

Football

Editor's Note: A number of years ago, someone invited author Cyra McFadden to a super bowl party. She replied, "Oh, is that the game with the pointy ball?" We would expect a similar response from the doctor, but he continues to amaze us with the most unlikely sorts of admissions.

While we're in confessing mood: I played the pointy-ball game for a coupla' seasons in high school (it is truly amazing what bizarre results peer pressure can achieve when applied to the young, the ignorant, and the insecure).

Everyone said, "You're tall, you should be an end!" An "end" sounded like a good thing to be. So I went out for the team.

At the beginning of the first practice, the coaches yelled (that being the only way coaches know how to speak), "Line here! Backs there!" Everyone scattered appropriately.

Except for me.

I stood for a while, not knowing what, exactly, an "end" was, and equally ignorant about the inclusion of "ends" in either of those two groups. It seemed, reasonably enough, that "lines" have "ends," but if there was a "back" there must be a "front"—and that implied "ends" as well. I began to suspect the existence of philosophical depths in the game of football that were, hitherto, unimagined.

Finally, as desperation set in, I emerged from this Zen-like trance of incongruity and said to a coach, "I'm an end. Where should I go?"

How was I to know that that was a reasonable, if not profound, question? Alas, the coaches were soon to discover that my understanding of the game was not nearly as deep as my first question suggested.

The Wife once asked my mother if she had worried about me when I was on the football team. “Not really,” she replied, “he just sat on the bench.”