

Who Gets the Footy Team?

The off season of footy (otherwise known as “are we there yet”) is filled with Rugby, Cycling, pre-Olympic meets and of course, currently, Soccer, Tennis, Basketball, and Cricket (in all its forms). All wonderful events, which help one to be meaningfully distracted from the ordinariness of life. If you are doubly lucky, these things form part of your life and you enjoy them with the people you love.

Then there is the summer reading of the 2011 Footy Almanac and preparation for teams, coaches, support teams, draft picks, new rookies, retirements and replacements. We have many many new and shiny coaches all looking to make their mark, and the old ones as well, getting ready to pump and be pumped.

It’s been a summer of cold and wet and a few hot hot days, but today, on Wednesday 11th January 2012, it is bloody cold and windy and rainy and so my mind is back at our winter pastime both physically and philosophically.

So I have a question for the Almanackers around the world (by the way, happy New Year). When a couple breaks up, who gets the footy team? I heard a story about a couple who shared this as one of its enjoyable pursuits, had reserve seating and were therefore regular attendees of this ritual and religion. What happens when they are no longer a “social team”, no longer rooting for each other while still rooting for the team (so to speak). Are there social niceties? Who gets the footy friends? Do the scarves historically stored, get split up? Who shifts seats? Who stops going and for how long?

Coaches shift and get sacked (see Ross Lyon, Rodney Eade etc), players leave (follow the Scully story), the structure goes on.

When relationships break down, the last thing you want to do is to sit regularly with your once significant other. Or do you? What is the etiquette, are there rules, can we make up rules? I know someone who changed teams with husbands (only twice but she wasn’t a regular attender with the first, but is now with the second?) Who do you go to the football with, your friends and family, their friends and family, mutual friends? Is this the guide, if it’s yours before, do you keep it after? And vice versa? Like with some property in divorces? Have people named it (their footy assets) as property in divorce settlements?

As much as we all hope separations and divorces remain civil, how civil can it be around the passion of football? Is there a rule book that the AFL keeps for such matters? Are there precedents, anecdotes and histories? Is it regulated, modulated, formulated or does each situation sink into its own morass and is left to be muddled through along with the feelings, the hurts, the reclaiming and the re-sorting.

Please discuss (could I have been a teacher in a former life?).

Yvette Wroby

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