

Move over Ickey Shuffle, here comes the Ricky Plunge



CHRIS METZ

Move over Deion Sanders, there's a new master of celebration in town and his name is Ricky "Don't call me Ickey" Whittle.

Much to the chagrin of head coach Rich Brooks, Whittle capped off his 67-yard first-quarter touchdown in true Hollywood fashion, busting a 360-degree twirl and gracefully tripping into the end zone from the one-yard line, earning him an ESPN highlight, a 15-yard penalty and more than an earful of Rich Brooks' extreme disapproval of the act.

Ladies and gentleman the litigants for the case of "To Plunge or Not to Plunge" are now entering the courtroom.

(Insert the People's Court theme here.)

The Plaintiff: Oregon head football coach Richard L. Brooks, 53.

Background: Earned B.S. in physical education at Oregon State University in 1963 and master's in education in 1964 at

OSU. In his 18th year as Oregon head coach. Favorite band: Guns n Roses. Favorite soda: Fresca.

Complaint: The plaintiff claims that the defendant, Oregon junior running back Ricky Whittle, employed poor judgment, succumbing to the pressure of 41,000 screaming Duck faithful fans and excessively celebrating, leading to a 15-yard penalty. Brooks is suing for 100 laps around Autzen Stadium.

(Insert theme again.)

The Defendant: Running back Ricky J. Whittle, 22.

Background: A native of Fresno, Calif., and a mainstay in Oregon's offense, Whittle has been brilliant at times scoring many touchdowns for the yellow and green. Favorite poem: Roses are red, violets are blue, if Stanford thinks they will win, they don't have a clue. Favorite Song: "Rose Colored Glasses." Past history: Second-time offender of "Ricky Plunge." First offense: Spring game 1992.

Defense: Just wanted to give the homecoming fans a little bit extra for their entertainment dollar. Temptation of ESPN plays of the week spot just to good to be true.

Key Evidence: Believes Brooks didn't even see the plunge.

The Testimony:

Brooks: "That is uncalled for and it could be a mistake that

could cost you the game."

Whittle: "It was just a one-time thing."

Brooks: "Ricky assured me that he will not do that again."

Whittle: "It will never happen again. It's just real tempting, especially when you catch heat from the defensive players that don't get to do things as much. They want you to take the chance while they sit back and watch."

Brooks: "If he does (do it again), he's going to be in deep trouble."

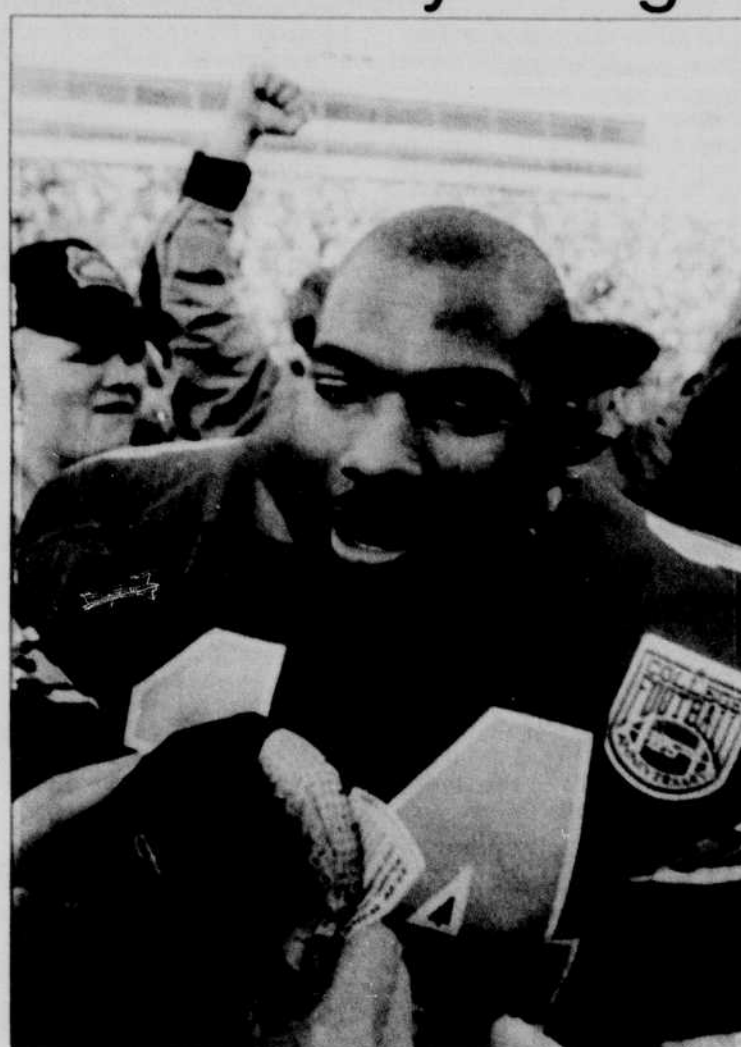
Brooks: "It's totally unexpected."

The Verdict: I (state your name here) find the defendant Ricky J. Whittle guilty of excessive celebration in the heat of battle. He is therefore sentenced to 99 laps around Autzen Stadium, with a reduction of 67 laps for yards already served.

Reaction: "Extra running can only help me," Whittle said.

This will conclude this week's case. Tune in again, and remember if someone celebrates excessively in your football stadium, don't take the law into your own hands. Take them to court.

Chris Metz is the sports editor for the Emerald.



MICHAEL SHINDLER/Emerald

Ricky Whittle caught the attention of college football fans during Saturday's game, especially the attention of head coach Rich Brooks.

VICTORY

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rediscovered some offense today too. We finally faced a defense that wasn't Arizona, Washington State or Washington," Brooks said.

The usual role of the conservative offense that relies on the defense to keep the wins coming was reversed on Saturday, with quarterback Danny O'Neil continuing to improve not only his physical game, but more importantly, his mental game.

"Our offensive team played an outstanding game," defensive coordinator Nick Aliotti said after the game. "They carried our little rears to victory."

With all the recent media attention and national rankings, the Ducks felt they had to come out and prove their worth, so to speak. Something that could have been a distraction, especially for such a young team, turned out to be just another in the growing list of motivating factors that has spun this improbable web of dreams for a team picked to snooze its way to the bottom bunk of the Pac-10 Conference.

"The good news is, after getting a little notoriety last week, we didn't go in the tank," Brooks said. "We stepped up and got the win we needed before we went on the road."

"We know what's at the end of the rainbow," Oregon offensive tackle Steve

"The bottom line is our defense made plays when they had to. I'm really happy we kind of rediscovered some offense today too. We finally faced a defense that wasn't Arizona, Washington State or Washington."

— RICH BROOKS
Oregon head coach

Hardin said. "It's hard to do with all the outside pressures we're getting, but it's

better than being 2-6."

The Ducks moved up to No. 15 in this week's Associated Press poll and No. 11 in the CNN/USA Today poll. The Ducks haven't been ranked this high since 1964 when they were 7th in the nation and they have truly gained national notoriety after their four-game home stand that has taken the conference by storm.

"Now we're in a position to make it even more interesting for everybody in the league," Brooks said.

As for having to take their magic show on the road, Brooks has his reservations.

"I don't want to go," Brooks said. "I want to stay home."

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