

## Quarterbacks: Black vs Black

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# Quarterbacks: Black vs Black

By **NELSON GEORGE**

Chicago's Soldier's Field was the site of an unusual, perhaps unprecedented, moment in National Football League history recently. The starting quarterbacks for both the Chicago Bears and the visiting Tampa Bay Buccaneers were Black. The pair have taken very different paths to reach status on their respective ballclubs.

For Vin Evans it has been a tough road. Drafted out of Southern California a few years back Evans was never given much of a shot at the top quarterback spot before this season. Like many Black college quarterbacks when he made it into the NFL where there was much talk of shifting him to running back or defensive back. Everyone knew he had a strong arm and could run, but no one in Chicago wanted to give him a real shot. Certainly previous Chicago coach Jack Pardee didn't.

Current Bear head coach Neil

Armstrong, fed up with the inconsistent Bob Avellini, gave Evans plenty of playing time in the pre-season and both he and the Bears looked good. But when the season started he went back to Avellini. But in a victory over Minnesota and a close loss to Dallas, Evans showed a flair for completing the long bomb and getting away from the opponents pass rushes, things his club needed desperately.

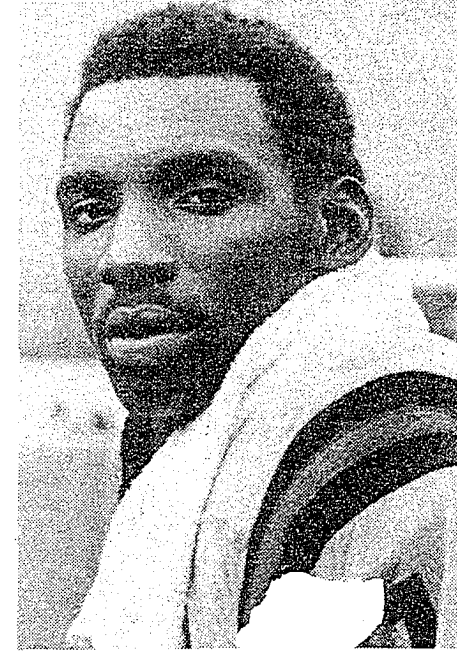
Doug Williams had it quite a bit easier. From his days at Grambling University, Williams looked like a top pro prospect. Last year, his first in the NFL, wasn't without its hard knocks. In his first game against the Giants he had his shoulder hurt. Later against the Los Angeles Rams linebacker Jim Youngblood and defensive end Fred Dyer combined to break his jaw.

But despite the injuries Williams gave Tampa Bay the kind of always dangerous passer they lacked their horri-

ble first two seasons. Under coach John McKay's offensive philosophy Williams isn't a percentage passer, looking to make short tosses to his backs and tight end. Instead the Buccaneers look to go down field so Williams can throw the 30 yard on the line passes that can mean quick scores from anywhere on the field.

On this Sunday Williams came up on top as he rallied his team, throwing a touchdown pass late in the final quarter for a 17-13 victory. Evans had just put Chicago ahead with a typically long pass, this one 65 yards to the NFL rushing leader Walter Payton.

However the real winner on the day were Black athletes and sports fans. For years the symbol of leadership, in pro football — the quarterback position was denied to us, often with the implication that Blacks weren't smart enough to play it. Well, that old chestnut is dead and it's sad it took so long to go.



**DOUG WILLIAMS**

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