ANOTHER VIEW

Eliminate The Failures

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BY RAY NEEDHAM

Man has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance.

—Faulkner

Four seasons of Rice football can change all that.

—Needham

I like to think that I am known as a reasonable man. I seldom shout, almost never kick children, and occasionally even speak kindly of Aggies. I have, however, one streak of rampant irrationality.

I like football. Worse than that, I attend Rice games. Right there is a potentially explosive situation.

I am now suffering through another season of Rice football. My fourth, in fact. (I wonder if there is some sort of decoration for this kind of thing?) My fondest memory of past years is of that incredible moment when we discovered that Bill Whitmore had somehow conned ‘Playboy’ into picking us sixth on their pre-season poll. “What a man!” we all gasped in admiration.

Staff Blinded

But then our coaching staff, blinded by its own press notices, made a tragic blunder. They actually let the team try to play the game. Let me tell you, Virginia, even Hugh Hefner couldn't have made the Santa Claus bit.

So who can blame me if my compassion is beginning to wear a little thin and my endurance is ceasing to endure? Who can blame me for raising several no longer avoidable questions?

For instance, where do they get those catchy new plays they keep surprising us with? Such as that amazing backward pass they used to wrap up the SMU game. Such as that stunning quarterback sneak on third and ten. Incidentally, in spite of anything you might have assumed, Nicholson was definitely not trying to hit Coach Neely with one of those forward passes in the second quarter last week.

Peace Offerings

And how do you think they manage to fumble so often? Perhaps they're making peace offerings to the other teams. Perhaps it's some sort of a secret play that Coach Neely has forgotten the secret to.

Why am I so unfairly critical? Perhaps I am bitter.

Let's stop kidding ourselves. Most of our football players are here to do a job. They are paid in terms of a scholarship (Shall we pause a moment to savour the full impact of that word?) to play football. Few of them are here because they are fine fellows or because they have met the same standards the rest of us have.

What is the result of their attending Rice? Do they attempt to get the most out of it? Gee, coach, sometimes I'd sure

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