

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

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Farewell to Favre

The flags flew half mast in Hayward last week when the gripper retired. I think the collective groan could be heard throughout the whole state of Wisconsin.

My 19 year old son, Ryan, lamented that he has never seen a Packer game without Brett Favre at the helm. It's sure going to be different now and poor Rogers has some huge shoes to fill.

After pondering over what made Favre such a great champion, here are a few sentimental observations:

1) He Showed up to Play Every Sunday.

Regardless of what was happening in his life (i.e. his father's death and his wife's cancer); he still found a way to get to the game on time.

2) He Played Through the Hurts.

I've watched just about every Packer game since Favre's debut. I've seen him clobbered, hammered, hamstrung, smashed, and boggled. Yet, Brett kept getting back on his feet again. Remember the year when he played half a season with a broken thumb? Somehow, the desire for victory was far greater than the physical pain.

3) He Took Risks and Made Plenty of Mistakes.

Not only does he hold the career touchdown record, he holds the interception record as well. You can't win big by playing it safe. Consider the turtle, which makes no progress until he sticks his neck out. Brett stuck his neck out all the time. On countless occasions, I've seen him do something crazy, and yelled, "NO!! NO!! DON'T DO THAT!!" But then, it's the crazy passes, completed as touchdowns which will go down in history as the greatest and most memorable.

4) After He Blew It, He Shook it Off.

Nothing could rattle his confidence. On the next set of downs after an interception, he'd throw deep (and crazy) again. Favre didn't allow failure to be final and always believed that setbacks are supposed to be followed by come-backs. He never blamed others for his mistakes, and always took responsibility for losses on the field.

5) He Inspired the Team.

Brett always had a good word of encouragement for the younger guys around him. I remember when Ryan Longwell, as a rookie kicker, muffed an easy field goal against the Eagles, and lost the game.

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The crowd boomed. Favre went over to his dejected teammate and said, "Hey, don't worry about it. It's not your fault. We lost this thing together."

6) He Kept Smiling.

The thing I appreciated most about Brett Favre was his enthusiasm and love for football. Most of the time, he really enjoyed himself and was glad to be there (There were a few exceptions, such as the ice bowl in Chicago, but normally, he'd grin for at least three quarters, anyhow!) Brett's lighthearted spirit was contagious. Win or lose, it was still a good game.

7) He Didn't Quit Until the Clock Ran Out.

Many players give up when the tide turns against them, but not Brett Favre! He played his heart out every second of every down in the game. Perhaps that's why he led his team to so many last second comeback victories.

I think we all could learn a lesson or two from the old quarterback.

So long, Brett! Thanks for the beautiful memories. You've been a part of our family for a long, long time.

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