

CEOs Out of Bounds

by [Scott Pickard](#)



Scott Pickard
On the Boulevard

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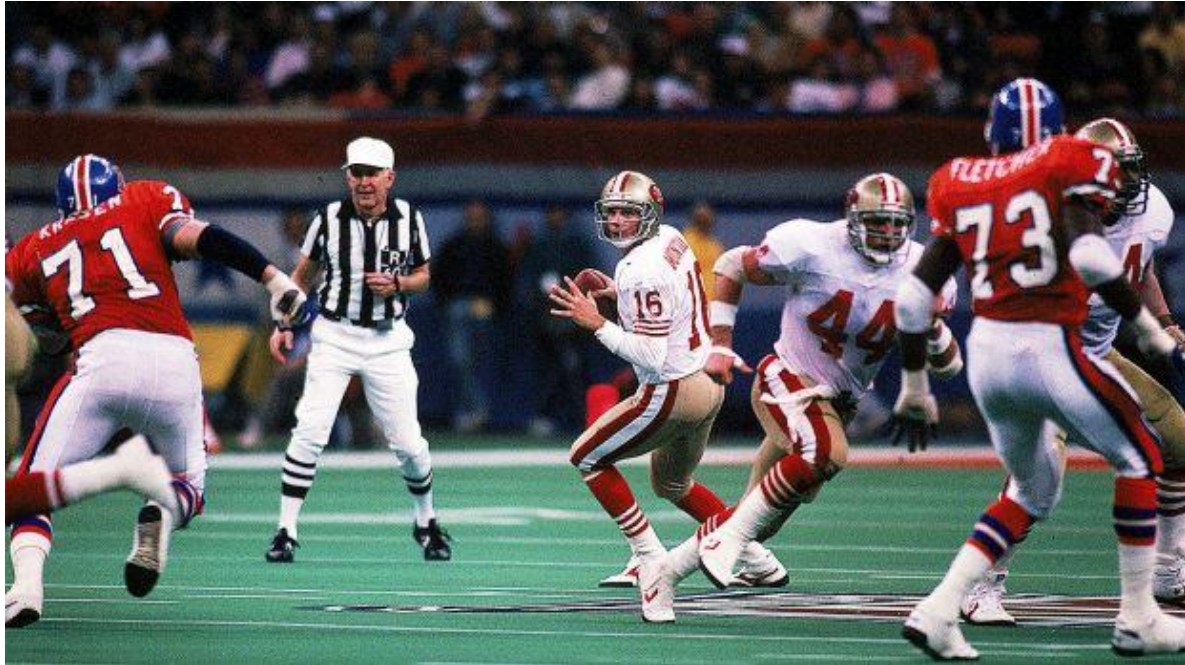
Sport plays an important part in the lives of many business leaders. Nothing can make the juices flow like sinking a 30-foot birdie putt to win the match or setting a personal record in the local 10K run. Risking, winning and losing, playing, pushing personal limits – all are tonics for the chief executive, but they require “getting in the game.”

For Dick Jorgensen, Red Cashion, and Tom Dooley, getting in the game was a way of life.

During their days as NFL Referees, they were chief executives of successful corporations, but on the weekends they exchanged their business suits for “zebra suits” to become NFL referees. Whether on the field or off, these CEOs shared an uncommon passion to perform their best.

Dick Jorgensen: Banking on the Blitz

Dick Jorgensen had the distinction of having been the head referee for 1990’s Super Bowl XXIV. It was the pinnacle of a 22-year career as an NFL referee when one considers that the officials on Super Bowl Sunday are voted the best at their position by the NFL.



Head Referee **Dick Jorgensen** (#60) follows San Francisco quarterback Joe Montana (#16) and the rest of the action at Superbowl XXIV in 1990.

When he was not watching Joe Montana fade back for the bomb, Jorgensen was president of Marine Bank in Champaign, IL, a banking affiliate of the Marine Corporation with over \$1 billion in assets. The bank always supported Dick's other life as an NFL referee, as banks generally support the active community involvement of all employees.

At 56 (in 1990) and coming off recent back surgery, Dick moved a little slower than he did as captain of the University of Wisconsin's basketball team. He was concerned about his upcoming annual NFL physical and stress test, but he was determined to pass. He daily stretched, swam, and lifted weights – whatever it took to ensure he would get another shot at a Super Bowl. Having participated in Super Bowls VIII, XV, and XXIV, he didn't want to pass up another opportunity to be part of "the immensity of the game."

The rewards of a Super Bowl experience, however, aren't without cost. The pressures of balancing a banking career and an active family life while on the road for the NFL were substantial, especially for the family left behind each weekend. "But once the kickoff comes and I get into the flow of the game," asserted Jorgensen, "all the pressure is off. It's exhausting, but mentally refreshing."

Tom Dooley: Constructing a Game Plan

[Tom Dooley](#), former CEO of R.T. Dooley Construction, says his 14 years of working out problems on an NFL football field helped him work out problems in business. "On the football field," he observed, "you have a set of rules and a solution." Dooley was proud of the fact that in all his years as CEO, he never had to retain an attorney to solve a legal problem!

“Nothing is black and white in business,” continued Dooley. “Everything is a compromise. On the football field, it is black and white. I can flush out every thought in the world when I’m on that field.” And like Dick Jorgensen, Tom Dooley got that same physical exhaustion but mental freshness after each game.

To make it possible for Tom to work weekends for the NFL and keep his business under control, he surrounded himself with “people smarter than I am.” And what was good for the boss was good for the troops. Business shut down every day at 11:30 am so employees could get in a vigorous noon workout at the local YMCA (the company paid every employee’s membership fee).

Dooley believed strongly in being “the best you can be.” After a lifetime of setting goals and achieving them, he still had one in his sights – to work a Super Bowl as head referee. He had a taste of Super Bowl action as a linesman at Super Bowl XV, Eagles vs Raiders, in 1981. But characteristic of every NFL referee, Dooley wanted a shot at the No. 1 position.

Red Cashion: A Variable Life

On April 21, 1990, Texas Independence Day, Red Cashion had the honor of being keynote speaker at Texas A&M’s “annual muster,” following in the footsteps of the mayor of San Antonio, the governor of Texas, and Ike Eisenhower. For a Texan, especially one that lived and worked in College Station (Aggie country), this was as big an honor as being referee at Super Bowl XX, Bears vs. Patriots, in 1986.

Speaking before students, athletes, and business people went with the territory for this NFL referee who was also chairman of ANCO insurance which he co-founded in 1966. The challenges and lessons of business and sport were inseparable for Cashion, helping him develop what he called “presence.”

Red enjoyed “being in the center of the action.” It took him 20 years of refereeing in junior high through college ranks before being accepted into the NFL where he officiated from 1972 – 1996 (25 years).

Obviously, the pressure of officiating wasn’t a problem for Cashion, having been at it for so long. He enjoyed keeping himself in shape through competitive handball. “Frankly,” he says, “I enjoy the annual NFL physical and stress test.”

The greater challenge for Cashion was making the right decision under pressure. Being an NFL referee helped him develop confidence in himself and his decisions, a quality employees respected.

When he returned each Monday following an NFL game, football was the topic of the day. Employees always greet him with questions about the game. Although Cashion admitted that

“after a while, you forget which city you were in,” he will never forget being head referee in Super Bowls XX (1986, Bears vs. Patriots) and XXX (1996, Cowboys vs. Steelers).

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Note from Scott Pickard: “I wrote this feature article under assignment to *Chief Executive* magazine and it was subsequently published in September, 1990. Sadly, [Dick Jorgensen](#) passed away in October, 1990. He was a well-known personality and highly-respected leader in Champaign, IL.”

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