

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR COLLIER'S BY GABRIEL MOULIN

Nobody Loves a Referee

To qualify as a football referee you have to know all the rules and be fast on your feet. And when the players or fans don't agree with one of your decisions the news leaks out like a vocal geyser. But, still, Herb Dana likes his job

By
Herb Dana as told
to Frank J. Taylor

Herb Dana is one referee who makes a quick decision, sticks to it, and keeps the game rolling along



Herb Dana makes a spectacular dash for the ball during a big game between Stanford and California. He blows a fast whistle

BOO-OO-OO-OO! Who hired that referee? Throw him out!" Until you've heard sixty thousand football fans boo and yell as one that you're a bum, you haven't heard anything. My baptism under fire took place in the Pasadena Rose Bowl during the first big whistle job I handled on the Coast. Talk about the players being nervous and excited! I was as jittery as any player on either team, and I was supposed to boss the game. I tried to be calm, but I simply couldn't get the ants out of my pants. So I pulled on my striped shirt and white pants an hour early and sat down in the end zone watching the stadium fill up. I wanted to get the feel of the crowd. It was the only way to keep from blowing sky-high.

In that hard-fought game between Georgia Tech and California I had to make some decisions unpopular with the crowd which was strongly California in sympathy. At one tense moment, a Georgia Tech ball carrier hit the line and was stopped dead. Just as I blew the whistle the ball popped out of his arms, hit the ground and was scooped up by Bennie Lom of California, who ran sixty-five yards for a touchdown. That put me in a fine pickle. If I allowed the touchdown, it would be unfair to Georgia Tech. If I ruled the ball dead, it would deny California a touchdown. As it turned out, the Rose Bowl victory and the national championship hinged on my decision. The crowd waited in the field, took the ball from Lom, brought it back and gave it to Georgia Tech.

Then they let me have it—boos, cat-calls, Bronx cheers and all. I felt as though I were being torn limb from limb. But I stuck by the decision.

At the end of the game, which California lost 7 to 8, bearing out the fans' idea that I was on the Georgia Tech payroll, I pulled on my sweat shirt and headed for the showers, convinced that it was curtains for Old Man Dana. I figured I had booted my first big whistle job. I saw the California coach, Nibs Price, weaving through the crowd, his eye on me. I was sure I was in for it on account of that decision. Some coaches take the game pretty hard. Price grabbed me by the arm. I turned around, expecting to catch the devil.

"Nice going, Dana," he said, pumping my hand.

You could have knocked me over with a feather. It was so unexpected I just looked at him. He must have read my mind.

"Right or wrong, if an official will only make a decision and stick to it, I'm for him," he added.

Keep the Game Rolling

I thought of the sixty thousand spectators who had been razzing the hide off me only ten minutes before.

"To hell with them," I said to myself. "If the players and the coaches know what the score is, then everything's okay."

That's about the smartest conclusion I've reached in fifteen years of officiating. I blew a fast whistle, make a quick decision, stick to it, and keep the game

rolling along. Maybe that sounds easy. It isn't. And until you've felt the heat of 120,000 eyes burning down on you and heard sixty thousand angry voices booing you in unison, you can't appreciate the pressure that the referee is under during a big game.

But even if he is a bum, the referee has some compensation. Being close enough to the players to hear the off-the-record asides, he gets in on a lot of football that no one else sees.

The fans up in the stands think the tense moments are when one team is about to score or when a brilliant play has turned the tide of battle. But down on the field the tension is greatest in the three minutes before the opening kickoff. Football squads are like high-strung thoroughbreds. They are champing at the bit and raring to go. The tension thermometer hits high when the captains walk up in front of the cameramen on the fifty-yard line and call the toss to decide who kicks off. That's when the atmosphere is so thick you can cut it with a knife, and when you wish you could do something to relieve the strain for the boys. Then's when you do feel like a bum.

Captain Tay Brown of Southern California and Paul Host of Notre Dame were facing each other on the fifty-yard line. There's been high feeling between those two colleges for years. The captains were patiently waiting for the cameras to finish clicking.

"How you feeling, Paul?" asked Tay Brown.

"Nervous as an old woman," grinned the Notre Dame captain.

"Take it easy," said Tay. "It won't be long now."

"Tay, we'll spot you a man for the kickoff," said Host. "Put Orv Mohler in there and let him start the game with you. We're sure sorry he can't play today."

This game with Notre Dame would have been the climax to a brilliant career for Orv Mohler, the Southern California quarterback who had been injured in practice during the previous week. This fine gesture by the Notre Dame captain enabled Mohler to participate in the first play of the last game of his career with the Trojans.

Turn on the Pressure

When the coin was flipped, Southern California won the toss. Before I could recover the coin or ask the winner which goal he wanted or whether he elected to kick off or receive, Brown said, like a flash, "We'll kick."

In other words, the game was on and Brown's one idea was to boot the ball and put the pressure on him. It was the old army game of waiting for the breaks. Most teams choose to do that because it eases the tension for them. It's too bad that the football fans are so far from the players that they miss the close-ups which make the game so fascinating to the insiders. To me, that's half of football.

In that Georgia Tech-California game I noted that the captains of the two teams, Irv Phillips of California and Ed (Continued on page 36)

The Hoodoo Bonus

By Roark Bradford

More excitement down at Little Bee Bend plantation, where the womenfolks like their men rich

ZURLINE filled the washtub with water, dragged it to the middle of the room, stripped and stepped into the tub.

"Maybe I better git dat toby," she decided. "Miss Modom didn't said—" She climbed out, picked up a small tobacco sack that was filled with a concoction of soot, sand and salt, tied it about her neck with a string and once more stepped into the water. She faced toward the rising sun and began to intone:

"Oh, Fletch, you must come back to yo' true love. You aims to come back. You wants to come back. You can't he'p f'm comin' back. Come on back wavin' dem bonuses in yo' sweet right hand."

Zurline carefully followed the directions given her by Modom Aw-Bear, the hoodoo lady of Willow Chute Bayou. Directions which, Zurline hoped, would charm her former husband and bring him back to her.

She was not especially interested in Fletch himself. He had been one of her several husbands with nothing in particular to recommend him above the others. At the time she married him he had, she supposed, something extraordinary over the other men on Little Bee Bend plantation. Otherwise, she would never have taken up with him. Had it been because he was handsome? Or because he had had a fine crop that year?

She disremembered. Looking back, she couldn't think of anything that had raised Fletch above any other man on the place. Except, of course, Fletch had been a soldier in Uncle Sam's war.

That was it! Fletch sure had been a fighting soldier. He killed about a million men, only they were German men. "Kind er furriners," Zurline recalled. "Like de dagoes." Now she remembered that that was what had made her love Fletch so good. He was a big man who had been all the way across the deep blue sea, to a town named Baw-doo.

"Ah, Lawd," she grinned, "Fletch is a man outn de books! Fightin' right square in Uncle Sam's war! And now Uncle Sam done hauled off and gived him a big pair er bonuses!" She didn't understand exactly what bonuses were, but she had heard a man could take them to Shreveport and sell them for money. A heap of money, too. Seven hundred dollars, maybe!

"Fletch, come back. You got to come back. You can't he'p f'm comin' back!" Zurline's prayers were interrupted by the sound of a voice lifted in song:

*"Hit take a rockin' chair to rock,
Hit take a rubber ball to roll,
Hit take a heavy-hittin' man
To satisfy my soul;
Cause I'm on my way to Texas,
Aw, sweet jelly roll!"*

"You, Play Mamma!" Zurline yelled. "You stop dat singin' a reel in front er my house when I'm prayin'."

"Scuse me," Play Mamma apologized. "I didn't know you ever done any prayin', Zurline."

"Hit ain't no good to sing reels, no-how," Zurline declared, "whether I'm doin' any prayin' or not."

"I wasn't singin' no reels," Play Mamma explained. "I was jest singin' cause I had a certain man on my mind."

"You always got some man on yo' mind."

Play Mamma laughed. "Not only on my mind, too," she giggled. "And dat ain't all. I'm fixin' to git me a sho 'nuff man, now. I jest been over to Miss Modom's house and got me a Three-S toby outn de world! Lawd, did she put some stuff on dat toby!"

ZURLINE looked suspiciously at Play Mamma. She recalled, vaguely, that Fletch and Play Mamma had, at one time, been friendly. "Did Miss Modom tell you to git in de washtub and pray twarge de risin' sun?" Zurline inquired.

"Nawp," said Play Mamma. "None er dat kind er ju-ju foolishness. She told me to burn a lamp behime de door at him. Dis is a hard man to bring back, on account er certain things he got."

"A pair er bonuses?" Zurline suggested warily.

"I means," Play Mamma stated, "a pair er bonuses straight f'm Uncle Sam, for fightin' in de war."

"Fletch?"

"You said hit," laughed Play Mamma. "Fletch is de war-fightin'est man I knows. And dey tells me he gittin' hisse'f a pair er bonuses wuth seven hundred dollars, cash money."

"And Miss Modom," Zurline continued, "gived you a toby to bring him back to you?"

"She charged me fo' bits," Play Mamma said. "Miss Modom ain't never gived nobody nothin'."

Zurline was worried. She was beginning to suspect there was something irregular about it. Could it be that Modom Aw-Bear was selling tobies to two women for the same man?

"And she told you to burn a lamp behind the door?"

"Sho," Play Mamma admitted readily. "Hit's powerful hard to pull a man like Fletch back and ain't nothin' but a lamp kin do hit."

Zurline went back to her praying but her mind wouldn't settle down to it as it should. She tried hard for a while but the thought of a lamp burning for Fletch behind Play Mamma's door kept crossing her mind. Anybody knew a lamp had more stuff on it than praying toward the rising sun.



She saw that Play Mamma was standing in a washtub mumbling prayers, while Mamie T was making passes over the lamps with her three-S toby. Modom Aw-Bear was in the center of the room, rolling on the floor, talking with the spirits

She got out of the tub, lit her own kerosene lamp and set it behind the door, mumbling: "Come back, Fletch. Come on back to yo' true love."

Once more she returned to the tub and continued her prayers. "Dis lamp and de tub bofe ought to pull him," she decided.

SOMETIME later, when she was dressed and on her front porch, a sudden thought struck her. It almost gave her a headache.

"I bet," she said to herself, "dat ev'y lady on de place is tryin' to git Fletch hoodooed back wid his bonuses!"

The idea disturbed her so that she could do nothing for a long while but just sit and worry about it. Then, unable to remain inactive while her former husband was being literally snatched

from her by other and less worthy women, she started out to the hoodoo lady's house again.

On the way over, she tried to recall the number of wives Fletch had been married up to since he got home from the war, almost twenty years ago.

"Fletch wa'n't ve'y much of a man, once you hyared all er his lies about de fightin'," Zurline remembered. "And de ladies sent him on about his business, mighty fast." She walked on contemplating the parade of ex-wives who, right this minute, might be trying to hoodoo Fletch and his bonus.

"I was de fust gal to marry him," she said grimly. "Dat ought to be a shade in my favors." She smiled with pride as she recalled that, a mere twenty years ago, she was considered the most marriageable young woman on the whole plantation. "Been a heap er water run under my bridges since dat day," she said sadly.

Modom Aw-Bear's house sat on the edge of a cypress brake, just beyond the pasture. It was a tumble-down log cabin so old that nobody remembered when or