

COMPARISONS

Lessons Learned at Football Games

Introduction

- For several years have been able to attend Broncos games
 - First game a result of Carlene's football knowledge and ability to accurately predict score
 - Later, while still active duty military, was able to get tickets through our base
 - Have been able to attend many games, see many wins and losses, many great athletes
 - Elway, Mecklenberg, Kubiak, John Lynch, Jason Elam, Peyton Manning, etc.
 - Mile High, Invesco Field, Sports Authority Field
- Many observations
- Many lessons about practicing Christianity

Entering the Stadium

- Notice fan excitement and readiness to participate:
 - Wearing team colors /yelling for team on ramp, corridor, etc.
 - Face paint, body paint, wigs, t-shirts, jerseys
 - Very few SPECTATORS
 - **Paid for their admission/seats, and PARTICIPATE!!**
- Let's look at ourselves at our assemblies
 - Face paint, yelling, etc. would be inappropriate – admitted
 - SHOULD be spiritually invested in what we do here, though
 - “In spirit and in truth” – John 4:23 – Emphasis on spiritual over physical as in OT
 - Follow example of Ezra (7:10) – PREPARE HEART > TO SEEK LAW OF THE LORD > TO DO IT > TO TEACH -- all ACTIVE VERBS
 - Do we PREPARE ? Examine selves for attitudes toward others, FOCUS on Worshipping, building up each other? Here to worship, but should build . . .
 - Do we realize and appreciate that **Jesus paid it all** for us and really participate in the Lord's Supper, in studying His teachings, in singing, in praying in His Name

Seat filler or Participant?

- There are not many “seat fillers” at Mile High
- Should be NO “seat fillers” in our assemblies
 - Come determined to worship God, honor Him
 - Come determined to edify each other
 - Come determined to be an involved participant
 - Recognize limitations of age
 - Recognize limitations of experience, etc.
 - More on these later

Warm-up Activities on Field

- When team takes field to warm up
 - Notice they are dressed for what they are about to do: helmets, pads, cleats, etc; to protect and help them be productive in the game
 - Should cause us to think of the armor we are to wear; Ephesians 6:13-17
 - Why even THINK of not wearing it daily?
- Recognize this is not a once a week thing for players
 - Imagine what games would look like if all the players did was show up once a week to play a game!
 - Practice, practice, practice, two-a-days
 - Conditioning/medical oversight/diet control
 - Playbook
 - Other activities – time TOGETHER (USFAA Basketball, Visits to small towns, malls, nursing homes, etc.)
 - Off season conditioning

What about us?

- Practice? 1 Timothy 4:7,8 – “Exercise yourself toward godliness; bodily exercise profits little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise for this life and the one to come”
- Proper diet? Feed on God’s Word? Eliminate harmful? Philippians 4:8
- Study – Our “PLAY” book is GUIDE book; ANSWER book; WORK book
- 2 Peter 1 – “Add to’s” include adding faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, Love
- Jeremiah 48:10 – Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully: the Hebrew used means with “laxness, slackness, slackening”
- Romans 12:10,11- “outdo one another in giving honor; do not lag in zeal, be FERVENT in spirit”

Other Pre-game Activity

- Introduction of players
- Playing of National Anthem
- Call for respect for opposing team and their fans
- Coin toss
- Establish an overall expectation and environment of order
 - Applies to our assemblies – decently and in order
 - How do you go from hustle/bustle to rendering praise to the Creator?
 - Announcements, readings, opening prayers, etc: FOCUS!!

Other Pre-game activity (cont'd)

- Establish an overall expectation and environment of order
 - Applies to our daily lives
 - Start day with prayer
 - Read/Meditate on His Word
 - Reflect on His work and how we can serve Him
 - Thank Him for opportunities to share His Son with others
 - Ask His help as we face our opponent – Satan
 - Consider the Psalms – David's continual awareness of the greatness of God, his wonder, awe for God.
 - Consider the reverence David manifested

Game Time

- Teams take field
- Play POSITION
- For the next 60 minutes of play time, they will struggle against each other to move a ball downfield and across a goal line
- Coaches and team captains will work to make it happen
- Sideline activities – what worked? Didn't? Adjust!!!
- Cheer good plays (Encourage/comfort one another - Romans 12:3,9,10,15)
- Missed routes, dropped passes – responses (Galatians 6:1,2)
- They will work together (Philippians 2:1,2)

They are a TEAM!! “group of people with a full set of complementary skills required to complete a task, job, or project”

Another description of TEAM

- ‘Team members operate with a high degree of interdependence; are responsible for self management, are accountable; work toward a common goal and shared reward. They become more than just a collection of people when a strong sense of mutual commitment creates synergy, resulting in greater overall performance.’
- Work! Work together! Individual responsibility also; We are accountable to and for each other. Together we accomplish more
- What (who) else does that sound like?
- 1 Corinthians 12:14ff
- Ephesians, Philippians

How we talk - - terms we use (misuse ?)

- Would we hear one of the Broncos (or any team) say, “I am going to team today?” They ARE team.
- Why do we say, “I am going to church today?” We ARE the church, called out for a purpose.
- The team assembles to practice or to play the game.
- The church assembles to do God’s work, to praise Him, to remember Jesus, to encourage each other.
- “Church is not a place.”

Field of Play, Penalties

- The field has markers to help measure progress. It has out of bounds markers. Plays occur ON the field. Out of bounds catches don't count; stepping out of bounds ends forward progress, etc.
- There are LIMITS
- Also limits on what is acceptable play against each other. Violations draw penalties.
- WE must Live and Work in GOD'S limits – according to His word (2 Jn 9) Nu 24:13, 1 Co 4:6 “not to think beyond what is written”
- When we commit violations, we must correct ourselves, or expect to be corrected – and must expect/accept consequences. (Bike experience)
- Our opponent does NOT play by the rules, though. Must be on guard against him – 1 Peter 5:8. Must resist him and draw near to God (James 4:7,8)

Causes for celebration

- During game:
 - Sustained great play
 - Amazing catch, difficult pass
 - Injured player returns
 - Victory
- For us:
 - Continue steadfastly
 - Do the difficult
 - Celebrate when one comes or returns to Christ
 - Heaven

Season Over?

- Pro season ends with Super Bowl, Lombardi, then the long wait begins. .
- Our “season” in God’s service goes on! Rev 2:10; die in the Lord
- If you have not yet taken the field for God, if you need to be baptized into Christ, added to His church, put on His Armor . . .
 - HBRCB
 - Remain productive/faithful
- If you need to get off the bench and take a place among active players, to return to Christ, . . .