



Times Photo By Mike Russell

FAST COMPANY

Barry Sanders (left) joins Roger Craig (right) athletes Ward Farris (left), Rod Green and Ed Berry (right) join in.

Familiar faces in training

By MIKE IPSEN

Times Correspondent

It's a typical off-season training day for several football players at a local county park.

It's 6 a.m., dark, damp and cold.

Yet the players continue to train — the young ones hoping for a shot in the NFL and the veterans who want to maintain their athletic ability.

Carlmont High grad Ed Berry, who was cut by the Forty Niners last season, is back for a second year of training. He plans on returning to Toronto in the Canadian Football League.

San Carlos' Ward Farris, Woodside's Chris O'Brien and Palo Alto's Rod Green all gather to train with the likes of 49ers Eric Wright and Roger Craig.

There's also a new face among them. Heisman Trophy winner Barry Sanders joins the group after reading about Craig's workout in a *Sports Illustrated* story.

"I'm on my spring break from school and Billy Altstatt

(a graduate assistant in Sanders' freshman year at Oklahoma State) invited me out for a visit," Sanders said. "I was able to kill two birds with one stone. I could visit with relatives out here I haven't seen for awhile and I could see what Roger is doing with his training.

"Roger Craig's workouts are known nationwide by all the athletes," Sanders said. "I felt this would be a great opportunity for me to see it first hand. If I can pick up a few tips, I want to take advantage of it."

The early morning workout, designed by Portola Valley doctor Arthur Ting, consists of running 45 minutes in the mountains above San Carlos and Woodside.

"Once the mountain running is behind me, the rest of the day is easy," Wright said.

At the end of the workout, most head for home. Craig and Sanders stick around to talk with Ting about the benefits of the run.

Craig offers Sanders some

advice. "I hope you can make it back and train with us," he tells him. "It will make a world of difference."

"Definetly," Sanders said. "I haven't been doing that much distance running, but that was a great workout. You can bet I'll be doing a lot more running before I get back here this summer. The only trouble is finding hills like this in Oklahoma or Kansas. Get up on the slightest hill there and you can see the whole darn state."

Sanders knows he'll probably be playing in the NFL some day and this is a way to hedge his bets. Taking a page out of Craig's work ethics is a bonus.

"Roger Craig is one of the toughest athletes around," Sanders said. "Just being around him and players like Eric Wright are going to make you a better player. Roger and Eric will also be able to help me with any questions I may have about the NFL."

At least he's in the right company.