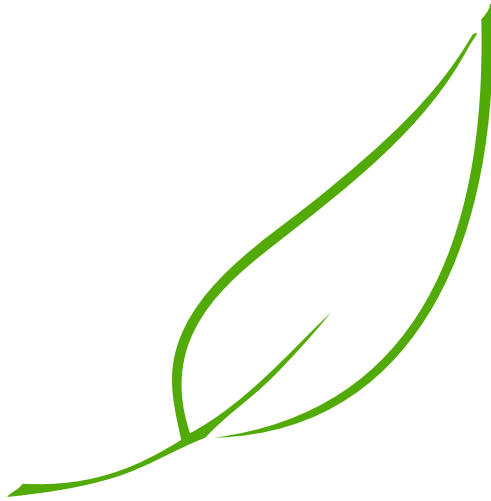


A GOOD SPORT

by Robert L. Crowe



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BUFFALO: (*with imaginary microphone in hand*) Hi, out there in radio land. It's time for "Sports Line" and this is your favorite host, Buffalo Johnson (*or use your last name*), bringing you another sparkling interview with the great names in sports today. As you know if you are ... *the* ... regular listener, each week we have an extended interview with those who are in the headlines of the sports pages. Today is no exception. Without further comment, let's bring in Percy "The Beast" Smith (*or use your first and last name, but leave "The Beast" in place*), quarterback for the Rapid City Reindeer. Percy, welcome to the show.

PERCY: Thanks, Bison.

BUFFALO: It's, uh ... Buffalo.

PERCY: You all look the same to me.

BUFFALO: You play for the Rapid City Reindeer and I've always wanted to ask someone ... Is it Rein-deer? Or Reindeers?

PERCY: Because of all the drops falling down, someone told me that "rain" is always plural.

BUFFALO: (*looks at audience, then another part of the audience, then shrugs*) Percy, you weren't always a quarterback. Tell us how that came about.

PERCY: Well, I started out in "Itty-Bitty Football."

BUFFALO: When was that? When you were 5 or 6 years old?

PERCY: No, I was in high school but the football was itty-bitty. Little tiny football. Easy to throw. When I grad-e-ated to a larger size football, I was an offensive guard. Then, I was an offensive tackle. Then, they moved me to offensive end. I was just generally offensive.

BUFFALO: We're you a big guy?

PERCY: I was about 127 pounds, soaking wet. I got weighed often when I was wet because the mascot kept throwing me in the showers.

BUFFALO: What was the mascot?

PERCY: We were the Ute City Brutes.

BUFFALO: Ahh, Brute, as is “Brutus” and “Brute Force!” I can see the picture. A Gladiator ... standing in the Coliseum, sword in position awaiting the charge of a wild animal. My, what a visage. Is that the origin of the nickname, “The Brutes?”

PERCY: No, we were named after the deodorant. Powerful stuff.

BUFFALO: Go ahead. You were spinning the exciting tale of how you became a quarterback.

PERCY: Right. It happened one night in a game against The Little Sisters of the Prairie. I was sitting at my usual spot on the bench when a chant started in the stands behind me. A small but vocal band of followers started chanting, “We want Smith. We want Smith.” And they just kept going on and on and on. It must have lasted 15 or 20 seconds. Then, the coach looked down the bench at me and yelled, “Smith!” I grabbed my helmet and answered. “Yes, sir!” He said, “Go up in the stands and see what they want.”

BUFFALO: And did you?

PERCY: I sure did. They wanted me to go in the game so I went down and told that to the coach.

BUFFALO: Did it work?

PERCY: Sure did. Just at that moment our quarterback got hurt and we needed a substitute. Our coach was so incompetent that he put me in the game.

BUFFALO: *(tries to get false excitement building in the next few questions)* What happened? Were you nervous? What did you do?

PERCY: Nervous, no. Petrified, yes. The first play called was a pass play.

BUFFALO: Had you ever passed the ball before?

PERCY: I had run *past* the ball many times but never actually thrown it *at* anybody. The ball was hiked. (*moves back as if to pass*) I did a three step drop and looked for my receivers. When I looked a little closer I saw this mammoth number 99 about to crush me so I threw the ball up in the air (*he tosses it with two hands straight up in the air*) hoping he would chase it. I pointed at the ball and yelled, “Fetch, boy. Fetch!” Since the ball went straight up in the air, nobody was watching it. It came down and hit the helmet of our man, Anderson, the split end.

BUFFALO: The split end.

PERCY: Yep. He was too big for his pants, so they split all the time. Anyway. Anderson thought it was the coach hitting him in the head again so he took off running and the ball landed in his hands. He scored a touchdown. It was spectacular.

BUFFALO: And ... you ... won ... the ... game!

PERCY: No, we lost but it was the only touchdown we had ever scored so the coach left me in.

BUFFALO: And from that humble beginning you went on to play semi-college and semi-pro football and today, here you are.

PERCY: I guess I am. But ... my mother didn’t want me to play football.

BUFFALO: Was she afraid you’d get hurt?

PERCY: Yeah, she said she didn’t trust any sport that kept an ambulance in the end zone.

BUFFALO: By the way, why do they call you “The Beast?”

PERCY: I don’t know.

BUFFALO: Oh. (*to the unseen radio audience*) We are talking today with Percy “The Beast” Smith, quarterback of the Rein....deers. He is one of the league’s all-around players.

PERCY: (*pats his stomach*) Yeah, I am but I’m trying to lose some weight.

BUFFALO: Just a reminder that this interview is brought to you without commercial interruption. That is not by design so if you’d like to buy a commercial, please contact the station.



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