

The Ignorance of Booing at Sporting Events

Written by Ginny Grimsley

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Every college football fan has asked, “What was the coach thinking?” at some point or other. That’s OK, says Kathy (Currey) Kronick, author of *Mrs. Coach: Life in Major College Football* (www.mrscoach14yrs.com), sometimes I wish they would bottle their “BOOs.”

As college teams and their fans prepare for the kickoff of another contentious season, Kronick offers insights from her unique perspective as a longtime “Mrs. Coach.”

“I have been in stadiums where I’ve thought to myself, ‘This must be what it was like in ancient Rome,’ ” says Kronick, whose book recounts her years married to Coach Dave Currey. “Some fans get so caught up in the heat of the moment that they forget these players are just kids who may be dealing with injuries or personal problems.”

There are many factors that feed into a coach’s decision regarding players, plays and clock management, she says. Last-minute decisions may be influenced by events and observations that go back to Pop Warner, or even earlier.

“A football coach’s work is never done,” she says. “When they’re not on the field, in the weight room or at meetings, a head coach’s mind is still on football. It was frustrating for me to know all that was behind a decision when fans started booing.”

She says fans should remember the following realities in college football:

- Student athletes: It’s very difficult to earn a slot on a major college team’s roster from high school, and only 2.4 percent of these young players ever make it to the next level. “These are kids just out of high school who have devoted their lives to the game. Most will not become millionaires, or even go pro, so I wish fans would give them a break,” Kronick says. “They are also full-time students, too, with all the added pressures of academia.”

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- Injuries: Some of the most egregious booing comes from fans who think a player isn't tough enough when injured. "The charge is 'lack of heart' when an important player is out of a game due to a 'borderline' injury, which cannot be diagnosed by a doctor or seen in an x-ray," she says. "Many of these student-athletes incur injuries that may affect them if they try to go pro. Even if they don't continue in football, they may carry the limp of the game for the rest of their lives. No athlete should ever be forced to play with an injury."

- Coach knows best: It's the coach's job to obsess over every detail that will help the team win. They do that 24/7, 11 months of the year. (They're off the month of July, when they attempt to make up for all the family time they've missed, but even then, they're still thinking about the team, Kronick says.) "Their lives revolve around winning – and not making mistakes. A bad call is only so labeled if a play doesn't work," she says. "Couch-surfing coaches and Monday-morning quarterbacks should be aware of that before criticizing."

Coaches always say that if fans buy tickets, they have the right to boo, Kronick says.

"But coaches' wives say, 'Please don't boo around us.'"

About Kathy (Currey) Kronick

Kathy (Currey) Kronick was married to Dave Currey from 1974 to 1989. He was an assistant coach at Stanford University when they met and married, and later moved on to Long Beach State (Calif.), the University of Cincinnati and UCLA. They divorced in 1996. Kronick, who has a bachelor's in education of the deaf and a master's in counseling, is the mother of two children and is happily remarried.