

February 4, 2008

## **Pure Sex, Pure Love**

### **My Boyfriend's Back? Men, women and sports**

By Dr. Christine B. Whelan

My husband isn't speaking to me. He isn't speaking to anyone, really. He's crushed by the Patriots defeat in last night's SuperBowl.

I'm not that chatty either, but not because I care one way or another about the Giants' upset last night. I'm just exhausted from hosting a big SuperBowl party, after a weekend of traveling.

I got up at 4 a.m. to fly from New York City (where LaGuardia was all decked out in Giants banners) to Iowa City. A snowstorm was headed for us, but I couldn't be delayed: We were hosting 25 people for a SuperBowl party.

#### **Super Snow Storm**

Crazy? Yes. I don't recommend hosting a party on a day which you begin 1000 miles away. But as the saying goes, don't let your Monday obligations get in the way of your SuperBowl Sunday.

As soon as I landed, we did a huge shop (chicken wings, chips, makings of guacamole, makings for pulled pork sandwiches, etc.) and frantically began cooking to prepare for the arrival of friends and colleagues.

Eight inches of snow prevented many friends from getting there, but our big HD-TV was incentive enough for most to brave it. The snow served as a refrigerator for the beer, and the party was in full swing by kickoff.

At the beginning of the night, we all watched the game. Well, I was mostly in the kitchen hostessing, but since I don't know a whole lot about football, that was fine by me. As the game dragged on, a few more girls joined me in the kitchen.

### **My Boyfriend's Back**

One was relieved it was the end of the football season. "I'll get my boyfriend back," she said. Another was only in the kitchen during the game itself-and was listening for the commercial break when she'd dash back out to the living room. "I love the SuperBowl because the ads provide water-cooler chit-chat for the whole week."

Most of the girls were just there for the party. "When I'm dating a guy who is really into football, I don't outright mock the idea of watching men in skin-tight pedal-pushers wrestling with each other, but honestly?" said Carlynn, 29.

During half-time, Tim, 26, and his girlfriend Stephanie, 24, refilled their plates in the kitchen. Stephanie is a bigger football fan than Tim, and he finds that attractive. Plus, the couple plays golf, which allows them to spend more time together on vacations and summer weekends.

Meanwhile, as the game heated up, it was the female screams and curses that were the loudest. Even I stopped cleaning up for those last few minutes of the game and joined in the excitement.

### **Team Spirit**

The SuperBowl is a transcending event, where men and women can watch sports together, share a common experience and drink beers together as they support their teams. Women had braved the snow to be there, and even if I'd spent most of the night in the more traditional role of hostess-with-the-mostess in the kitchen, I was glued to the TV at times.

But the SuperBowl is just one night celebrating one sport. How do you feel about the intersection between your team spirit and your relationships during the regular season?

I've spoken with women who will pretend they like sports to get a guy interested, or who join teams as a way to meet men. Is this a bait-and-switch? What about the girls who get all dressed up for sporting events—Football Barbies, one blogger calls them—but don't know a thing about the game?

Do you feel like you "lose" your significant other during a particular sports season? What happens when you support one team, and your spouse or inlaws support another?

Sporting events can be a wonderful way for generations to bond with each other, a common language. How do sports enter in to your relationships and family life?