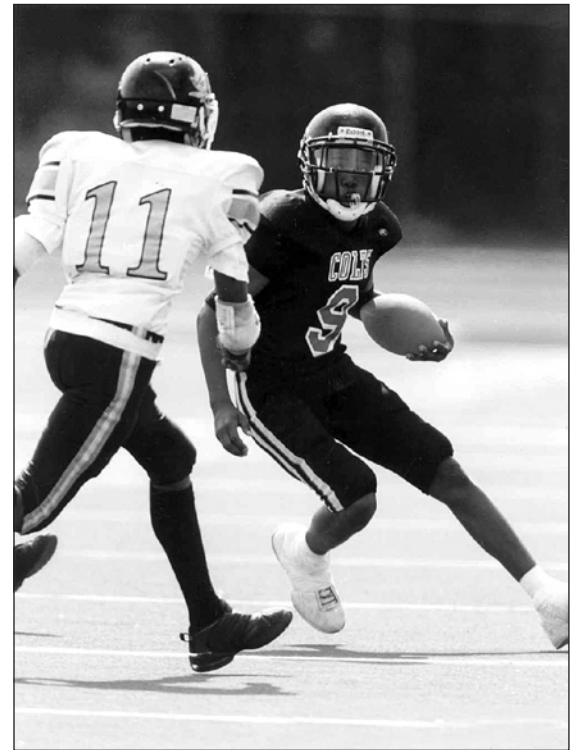




Michael Gates #11



Michael Gates #11 and Myles Gates #9 of Union City Colts Youth Football Team.



Myles Gates #9

# 'Twin Gates' Aiming To Be Like Barbers

BY ALONZA ROBERTSON

FREMONT, CALIF. - Things weren't going so well for the Union City Junior Midgets last Saturday during their rainy quarterfinal playoff game on the slick AstroTurf at James Logan High School field.

After an exciting 68-yard opening kickoff return, their offense led by 13-year-old Michael Gates sputtered. After a first quarter safety, the Colts fans - huddled up groups of parents, siblings and grandmas trying to keep dry - didn't have much to cheer about.

For the next three wet quarters, quarterback/defensive end/ PAT kicker Michael and his identical twin/running back/wide receiver/cornerback Myles played hard like the 5-year veterans that they are. In the end, the Colts and their star twins prevailed 16-6.

The Junior Midgets, coached by former San Jose Sabercat player, Ward Farris, are the San Jose PAL National Division Champions with a season record of 7-1. The Junior Midgets are now heading into the semi-final round against archrival Berkeley this Sunday at the San Jose Police Athletic League (PAL) complex in San Jose.

"We'll be ready," said a confident Myles after Saturday's game. Michael nodded in agreement as he huffed down a hot dog he'd bought with money his Dad, also named Michael, had awarded him for several good plays.

As these two multi-sport stars move through their last games of youth football, they

"They play baseball, basketball, wrestling; but they love to play, watch, talk and sleep football" - Chirika Patterson

dream of one day being the heirs to the NFL's current African American twins, the Barbers - Ronde and Tiki.

(Actually, according to NFL.com, the league's official website, there have been eight other pairs of twins in the NFL before the Barbers. Only the first set of twins, Tom and Gene Golsen, played as teammates for the 1926 Louisville Colonels. The latest pair to come close was in 2001 when, Evan and Ethan Howell, another running back/defensive back combo, played in NFL Europe together.)

Like the Barbers, the Gates first goal is to use athletics to help them get to college.

Both boys, who stand and weigh an identical 5'5" and a solid 113 pounds, have displayed enough talent to have local high school coaches and fans drooling. "Sports are a big deal in our family," said the Gates' mother Chirika Patterson who attends every game and practice and is easily recognizable in her black and red Team Gates cap. "They play baseball, basketball, wrestling; but they love to play, watch, talk and sleep football."

And it seems they relish the idea of the Barbers as role models. A planned introduction and meeting with Ronde Barber of the Buccaneers - during Tampa's October visit to play

the 49ers fell through. Nonetheless, "we like having the Barbers as someone to look up to and see if they did it-- studied and played hard, then we can too," said Michael.

"Sports takes a lot of time and commitment, but hard work pays off, look at them," said Myles, the older brother by 14 minutes.

The boys are 8th-grade students at Centerville Junior High School in Fremont where they both carry 3.0 GPAs. Their goal is to follow the football paths paved by their father and uncles, former St. Francis High School football greats, Michael Gates and Tyrese & Tyrone Gates.

Every so often, the Bay area seems to produce a superstar twin tandem: Ozzie and Jose Canseco, sluggers with baseball's Oakland A's; and Jason and Jarrod Collins, former twin basketball towers at Stanford University, now both playing professionally in the NBA.

In time, the Gates hope to be the Bay Area's next twin sensation. *cfm*

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