

Geoff Meinken, hits big on YouTube

By Scott M. Johnson, Herald Writer

All that was going through Geoff Meinken's mind as the Stanford offensive line opened up a Buick-sized hole in front of him on a short-yardage carry in the third quarter of a game against Colorado 12 days ago was that he needed to get lower than his opponent, put his head down, and keep the Cardinal's drive going.

He never could have thought that he was about to make one of college football's biggest hits of the season.

The fullback from Lynnwood made the YouTube rotation recently when his second-and-1 carry turned into a seismic collision that left opponent Douglas Rippy's helmet flying in the air.

The 274-pound Meinken, a former linebacker who played defensive end at Lynnwood High School, took an Andrew Luck handoff and ran between two offensive linemen into a one-on-one collision with Colorado's 230-pound linebacker. Meinken ran over Rippy, whose helmet popped into the air as he fell backward and landed under the Stanford runner for a two-yard gain.

A week-and-a-half later, Meinken was still hearing about the hit but wasn't exactly gloating.

"You'd hope that when you make a play, you gain some respect from it," he said via telephone on Wednesday afternoon. "But that's not really what I'm concerned with. I'm concerned with that I got the first down. We went on to score a touchdown. This is Stanford, and we're a physical program. I just hope I can help contribute to that."

The play led to several shoulder-pad slaps as Meinken, a backup fullback, came off the field and onto the Stanford sideline. A gush of praise swept over the Stanford Stadium when the collision was replayed on the big screen a couple of seconds later. And a week after that, fellow fans noticed mother Susan Miller's button at the Stanford-Washington State and commented on the play.

"That was cool," Meinken said. "My friends are excited and teammates are excited, so that's cool."

But perhaps the highest form of flattery in this age of high technology came when Meinken's hit made the rounds on YouTube. He's copped to watching replays of the hit "a couple" times, but later admitted he's watched the play "a fair amount."

As much as the low-key Meinken tries to downplay his biggest collision, it's there for everyone to see.

"I don't remember who's quote it is, but someone once said about football: To take someone from Point A to Point B against their will, there's no feeling more satisfying," Meinken said. "Yeah, I guess it felt good to do that."