

Blitz

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HALL OF FAME

Blitz looks at the Hall of Fame's "Game for Life"

YOU CAN'T TEACH HEART

Oxford Saints Ben Denton's amazing journey

KICKING FOR GLORY

The art of kicking under pressure image gallery

The LO'down

Coach Lo Locust speaks to

**The Female
Coaching Network**

COACHES CORNER

Jeff Reinebold profiles coaching legends Buddy Ryan and Mouse Davis

ONE CLICK FROM PERFECTION

Jason Brown on how to capture the perfect shot



SUNDAY WORSHIP

CJ FRANCHETTI MORTIMER - TOUCHDOWN TRIPS

The Power of Game Day

It's a Sunday morning. It's crisp. It's bright. It's game day.



I became a football fan before I became a teenager. Sundays were spent watching the games broadcast on television. It really didn't matter who was playing, I just wanted to see a good game. I love the game. But it wasn't until years later that I got to experience my first NFL game live and that changed everything.

Seeing a live NFL game is more than the game itself. It is more than sitting in a stadium surrounded by strangers who happen to be wearing the same colour as you. It is an emotional experience that connects with every sense in your body. But it is an experience that begins well before kickoff.

Let's go back to that Sunday morning. While most people will be having a lie-in, the NFL faithful will be up before the sun and packing their vehicles with what is essentially a miniature campsite. This equipment will range from a few chairs and a cooler of beverages to a full-on outdoor cooking, eating, and relaxing environment. Why are they doing this? It is for the truly American experience of tailgating.

"It really didn't matter who was playing, I just wanted to see a good game"

Tailgating. It's a strange word to associate with football...until you understand its power. Tailgating is the American custom of coming together four hours before the game even starts. It is celebrating the idea of football. It is celebrating the passion of football. It is celebrating the football community and bringing it together to share in food and drink and to be as one, united by fandom.

I have spent many a Sunday morning sharing in food and beverage with my fellow tailgaters. Reading this you must think I'm crazy but I promise you, the banter, the camaraderie, the amazing eats—those times are some of the happiest memories I have at a game! The friends I made through tailgating are friends that have proved to last. But that is just the start of the game day experience.





About 45 minutes before kickoff, the masses start making their way into the stadium. As you walk closer and closer, you hear snippets of conversations...predictions, expectations, and always a little trash talking the opponent. You finally cross over and you are in. You are first struck with the sheer size of this place and then you take it all in...vendors shouting "Beer here, get your beer here," smells of hot dogs and fries coming from every direction, and music playing as the pre-game entertainment is underway.



"My seat was always up high as I like taking in the whole game"

So I start the climb; it is a stairway to heaven based on just how high I am going. I get to the top of the 56 metre stadium and get to my seat. I feel the crisp air on my face and the cool base of the seat and then the announcer says it's time to meet the team! You feel the rush and hear the roar of 70,000 people jumping to their feet at once and cheering as loud as they can to welcome them to the field. Fireworks go off to add to the atmosphere, cheerleaders are shaking their pom-poms, mascots are doing their dance and everyone is ready for some football! ■

Photographs courtesy of Touchdown Trips