

He rushed for more than 3,700 yards — including 252 as a junior against Wheat Ridge — and

scored 548 points with the Rams. He also had 15 interceptions as a free safety and scored on punt and kickoff returns. He even was an all-state kicker as a sophomore.

Davis also was a basketball star with the Rams. They won the Class 5A state championship in 1992, Davis' senior year. He led the state in scoring, averaging 24.4 points.

Davis was an All-Colorado selection in football and basketball, but his passion was football.

"Shay was a better prospect in football than basketball, although he was very good in basketball," said older brother Van Davis, a member of the Green Mountain coaching staff the last six years. "When we started shooting baskets to 10 in the backyard, I had to give him points. It didn't take long and he was giving me points."

Davis' teammates at CU included 1994 Heisman Trophy winner Rashaan Salaam, linebackers Matt Russell and Ted Johnson, and quarterbacks Kordell Stewart, John Hessler and Koy Detmer.

The Buffaloes were 8-3-1 in 1993, 11-1 in 1994 and 10-2 in 1995. Davis was a candidate to play wide receiver and running back with the Buffs. He was listed as their No. 3 tailback entering the

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1994 season, behind Salaam and Vance Joseph, but injuries derailed his career in Boulder.

"I had three surgeries on my shoulders," Davis said. "I just decided that I wasn't going to be able to play football."

Said Janet Davis, his mother: "I believe he was disappointed during the rest of his years in college. I think he knew he was going to be moving on to something else because of the surgeries."

After graduating from CU, Davis took a "mind-refresher" course for two years in Vail. He returned to the Denver area in 2000.

"I wanted to have my mind clear for whatever I decided to do," Davis said. "I had been involved in drawing pictures since I was 5 years old, and by high school I had developed a passion for oil painting. I decided to pursue a career in art. It went hand in hand with everything I grew up with."

"There's a connection to sports. You have to have self-discipline and be willing to put a lot of hard work into both in order to move up to the next level. In believe I've developed more passion for my artwork than I had with sports."

Davis sees Los Angeles as a Mecca for art, so he set up his studio there. He calls his style of painting "futuristic surrealism" and considers it one of the popular art movements

in the world.



(Photo courtesy of CU)

"I'm happy with the way things have worked out," Davis said. "You never know the hand that's going to be dealt you. My hand is different than I had planned back then."

Davis bio

Born: Sept. 6, 1973, in Denver

High school: Green Mountain in Lakewood

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College: University of Colorado

Family: Mother Janet, brother Van

Hobbies: Surfing, snowboarding, traveling

Desire: An art show where every piece of his work sells



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