P.S. to the NEWS
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O. J. ANDERSON

The St. Louis Cardinal football team finished last in its division of the National Football League. In its final game, it was crushed by the Chicago Bears. Yet for Cardinal fans, the season was still something of a success.

They watched Cardinal halfback Ottis Anderson win the Rookie of the Year Award. In his first game, which was against Dallas, considered the best team in the National League, the fans saw Anderson gain an amazing 193 yards. He then became only the fifth runner ever to have nine 100-yard games.

Anderson is big to be such a fast halfback. He weighs 210 pounds and is over six feet tall. Yet he can either outrun or run over opposing defensive backs. He appears to run with a full foot on the ground, not merely his toes.

Opposing linebackers say that "Anderson seems to have eyes in the back of his head." He has the knack of sensing the open hole and has such a sure instinct for an impending tackle that he is very difficult for one tackler to bring down. He seems to be bigger, stronger, and even faster than the other good halfbacks in the National League.

Anderson grew up in a housing project in West Palm Beach, Florida. His father walked out on the Anderson family when Anderson was eight, and his mother, who went to work as a motel maid, ran a tight ship in bringing up her five children. Ottis vividly recalls the "whupping" she gave him when he stole a pair of shorts.

Anderson was recruited by the best college football teams, Oklahoma and Notre Dame, but he chose the University of Miami so he could live at home while going to college. Now only 22 years old, he is devoted to his mother and her four other children.

Since Anderson has been playing for the Cardinals, his mother has moved into a new house he had built for her. But she insists on continuing to work as a maid,

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because, as Anderson says, "she doesn't feel it's right not to work."

Anderson is deeply religious and reads the Bible daily. The coach says he is the only Cardinal who does not use any profanity even when things go wrong on the football field.

In the last Cardinal football game of 1979, Anderson proved that he can handle adversity. Playing against the Chicago Bears, he sprained his ankle. Although the Cardinals were losing the game by a big margin, he insisted on reentering the game despite his painful limp.

The Cardinal football owner was smart to sign Anderson for a seven-year contract for $1.3 million. His fans hope that his religion and his mother will prevent his tremendous success as a rookie from spoiling his wonderful qualities.

As a famous Winston Churchillism illustrated, some people are more easily spoiled by success than by defeat. In referring to British General Montgomery, Churchill once said: "He is indomitable in defeat, indefatigable in pursuit, insufferable in victory."

Another great St. Louis athlete, Olympic and world heavyweight boxing champion Leon Spinks, apparently could not digest success. Other famous athletes have indulged in temper tantrums, to the disgust of the fans.

Anderson has a very attractive personality and has been an instant star on a ~~television~~ radio show. After all, what other athlete calls his mother after every game "just to tell her he wasn't injured"?

A great athlete like Anderson can be an impressive role-model to young boys. Some young people seem to think that religion is sissy stuff only for women and old men. Anderson's splendid conduct and daily Bible reading can inspire boys to imitate him.

Anderson should become a popular lecturer at colleges, high schools, and Sunday school classes. I hope that my own four sons will be inspired by his success story.

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