



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 2, 2010

## H.S. Football Player Penalized for Gesturing to God

Tumwater (Washington) High School running back Ronnie Hastie learned the hard way that freedom of religion is a dying right on Monday night when he received a penalty flag for pointing to the heavens after scoring a touchdown.



According to the [Seattle PI](#), "In the second quarter of the game, Tumwater running back Ronnie Hastie scored on a 23-yard run, took a knee in the end zone and briefly pointed to the heavens above. For that, the referee threw a flag, saying it was unsportsmanlike conduct."

Hastie was shocked by the penalty, asserting that gesturing to God after every touchdown was something he always did without issue until Monday's game.

"It's usually one or two seconds long," Hastie said.

Hastie questioned the ref's use of the penalty flag and was told that Hastie violated the sportsmanship rules by drawing attention to himself.

Hastie told the press, "That wasn't the point [of the gesture], so I guess I was a little confused. I do that to give glory to my heavenly father, Jesus. He gives me strength. He's the one who gives me these abilities in the first place."

Hastie's father confirmed that his son points to the heavens after every touchdown in order to remember that there is something more important than him.

[Mike Colbrese](#), executive director of Washington Interscholastic Activities Association, reviewed the video but indicates that he was unaware of the circumstances behind the referee's call. He added that Hastie failed to give up the ball immediately after the play as the rules indicate to do and implied that perhaps that was the reason for the call.

However, as the ref stated otherwise, Colbrese's defense is weak.

Deterred by the penalty, Hastie indicates he will simply do the gesture off-field.

"I'll just have to change it up and not make as big of a statement, I guess. The refs are in charge."

Another point for the secular team.



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