

Your Personal Coach

By

Kathleen Brehony, Ph.D.

Dear Kathleen,

Here we go again! My husband, Randy, is a football junkie and I'm sick of it. He watches college football all day Saturday, professional football all day Sunday, and any other day or night that a game is on. He does nothing on weekends except watch TV and that means all the yard work, laundry, errands, and cleaning are left to you know who. I should have known this would be a problem when we had to leave on a later flight for our honeymoon so he could watch the Redskins game at the hotel where we had our wedding reception three years ago. He's a maniac for football, and between pre-season games beginning in August and post-season games dragging well past New Year's, we're talking six months of his obsession. What can I do?

-- Ready to pull the plug

Dear Ready,

Are you ready to pull the plug on the TV or on Randy? I can assure you that you're not alone in your frustration about your partner's football obsession. . But don't think this is only a "guy" thing. Many women enjoy sports – including football – as much as their male "teammates." I know men who feel the same way you do about their wife's football jones!

You've probably already figured out that it's not football that's the problem here; it's the amount of football. All sports are played by rules and I'm going to suggest some new ones for your relationship. Tell your husband that you'd like to huddle to discuss a new game plan.

Rule #1: Your husband doesn't get to sit on the bench when it comes to chores. His responsibilities are the same whether there's a game on or not. If that means washing the car or handling another household task at 6:00 AM, then that's how he'll have to do it.

Rule #2: You will make an effort to understand his passion. That doesn't mean that you have to become a football junkie, but you'll make a good faith try to watch some games with him. Learn a little about the game if you don't understand the rules. He can help you learn if you are interested, and there are hundreds of websites and books that explain how football is played for people unfamiliar with the sport. If, after giving it a good try, you discover that you really don't like football, you should plan to do something that you enjoy with your friends. Maybe they, too, are sick of being football widows.

How about inviting some other couples over to watch some of the games? The folks who love football can be glued to the TV and the ones who don't can talk, play cards, or watch a video together in another room.

My father is a big football fan and my stepmother has no interest in the game. She doesn't know the difference between the Super Bowl and Super Glue, and couldn't care less. But she loves to entertain and cook and always has a houseful of people while the football game is on in the family room. She's funny and creative and serves dishes

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that run with the theme of the game: Redskin potatoes when the Skins play, Buffalo Wings when it's the Bills, Swedish meatballs for the Vikings, and Red Hot Texas Chili when the Cowboys are on the gridiron.

With a little imagination, you may be able to turn some of these lonely weekend afternoons into a vibrant social life. But remember, it's not your responsibility to do all the preparation and work. Randy can take a time-out and do his share.

Rule #3: Too much of a good thing is no longer a good thing. Randy's life is out of balance if football doesn't leave him any time on the weekend for you, his friends, his chores, or other activities. Hey, everyone needs a little fresh air. I think it would be reasonable to select one or two games over the weekend and he'll just have to catch up on the other scores in the Sports page or on the news.

I bet he'll hate this idea, but truthfully, he could tape some games and watch them at other times – not only on the prime weekend days and evenings when couples usually have more time to be together. Suggest that watching a Sunday game after work on Monday is really just a rather long interval instant replay.

Remind him that marriage is something like...well; it's like a team. Teams work best when they work together, and you're willing to meet him halfway (tell him that's like the 50-yard line) but he'll have to do the same. That's the only way he won't fumble this relationship. Assure him that if the two of you work together, you'll score a touchdown.

Send your personal coaching questions to kathleen@fullpotentialliving.com or call 473-4004. Kathleen is a personal and executive coach, clinical psychologist, and writer. (©2005 Kathleen Brehony. All Rights Reserved.) Columns are archived at www.fullpotentialliving.com.