

Look Ma, I did what they sent me out here to do

From the Sidelines

It used to be that every play in college football ended the same way. At the end of the action, the referee would blow his whistle signaling to all involved to cease and desist.

But times have changed, and college football has evolved, too. The referee's whistle now only means the ball carrier's knee has hit the turf. This year, the action isn't officially over until one of the players has strutted across the field, arms raised in the traditional Tour de France victory pose.

Or the athlete may choose to take things one step further by removing his helmet and finding the nearest camera in order to boast of his achievements.

Football is a tough game, and to play your best, you definitely have to be pumped up. Players who have made spectacular plays have every right to be proud of themselves — but every play? It seems that every play this year has warranted at least one player prancing around with his arms thrust skyward, strutting like a rooster on speed.

There was a day in college football

when making a play was considered average, when making one tackle wasn't considered such a great accomplishment that it necessitated a show of egoism. Those crazy players of the old days must have thought they were just doing their jobs.

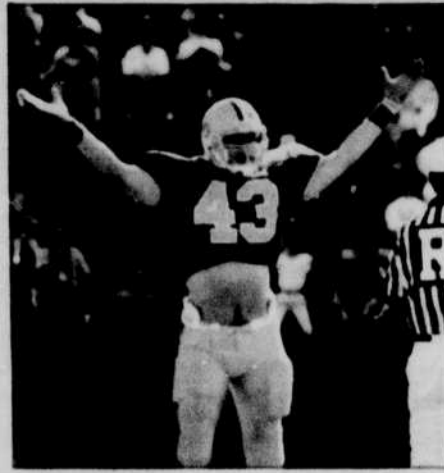
Think about it. If you're a really great player, making one great play isn't that rare a moment in your life.

A nice example occurred when Washington played Cal Oct. 10. In the third quarter, Cal's nose tackle, No. 58, batted down a screen pass. Of course, following this year's guidelines, he immediately began his "I'm-such-a-pro" strut.

The guy must have forgotten about his earlier play when he jumped offside on third and short, giving Washington an automatic first down (a true accomplishment for a guy who lines up directly over the ball). I don't remember him strutting around on that play.

And never mind the fact that it was the third quarter, Washington was ahead, and the Huskies had been running over the top of him all game. He made one good play in the third quarter, and he was going to let everyone know about it. We were impressed.

Mark Gastineau could be given credit for the way many linemen act after a play is made. But the former New York Jet star saved his celebrations for after one of his many quarterback sacks. Not once did he do his ritual dance when leveling a running back after a 15-yard



File Photo

Like football teams around the nation, the Ducks and Huskies have had their fair share of showboaters this season.

gain.

But it's not just the linemen who make fools of themselves at times.

Billy "White Shoes" Johnson, a former receiver in the NFL, got his name for being one of the first football players to wear white shoes. But he is remembered most for introducing celebration dances in the end zone after touchdowns.

For years after Johnson started the fad, there seemed to be a contest, especially among college ranks, to see who could cut a rug the best after a touchdown.

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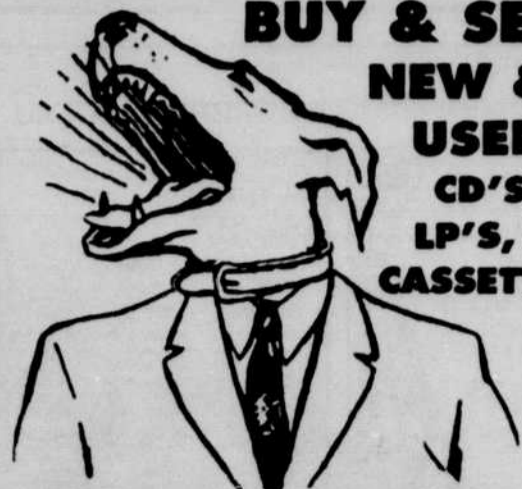
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