

Commentary

Save the insults for someone else

Minutes after walking off the field at St. John Fisher College Friday, dripping with sweat, out of breath and wanting nothing more than a cold shower and some food, Kevin Everett got a taste of what being a professional athlete is all about.

After waving to the fans huddled in the bleachers, calling out to him to come over and sign autographs, Everett turned toward the locker room. A voice that seconds earlier had clamored for Everett's John Hancock sounded out, "you suck!"

Yep, welcome to life in the pros, Kevin. Hope you have a thick skin, because these gimme-gimme-gimme fans will turn on you in a second if you don't accommodate them whenever they demand it. It doesn't matter that it may not be the best time for you. I mean, who cares if you just busted your butt on the field and need to relax. You owe it to the fans to sign their napkins, which will end up on eBay before you even make it to the showers.

Everett was one of the last players to stop practicing Friday. After the coaches excused the players for the day, he ran crossing routes with quarterback Kliff Kingsbury, because, as he said, he "needed to work on them." I guess working hard to ensure a place on the team, pushing himself to increase his skills and helping

the team in any way he can takes a back seat to giving an obnoxious fan his fix of "just desserts."

Well, I have a message for the blowhard in the stands. Listen up, jerk. I understand the players should do whatever they can to connect with the fans. Without 80,000 screaming supporters each week, there is no team, no league, no sport. But remember, the players are men too. So, when you feel the need to spout insults from your self-important idiocy canyon you call a mouth, don't. You're not five years old, stop acting like it.

If you're going to ride a player and tell him he sucks, at least wait for him to screw up. Or maybe he should come to your job, wait until you are physically exhausted and shout at you in the parking lot, "you suck!" I'll bet my left arm you wouldn't think, "oh, he has the right to do that." You'd be ticked off something fierce. We all would. And guess what. So would Everett.

But Everett didn't get upset. He didn't respond in any way other than to continue walking into the locker room to catch a shower and head to the

dining hall to get something to eat. He's a professional and handled the insult the way all football players are told to, by ignoring it.

It's the right thing to do, but could you blame the guy for hitting back a return like an Andre Agassi backhand?

There are plenty of athletes out there in the public eye worthy of scorn and ridicule. Heck, take your pick from the recent crop of steroid users, cheats and liars. Ask American sprinter Justin Gatlin if he'd like a massage with "special" cream. Tell American cyclist Floyd Landis you have inside information that it was actually the communists that falsified the results of his blood tests.

Now, if you want to get obscure, check out former Olympic gold medalist figure skater Wolfgang Schwarz, who received an eight-year prison sentence this week for plotting to kidnap a teenage girl and hold her for ransom.

Everett has done nothing to earn scorn from fans. After all, he's no Rafael Palmeiro.



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Buffalo Bills

All Wired Up

Veteran looking to nail down safety position at training camp

by **NICHOLAS J. PRIMERANO**
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To see Coy Wire during a football practice is like watching a hawk, circling a field, waiting to strike.

He is methodical on the gridiron — and his eyes show it.

Wire is a soft-spoken secondary man with the hitting power of Takeo Spikes and he's not afraid to take a hit or give one.

The Buffalo Bills have a number of qualified candidates to anchor the deep spot on Perry Fewell's new defensive system, with Wire as one of the primary choices as the second starter, despite the fact that no one has yet to be named.

Currently, there are seven candidates vying for the starting gig at safety. Wire, 15-year veteran Troy Vincent, second-year man Jim Leonhard, who will see the majority of his play time on special teams, Rashad Baker, Matt Bowen, rookie Ko Simpson and first-round draft pick Donte Whitner all have their sights set on starting for the Bills come September.

The first starter will undoubtedly be Troy Vincent, making the second job a six-way split for the starting position — and Wire wants it.

"My mission is continue to produce at strong safety," Wire said after Friday's afternoon session at training camp in Pittsford. "The coaches make all the decisions, I'm just here to produce."

On the second passing play of team scrimmage that afternoon,



Buffalo Bills safety Coy Wire is looking to regain his starting job this year, while battling with several other hopefuls at training camp. Photo by Patrick McPartland

Wire caught a deflected J.P. Losman pass and took it back to the end zone.

"You always have to try to hus-

tle to the ball. Good things happen when you play hard," Wire said.

When he first came to the Bills in 2002, Wire made an immediate

impact, playing in 16 games and starting in 15. He finished fourth on the team in tackles with 92.

When Wire started at strong

safety in his first NFL game against the New York Jets, he became the team's first rookie to start on defense on opening day since Nate Odomes and Shane Conlan did it together in 1987.

Wire lost his starting job in the beginning of the 2004 season with the addition of long-time New England Patriot Lawyer Milloy, who signed just hours before opening day kickoff.

It was then that Wire attempted to make the transition to free safety, but the addition of Vincent left him looking for a home on the Bills defense. Wire found that home in the special teams and took on the duties of special teams captain.

In 57 games, Wire posted 115 tackles, 57 assists and five sacks.

"I want to leave the field after every practice knowing that I am a better player than when I stepped on the field," Wire said. "I am extremely grateful for the gifts that I have, but I can always improve."

The Bills will make their first cuts to the official roster on Aug. 29, when the NFL requires them to have 75 players. By Sept. 2, the final roster will be released, with 53 players.

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South High announces fall season starting dates

The Fall 2006 sports season is almost here and Williamsville South has posted its physical verification and starting dates for the upcoming season.

The South school nurse will sign athletic physical consent forms for varsity and junior varsity football from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 11 and Monday, Aug. 14 and for all other sports from 8 a.m. to noon on Friday, Aug. 18 and Monday, Aug. 21.

In addition, the South weight room is open from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and from 3 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

South High School is located at

5950 Main St., Williamsville.

Monday, Aug. 14

Varsity and JV football - 3:30 p.m., South High

Monday, Aug. 21

Girls varsity and JV soccer - 9-11 a.m., Mill Middle School, 505 Mill St., Williamsville

Girls varsity and JV volleyball - 2:30-4 p.m., South High

Boys varsity and JV soccer, 10 a.m.-noon, South High

Girls tennis - 10 a.m.-noon, South High

Boys and girls cross country - 6-8 p.m. (South High)

Boys varsity and JV Volleyball - noon-3 p.m., South High (new gym)

Varsity and JV field hockey -

9-11 a.m., South High
Varsity girls swimming - 9-11 a.m., South pool

Tuesday, Aug. 29

Modified football - 3-5 p.m., South High

Girls gymnastics - 10 a.m.-noon, South High (old gym)

Friday, Sept. 1

Girls modified soccer - 3-5 p.m., Mill Middle

Boys modified soccer - 3-5 p.m., Mill Middle

Golf - 11 a.m., Audubon Golf Course, 500 Maple Road, Amherst

Wednesday, Sept. 6

Modified field hockey - 3:45-5:30 p.m., Mill Middle

Fireman's Softball

North Amherst.....	12-1
Clarence.....	11-2
Newstead.....	10-3
East Amherst.....	10-3
Harris Hill.....	8-5
North Bailey.....	8-5
Clarence Center.....	7-6
Snyder.....	6-7
Main Transit.....	5-8
Getzville.....	4-9
Akron.....	3-10
Williamsville.....	2-11
Bowmansville.....	2-11
Eggertsville.....	0-13

Aug. 11

East Amherst at North Amherst; Newstead at Clarence

Aug. 13

At East Amherst
Consolation 1 p.m.
Championship 3 p.m.

Erie County Fair Days SALE
UP TO 1/2 OFF ALL THIS WEEK
FIND THE BIGGEST PRICE CUTS OF THE YEAR AT THE FAIR AND AT OUR STORE! DON'T MISS OUT!