

Giving Calhoun the Ball

An important football game was to determine the state championship among high school teams.

One team was much larger than the other. The larger team was dominating the game and beating the smaller team – physically and on the scoreboard.

The coach for the smaller team saw that his players were unable to contain or block the larger team. His only hope, he decided, was to call the plays that went to Calhoun, considered the fastest tailback in the state. He could easily outrun the larger players, once he broke free.

The coach called his quarterback to the sideline and instructed him to give the ball to Calhoun and let him run with it.

On the first play, Calhoun was handed the ball and headed off right tackle, but he was hammered to the ground by a defensive end and a linebacker for no gain.

The second play was again signaled for Calhoun, and this time he tried to run between the left guard and tackle, but it was like running into a brick wall for no yardage.

On third down, and again heeding the coach's instructions, the quarterback called a toss sweep left, and pitched the ball to Calhoun. He was smothered by three defensive players for a loss of three yards.

The game was now in the final seconds, and the smaller team behind by five points. It was fourth down, and the coach sent in the play again with Calhoun to get the handoff. The ball was snapped and the quarterback was sacked, ending the game.

The coach was furious as he confronted the quarterback: "I told you four times to give the ball to Calhoun and now we've lost the game."

The quarterback stood tall, took a deep breath, and said to the coach, "Four times I called the play to give the ball to Calhoun. The problem was, in the huddle on the fourth down, he said to me: 'Calhoun don't want the ball!'"

Some lessons from this story:

1. Champions don't let adversity deter them from their goals. Those who succeed in life do so in spite of setbacks and deterrents they may encounter.
2. Team play must take precedence over an individual's desires to accomplish the established mission.

These principles are true in health care, just as they are in football.

– Beecher Hunter