

Csonka, LARRY

# Rough-Guy Csonka: 'The World Could Use More Love'

LONG BEACH, Calif., Jan. 11  
—“There's too much violence in our society . . . We should be out of Vietnam . . . In Little League football the importance of winning is overemphasized. The world could use more love.”

This gentle apostle for peace who has set forth his creed for a better world bears the unlikely name of Larry Csonka. Same guy who can terrify a 4-3 defense with his 240 pounds and 5.2 rushing average. The NFL's human earthquake whom the Redskins must subdue if they are not to be blown out of the Super Bowl by the Miami Dolphins on Sunday. There are other names on the Dolphins. Griese, Warfield, Mercury Morris, Kitek and Twilley. Only Csonka's means ball control, the name of the game.

Inevitably, for a fullback of his size and power, came the drift toward personifying him as The Brute. Csonka said today he resents that image. “What do they think I am,” he said, “some primate with his knuckles

dragging on the ground? Dick Butkus gets the same rap. But we're both decently intelligent human beings. We only knock people down on the football field. If you ever saw Butkus around his family, or other kids, you'd see a soft and tender man. I think I am, too.”

The war in Vietnam is senseless, he said. So is some of the coaching kids get in the Little League. “Kids don't have to play hurt,” Csonka said. “There's time for that later if they grow up and play pro football and have to play hurt to keep their jobs, like we do. Their coaches ought to teach the kids better values than the tough-guy stuff.”

He said he wasn't proud of the nine broken noses he has suffered playing football. “Kids hear about me and think maybe it's fashionable,” he said. “We get hurt because when big fellows like us run into each other in this league, something's got to give. We're not crazy about the pain we play with. When I run over tacklers

## Shirley Povich



it's not what I planned to do. Maybe it's because I can't cut as fast as Larry Brown. The difference between Brown and me is about 35 pounds, which makes a difference in our style. My weight is harder for the feet to handle, except straightaway."

Csonka clams up a bit on the subject of the demotion of his close pal, Jim Kiick, in the Dolphins' backfield, and his new running mate, Mercury Morris. He maintains, with coach Don Shula, the stance that "we have three running backs." Kiick, who has much of Csonka's fierce running style, has been his favorite backfield partner. Until the speedy Morris busted up the duo, it was Csonka and Kiick who complemented each other as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

After one game last year in which Csonka and Kiick each banged out more than 100 yards, a Buffalo assistant hung a name on them. "The Heavy Heads," he called 'em. Csonka's 5.2 average is the more remarkable because he gains it mostly in the sticky going inside. They have an admiration of the blocking they get up front.

Csonka is out of Stow, Ohio, a town he calls "a dusty corner between Akron and Kent." He got his size from his father, an Akron night-club bouncer who turned successful farmer. He got his schooling at Syracuse, where he zoomed to football fame as the fellow who broke the ground-gaining records of Jim Brown, Ernie Davis and Floyd Little. All his memories of Syracuse are not fond. "They took away my board money when I got married in my sophomore year. Nobody up there left any money bags on my

doorstep. I had to take a night watchman's job at a dollar an hour to keep us eating. I put in six or seven hours a night. I had to catch my sleep before and after class. Sometimes during class."

He's found more pride playing for the Dolphins than he ever did playing for Syracuse, he said. He was their No. 1 draft choice five years ago and has proved a bargain at a \$100,000 bonus. He's still bothered by the terrible thing that happened to him last year in the Super Bowl against the Cowboys. Was guilty of his first fumble of the whole season, and Dallas exploited it for a field goal and was never caught.

He had a good game against Pittsburgh, the one that got the Dolphins back into the Super Bowl, and he's still aching a bit from it. From what he has seen on the films, he said, he expects the Redskins' defense to be tough on Sunday.

"But that Pittsburgh defense," he said, "was no doll baby."

