

This is a column I wrote several years ago that always gets alot of love. I try to rerun it once a year. Simply put, it is "The Anatomy Of A Tailgate". My routine for getting my pregamer on before all Browns home games. With the teams' level of play these last eight years, it's crucial not to try and take in the experience of live Cleveland Browns football clean and sober.



5:00 AM - Wake up. Multiple alarms have been set to ensure the tailgate does not get off to a late start.

5:01 AM - Begin barking. Listen to wife challenge my mental stability, and repeatedly ask me why I need to wake at 5 AM for a 1 PM football game. Continue barking.

5:05 AM - Five minute power shower to decrust eyes and shake off cobwebs of any cocktails consumed the previous evening.

5:10 AM - Establish a base. Nothing fancy. I usually throw down a couple of uncooked strawberry Pop Tarts and 40-50 oz of grape Gatorade.

5:15 AM - Log on to web. Set fantasy football lineups. Do last minute research on injuries and wagers for day. Remind myself that I have a policy of not betting on the Browns.

5:30 AM - Time to hit the road. Stop at the one gas station by my house that has a Sunday liquor license at this obscene hour of the morning. Purchase a case of Heineken, a sleeve of plastic cups for friends, enough cigarettes for several days, and a couple mini packs of Advil for the ride home.

5:45 AM - Pick up my alcoholic friends ... who are never ready on time. A quick slam on the horn when they approach the car reminds them that it is crucial to never arrive at Muni later than 7 AM, and also wakes them up.

6:30 AM - Arrive at Muni Lot. Pay obscene parking prices. Try to find a spot central to urination spots and friends who cater.

6:35 AM - Crack open first carbonated adult beverage. Toss around the football to get the blood flowing, and shake off initial shock of lakefront weather.

7:00 AM - Begin calling all friends who have not yet arrived, challenging their manhood in

the process.

7:15 AM - Take the first stroll around Muni. I am not a tailgater that sets up shop by my own vehicle. After years and years of doing this, I know many people down at Muni, and like to get a chance to BS with all of them.

8:00 AM - Stop back at car and refill 80 oz plastic cup. Continue drinking and smoking heavily. Check cell phone for injury/point spread updates. Remind myself I have a policy of not betting on the Browns. Leaf through sports page again. Make obscene phone calls to friends who have not yet arrived.

8:15 AM - Take second walking tour through Muni, with several stops along the way. This tour usually involves some taunts of opposing fans and the consumption of some sort of red meat. Throw the football around a little more.

9:00 AM - This is usually refill time again. And also right around the time I start to make myself believe that the Browns are a mortal lock against the point spread, and that there is simply no way they will not win by double digits.

9:05 AM - Continue to bounce around the lot, meeting up with the great people that make Muni their homes on Sunday mornings...chatting up the game ahead of us and catching up from the last time we've spoke. Im starting to feel no pain about now, irregardless of the weather...and all of the sudden, waiting in line for the port o let or bathroom in my buddies RV just aren't that important to me.

10:00 AM - Head back to car for refill, and this is the time I finalize all of my fantasy football lineups and NFL wagers. By this point, I have scratched out all of my predetermined morning wagers, and placed my entire bankroll on the Browns. Urinate for the 6th time.

10:15 AM - Begin to examine possibilities for final meal before game. The "Chefs For Hire" and "Catered Services" guys are both people I know, and each put on an impressive spread before the games. Forgetting that I've already eaten Pop Tarts, a steak, and possibly even several milkbones, I inhale a mean big enough for a family of four in under five minutes...with much of the food ending up on the front of my Kosar jersey.

10:30 AM - Now well fed and drunk, Im feeling antsy. I begin to stalk the parking lot looking for some friendly banter with fans of the opposing team foolish enough to come tailgate. Seek out any last pals I have not yet ran in to. Continue drinking, smoking, and urinating. Begin chanting "Super Bowl" on top of my lungs every couple minutes. Talk all other friends into betting on the Browns.

11:30 AM - Sadly, with Lew Merletti now in charge of security, this is the time the ascent to Cleveland Browns Stadium must begin. My group of 4 turns into a mob of 20 chanting "Here We Go Brownies, Here We Go" by the time we emerge from Muni and begin the uphill walk to the stadium.

11:50 AM - Arrive at Stadium.

12:45 PM - After repeated full cavity searches by Merlettis crew of henchmen, I finally enter the stadium...hoping anxiously for a Browns victory.