

the scoreless game

Charles E. Armistead

I am a quarterback from Middle Tennessee playing for the Bullets, a professional football team. Today, we played a football game with the Reds. The game plan we used was to control the ball when in our territory and to throw the bomb while in the enemy's territory. Coach Johnson kept emphasizing this plan all morning and in pre-game warm-ups. His reason was that the Reds as a team are weak physically and that their pass defense is very poor. "Coach" did not want the scouts from the Chinese Bandits and the Big Bears, the two toughest rivals of the Bullets, to see our major strategy. I think that this plan stinks, but we can win the game this way as well as keep our top weapons secret.

As the game started, the Reds rolled all over us, but they did not score. Eventually, we discovered that this was not going to be an easy victory. Their offense hit our defense very hard with the draw-plays, the screen pass, little flares, as well as dives and sneaks. The Reds controlled the ball the first ten minutes of play. We substituted an entire new squad for the tired defense and re-established our defensive plan. We were using a five-man line, but because their running game was so successful, we switched a six-man line. This slowed down their effectiveness nearly fifty percent.

We followed the game plan very closely, and thus the offense started clicking in the early seconds of the second quarter. Taking the ball on our own five-yard line, we ran a fullback sweep around the left end to the twenty-yard line for a gain of nine yards. We then wedged our fullback through the line over right guard and gained twelve yards. The next series of running plays carried us to our forty-five yard line. The fans were cheering us onward, "STOMP! KILL! DESTROY!"

We then went to our next phase of the game plan of throwing the long bomb pass to open up the secondary. By opening up the secondary, we would loosen their defense and thus could run more. Each of my four passes failed to connect with my receivers. Thus, the passes did not open up the running game.

During the rest of the first half, practically the same thing happened. We would drive to the forty or fifty yard line and then

try with no success to bomb the enemy with passes. Every time we passed the fifty, we were penalized five yards for illegal procedure. I wanted to run through the enemy on the ground, but Coach Johnson would not let me. So, I stuck to the original game plan, and the result at halftime was the Bullets 0 and the Reds 0.

The score was not the only result of the first half. As we ran off the field at halftime, the crowd showed its disapproval of our strategy by booing the players and coaches. It was also demoralizing to the players because they were not ahead of one of the weakest teams in the league. Here we were, the best team in the league, and we could not even kick a field goal. It was also demoralizing to hear those shouts of disapproval because they continuously came from a major portion of the crowd. Even in the locker room we could hear the anti-Bullet yells growing louder all the time.

As I walked into the locker room, I took my helmet off my head and sat down. Suddenly, I realized the type of ball they are playing in Southeast Asia.

If I could see his tired body lying still,
With one thin blanket in cool, darkened room;
If my eyes touched his, closed in tender rest;
His limbs easily lain; his black hair mussed;
Then—if I could see him such—
I could not say, "I do not love."
For I would lay my nightgowned-self on his
And surely clasp his warm, soft-beating breast.
Then lying quiet face to his, if he
Slept on, I would, gazing mild, love his peaceful face—
Love so much his gentle breathing, I could not leave,
Nor cease to share our lives.
Dear body—never sleeping seem; loved by me,
Yet lying faithfully apart—I could not view you long,
But gathering hope, would bless togetherness.
Dear home—who warm enfolds his spirit good,
As I would him—gentle calm my fears,
And for love of what I have not
Let me live as though I had.

Diana Day Harrison