

Fleet Wally Triplett Carries The Mail For Nittany Lions

By CHUCK DAVIS

The train sped toward Dallas with its high spirited cargo—the Nittany Lions of Pennsylvania State College, undefeated in seven starts—enroute to the Cotton Bowl to take on Southern Methodist U., New Year's Day, 1948.

Somewhere in a coach, a player looked over at Wallace Triplett and winked... a few minutes later, Coach Bob Higgins passed through and clapped a fatherly hand on his shoulder. "Keep cool, Kid," they seemed to say.

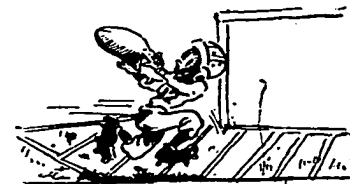
It would be up to the hard driving right halfback to carry the mail against SMU. He hadn't showed nerves before, but this was different. Being maybe the first Negro to play against whites in a major Texas grid game was



enough to put Triplett on edge. The Lions couldn't afford that. A slip by anybody, and Doak Walker would be away—or on top of the play.

Triplett didn't get a case of nerves. Neither did his Negro teammate, Dennie Hoggard of Philadelphia. They just wanted to get in there and play. And they did!

Triplett kicked off to the Texas boys, and the game was on. The teams seasawed back and forth until late in the third period, SMU led, 13-7. Elwood Petchel heaved a desperate third down



pass from the 26. Out of nowhere came Triplett. He snagged

Penn. State defeated the University of Pennsylvania 13-0 at Philadelphia, Saturday, for one of the most startling upsets of the season. Wallace Triplett contributed greatly to the victory.

the oval on the one, and stepped over.

Forty-seven thousand fans

jumped to their feet, including Gov. Duff and 3,000 avid Pennsylvanians. At the final gun, with a bullet pass bouncing off Hoggard's chest, the score was still 13-13.

Celebrate At Home

Triplett's five foot 9½ inch, 172 pound frame was hoisted to the shoulders of the Pennsylvanians who streamed over the field. Back home in La Mott, Pa., the whole Triplett family celebrated around the radio—Mama and Papa Triplett, and brother Raymond, Howell, Alfred, Frederick and Perry. They renewed the celebration when Wally came home.

A year later, Triplett calls the Cotton Bowl game his greatest football thrill—equal to the day he learned that Jackie Robinson had donned a Brooklyn Dodger uniform, and the time he clouted a grand slam homer in his favorite game.

Triplett is an earnest young man of 22, who can be seen on the campus any day in his favorite cheviots and gabardines



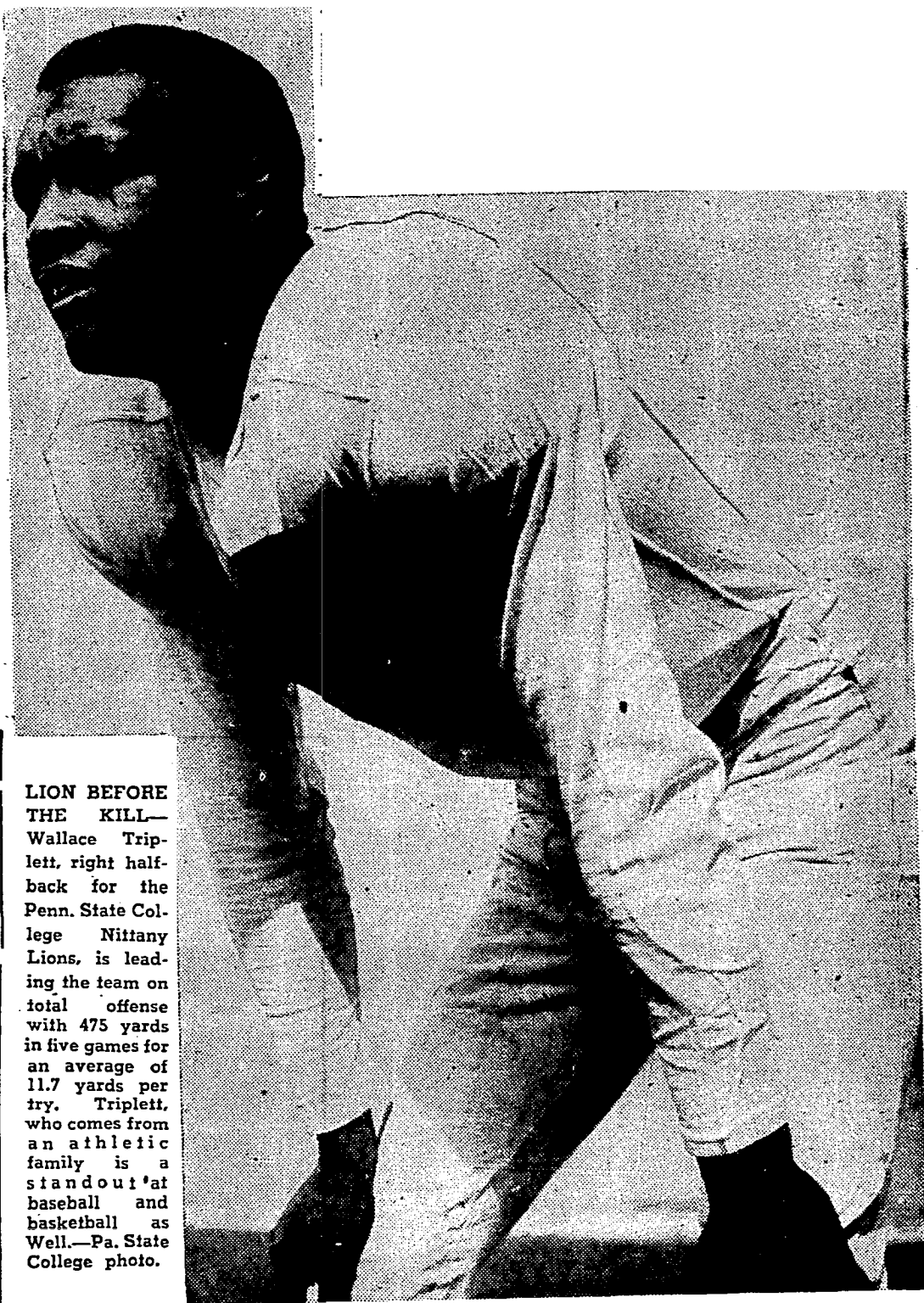
in blue, gray or checks. He is popular because of his skill in baseball and basketball as well as football, and rates high with his Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity brothers.

Scholarship Student

His personality has a fine balance, with his taste in clothing and his preference for Gershwin, Ellington and Chopin in music hinting a conservative tendency.

Since high school Triplett has been a good athlete and a good student; the last accounting for his attending Pennsylvania State on a scholarship.

When he finishes school next year, Triplett wants to teach or coach. But he may be snapped up by pro-football first. Squeezed in the dollar battle for players several teams are turning more and more to Negro athletes not claimed by both leagues in the annual football draft. One may tempt him.



LION BEFORE THE KILL—
 Wallace Triplett, right halfback for the Penn. State College Nittany Lions, is leading the team on total offense with 475 yards in five games for an average of 11.7 yards per try. Triplett, who comes from an athletic family is a stand out at baseball and basketball as well.—Pa. State College photo.