**Football**

**The holiday Bowl games were in full swing, and we had invited some other football fans over. One couple brought their active two-year-old son, who began playing with a dish that was filled with antique buttons. After a few near disasters, my husband quietly removed the temptation. The next morning I realized the bowl was gone and went upstairs. "Don, where is the button bowl?" I asked my just-awakening husband. "Gee, I don't know for sure," replied my spouse, who prides himself on knowing the answer to any sports-trivia question. "I think it's in Florida." *(Janice E. Thompson, in Reader's Digest)***

**The rules of football and the plot of The Godfather are the two most complicated things that every guy understands no matter how dumb he is. *(Julian McCullough)***

**Anyone who's just driven 90 yards against huge men trying to kill them has earned the right to do jazz hands. *(Craig Ferguson)***

**While the football fan was thrilled to be at the Super Bowl, he was disappointed with the location of his seat. Peering across the stadium through his binoculars, he spied an empty seat on the 50-yard line and made his way there. He asked the man in the next seat over, "May I sit here?" "Sure," the man replied. "This was my wife's seat. She was a huge football fan, and we came to the games together all the time until she passed away." "I'm sorry for your loss," the fan said. "But I'm curious. Why didn't you give the extra ticket to a friend or relative?" Replied the widower, "They're all at the funeral." *(Reader's Digest)***

**To be a self-aware American football fan today is to commit an act of deliberate compartmentalization. I know, because I'm guilty of it. Like most of my male friends from high school and college, I am a passionate professional football fan. Today, however, I wince at big hits, and quietly root for my favorite non-quarterback players to retire before 30 to avoid long-term damage to their brains and bodies ... all while watching football games. Although I can't bring myself to stop tuning in on Sundays, I also can't quite stop thinking about the game's ugly consequences for players and their families. *(David Thompson, in TheAtlantic.com)***

**A football fanatic's obituary from July: "A lifelong Cleveland Browns fan, Scott E. Entsminger respectfully requests six Cleveland Browns pallbearers so the Browns can let him down one last time." *(Columbus Dispatch)***

**Princeton took on Rutgers in the first American college football game, November 6, 1869, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The 25 helmetless men on each team played a game more similar to soccer and rugby than today's football, which will not evolve for several years, "Princeton had the most muscle," Rutgers' newspaper reported, but despite scoring a point against themselves, Rutgers won 6-4. Some 48 million people attended 3,493 National Collegiate Athletic Association football games in 2008. *(Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**Football helmet failures: Football helmets aren't as effective at safeguarding players from concussions as previously thought, the Los Angeles Times reports. A study of 10 of the most widely used helmets found that they reduced the risk of traumatic brain injury from rotational force -- blows that cause the head to rotate or the neck, and the brain to bounce and twist inside the skull -- by an average of only 20 percent, compared with not wearing a helmet. "All of them were terrible," said Frank Conidi, director of the Florida Center for Headache and Sports Neurology. The helmets do somewhat better with straight front-to-back impacts, reducing the risk of skull fracture by 60 to 70 percent. A total of 300 tests were performed on a crash-test dummy's head and neck to assess the effect of 12 mph impacts, with and without helmets. The study comes against a backdrop of increased concerns that repeated head trauma can lead to chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a degenerative brain disease that causes symptoms similar to Alzheimer's. "We can and should make better helmets," Conidi says. "In the meantime, parents and players and coaches should realize that players are not invincible on the field. *(The Week magazine, March 7, 2014)***

**New research has indicated something called "male menopause," where men get fatter and lose interest in sex. Of course, it's also known as football season." *(Conan O'Brien)***

**One Sunday afternoon, a football enthusiast visited one of his friends to watch the New York Jets in action. On hand was his friend's mother, who asked the two spectators why they were so excited about the televised contest, and how the game was played. The football fan told her the object was to get the ball and carry it across the goal line while six or seven opponents tried to knock you down. "If you succeed, what do you get? she asked. "Six points," said the fan. "It isn't worth it," said the woman. *(H. Z. in Reader's Digest)***

**I prefer the tight yoga pants football players wear over the frumpy businesswoman slacks baseball players wear. *(@QUINNK)***

**A big football college has announced plans to expand to three squads next year. One squad will play offense, another will play defense and the third will attend classes. *(The American Legion magazine)***

**Football exerts a remarkable influence on fans. In a recent study, Pierre Chandon, a French marketing professor, examined data from 475 Sunday NFL games. On the Mondays following those same games, he observed a spike in (the fans' intake of) calories and saturated fats, but only in cities where the home team went down in defeat ... If nothing else, the study may give new meaning to "the biggest loser." *(Peter Andrey Smith, in The New York Times Magazine)***

**Back in 1967, the game wasn’t yet Super, and the event not yet Super-sized. But as Super Bowl XL approaches Sunday, it’s clear everything about the big game has grown. Instead of $6 tickets, they are now $600, and a 30-second ad now costs $2.5 million, not $42,000. *(Lynn DeBruin, in Rocky Mountain News, February 3, 2006)***

**Man to friend: "I was talking with my wife last night. You know how it is with the football season all over." *(Herb Rau, in Miami News)***

**My dad didn't text me after the Patriots game, which is basically a Life Alert signal if you're from New England. *(@JOSHGONDELMAN)***

**A West German doctor and I were watching TV one day when the highlights of a football game came on the screen. This was his first look at the game, and we sat in silence in front of the set as a series of violent collisions occurred. After watching the large men push, shove and knock one another to the ground, he asked incredulously, "Aren't there any rules?" *(Henry R. Herreman, in Reader's Digest)***

**It's weird that NFL players don't constantly look at their phones to check their stats. *(@SHAWNRIES)***

**Anyone who thinks women talk too much has never sat through a six-hour Super Bowl pregame show. *(Nora Barry)***

**Forbes's annual Business of Football valuations estimates that the NFL's 32 franchises are collectively worth $45 billion -- almost twice the value of the totals for MLB or NBA teams. That's up from a total worth of $6.5 billion in 1991. *(FiveThirtyEight.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 26, 2014)***

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