

We're all part of me-first society

C. JEMAL
HORTON



This is a scenario you are sure to see take place when the Carolina Panthers have their playoff game at Ericsson Stadium Saturday: A Panthers player - or any player, for that matter - will commit a blunder. He'll try his best, but then he'll drop a pass or fumble a ball or miss a tackle or ... something.

And someone will boo, someone will yell nasty things to him.

Many of the same people who screamed about the horrific lack of sportsmanship when Joe Horn pulled out a cell phone in the end zone recently will narrowly miss spilling their beverage on their children as they jump and scream at players.

"You suck!"

"Shut up and play!"

Yep, there's an example for the kids. That's real sportsmanship. That's not showing up a player.

And Horn gets vilified, not to mention a \$30,000 fine, for pulling out a lousy cell

phone?

Come on. We have got to get over ourselves, people.

We have got to get over using athletes as the symbol of everything that is wrong with our country, particularly when, in some cases, we're the ones setting the poor example.

Let's look at these elaborate end zone celebrations for a moment: What's the big deal? Please tell me how a guy who celebrates a touchdown somehow is a menace to society.

Will somebody please tell me why we're so quick to act as if a guy pulling out a cell phone is so much worse than, say, a guy violently spiking the ball 5 feet away from his fallen defender. That's taunting. That's hurtful to the opponent. And that's exactly what future Hall-of-Famer Steve Young used to do.

Yet no one ever complained.

This is the classic example of people from different cultures and life experiences trying to force their own mores on other people. And that's wrong. Very wrong.

Fans and media love to complain that there are too many "look at me" athletes

in our society and not enough "team."

Well, if you've been fortunate enough to attend a game at Ericsson Stadium or the Charlotte Coliseum or similar places, you've seen the reaction of most fans when their faces pop up on the Jumbotron. Let's just say they don't sit in their seats and, as so many fans and sports commentators love to say, "act like they've been there before."

People do everything from get up and dance to wave their hands feverishly to bring attention to their body parts.

How much more "look at me" does it get?

A whole lot of us are hypocrites, because a whole lot of us are "look-at-me" people. First of all, most of the people spewing this mess are loudmouth talk-radio hosts and sports columnists with their pictures in newspapers. These are the same people who are, at the tops of their lungs, publicly ripping players, owners and fans.

Again, how much more "look at me" does it get?

And let's get rid of this ridiculous notion that professional sports are all about the team, OK?

You watch an Indianapolis Colts game, and all you hear is commentators going on about how Peyton Manning should win the MVP. When a player holds out, it's not about the team. When an owner underpays a player, it's not about the team.

If it were all about the teams, then the professional sports leagues wouldn't sell and market jerseys with individual names and numbers on them.

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The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is seeking minority and women-owned firms (M/WBE) to bid on upcoming highway projects throughout the State. The Locations of the projects are:

Project No.	County/ Route		Type	Location	Metric/ English	GOALS BY PERCENT		
						DBE	MBE	WBE
B-2963 32780.3.2 8.2352202	Durham	12	Structure, Grading, Drainage, Paving	Bridge 111 over New Hope Creek on SR-1107				
B-3067 32849.3.1 8.2750903	Watauga	4	Structure, Grading, Drainage, Paving	Bridge 324 over Middle Fork Creek on SR-1542				
B-3422 33049.3.2 8.2663203	Cabarrus	10	Drainage, Grading, Paving, Culverts, Signals	Bridge 47 over Three Mile Branch on SR-1002				
B-3627 33175.3.1 8.1480503	Caswell	26	Structure, Grading, Drainage, Paving	Bridge 24 over Hycro Creek on US 158				
R-1030E 34363.3.2 8.1330502	Wayne	002	Guardrail, Signing, Paving	US 117 from North of US 70 Interchange at Goldsboro to South of SR-1342				
R-1030F 34363.3.14 8.1330511	Wayne, Wilson	12	Guardrail, Paving, Signing	US 117 from South of SR-1342 to South of US 301				
U-3803 34971.3.2	Rowan	32	Grading, Drainage, Paving, Widening, Curb and Gutter, Signals, Pavement Markers	China Grove - Intersection of US 29A (North Main Street) & NC 152 - SR 1337 (Church Street)				

* Designates a Federal Project

LETTING DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2004

Until further notice, the pre-letting activities formerly held at the North Raleigh Hilton will no longer be held at the Bennington Corporation. If you have questions, please contact the Office of Civil Rights.

NCDOT Office of Civil Rights & Business Development 1-800-522-0453

Certification of highway contracting firms: Jerry Armstrong
Certification of supply/service/engineering firms: Robert Mathes
Comments or concerns: Larry Dickens: Interim Director



Something Sporty: That's Monte Carlo's SS coupe

WINFRED
B. CROSS

Test
Drive



NASCAR has done a lot for General Motors, or is that the other way around?

GM products win a lot of races, which helps sales for those models, even though racing versions have little to do with the consumer products. Still, some people get a kick out of driving the cars their favorite drivers use.

Those who like the Monte Carlo will like the SS version even more. SS probably stands for super sport or something. Sporty it is, boasting a 240 supercharged version of the venerable 3800 engine. That's the real sweetness of this car. The engine is lively, propelling the car to 60 mph well before

the clock ticks off 7.0 seconds. The engine has a somewhat metallic sound while producing these horses, but the exhaust note is quite nice.

If you go fast you need to stop and turn fast, the Monte Carlo delivers. The four-wheel antilock brakes will haul this puppy down to 0 in a pinch. The standard traction control helps keep the car on the right path, even under adverse situations. Steering is good also. It's not as tight as I like for a car this fast, but it's quick enough.

The four-wheel independent suspension is tuned more for sport than comfort but the ride is OK. I expected harsh, but I got good.

For a coupe, the Monte is pretty livable. There's plenty of room for four, maybe five. The doors are about the right side, wide enough to allow easy access, but not so heavy as to make you wish

for a four-door.

Chevy's interiors always leave me cold. The Monte Carlo is no exception. There's a lot of inexpensive plastic and odd shapes. The familiar Fischer-Price dash hasn't changed, nor the '80s radio faceplate. There is satellite radio, which is the best GM option next to OnStar.

The SS Monte Carlo comes with a lot of standard stuff which includes ABS, dual climate controls, power package, traction control, cruise, keyless remote, and 17-inch diamond cut wheels. Options include XM radio, OnStar, upgraded 200 watt stereo and driver's information center.

With options, the car tested at \$31,055. Not bad, but there's plenty to choose from in that price range. But not many of those will be found circling an oval at triple digit speeds.

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