

NFL EXTRA

Week 17

Segment	TRT
Visanthe Shiancoe	1:05
The Punter: Zoltan Mesko	6:28
Rudy 2.0	6:43

01:15:23 - VISANTHE SHIANCOE

HEY, DO THIS MAN.

HEY, YOU'RE A DOG NOW. YOU'RE A DOG. I'M A DOG TOO.

COME ON MAN.

RADIO – I-FORMATION BEHIND CHRISTIAN PONDER. GETS INTO ADRIAN WHO GOES UP THE MIDDLE AND GETS A NICE BLOCK. RUNS AWAY FROM A.J. HAWKE! HE'S TO THE 50! TO THE PACKERS 40! AND CHARLES WOODSON PUSHES THE GREAT ADRIAN PETERSON OUT OF BOUNDS!

I TOLD YOU MAN, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU BE SEEING IT MAN, BUT YOU SEE IT.

COME ON, YA ALL LOOKED LIKE DOMINATOR NOW.

RADIO – PONDER OUT OF THE SHOTGUN TAKES THE SNAP. LOOKS RIGHT. PASSES RIGHT. INTERCEPTED!

BRING HIM BY THE FIRST QUARTER. MY THING. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. WE ALL GOT YOUR BACK NOW.

RADIO - CHRISTIAN PLAY ACTION. SPRINTS TO THE RIGHT. FIRES! CAUGHT! TOUCHDOWN!!
VISANTHE SHIANCOE!

HEY, WHAT A DEBUT, HUH?

01:16:40 - THE PUNTER: ZOLTAN MESKO

ANYONE WHO THINKS PUNTING IS EASY, NEVER SAW WEEK 15 OF THE 2010 SEASON.

RADIO – LOUIE TRYING TO KICK AWAY FROM HESTER. DEVIN GOT IT AT THE 35. HE HIT IT HARD! HESTER DOWN THE SIDELINE! HERE IS THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE RECORD 14 CAREER RETURNS FOR A TOUCHDOWN!!

WELL, OBVIOUSLY, THERE'S A NUMBER OF RETURNERS IN THE LEAGUE THAT SCARE YOU TO DEATH. IT'S EASY FOR US. WE SAY "KICK THE BALL OUT OF BOUNDS." AND THAT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO DO.

RADIO – JACKSON BOBBLES IT AND NOW HAS TO TRY AND RECOVER IT. DESEAN JACKSON GETS A BLOCK!! ARE YOU KIDDING?!! DESEAN JACKSON, UNBELIEVABLE!! NO TIME LEFT! EAGLES WIN!

RADIO - TOM COUGHLIN LOOKS LIKE HE WENT RIGHT TO MATT DODGE AND WAS ASKING HIM WHAT HE WAS DOING.

IN THOSE KIND OF SITUATIONS, YOU GOTTA TRUST YOUR PLAYERS. YOU GOTTA TRUST YOUR GUT.

SO WHAT KIND OF PUNTER SHOULD COACHES TRUST?

CERTAINLY SOMEONE WITH A PASSION FOR PREPARATION...

A KICKER WITH GREAT MECHANICS...

AND ONE THAT HAS SMARTS BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD.

WE JUST UPDATED THE APRIL NUMBERS.

AND, OF COURSE, BEING FLUENT IN A NUMBER OF LANGUAGES DOESN'T HURT EITHER.

HELLO... UNIV. OF MICHIGAN BALL. ...THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS.

RADIO – SNAP IS ON THE MONEY TO MESKO. HE HITS IT HIGH IN THE AIR. THAT IS OUT OF BOUNDS AT THE 6 YD. LINE. SUPERB JOB BY ZOLTAN MESKO.

WHEN HE WAS DRAFTED IN 2010, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL CALLED ZOLTAN MESKO THE NFL's MOST INTERESTING MAN. (*Zole – tahn/soft Latin A - ah*)

YET HIS PATH TO THE PROS GOES BEYOND INTERESTING TO SIMPLY AMAZING.

THE 1989 ROMANIAN REVOLUTION THAT TOPPLED COMMUNISM BEGAN IN ZOLTAN'S HOMETOWN OF TIMISOARA WITH THE MESKO FAMILY CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE. (*Timmy – sure – ah*)

ON CHRISTMAS EVE THE SOLDIERS HAD UP RISEN. BULLETS WERE FLYING THROUGH OUR APARTMENT. WE WERE LYING DOWN. IT WAS CRAZY. I MEAN IT BECOMES MORE AND MORE

A REALITY TO ME THAT I DID GO THROUGH THAT. NOW WHEN AFTER COMMUNISM, INFLATION SET IN BUT WE HAD NO MONEY BECAUSE OUR MONEY WASN'T WORTH ANYTHING. SO BOTH MY PARENTS ARE ENGINEERS, AND THEY WERE LIVING PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK.

TO ESCAPE THEIR SITUATION, ZOLTAN'S FATHER TOOK A CHANCE ON A LOTTERY FOR A U.S. GREEN CARD.

THE PROBABILITY OF IT IS 50,000 FAMILIES WIN IT EVERY YEAR OUT OF THE WHOLE WORLD THAT APPLIES. SO WHEN YOU PUT IT INTO A TANGIBLE NUMBER, IT'S CRAZY HOW FORTUNATE WE WERE.

ANOTHER FATEFUL TWIST HAPPENED DURING A KICKBALL GAME IN 8th GRADE GYM CLASS.

I ENDED UP TRYING TO HIT A HOMERUN BUT I POPPED IT UP TOO FAR AND I KNOCKED OUT ONE OF THE LIGHTS. OUR GYM TEACHER HAPPENED TO BE THE ASST. HEAD COACH ON THE VARSITY FOOTBALL TEAM, AND HE WALKED UP TO ME. HE WAS LIKE, "HEY ZOLTAN, WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY FOOTBALL OR PAY FOR THAT LIGHT?" AND THE DECISION WAS PRETTY EASY. PLUS, FOOTBALL HAD CHEERLEADERS.

IN HIGH SCHOOL, ZOLTAN WAS BOTH A PUNTER AND PLACEKICKER.

BY HIS SENIOR YEAR, HE WAS THE NATION'S TOP PUNTING PROSPECT.

IT'D BE NICE TO GO PRO BUT IT TAKES A LOT OF HARD WORK AND DEDICATION, STAYING OUT OF TROUBLE.

TO REACH THE NFL, ZOLTAN HAD NO TROUBLE MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

I THINK WHAT SAID IT ALL WAS THAT T-SHIRT THAT THEY HAD, THE STUDENT SECTIONS UP IN MICHIGAN THAT SAID, “ZOLTAN FOR SPACE EMPEROR.”

AFTER HE SET SEVERAL SCHOOL RECORDS, THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS CAME CALLING.

WHEN BILL PICKED HIM ON THE 5TH ROUND I THOUGHT, THAT IS A GREAT PICK BECAUSE HE GIVES THEM A WEAPON. HE’S VERY ADEPT AT BOOMING IT AS A SPIRAL.

RADIO – CAMARIO BACK, BACK, BACK.

PINNING THE OTHER TEAMS WHEN THEY HAVE TO BE PINNED.

RADIO – THAT WAS A HECK OF A PUNT INTO A VERY STRONG WIND.

I THINK BEING CEREBRAL IS A HUGE PART OF THIS. I WOULD LOVE TO JUST BE INSIDE MESKO’S BRAIN FOR A SECOND. IT WOULD BE LIKE RUSSELL CROW IN A BEAUTIFUL MIND. HE’S PROBABLY JUST SCRIBBLING NUMBERS ALL OVER THE PLACE. “O.K., IF I HAVE THIS DEGREE WITH THIS ANGLE, WITH THIS YARDAGE, THE WIND IS LIKE THIS. I CAN PUT IT INSIDE THE 20. LET ME DROP IT TO THE 16 WITH A ROLL TWICE OVER TO THE 14, AND OUT OF BOUNDS AT THE 12.” YOU JUST HAVE TO IMAGINE THAT HE THINKS THAT WAY.

HIS BIGGEST ROOKIE TEST CAME IN OVERTIME AGAINST THE RAVENS IN 2010.
RADIO – HE’S GONNA NEED A TREMENDOUS KICK TO GET THEM OUT OF ANY KIND OF TROUBLE.

RADIO – HIGH IN THE AIR COMING DOWN TO THE NEAR SIDE. BOUNCING ACROSS THE 30. THAT IS A MONEY PUNT FOR THE ROOKIE ZOLTAN MESKO. A 66 YARD GAP.

AFTER STOPPING BALTIMORE, NEW ENGLAND KICKED THE WINNING FIELD GOAL.

RADIO – KICK IS GOOD! PATRIOTS WIN IT!

YOU DON'T SAY THAT A PUNTER IS A MVP VERY OFTEN BUT THAT'S A SPOT WHERE ZOLTAN MESKO ACTUALLY ENDS UP HELPING YOU WIN THAT FOOTBALL GAME.

DURING THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE NFL WORK STOPPAGE IN THE SPRING OF 2011, ZOLTAN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS DEGREE IN BUSINESS AND INTERNEED AT A PRIVATE EQUITY FIRM.

HI. THIS IS ZOLTAN MESKO FROM GRANT PARTNERS.

A WORLD THAT'S JUST AS COMPETITIVE AS PRO FOOTBALL.

YOU KNOW ATHLETES ARE USED TO A LOT OF ADVERSITY. THEY TEND TO BE TOUGH AND YOU CAN PUSH THEM PRETTY HARD. AND WE PUSH PRETTY HARD. I EXPECT A DETAIL TO BE RIGHT.

WE ACTUALLY HAD THOSE R.O.C.'S. I FEEL LIKE I CAN OUT-PREPARE ANYBODY. ONCE YOU KNOCK DOWN YOUR WALLS, IT'S EASIER.

I SORT OF JOKE WITH THE YOUNG GUYS THAT THERE ISN'T REALLY THE OPTION TO SINK OR SWIM. IT'S SORT OF LIKE YOU SWIM OR WE'LL DRAG YOU BEHIND THE MOTORBOAT.

HAVE YOU ALL DONE THIS? WE DID.

THIS IS NOT YOUR NORMAL FOOTBALL PLAYER.

IF WE JUST PUT ZOLTAN MESKO ON ANY TYPE OF FINANCIAL CRISIS, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO SOLVE IT IN LIKE 14 MINUTES, THEN GO OUT THERE AND DROP LIKE 3 INSIDE THE 20.

RADIO – ZOLTAN MESKO’S FIRST PUNT OF THE SEASON.

IN 2011, ZOLTAN TOOK ONE MORE STEP ON HIS AMAZING JOURNEY.

RADIO – BALL IS DOWN BY THE PATRIOTS INSIDE THE 5. SUPERB JOB BY ZOLTAN MESKO.

SO HIS CONTRIBUTIONS BOTH AS A ROOKIE, AND NOW IN HIS 2ND SEASON, HUGE PART OF THE PATRIOTS SUCCESS.

YOU CAN’T CONNECT POINT A TO Z UNTIL YOU LOOK BACKWARDS. YOU’RE LIKE, “THAT’S HOW IT HAPPENED.” AND IT WAS JUST ME PUSHING THE SLED, YOU KNOW? PUSHING LIFE AHEAD.

01:23:18 - RUDY 2.0

EVERYONE KNOWS RUDY; HIS STORY CAN BE FOUND IN THE VIDEO STORE UNDER SPORTS MOVIES. DAVID RUFFER IS THE CURRENT PLACEKICKER FOR NOTRE DAME, AND HIS STORY BELONGS NEXT TO HARRY POTTER IN THE FANTASY SECTION.

I WENT TO GONZAGA COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL IN WASHINGTON D.C. I PLAYED GOLF AND SOCCER THERE. GOLF ALL 4 YRS. AND SOCCER JUST MY FRESHMAN YEAR. AT GONZAGA YOU’RE KIND OF LANDLOCKED. SO THE FOOTBALL FIELD’S RIGHT NEXT TO THE ACADEMIC BUILDINGS. SO DURING LUNCH ME AND A COUPLE OF MY FRIENDS WILL JUST GO OUT ONTO THE FOOTBALL FIELD AND GOOF OFF AND KICK AROUND; AND IT WASN’T UNTIL ONE DAY ONE OF THE ASST. FOOTBALL COACHES SAID, “WHY DON’T YOU TRY KICKING?” I HAD HONESTLY

NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE. IT WAS JUST SOMETHING TO GOOF OFF AND JUST A HOBBY. SOMETHING STUPID TO DO.

AT THE END OF HIS SENIOR SEASON, DAVID WAS INVITED ONTO THE TEAM AND ATTEMPTED AN EXTRA POINT.

COACH MADDOX, HE THOUGHT MY NAME WAS DAN. HE WAS LIKE, "DAN, GET IN THERE! KICK IT!"

HE MISSED...PROBABLY.

IT'S ACTUALLY A KIND OF RUNNING JOKE IN MY FAMILY. THE BALL WAS LIKE WAY ABOVE THE UPRIGHTS. WE ACTUALLY HAVE A PICTURE ON OUR BAR AT HOME. YOU CAN'T REALLY TELL WHETHER IT'S STRAIGHT OR NOT; BUT IT'S JUST SO FAR ABOVE THAT WE JUST THINK THE REF GOT IT WRONG.

BUT KICKING WAS NEVER A DREAM; HIS BIGGEST GOAL IN LIFE WAS TO ATTEND THE ALMA MATER OF HIS SISTER, HIS FATHER, TWO UNCLES, TWO GREAT UNCLES, AND HIS GRANDFATHER, CLASS OF '28.

I JUST WANTED TO GO TO NOTRE DAME. THAT WAS ALL I THOUGHT ABOUT GROWING UP. I APPLIED. I DIDN'T GET IN THOUGH. I GOT 5 REJECTED. SAD DAY IN THE HOUSE.

HE MATRICULATED TO THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY, AND THAT'S WHERE THE STORY SHOULD HAVE ENDED. BUT IT DIDN'T. ONE YEAR LATER, DAVID RUFFER WAS ACCEPTED AS AN ACADEMIC TRANSFER AT NOTRE DAME, WHERE NOTHING'S BIGGER THAN TOUCHDOWN JESUS, THOUGH INTERHALL FOOTBALL IS A CLOSE SECOND.

MOST COLLEGES HAVE DORMITORIES; NOTRE DAME'S ARE CALLED HALLS. AND MOST SCHOOLS PLAY INTRAMURAL TOUCH, BUT INTERHALL FOOTBALL IS FULL PADS, FULL CONTACT, FULL SPEED.

INTERHALL FOOTBALL IS VERY INTENSE. WE HAVE TRYOUTS OF ABOUT 50 GUYS FOR A 24 MAN ROSTER, AND PROBABLY ABOUT 90% PLAYED IN H.S. I WASN'T AWARE THAT, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT IT WAS TACKLE FOOTBALL. IT MEANS A LOT.

THEY'VE GOT THEIR OWN TROPHY CASES WHERE THEY DISPLAY THE TROPHIES FROM INTERHALL. IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO THE NOTRE DAME LIFESTYLE.

DAVID LIVED IN SIEGFRIED HALL AT NOTRE DAME, WHICH HAS A STORIED HISTORY IN INTERHALL ATHLETICS. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE 'EM, JUST ASK -- OR LOOK UP.

OUR FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP WAS THE BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP HERE ON CAMPUS, AND WE'RE VERY PROUD OF THAT. WE WON OUR FIRST INTERHALL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP IN 2003; AND ONCE YOU GET THE TASTE OF A CHAMPIONSHIP IT'S NICE TO DO IT AGAIN.

I TOTALLY UNDERESTIMATED HOW COMPETITIVE IT WAS TO MAKE THE TEAM. I WAS LIKE ONE OF THE LAST KIDS TO ACTUALLY MAKE IT. SO IT WAS REALLY CLOSE TO NOT HAPPENING.

EVERY INTERHALL TEAM WAS ONLY ALLOWED TO HAVE 24 GUYS ON THEIR ROSTER. SO IT'S REALLY HARD TO GIVE ONE OF THOSE 24 SPOTS TO PURELY JUST A SPECIAL TEAMS PUNTER OR KICKER.

IN INTERHALL, THE SCORE IS REALLY LOW. THE TYPICAL SCORE IS 6-0 BECAUSE, IF IT'S A TOUCHDOWN, THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH CONFIDENCE IN THE KICKER TO GO FOR THE EXTRA POINT; OR IF THEY ATTEMPT IT, IT'S NO GOOD.

HE DIDN'T HAVE A SCAR ON HIS FOREHEAD LIKE HARRY POTTER, BUT HE HAD MAGIC IN HIS RIGHT LEG, AND SOON HIS LEGEND GREW.

DAVID WAS CONSIDERABLY BETTER THAN MOST KICKERS OUT THERE.

WE WERE JUST SETTING HIM UP FOR FURTHER AND FURTHER FIELD GOALS UNTIL HE JUST STARTED LIKE NAILING 55 YARDERS. IT WAS PRETTY CRAZY.

HIS FIRST EXTRA POINT FOR SIEGFRIED, LIKE HIS FIRST IN HIGH SCHOOL, WAS NO GOOD, BUT AFTER ONLY 2 GAMES OF INTERHALL, THE VARSITY TOOK NOTICE.

I GOT A CALL FROM THE COACHING STAFF. I WAS STUDYING FOR LIKE A LATIN TEST OR SOMETHING. I THOUGHT IT WAS ONE OF MY BUDDIES MESSING WITH ME. HE WAS LIKE, "NO, THIS IS REAL. WE WERE WONDERING IF YOU'D WANT TO COME TRYOUT."

AND I SAID, "I HEAR THE VARSITY'S LOOKING AT YOU." AND HE KIND OF SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS AND SAID, "YEA." HE DIDN'T MAKE MUCH OF IT. HE DIDN'T THINK HE HAD MUCH OF A CHANCE WITH THE VARSITY.

IN 2008, HE MADE THE TEAM, AND ALSO JOINED A UNION.

W.O.P.U. FOR WALK ON PLAYERS UNION. I'M NOT SURE EXACTLY WHEN IT STARTED. THERE'S SOME HANDSHAKES THAT GO ALONG WITH IT. THIS IS ONE OF THE W.O.P.U. HAND SIGNS. A LOT OF TIMES IT HAS A TENDENCY TO FLY UP; AND SOMETIMES IN PRACTICE YOU'LL SEE GUYS ON THE SCOUT TEAM KIND OF THROW IT UP. THROW UP THIS, THE W.O. FOR WALK ON. JUST KIND OF GOOFY WAYS TO STICK TOGETHER.

THE WALK-ON PLAYERS UNION SEEMS MORE LIKE A SOCIAL CLUB, BUT MEMBERS HAVE TO PAY THEIR DUES. IN HIS DEBUT FOR THE FIGHTING IRISH, RUFFER COMPLETED A RARE

TRIPLE CROWN BY MISSING HIS FIRST VARSITY EXTRA POINT AFTER MISSING HIS FIRST HIGH SCHOOL AND INTERHALL ATTEMPTS.

BUT IN THE PAST 2 SEASONS, DAVID RUFFER HAS BECOME ONE OF THE BEST KICKERS IN THE COUNTRY, AND OWNS THE SCHOOL RECORD FOR CONSECUTIVE FIELD GOALS MADE WITH 23.

ONE OF MY EARLIEST MEMORIES IS SITTING ON MY DAD'S SHOULDERS AT THE WALK AND SEE THE PLAYERS WALKING BY. I WAS PROBABLY 4 OR 5 AT THAT TIME. PEOPLE EVERYWHERE SHOUTING, CHEERING, "GO IRISH!" GETTING INTO NOTRE DAME WAS JUST THE END-ALL, BE-ALL. I JUST WANTED TO BE A STUDENT HERE. I WANTED TO BE HERE SO BADLY.

RADIO – RUFFER'S KICK IS GOOD.

I HAD AN INTERVIEW THE OTHER DAY. GUY'S LIKE, "YOU'RE THE CLOSEST I'M GONNE GET TO MEETING RUDY?" I'M LIKE, "NO, THAT'S ACTUALLY MY FRIEND DAVID RUFFER."

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, DAVID RUFFER LIVES HIS DREAM BY ATTENDING NOTRE DAME. ON SATURDAYS, HE PLAYS FOOTBALL.

IT WASN'T SOMETHING THAT EVER THOUGHT I'D BE DOING. IT'S JUST GREATER THAN ANYTHING I EVER THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN.

MAYBE THE BEST DREAMS IN LIFE ARE THE ONES YOU NEVER HAD THAT STILL COME TRUE.

(END)