

An Intelligent Woman's Guide to the Super Bowl

by Con Chapman

Over the next two days, you will be bombarded by features in women's magazines and on daytime talk shows on the theme of "Impress Your Man With Your Super Bowl Knowledge!" I saw one just the other day featuring a bottle-blonde—is "bimbo" too strong a word for the internet?—tossing a football in her hands as she spoke to some guy without a neck who used to play for the Canton Bulldogs. The palaver went something like this:



Elroy "Crazylegs" Hirsch

BIMBO: We're here with Chuck Brandnewjetski, former special teams coach of the Duluth Eskimos. How are you today Chuck?

NO-NECK: I can't feel my left leg.

BIMBO: Chuck, how does an insecure woman impress her "significant other" on Super Bowl Sunday?

NO-NECK: Her significant other what?

Irina Slutskaya: Her trademark "coquette" finish.

Available online at [«http://fictionaut.com/stories/con-chapman/an-intelligent-womans-guide-to-the-super-bowl»](http://fictionaut.com/stories/con-chapman/an-intelligent-womans-guide-to-the-super-bowl)

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The question never asked is—why? Why do you have to impress your boyfriend/husband/date while watching the Super Bowl? Does he read articles in men's magazines during the Winter Olympics to bone up on the difference between a salchow, a camel and a toe-loop? Does he know Irina Slutskaya from Dick Button? I didn't think so.

I know it's a man's world—James Brown said so—but that's no reason for an intelligent woman to kowtow to the gods of male supremacy by pretending to be interested in something she's not. Do you think all-purpose cultural critic/intellectual Susan Sontag would ever discuss a punter's “hang time” while dipping a Cool Ranch Dorito into the salsa at the Partisan Review's Super Bowl Party? I don't.



Sontag: “Watch the Super Bowl? I'd rather be dead in a ditch.”

Still, you don't want to get a reputation for being aloof or stand-offish by not joining in the fun at a Super Bowl party. What you need is verbal “gamesmanship,” a conversational technique perfected by humorist Stephen Potter as a means of countering, and even fending off, the sort of guilt-edged bores that communal football-watching

attracts like *Drosophila melanogaster* (the common fruit fly) to a bunch of bananas.



Fruit fly. You can tell it's a male by the little foam "We're #1" on right wing.

When confronted by the sort of self-absorbed monomaniac who assumes you're interested in his worldly travels and drones on about the beauties of Upper Volta until your eyes glaze over, Potter suggested using the bore's momentum against him, as with *jiu-jitsu*. "Upper Volta, quite right, beautiful country," you interject thoughtfully. "But only in the south." After a few of these counterpunches, your interlocutor wanders off muttering to himself, questioning the very foundations of his self-esteem.



Your "game plan" as pigskin heads like to say, is to fend off the guy who played three years of high school football but, due to a late-adolescent onslaught of Osgood-Schlatter's Disease (and try saying *that* five times fast) was cruelly deprived of his shot at glory holding extra points for the Central Missouri State Mules, and has been taking it out on everybody else since.

Your Super Bowl nightmare scenario is to be stuck behind the *hors d'oeuvres* table while this guys drones on and on and on about blitz packages, whether the Steelers are a true dynasty, yadda yadda. You can start with a fashion comment, which will render the guy temporarily speechless. This year's game presents a unique opportunity to throw up this sort of goal-line defense due to the helmets worn by the Steelers:

FOOTBALL BORE: The thing about Roethlisberger is, he *extends* plays.

YOU: He forgot to stencil one side of his helmet—Martha Stewart would never make that kind of rookie mistake.

Why the difference?

With Super Bowl gamesmanship, the important thing is not what just happened on the field or the plasma TV screen, it's what *didn't* happen. If the Packers' James Starks is stuffed at the line of scrimmage, some knucklehead former high school linebacker may say "Oh, man—they read that one right!" (Note that each word is only one syllable, for ease of pronunciation.) Now's your chance to jump in with "Would have been a perfect situation for a halfback option pass—remember Prentice Gault?"



Prentice Gautt: Gone but not forgotten. By me.

As with a wide receiver, it is essential that you run your route precisely after making this out-of-the-blue comment. Establish eye contact with the knucklehead, smile, then cut right to *les cruditees* arrayed around the dip. Believe me, he doesn't know who Prentice Gautt is, and he won't follow you to a plate of vegetables.

Les cruditees: A football-free seam in the defense.

The lead story line to this year's Super Bowl, which will be rehashed *ad nauseam* until the last second ticks off the clock, is the yawn-inducing tale of Steelers' quarterback Ben Roethlisberger's "redemption" from a social *faux pas* involving oral sex in a men's room. Your true sports fan wants, of course, to "focus on the game." No way, you say!



Flannery O'Connor

FOOTBALL BORE: Geez I hope Ben can put that little incident in Millidgeville behind him.

YOU: Millidgeville, Georgia? That's where Flannery O'Connor was from!

FOOTBALL BORE: Who?

YOU: Only the greatest American short story writer of the twentieth century!

FOOTBALL BORE: Never heard of him.

YOU: It's a her. Did you know she had a chicken who could walk backwards?

