

The North Fulton Marriage Newsletter

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Toe Meets Leather

In my life, there is no Fall, Winter, Spring or Summer. There is simply college football season and then the off-season. Actually, college football season, recruiting season and spring practice season. Three seasons. And, for the longest time I have been wanting to write a marriage newsletter related to college football. That day has arrived—"Toe Meets Leather"—it is time for kickoff! The phrase "Toe Meets Leather" was coined by the late, great Georgia Tech broadcaster, Al Ciraldo. For those of you who don't know, "toe" means foot, "leather" means football, so together they mean kickoff. I am a Georgia Tech alumni and long time football season ticket holder. Toe will meet leather for Georgia Tech on September 5th, 2009, at 1 PM. As you read this newsletter, think of me in my seat in the lower west stands of Bobby Dodd Stadium. THWG!

I am going to dispense some marital advice here strictly using football analogies. Let me begin by saying that in my marriage I have certainly "out kicked my coverage," which basically means my wife is most certainly my better half. My wife does a really good job of keeping me in line. She does not mess around. If I am being a jerk, Toe (her foot) will meet Leather (my butt) in really short order. Checks and balances are a good thing for a marriage. A lot of folks seem to enter marital bliss with little or no game plan. I guess the roar of the crowd and clean old fashion lust keep people from really thinking things through before signing a marital contract. The reality is once married, the luster (and the lust) will wear off, the cheering crowd will go home, and you will simply be left with your ability to get along with your spouse. So, before signing your recruit for a lifetime, do some game planning. Ask each other questions about the future, what do you want out of life, what are your goals, dreams and plans. Are you willing to compromise on the game plan? A good friend of mine who is also a counselor once said the following: "Yeah, I wanted one child, and my wife wanted three, so we compromised and had three." Sometimes, it appears compromise can be a lopsided victory for one team or the other! As you progress through your marriage, you will find that it will be a very long season, filled with ups and downs, wins and losses, triumphs and disappointments. But, to survive, as corny as this sounds, you have to survive as a team. You have to manage conflict and remain good friends.

When folks come in to see a marriage counselor, most of the time they have reached the fourth quarter, and they are down by a few points with seconds to play. Marriage counseling becomes the last Hail Mary pass attempt to win the game and save the marriage. If you reach this point, do not expect your marriage counselor to throw the pass for you. You will have to throw the ball yourself, and your spouse will have to catch it. Your marriage counselor will be one part coach, one part referee: the coach there to give you guidance, the referee there to step in when you commit personal fouls against each other. But please don't let your marriage come down to the final seconds. Plan ahead, think it through, and see to it that you are up by a comfortable margin near the end. In closing, I would like to thank my wife for indulging my college football obsession, understanding that I will be depressed for a few days after a Georgia Tech loss, and tolerating a grown man in her house wearing a football jersey most every Saturday. Thanks be to Dodd (Bobby).

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