

## Pewaukee Football Newsletter, June 2011

**By: Emily Iverson**

Ten years ago, I sat in a classroom in the business building at UW-Whitewater, as a professor began to address future business teachers. I looked up to see a tall student looking quite disorganized entering the class late. A yellow jacket hung lopsided over his shoulders, a whistle dangled from his neck, and a stack of legal pads, folders, and papers were stacked haphazardly in his hands. The professor commented on the student's tardiness, so he quickly took the open seat closest to him--the seat directly to my left. A few minutes into class, and the student realized he had no pen. Turning to me, he asked if he could borrow one. Instead of taking notes, he began drawing X's and O's on a yellow legal pad, and I was half-listening to the professor while sneaking peeks at his drawings. When it was finally time for a break, I summoned the courage to ask, "Where do you coach?"

Needless to say, it was love at first sight.

Well, sort of. It was another year before we actually went on a date. During the first year we dated, I had only a narrow view into the life of a football coach (Clay was an assistant at Muskego at the time.) But ten years later, I have developed a much broader view. While I won't give you a ten year play by play, I will begin by touching briefly on the year 2005. This is the year Clay and I were married, we bought a home, Clay accepted the head football coaching position at Pewaukee, and our first son, Cal, was born. I spent the fall of 2005 yelling from the stands, cheering for Andy Bremberger, Mike Hart, Tom Zimmerman, Jon Singer, Kevin Barth, Nick Klomstad, John Carley, JJ Watt, and the other great players on that year's conference championship team. Most of my family was shocked I didn't go into labor in the stands, especially during the four overtime win over St. Francis, or in the Level 3 playoff loss to Kewaskum.

Five more seasons have come and gone since that first conference championship, along with other milestones such as five more playoff berths, two undefeated conference championships in a row, numerous all-conference and all-state player awards, and of course the induction of Coach Lecher into the Wisconsin High School Football Coach's Hall of Fame. In 2008, we welcomed our second son, Corey, to the family. Corey decided to say hello to the world during the middle of August two-a-days. In fact, about an hour after Corey was born, Clay was off to the practice field. And while the nurses looked a little judgmental, I had nine months to prepare for that day, and I knew how important those practices were to the team's season. In all honesty, there have been many times when Clay has been heading off to the weight room or the practice field or a youth board meeting or a game when I've wondered if football is worth it, if our family really gets out what we put in when it comes to the time and sacrifice it takes to be a football family. But, no matter how stressed I get, I can't talk myself out of encouraging Clay to continue coaching. If you ask him, he'll tell you I'm *always* supportive. He exaggerates. Overall, however, I do try to be supportive, because while I enjoy the wins (you may have seen me jumping up and down and screaming like crazy), there are things about football that I appreciate even more.

Pewaukee football is a family. And while I am not in the huddle, on the field, in the weight room, or under the lights on Friday night, I still have a glimpse into this family. I have watched with a smile as

players form a huddle, take a knee, and look up as their coaches prepare them to take the field. I've watched with frustration, as I had to drive up to Pewaukee one late night with my two week old in a car seat in order to shine my headlights on the football field (Clay had lost his keys and couldn't drive home). I've watched with laughter as Coach Lecher and Coach Ryback bicker back and forth, ribbing each other with the same jokes they've used for 40 years. I've watched with, well, trepidation and delight as the Watt brothers, Brian Spakowicz, Kent Grimscheid, and Matt Jaskowiak have played football with our two boys. I've watched with tears as Josh Mohr and Matt Jaskowiak lost their mothers after their senior years of football. I've watched with nervousness at every third down, every fourth down, every punt... okay, I watch with nervousness all the time. But most importantly, I've watched with pride. Pride when the team walks onto the field holding hands. Pride when players hand the ball to the referee after a touchdown. Pride when the youth players are sporting their Pirate gear at a game. Pride when my son tells people "When I grow up I want to be a coach". And, pride when Clay dedicates hours watching film, planning practice, coaching (yelling?) on the sidelines, and leading boys to become young men, while still making time to be an amazing, involved, and dedicated husband and father.

Summer is here. For some this means travel, for others summer school. But for our family and to Pewaukee football, summer means the start of another season. Summer school strength, speed, and conditioning begins, as do youth camps, college camps, high school contact days, and on August 3<sup>rd</sup> (so soon this year) two-a-days. I personally love the summer—the weather, the pool, the zoo, the reprieve from teaching, and the chance to spend more time with my family. My favorite part about summer, though, is 3:00. This is when Clay comes home from summer school each day, and the boys run outside yelling "daddy's home!" and begging him to run, throw, catch, and tackle. Just as he was late for class ten years ago, Clay still comes home late often, still carrying stacks of legal pads covered in X's and O's, still looking a bit disheveled with a whistle around his neck. But, I can smile, and appreciate the work that he's doing, because I know he's doing it for his family, our family, the Pewaukee Football Family.