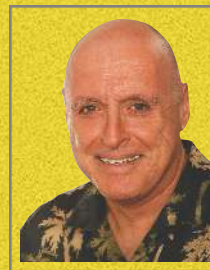


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



731 The Understudy Won – Now What?

So, as we left the story yesterday, the reserve leader took over for the regular guy, who was physically unable to perform, and delivered the project successfully, as hoped. So what's next for the new leader? What's next for the existing leader, who says he's ready to take back his position? What will the ultimate decision maker decide? How will customers react? How will the rest of the team react? Oh, my goodness, what have we done? I'm Jerry Roberts, and let's consider all that, next, on The Extra Point.

Yesterday, a man named John Wolford, a virtual unknown until a week ago, even to fans of the Los Angeles Rams, got a chance to lead his team to victory and a spot in the NFL playoffs. He did just that.

The understudy's performance wasn't perfect, but he was solid, gutsy, and at times nothing short of inspiring. An understudy, a reserve quarterback in the NFL has to be ready, always ready, just in case. He is one play away from becoming the leader on the field.

Many people listening to me right now are just one play away, one decision away from being asked if they're ready to become their team's leader.

Because of Wolford's success, there is now a bit of a controversy flaring among Rams' fans and the media. In next Sunday's game against the Seattle Seahawks, who should quarterback the team — John Wolford or Jared Goff, the regular starting QB? Goff had surgery on his hand last week and says he's ready to go.

Goff was hurt in Seattle eight days ago in an ugly loss to the same Seahawks. He didn't play well and frankly, has not played well most of the year. He wasn't good last year, either. Yet, he's got a contract worth \$134 million, a deal that has three years left on it. If you decide to go with Wolford, what does that say

about Goff? What does that say to Goff? Where will his head be if not selected?

I've seen star salespeople lose big accounts because they weren't performing well. In many cases like that, the sales rep sees it as a demotion, a public embarrassment, and doesn't recover from it. They hang on for a while, but often start looking for another job. Goff has played football for years and may have never been removed from the starting role.

Quarterbacks have a special relationship with the coach, and yes the NFL is all about delivering results. To be entering the biggest stage in sports, the road to the Super Bowl, and to be told the team is taking a different direction and you're no longer the guy...what will that do to Goff?

Wolford isn't perfect. He now has one start and one win, and to put him in the playoffs where you're one and done if you lose, is a tall order. Yet, he brings different challenges to a defense because of his speed and elusiveness, much like the Seahawks' field leader Russell Wilson. The Seahawks' defense knows Goff well, and has had success against him. He's slow, not mobile like Wolford, and has often made serious mistakes to lose games.

In a situation like this, people begin to take sides. The customers, the fans of the business, are split, with more favoring Wolford right now. How about the rest of the players, how do they feel? Here's where it gets dicey. The team has to be divided, too.

Goff has friends and supporters on the team. He's been their leader for five years. However, they want to win and, even if they haven't been vocal about his lack of performance, you know some, perhaps all, question whether he's the one to lead them at this point. They

(Con't.)

are held to a standard and if they don't deliver results, management takes action and puts somebody on the field who might do better. Should Goff get a free pass?

Coach Sean McVay enters the most critical period of the season with a big question mark. Does he go with Goff, who hasn't performed well in the past two seasons, but is more familiar, or ride the new guy, Wolford, who seemed to bring a new energy to the offense, and did get the job done?

Like the sales manager who needs to get better performance and has to decide between the veteran who is struggling but is familiar to the market, and the new hire who has a lot of promise but is inexperienced — what's the right call?

When pressed by the media on how well Wolford played and who would play against Seattle, McVay responded, "Yeah, I'm going to think about it."

Pulling a struggling star performer off the field is a tough decision because of the possible repercussions if you don't get the results you're after.

If Wolford plays and loses badly to Seattle, then McVay should have played Goff. If he chooses Goff and he loses, then he should have chosen Wolford.

It's the same for the sales manager. Whether it's fair or not, it's reality. If you have to make the decision, unless your decision goes well, many will question your ability to make critical choices, and to lead. As they say, it comes with the territory.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

