

Columns

Fantasy football win marred by tragedy

For the first time in over a decade of playing, I won the championship in my Fantasy Football League.

What would normally be cause for much smack talking and braggadocious behavior was muted by the circumstances behind my win.

First, a little background. According to a 2017 article on “The Fantasy Footballers” website, the origins of fantasy football stretch all the way back to 1963. A businessman from Oakland, Calif., Bill Winkenbach, formed the first league, the Greater Oakland Professional Pigskin Prognosticators League, or GOPPL for short.

The premise for his game was simple. Participants “drafted” American Football

League players, and when the pro scored points on the gridiron, the “owner” of the player in the GOPPL also scored.

For the first few years, the GOPPL remained a closed venture for those who had some stake in game, but in 1969, a gentleman by the name of Andy Mousalimas introduced the game to patrons of his bar, The King’s X. Today, over 60 million people play the game in the U.S. and Canada, and I’m one of them. There are “keeper” leagues, where you can keep your best players.

There are leagues where a lot of money is on the line for the winners. I am not in either of these types of leagues.

Now, back to the rather sad and dubious roots of my win. You see, my opponent in

the championship game was trailing me by only 20 points and his star player, Buffalo Bills Quarterback Josh Allen, had just begun his game versus Cincinnati when tragedy struck. After making a play, Damar Hamlin, a promising young defensive player for the Bills, collapsed to the ground, suffering cardiac arrest.

Since this was on Monday Night Football, the gruesome tableau played out in front of the entire sports viewing public as Bills medical personnel and paramedics applied CPR to the young man in a desperate attempt to save his life. Thankfully, their efforts were successful, and Hamlin is now recovering in a Cincinnati hospital.

This incident isn’t the first

Hook, Line and Sinker

By Tony Hooker



in the history of the NFL. In 1971, Detroit Lions wide receiver Chuck Hughes collapsed and died of a heart attack during a game against the Chicago Bears. Closer to home, Referee Rich McVey collapsed and died during a game between the Illini and Michigan State in 1982.

Darryl Stingley and Mike Utley both suffered permanent paralysis following on-field

injuries. Alex Smith and Zach Miller suffered injuries that nearly led to them having their legs amputated. Football is a dangerous sport, to be sure.

On a much brighter note, Hamlin’s fundraiser, “The Chasing M’s Foundation Community Toy Drive,” which had an original goal of \$2,500, has raised \$8.1 million dollars since his injury. Hamlin is now able to breathe on his own,

without signs of neurological damage. The first question he asked upon regaining consciousness? “Did we win?” was supposedly answered succinctly by his cardiologist. “Yes son. You won the game of life.”

It’s for these reasons that there hasn’t been much in the way of celebration for my league championship. To be truthful, I, too, had two players in the game that was canceled, so the outcome was not certain, but it’s a no-brainer to me that the young man’s tragic injury was so much more important than a hollow victory in FFL. Let’s hope #3 makes a full recovery and is able to get back out there and do what he loves in front of those who love him, although even if he doesn’t, he’s already a winner.

You truly are what you eat!

We have all heard that hundreds of times, but it is true! The problem is your dietary needs change over your lifetime and your ability to digest and absorb foods also changes over time, so what you ate with no problem just month’s ago, might be your worst enemy today. This is just one of the reasons diets have been so difficult to master.

This week, I want to give you a bird’s eye view of how most people’s dietary needs change over their lifetime and next week, I will explain how you can tell if a specific food is good for you or not. These are just general ideas, but they can be very useful for most of you.

Let’s start with how your


diet needs to change as you age. In general, from the time you are eating solid foods until you are in your early 20s, you can eat lots of protein and good fats and you can get away with eating both simple and complex carbohydrates easily. Your body is burning food for fuel at its most efficient level of your entire life.

If you use this time in your life wisely, you can set up your Gut Microbiome to be diverse and build the foundation for a healthy life for decades to come. But, if you eat crappy food during this time, you will set yourself up for a future of chronic disease and disability.

From your 20s until your 50s you should really work to

Real Life Wellness

By Dr. Bill Hemmer



decrease the amount of simple carbohydrates and begin to cut down on the amount of protein you eat. Simple carbohydrates like bread, pasta, fruit and high sugar vegetables (examples: corn and peas) spike your blood sugar leading to increases in your insulin levels which can burn out your insulin receptors on your cells and

can lead to Diabetes Type 2.

One reason you need to slow down on your protein consumption during this time is protein must be broken down into a sugar to be burned by your cells for energy. So, if you are eating too many simple carbs plus tons of protein, your insulin will spike even more.

Soup is perfect for cold winter days and nights

Usually in January, I look forward to making soup for those cold evenings, but this week has been springlike! Assuming that it will again turn cold, I am reprinting a family favorite. The name alone should appeal to the kids in your family! I printed this a few years ago, and think it’s worthy of being run again for all my new readers. Be sure to read the notes following the recipe.

Cheeseburger Soup

- 3/4 to 1 lb hamburger
- 3/4 cup chopped onion
- 3/4 cup diced celery
- 3/4 cup diced carrots
- 1 tsp basil
- 1 tsp parsley
- 4 Tbsp butter, divided
- 3 cup chicken broth
- 4 cups peeled and diced potatoes
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups Velveeta, cubed
- 1 1/2 cups milk

- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp pepper
- small can diced jalapenos
- 1/4 cup sour cream

Brown the hamburger and drain well. In a soup pot, saute onion, celery and carrots in 1 Tbsp butter. Add basil and parsley. Add broth, potatoes and browned hamburger. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes until the potatoes are tender.

In a small pan, melt 3 Tbsp butter over medium heat. Add flour. Sook and stir for 3 to 5 minutes until bubbly. Add to the soup. Bring to a boil, cook and stir for 2 minutes. Reduce heat to low. Stir in Velveeta, milk, pepper and jalapenos. Cook and stir until the cheese melts. Do not let it boil! Remove from heat, stir in sour cream.

The above recipe calls for

diced potatoes, I like to use frozen Southern hash browns to save time. I try to let them partially thaw out before adding to the pot. If you choose to dice your own potatoes, try leaving the peel on. Also, this recipe calls for a can of diced jalapenos. If your family doesn’t like heat, you can omit them, or do as I do, I use half of the can. That half gives some kick without too much heat!

I bet there are plenty of cooks out there that ask your spouse “what would you like me to fix for dinner?” and get the annoying answer “I don’t care, whatever you want to make”. Sometimes I get stuck on planning my menu for the week, and when I can’t get my husband to make a suggestion, it’s frustrating! But sometimes he surprises me with a request, and this next recipe

is probably the one he most often asks for. I love it too! This beef is good served with mashed potatoes and carrots.

Caraway Beef Roast

makes 12 servings

- 1 boneless beef rump roast or chuck roast (3 lbs)
- 3 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 1/2 tsp beef bouillon granules
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1 Tbsp dried minced onion
- 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tsp caraway seeds
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 Tbsp flour
- 1/4 cup cold water

In an oven-proof Dutch oven over medium heat, brown roast in oil on all sides. Drain. In a small bowl, combine the hot water and bouillon. Add ketchup, onion, Worcester-

Let’s Cook

By Linda Hoskins



shire, caraway, salt and pepper. Pour over the roast. Add bay leaves.

Cover and bake at 325 degrees for three hours or until tender. Remove beef to the cutting board and keep warm. In a small bowl, combine flour and water until smooth. Stir into the pan juices, bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 1 to 2 minutes until thickened. (you may need to add a bit more water). Remove bay leaves.

Serve over mashed potatoes.

If you have a recipe or cooking hint to share, or perhaps a funny story about a cooking mishap, please send to letscook!@heraldpubs.com (don’t forget that exclamation point) or mail to Mascoutah Herald, PO Box C, Mascoutah IL 62258. If you wish, I will leave your name and/or home town off. Thanks so much, and Happy Cooking!

BBQ spaghetti? I guarantee you’ll love it

Oh my, the house seems so bare and cold without the Christmas tree and all the warm cozy lights. I did not make any New Year’s resolutions so I saved myself from being disappointed. My girlfriend said that her only resolution is not to make any resolutions; that way she does not have the pressure of breaking them. Did you make or break any resolutions?

My mother was not pleased with one of her Christmas gifts and I was really surprised. She loves to play CDs of music from her teen years so I bought her a four-pack CD of 1940s greatest hits. I thought this would be well received but she stated that the CDs were scratchy. I could not believe that a well-known music company would put out damaged CDs so I brought them home and put

Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims



them in my newly repaired CD player and they sounded great.

Since the CDs are not actually damaged I can’t send them back so I questioned her again and she said she thinks they were copied off of an old record and they have no depth. I beg to differ but it is no use so I shall keep them for myself. The funny thing is that I love this old crooner music; it reminds me of when I was a kid and my folks would play it on the radio or phonograph. I was

born in 1947 so I would have heard most of these songs well into the 1950s; a great time to have been a kid!

Over the New Year weekend I treated myself to a couple of our favorite foods. As we have for many years, I made Canadian Poutine for New Year’s Eve dinner. Poutine is my favorite way to eat French fries; one smotherers them with poutine gravy (you can buy the packaged gravy on Amazon) and curd cheese. I used to

smuggle the St. Hubert’s gravy mix and curd cheese across the border until I found out it was legal. If that was not enough fat, calories and cholesterol for one weekend I then made BBQ spaghetti for New Year’s Day. If you have never tried BBQ spaghetti I would encourage you to do so. Hubby has friends on the BBQ competition circuit and they introduced us to this delicious meal.

We make it the western BBQ way by taking the drippings from the BBQ pork ribs and cooking the spaghetti noodles in it but Hubby came up with a winter recipe which we really prefer. Since he did not smoke meat or BBQ outside in the winter, we would roast the ribs in sauce and water, in the oven and use all the juices to boil the spaghetti noodles just prior to adding other ingredi-

ents.

The first time we enjoyed the dish was at a well-known Tennessee BBQ place; I thought it was great but Hubby did not like the vinegar taste and the next time we ate BBQ spaghetti with pulled pork was on a trip out west. His friend had recommended a “hole in the wall” diner owned by a friend of his in Montana and he promised that there was no olive oil or vinegar in the recipe. Sadly on our next Montana trip the diner was closed but we researched western BBQ spaghetti recipes and started making it at home.

We boil the spaghetti in the pulled pork or ribs liquid, drain the noodles and add our favorite BBQ sauce, a can or chopped tomatoes, extra basil and two tablespoons of butter. After the sauce and spaghetti

have simmered and blended, we add the pulled pork and serve. I guarantee that you will love it if you like BBQ.

January and February are great months to try new recipes and I have a number of them to make. I failed at another fruit cake experiment this year; Mom did not like it as much as she likes her own recipe so last night I made her fruit cake complete with store bought candied citron fruit. Unfortunately, I am allergic to the preservative used in the prepared fruit and the ones I made at Christmas I used fresh grated fruit rind and juice. I hope she likes this one.

It is not quite time to garden so I will have fun cooking during the rest of the winter.

Happy cooking!