





## A Letter from MFCA Tweak Editor, Matthew Culp

few months ago, I sat down and watched one of my favorite movies of all time...2001: A Space Odyssey. The film came out in 1968 and was directed by the now legendary Stanley Kubrick. It was a breakthrough film, as the special effects blew people away and the story was one of intrigue and was well written. This film was before Star Wars and although it received some mixed reviews, it is now known as a classic. What made this movie so great? Well, the 60's was all about the space race. The entire nation was behind the space program and what we accomplished in just eight years was astounding. We went from... "We want to go to the moon"...to not only landing on the moon in 1969...but making it routine. By 1975 America lost interest in space travel, the moon and NASA for that matter and we never really have been determined to get back into space ever since. No interest means no money for research, which means advances are slow.

The reason I love the movie 2001: A Space Odyssey is because it was a vision of the future of space travel and of technology. I first saw the movie in the theaters in 1975 (I was six years old) and it captured my imagination at the very first scene above earth. The movie's special effects were breath taking, as flyby views of the space station hovering over earth transitioned to the moon base and the shots of Jupiter were just amazing. When I watch the movie now, it is incredible to see some of the technology that the characters used, that is being used today. For example, the "viewer phone" that the man uses to call his family on the space station at the beginning of the movie, reminds me of our own live pod phones on our computers today. Even one of the main characters, a computer that runs the ship named "Hal", is something that is in use today on all of our modern aircraft, as Hal has complete control of the ship. The vision showed by Stanley Kubrick is responsible for some of the technological advances we see today, because it is the 70's generation that has been at the forefront of most of our advances. He inspired a generation, and like so many others, as a child, I truly believed that by 2001 all these things in the movie would become a reality. Look what we did in 8 years, surely we would be traveling to Mars and Jupiter by 2001. Well, that has not come to pass. In 1984, the sequel to 2001 came out titled 2010-The Year We Make Contact. I loved that movie just as much, but on this January 1st I was reminded about how far we have come in the space program...not far enough. It is 2010, why are we not traveling the stars? As an amateur astronomer, I now only hope I will see a man on Mars before the end of my life...but could things have been different?

So what does all of this have to do with electric football? Actually, quite a bit. As I was thinking of a theme for this Winter Issue, I thought it would be fun to dream a little bit. What would

it be like, if we would have continued to back NASA all these years? Would we be on Mars or even Jupiter? That got me thinking...if video games would have never come to pass, and Tudor would have had limitless funds for research, then how far would electric football had advanced over the last 30 years? All I did was ask this question to Al Dunham, what I got was one of the most innovative, creative, detailed and outstanding articles ever to grace the pages of *The Tweak*. With Al's article, it was then up to Lynn "Wolf" Schmidt to make the drawings to show the ideas...and what a job Lynn did. What is the future of electric football? Give me \$1 million dollars, some time and it will be just as we have put forth in this issue. Al's genius could someday become a reality for this hobby, if we just wish it to be. I would also like to point out that the cover is a special one to me. Can anyone guess where I got the inspiration for the cover? If you said from the album covers of the rock band Boston, then you are correct. I gave Lynn a concept...he gave me his best and the cover really symbolizes, perhaps, what we might see someday...electric football in space!

In addition, in this issue we will hear from the 2010 Miggle Convention, which was yet again a very special event. We will get a glimpse of the life of one of electric football's greatest coaches, as we tell the Ron Bell story in our continuing "Legends of Miniature Football" series. We will check in with the league in New York and their 2009 BAM championship. We will get tips from Joe Greco and youngster Taylor Throne. And of course, the 2010 article done by Al Dunham will take us into the world of "what if". As secretary of the MFCA, I would also like to remind everyone that the MFCA Convention is coming this August. If you did not make it last year, well...sorry about your luck....but you have another chance. Make your reservation soon for Canton, as we have a ton of activities planned and this year it is going to be bigger and better! Better yet...Emmitt and Jerry are going into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, I will not miss it, how about you? This is your convention...we hope you can join us.

And finally, I would like to say a few words about the tragedy that took place on December 24, 2009 to the Rutledge family. The staff of *The Tweak* would like to dedicate this issue to the memory of Rhianna Rutledge, who lost her life in a car accident and left us much too young. I speak for the entire miniature football community, when I say that we wish we could take your pain away for your loss. The entire Rutledge family will remain in our prayers and thoughts and we hope that you will accept our deepest sympathies. May God be with you Reginald and your family.

We hope everyone enjoys the issue. God Bless and peace.

## THE TWEAK

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE MFCA

## Editor and Publishing Director

Matthew Culp

#### **Assistant Editor**

Al Dunham

#### **Contributing Writers**

Matthew Culp

Rick DeJong

Al Dunham

Joe Greco

Corey Johnson

Ed Scott

Robert Slate

**Taylor Throne** 

#### **Design and Graphic Artists**

David Rollers Lynn Schmidt

#### Cover

by Lynn Schmidt

#### **MFCA Board of Directors**

Matthew Culp

Robert Don

Chris LeMay

C. M.

Steve Martin

Lynn Schmidt

Will Travers

Mike Turner

#### **Contributing Photographers**

Many MFCA Members

#### **Subscriptions**

www.miniaturefootball.org

#### **Customer Service**

Call 816-891-0802

#### To Join the MFCA

www.miniaturefootball.org

# WINTER 2009 Issue Eleven

- **2** Letter From Matthew Culp by Matthew Culp
- 4 2010-A Miniature Football Odyssey by Al Dunham
- 10 The 2010 Miggle Convention by Matthew Culp
- 17 Miggle-A Rookies Perspective by Rick DeJong
- **20** Miggle Retrospectives by Ed Scott & Corey Johnson
- 23 One Team, One Heartbeat by Matthew Culp
- 29 2009 BAM Championship by Robert Slate
- **33** Your First Tournament by Joe Greco
- **36** A Beginners Guide To Creating A Team by Taylor Throne



The MFCA is a not-for-profit organization the purpose of which is to promote the hobby of miniature football and to encourage participation of coaches across the country. The MFCA shall not be responsible for or in any way liable for the content of images, articles or any other information furnished by its advertisers. Said liability to include defamation in any form, copyright, trademark or patent infringement, license violations or other legal theories.



A Miniature Football Odyssey
The Horizon of Electric Football

By Al Dunham

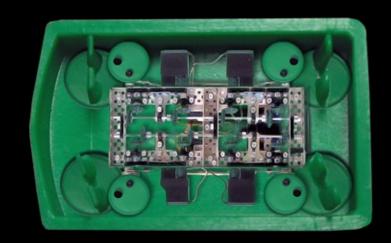
he 60's! What a time it was. Hippies, the Beatles, GTO's and Road Runners, Schwinn Stingrays, Purple People Eaters and the Fearsome Foursome, mood rings, Frankie and Annette, Space Food Sticks, Chamberlain vs. Russell, Mrs. Robinson, Star Trek, Andy, Opie and Barney, the moon landing and of course, Electric Football. Millions of games were sold and it seemed like every kid on the block had one...

When we look at the game today, we marvel at how far the hobby has come with custom fields and figures, decals, face masks and base tweaking knowledge. But has it really? In the 60's we had four or five TV stations to watch, today there are hundreds, thanks to cable and satellites. Back then, if you had a

roadside emergency, you looked for a pay phone, while today you simply call on your cell, or use your On-Star, if you have a GM car or truck. A computer that used to fill up an entire room can now be held in your hand. TV's that used to have tubes and resistors now have microprocessors. Technology has video games came along, and with them the promise of more and better control of the action going on. Kids left electric football in groves and jumped on the video bandwagon. Sales dwindled and in the 80's the hobby had pretty much dried up altogether. Technology was growing, while our hobby was dying. It made no sense for any company to invest money into research and development for a game that was disappearing. Economics is only half of the picture. What this hobby needs is something that didn't exist until it was already too late. I'm talking about micro robotics. Only in the last few years has this technology become not only cost effective, but small enough to work within the parameters of miniature football figures and bases.

I want to take you now, into the world of "What If".

Imagine for a moment that miniature football was as strong today as it was 40 years ago, selling millions of games worldwide. What if someone had invested the time and money and integrated micro robotics and computers into bases, figures and game boards? What would our hobby be like today?



# Radio controlled bases operating on their own frequency, will perform exact routes with signals from a hand held, programmable controller.

grown by leaps and bounds, yet our beloved miniature football still relies on a century old principle of vibrating motors. Everything else in life has changed at a drastic rate, one that boggles the mind, yet miniature football has made only simple strides, and even those have only been fairly recent, within the last 10 years or so. Why is this?

The answer is fairly simple...economics, combined with bad timing. In the early 70's, electric football was still going strong, but then a funny thing happened...

# **Controllable Bases**

We've had TTC (Total Team Control) bases for a few decades now. You turn the dial, and they go where you want them to go. It's a pretty simple concept, and most guys are happy with it. Imagine for a moment that you had a truly controllable base, one that not only goes where you want it to, but will change directions or speed as well, all during the course of a play? Sounds pretty amazing, doesn't it? Well, it's not as far-fetched an idea as you might think.



With today's micro robotics, anything is possible. Imagine a base with a full dial that has all the prongs on it, not unlike an ITZ dial. Under the shell is a micro sized motor with a tiny RF receiver and battery. Each base has its' own unique frequency that is stored onto your laptop. You simply choose a play like you would on Madden, only instead of a video player running the plays, the computer makes the base change directions and your little plastic men run the plays.

Pulling guards are no problem. Just before the board is turned on, the dial under that lineman turns 180 degrees and he pulls backwards, only to have the dial turn and he lead blocks for the running back. Receivers could run hook patterns, or hitch and go's. Pre-programmed plays can be bought, or you could design your own, having true total team control. And that's not all. Besides having a computer programmed to make the men move, you could also have a joystick to control a player. Now you would be able to make your own moves with the running back, or use it to make the quarterback scramble, or perhaps you would want to be a free safety and be able to blitz or go back into coverage. The possibilities are endless.

Changing direction of the player isn't the only option either. Did you ever want to have a safety back pedal, then come charging into the line? Or perhaps you wanted a running back to start off slow, and then turn on a burst of speed? This would be possible with another form of TTC base, only this one would have a rolling prong

set instead of a dial. The micro motor under the base would change the angles of the prongs, causing the base to slow down, speed up or even come to a full stop or run backwards. You could run a draw play, where the running back stays still for a few seconds, then takes off at full speed, all without ever turning the board off.

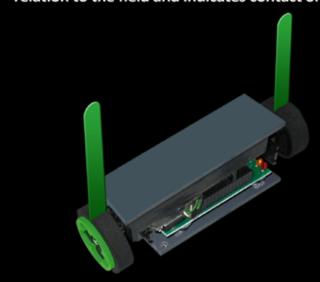
Using dice or fumble men would be a thing of the past, as the new bases could have impact sensors located on their sides. The computer controlled board could be programmed so that whenever a base is hit with enough force, the board stops and an announcer

exclaims that there is a fumble on the play. Since each base has its' own frequency, it would be stored onto a card that is inserted into the side of the board before the game begins. The board's computer could keep track of each player, so that it knows when a base is hit by another offensive player or a defender and only allow fumbles when hit by the defense. They would also help in determining whether or not a base was hit by another base. Instead of FOB tackling (Front of

# PRONGS DIRECTIONAL SERVO UNIT & SENSOR ARRAY

Prong directional unit attaches to the underside of the base and allows the base to move backwards or forwards.

Sensors keep track of the bases location in relation to the field and indicates contact or tackles.



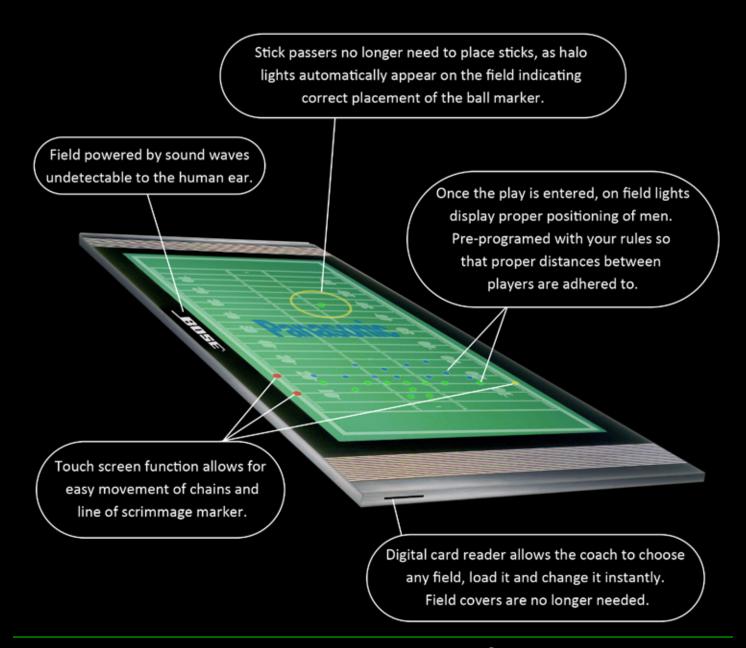
Base), you could program the board to automatically shut off only when the front sensor of a defender hit's the offensive base.

Another feature of the base would be sensors in all four corners. These would be used to determine the spot of the forward progress made by the player. There would be no more arguing over whether or not the player made a first down or crossed the goal line. A series of sensors located under the surface of the board would be able to keep exact location of where the ball is. No more guessing!



## Panasonic Flat-Panel LCD HD Fields

with 1366 x 768 pixel resolution 10,000:1 native contrast, 400 cd/m<sup>2</sup> brightness and 178° viewing angles.



# **Fantastic Boards**

Many guys have gone with custom size boards and covers over the last few years. Once you've played on them and seen the graphics, it's easy to see why. The Future Board goes a few steps further to make the game more realistic. First, would be a graphics interlaced surface. With this, you only need to pick a field cover design from your laptop and download it into the boards' computer. The field's surface would be photo/graphic dynamic, with the ability to change at the push of a button. Want to play with a Cowboys field one minute and then the USC cover the next? No problem, just click the icon on your laptop and the field instantly changes. No more messy field covers to have to take on and off and store. It's all in your laptop, waiting for you to pick.

The field's surface would also have a series of sensors located just under the top that would be able to keep



exact location of where the ball carrier is. A voice activated computer would acknowledge where each player is and be able to identify which base is the ball carrier. You would just say "Number 32 has it" and the chip that was plugged into the board before the game began would know which base #32 was.

This would also greatly simplify the passing game for those that like using the passing sticks. After turning the board off, the coach says which receiver he is throwing it to... "throw to #80". The computer knows which base is #80 and which is the QB. It then automatically determines the distance between the two and lights up a circle around the intended receiver equaling the appropriate stick distance. Now all the offensive coach has to do is aim a laser pen at any spot around the circle and click it. This marks where the 'stick' is. Now the two coaches turn their respective players to try and make the catch. The computer would then 'lock' the bases into their default positions, so that there would be no changing of directions of the base by either coach or the computer during the play. The board would be turned on and the computer would determine which, if any, base got to the spot first or if it was an incomplete pass. The computer would have an announcer who would say "Incomplete pass" or "The pass is intercepted" and the play would continue accordingly. Another feature of the board would be automatic down markers that move back and forth along the sidelines. They would simply plug into a track that would move along the side rails.

The board would also have an automated scoreboard in the end zone that would keep track of the time, down and scores. The team's names and information would already be stored into the chip that is plugged in, so the scoreboard would display them. Since the board already knows which bases are which, it would automatically update the scores and downs as the game progresses.

# **Moveable Bodies**

The game would be fantastic enough with just the bases and boards, but we're not finished yet. Micro robotics

# Panasonic Programmable **Miniature Football Play Remote**

Design plays on your computer. Assign a number code to each play. Load plays to the remote with the USB plug. Enter the number of the play you wish to run

Place men on field according to the positioning lights.

Each man will perform as pre-programmed with a radio controlled signal from the remote. Arrow buttons, allow for "on the fly" ball-carrier directional changes.



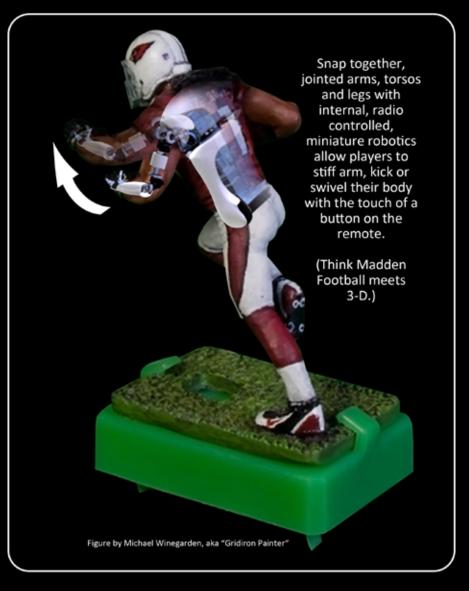
would allow us to have fully functional figures as well. Imagine having your linemen in a three point stance, then when the board is turned on they stand up to block. Or, how about having the running back twist and turn while he runs? How about a defender who can reach up to block a pass? This would all be possible with the tiny motors inside the figures. And there's still more! We have the technology today to have cameras that are tiny enough to fit into an object the size of the common housefly. What could be better than to be able to have a camera inside a figures helmet, relaying the image to a TV set so that you could get a players view of the game? How cool would that be?

While we're talking about figures, let's not forget about the referees. They would also be able to move and be on bases programmed to stay out of the way of the action. The board's computer could also have a random generator that would make penalties happen during the course of a game. You could have a ref with a flag in his hand that would wave it whenever there was a penalty. Another ref would then turn to the sidelines and signal out the penalty, putting his hands

on his hips for off sides, or bending over and hitting his hands against his legs for a chop block etc, all while the computer's announcer let's everyone know what is going on. The coach would then say "Accept" or "Decline" and the computer's voice recognition software would move the sticks to the new spot.

Finally, we could have a truly automatic kicker. You set him up with the ball on the tee and place him onto the board. The computer would give a delay of 1 ½ seconds or so, then it would release the locking mechanism that is holding the leg back and let him kick, all without having to hold him. Sensors inside the uprights would detect whether or not the ball went between the posts and announce the results.

If we can dream it... we can do it...



I don't know for sure if we'll ever see any of these things come into existence or not. It would require a major expansion of the hobby into a global phenomenon to make it worthwhile for any company to invest the amount of money necessary to see this happen. Who knows, maybe someday a Bill Gates or Mark Cuban will rediscover miniature football and remember the fun that they had with the game when they were young. Perhaps they will want to invest in these robotic bases and computer boards and the hobby will become the new 'hot' game for tomorrow's youth. If there's one thing I have learned in short amount of time I have been on this planet, it is that anything is possible, and where there's a will, there is a way. For now, all we can all do is continue to do our part by promoting miniature football, and sharing the joy of playing with others. The future is now and it is up to us to grab a hold of it!





There is an old Southern saying, "That Dog DON'T Hunt"\*.

\*It basically means something doesn't quite ring true or live up to expectations.

BUT in 2010, at the Miggle Convention,

"That Dog DID Hunt!"

That bulldog was named...

# **Butch Carter**



and that

"Bulldog"

fetched home the

Ring,

the Crystal and

the Miggle

Championship!



It was not supposed to happen and in October, when Miggle cancelled the 2010 Miggle Convention, you could just hear the air being released out of the electric football community.

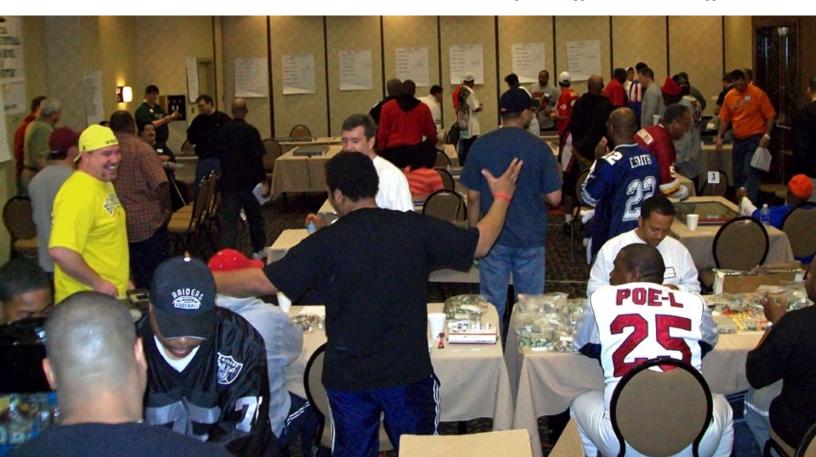
What?! No Miggle?! For an electric football coach that is like announcing there will be no air to breath tomorrow or the sun will not rise in the morning...okay... maybe not that drastic...but you get the idea. After 15 years, it was apparent that we have been spoiled rotten when it comes to our beloved reunion. We might have perhaps taken it a little for granted, but like the song goes... "You don't know what you've got till it's gone". Well, as October rolled on it was looking more and more like it was not going to happen...but on one fateful day, after coaches responded in high numbers for there to be a convention, the Landsmans came out and said...okay...at least one more time. On November 7th, 2009 the announcement was made and the electric football community rejoiced, like never before. I actually got a few phone calls from coaches, excited as if they had hit the lottery... "Matt! The convention is on!" and I for one was very grateful, because I knew that this year's convention was going to be something special. I was not disappointed.

The Miggle Convention that almost didn't happen became one of the best conventions ever in the 16 year history of the treasured tourney. Not only did people come, but they came in big numbers despite the down turn in the economy and financial difficulties for all of us...no one was going to miss this convention. From



2009 Miggle Champion, Jim Davis, prepares for a repeat run at the elusive second ring.

January 15-17, 2010, coaches came and gave thanks to the Landsmans for all that they do and once again they delivered. At great expense, they continued the tradition of the Friday night welcome dinner, the tourney on Saturday and the championship on Sunday. The fellowship was wonderful, the tourney was very competitive and the awards...well...they were just outstanding. Not only did we have a championship ring, but a beautiful crystal trophy as well...and we would also have a new Miggle champion. It is hard to sum up the whole weekend in one sentence, but it was great to have a new champion at Miggle. I saw the 2010 Miggle Cham-



pion, Butch Carter, as he was leaving to head back home Sunday afternoon. He stopped to show us the ring and crystal trophy. I can sum up the weekend with not words, but his expression...he was smiling from ear to ear...and he should, as he had just won the Miggle Championship over one of the elite coaches, Norbert Revels. As he was leaving, he was thankful for winning, for God and for having a chance of fellowship with guys that love the hobby. So, it is with great pleasure that I present "the weekend that wasn't supposed to happen, but thank God it did", as I present the 2010 Miggle Convention Recap.

# Thursday January 14th, 2010 The Arrival

I was not going to miss this Convention, come hell or high water. My plans included showing up a day ahead, so I could get in some football with coaches arriving early. I roomed with two great guys, Tim Young and Joe Allore. Too bad I saw little of them most of the weekend, as you see, our room...Room 212...became the unofficial greeting room for all the coaches. After unpacking, I began to search the hotel for familiar faces and it took all of 10 minutes to see coaches I had not seen for awhile. My best buddy, Jim Davis, was close by...Mike Guttmann was roaming the halls, and the Mid-Ohio MF crew of Frank Jacobs, John Martin, Jeff Priest were arriving to get the party started. As more and more coaches arrived, we became the official welcome room and at some point I am sure we went over the recommended occupancy level for our room. Thursday was simply a day to sit back, catch up on things and visit, but we still got in some games and the buzzing was continuous from the time we arrived, until about three in the morning. The Embassy Suites, the best venue ever for this event, opened up the downstairs ball room and several coaches took advantage of the space, as we got some games in. It was great to see Don Lang, Norbert, and all the Detroit guys as well. Thursday was just the appetizer for the weekend to come.

# Friday January 15th, 2010 Welcome Dinner

If you have had the pleasure to make it to a Miggle Convention, then most of you will remember the tradition of the Friday Night Dinner. This year's feast was outstanding and, to top it off, we had former Ohio State Buckeyes as special guests. There was Roger Harper, former Dallas Cowboy and Buckeye. We also had Shawn and Garcia Lane, two former Ohio State Buckeyes. Garcia actually played at the same High School as Dewayne Jennings, as Dewayne was responsible for inviting many of the guests. Also invited, but not in attendance, were Dominick Hixon, Akron University graduate and NFL star on the New York Giants and John Bowie, who played at the University of Cincinnati and also for the Oakland Raiders. All the special guests made for an eventful



Guess these guys favorite song......Yep, "Save a horse, ride a Cowboy". Old and new friends find common interests at the convention.



Joe Allore and Rick DeJong try to politely point out that Matt might want to use a napkin after devouring the fantastic meal.



Former Ohio State Buckeyes get their first taste of the Miggle Convention as special quests!



evening, as Miggle saluted the host city of Columbus, Ohio and Ohio State University. Miggle also provided some entertainment, with an improvised version of "Deal or No Deal". Mike Turner and Corey Johnson were a couple of the contestants that took a shot at winning some special prizes, which included Miggle products and custom paint jobs by Mike Guttmann. It was a very fun and entertaining time. Miggle also handed out some awards, which included the 2010 Good Vibrations award, which went to long time Miggle supporter and Championship day announcer-Ken Allen. Overall, the evening was excellent and after the dinner, coaches headed over to the ball room to get in some extra practice before having to turn their teams in for inspection. Speaking of practice...my roommates and I got plenty in all day Friday. Following

Ken Allen, accepts his "Good Vibrations" Award from Miggle owners, Michael and Delayne Landsman



our outstanding Embassy Suites morning breakfast, I concluded a marathon game with John Martin...and I do mean marathon. The entire day, our room was filled with coaches coming to check out Joe Allore's new custom made Michigan Wolverines board, as well as, all the game action going on. John and I played in the sleeping area and at one point we had a standing room only crowd watching on.

One of the highlights of the trip, for me, was playing on my new Dallas Cowboy board. One thing about these weekends is that I probably spend more money on electric football gear, than I do on Christmas presents...something is fundamentally wrong with that...but at least I am not alone! Thank you Miggle for bringing your store to the convention. I must now take out a second mortgage to pay my bills...just kidding...but there is something to be said for being able to "drool" over all the Miggle gear. I was like a kid in a candy store! Also, thank you Geno Hendricks for bringing great products from the mid-west. I love the TDK and TDQ, as well as the other products you guys have come out with. One thing I must say, Geno Hendricks is a class act gentleman. This was the first time I had ever met Geno and his son Flynt, who drove all the way to the Convention from Kansas. He is a

Kansan, Geno Hendricks and Miggle Convention Organizer, Dave Haydel meet for the first time in or around "Room 212".



great competitor and embassador for the game. His attendence to the convention, along with a host of other coaches, who I met for the first time, made for an outstanding beginning to the weekend. Simply stated, Friday was a great day, but the weekend was just



If you have ever called Miggle, you know her voice and you know that Miggle wouldn't be the same without her! Margie Windsor (right), with Brandi Windsor (left), keep the products flying out Miggles doors.

getting started and Room 212 was not the only room with a party going on.

# The "Vortex" Known as Room 409

If you were not in Room 212, then most likely you could be found in the Vortex, now a legend, known as Room 409. In Room 409 you would find the "Face of the Hobby", Corey Johnson. You would also find the host league from Mid-Ohio Frank Jacobs, John Martin, Chris Fields, Jeff Priest, etc. and a host of other legends such as Ed Scott, Brian Healy and Andrew Stewart...to name a few. This room had it all...pizza, sandwiches, beer, cold



Karim Campbell and Simmie Lassiter face off in early round action.











drinks, continuous games, cigars...you name it...they had it. It was a never ending party from Friday afternoon, until late Sunday night. And I have heard some "unconfirmed" rumors of some 'heavy duty partying'. All I know is that it was a fun time and the generosity of those guys made for a very enjoyable weekend for all.

# Saturday January 16th, 2010 **Tournament Day**

Saturday came and the coaches were ready for a fun afternoon of tournament play. Everyone turned in their gear for inspection and got their teams back before play began. We had some new comers to the convention this year and some sophomore coaches, who made the trip for the first time since last year. It was great to see Sean Jackson from Texas again, as well as John Stamm from Northern California. Last year, these guys got their first taste of a Miggle Tourney. This year they came to play and they both played outstanding for their first year back. As in previous tourneys, the boards buzzed from 10 a.m. until 3:30 in the afternoon. For the round robin session everyone was able to play 6-7 round robin games. The Miggle convention tournament was a hard fought battle from start to finish. The tourney field included 44 players from around the country, who were divided up into 7 conferences. After the round robins were completed, the top two coaches in each conference played each other for the conference championship and had an automatic bid to a bowl game. The conference finals featured the following matchups: Jim Davis, last year's winner, was matched up against Simmie Lassiter, with Simmie upsetting Jim Davis to move on. Norbert Revels, 2005 winner, took on Joe Allore and won. Andrew Stewart played Don Lang and won. Butch Carter, last year's wildcard (thanks to Andrew stepping down) was matched up against Charles Lane, who eventually was awarded the wild card with the most points among all non-winners, with Butch Carter winning. Ken Allen was paired against Brian Redmond and won. The conference final of the decade featured Greg Hardmon and Adrian Baxter. This hard fought contest went into the 5th overtime with Adrian coming out on top. In the end, the veterans again prevailed and once again I failed to get out of the round robin, but I had a great time playing. Your elite eight coaches were...Andrew Stewart, Charles Lane, Norbert Revels, Simmie Lassiter, Butch Carter, Ken Allen, Ron Bell and Adrian Baxter. Saturday night would pit some of the best coaches against one another to see who would advance to the final four.

The Bowl games would decide who would advance and who would be done. In the Sugar Bowl, the #1 seed Andrew Stewart cruised by Charles Lane 22-8, as Andrew's offense got some big plays for the win. In the Fiesta Bowl, it would be the legendary "Thor", Norbert Revels, who would defeat Simmie Lassiter 14-7 to advance. In the Outback Bowl, it would be the "Gem of the South", Butch Carter, who would upset Detroit's own Ken Allen 7-0. And finally, in the Cotton Bowl, it would be four time Miggle champion Ron Bell who

would advance, with a close 28-21 win over MFCA coach of the year Adrian Baxter. So the Final four was set for Sunday, but more football was to be played. Again, as with Thursday and Friday night, the buzzing and partying went on in to the waning morning hours, as the fellowship was what it was all about. It was also time for the NFL playoffs. For the first time, several coaches were able to get together, sit down and watch some football during the divisional playoffs. In the past, the Miggle Convention always took place the week before the Super Bowl (no football on tv), but this time around it took place during the playoffs and most of the buzzing halted while the Arizona Cardinals and New Orleans Saints played, and later the Indianapolis Colts and Baltimore Ravens. Ron Bell came prepared, as he watched his beloved Saints on a tiny television, while coaching his electric football Saints to a win over Joel Pritchard.

# Sunday January 17th, 2010 Sunday Morning Action

Sunday morning came, and as I awoke from my three hour nap, it hit me that this was the last day, but what a day it was. The morning began with the final four games being played. In the first game, the Rose Bowl, it was Norbert Revels and his running attack, which defeated Andrew Stewart by the final of 23-7. In the second game, the Orange Bowl, it was new comer, Butch Carter, with the upsets of upsets, as he defeated the legendary Ron Bell in a defensive game, by the final of 8-0. That setup the 2010 Miggle Championship, as it would be Butch Carter versus Norbert Revels for the Title. But before they would play, we had several other games going on for championships.

Norbert had many reasons to be thankful on this day, but playing in the championship did not mean as much to him as getting to watch his son play. In the 2010 Jr. Spark Bowl, Nigel Revels outlasted Jaya Davis 7-0, in a back and forth battle to win his first championship at Miggle. Norbert was a very proud dad after the game, and it was a great moment for him and his son to share. In the Senior Spark Bowl, Gerry Fulton Jr., who is a veteran of these Spark Bowls, was crowned champion again. Watch out coaches, as Gerry will soon be taking his place with the adults in tourney play. Congrats to all the kids, who played in the tournament.

In addition to all the tourney action that took place on Sunday, the MFCA hosted the 2010 Skills Challenge. We had some very intense competition! Your winners from the skills competition were....

Passing: Norbert Revels 240 points

Fastest Man under 3.3: Joel Pritchard 37 5/8 inches

Fastest Man 3.4 and over: Karim Campbell 34 3/4 inches

Strongest Man under 3.3: Geno Hendricks 13 3/8

Strongest Man 3.4 and over: Joel Pritchard 10 1/4

Kicking: I had a personal stake in this. Brian Healey defeated me after we kicked 5-6 times from the 63 yard line. He won...again! One of these years he and Joe Greco will not show up to this event and then I might finally win.









# **Crowning a New Champion**



# The Miggle Experience

The Championship time came and what a game it was. I personally anticipated an offensive battle, but the game was really decided in the first half and on the first Butch Carter possession. Butch received an early gift on the kickoff, as Norbert's kick was low and hit one of Butch's players. The result of the play was a short field for Butch and he took full advantage of the situation. Butch focused on the short passing game, as he completed passes to his back behind a wedge formed by the offensive line. He moved the ball down the field and in for a touchdown early in the first half. Butch then went for the two point conversion and got it to go up 8-0. On the ensuing kickoff, Norbert broke a 100 yard kickoff return for a touchdown...and just like that it was 8-6. No one watching the game realized that the key play of the game was about to happen, as Norbert was going for two points on the conversion to tie. Norbert had a beautiful sweep set to go right, with room to run for the score, but Butch's cornerback got in the way, as Norbert's running back ran into the back of the cornerback and the two point conversion failed...and that would be all the scoring for the game. Defense ruled the second half, as neither Norbert nor Butch could get anything going. As the final gun sounded it was a great scene to see Butch "The Bulldog" Carter, from Granite Falls, North Carolina, as the new 2010 Miggle Champion! It was a great moment for Miggle...a great moment for electric football and a great moment for one of the most well liked gentlemen from the southern United States. As for Norbert, what a great competitor, year in and year out. All this guy does is win and he was very gracious in defeat, a true sportsman.

The Miggle Experience has become a special time of the year for electric football coaches. As things wrapped up Sunday afternoon and I began to say goodbye to everyone before heading home, I took a moment and looked around the room and just said to myself...what a great group of friends that I am so lucky to have. I hope in my heart that Michael and Delayne Landsman will host a 2011 Miggle Convention because it is so much more than just electric boards running or about plastic men. We are a family. What makes us a family? Well, here is one example. A lot of coaches, including myself, gathered in the lobby to watch my beloved Cowboys play the Vikings in the NFC Divisional playoffs. I had Scott Hooper and Adrian Baxter to sit with, as we rooted on the Cowboys, but we also had all the "non-Cowboy" fans giving us a hard time, and when the Cowboys lost 34-3 I felt a bit of frustration to say the least. If it had been strangers giving us a hard time, then I might have been upset, but these guys are my brothers. It was like being home with my real brothers watching the game. For me being with people that share something in common...well...that is the best way to spend an afternoon that I know of. The Miggle Experience is about just spending time together, and if this is the last Miggle Convention, then at the very least I will treasure the "moments" for a very long time. I ask all of you to show your support for Miggle, so 2011 will be another reunion for the electric football faithful. This convention was not supposed to happen, but I am glad and thankful that it did. God bless, and thank you to everyone that makes this hobby more than it is.





# A ROOKIES POINT OF VIEW

BY RICK DEJONG



Miggle rookie, Rick DeJong srimmages with Joe Allore before hitting the main playing area and the Miggle competition

7 t was about a year ago, while traveling to Kansas, that I stumbled upon the MFCA website and I was amazed at the great looking pictures and video I found of the hobby I used to play as a kid. I loved the passion and great interest that so many people throughout the country seemed to have for Miniature football. Then, not long after that, I started reading all the posts and looking at the pictures from the 2009 MFCA Convention and I thought everyone just seemed to have a great time. Since I love a good football competition any day of the week, I wanted to find out more about where the hobby was going. Eventually, I hooked up with the guys from the Mid-Ohio league, as I was from Columbus, and after buying a board and getting a team put together, I began to play in their league and am currently about three fourths of the way through my first season. However, I was still looking forward to attending the Miggle Convention and trying my hand at the tournament that I had heard so many

outstanding things about. I was really disappointed when I heard it was canceled in Chicago, only to be even more excited when I heard it was back on, and not only was it back on, but in my own back yard of Columbus! I ordered a Buckeye team from Miggle, bases from Norbert (who did a great job for me!), put on some decals and facemasks and got myself ready for the tournament.

The Friday evening dinner was first class. The Landsman's put on a great dinner that was not only a fantastic meal, but it was free! I'm not sure how many people were there, but it seemed to be around 100 and none of us were paying a dime. I remember telling more than one person they could have charged \$10 to \$20 dollars and I still would have thought it was a bargain, not that it was the purpose of the evening, but just one example of how great an experience I think the Landsman's wanted everyone to have. In addition to the dinner, there were a number of former Buckeye players in attendance and a nice program towards the end to have a little fun. All-in-all, it was a great way to start the weekend.

After dinner I went to the "game" room and started some last minute preparation for the tournament. The room had about 20 tables set up for coaches to use and quite a few were taking advantage of the fields to get ready for the next day. Eventually, after I felt I was about as ready as I could



be, I turned in my team. I walked around the hotel and spent some time in Joe Allore, Matt Culp and Tim Young's room. All three guys were great about opening up their room all weekend for whoever, including myself. Whether it was watching the NFL on the tube, play-



ing a game, or just talking miniature football, Room 212 was a great place to hang out. Finally, Saturday morning arrived and the tournament day was here.

The Hotel (Embassy Suites) put on a great breakfast that I took full advantage of, as it helped to fuel myself up for the day ahead. Nex,t I headed to the tournament room and the Miggle store, where I bought a number of things that were being offered, and then it was game time! I joined the roughly 50+ coaches, as we waited to find out which conferences we would be placed in, and who we would be faced up against in the round robin. I ended up getting placed in the Big East conference with Jasper Scott, Jerry Fulton, Will Travers, Karim Campbell, Simmie Lassiter and the defending champion Jim Davis! The games were a blast and the guys were great. Any time there was a disagreement the guys never got upset or cranky. If we had a disagreement, we either deferred to the call of someone watching or flipped a coin. My first "big" game was against Simmie Lassiter, who must be



"The Hulk", Jim Davis, teaches the kids at the convention how to say, "Ain't NOBODY stronger than me."

really bitter about all the recent Buckeye wins over the Wolverines, because he seemed to get great pleasure out of yelling how much he hated the Buckeyes. I think he was trying to get in my head, or intimidate me, or he just enjoyed yelling. Either way, I actually enjoyed his passion and yelling and it helped me to focus on the game. I ended up winning 6 to 0 to move to a 2-0 record. After a tie and a loss, my next two matches became the pivotal game for me, as advancing came down to my game with Jim "The Hulk" Davis, the defending champion. I needed the win to have any chance of moving on to the next round. Jim started with the ball first, and somehow my defense limited Jim to only 2 yards! That was a victory for my defense! All I needed was 3 yards in 4 plays and I would need only 1 more victory



Jerry Fulton and Will Travers look on as they await game play in the Big East Conference of the tournament. In the background, eventual Miggle Runner-up, Norbert Revels starts his run to the final game.

the first play I gained a yard. Then on second down, I ran a pass play that worked to perfection and I had a guy wide open for the win. There was just this little matter of about a 15 yard pass to complete. Piece of cake, right? Wrong! I threw the pass short, like so many lousy Buckeye QB's of the past, and it fell incomplete. Now I was down to two plays to pick up the two yards, but instead of playing it safe and trying to run for it, I got cute and ran two pass plays that I screwed up royally. So I lost the game, two yards to zip to Jim Davis, who ended up moving on to the next round...my final record 3-2-1. All things considered, I really enjoyed the games, competition, and especially the coaches that I played against and their fantastic sportsmanship!

to move on to the next round! On

I spent most of the rest of the day watching games in the tournament room and watching NFL games on the T.V. Then I finished the day playing Michigan Joe, in a Mid-

Ohio league game, where he took it to me 24-7. Despite the loss to Joe, he was great at giving me tips and insights on what I could do in the future to improve my play and performance in the league. The next day was another great breakfast, followed by the big game of the weekend, the Miggle Super Bowl between Norbert Revels and Butch Carter. The game was a great contest, with Butch holding on to win the game and the great Crystal Trophy given by the Landsmans, which was just another example of what a great competition was put together by them and everyone at Miggle. Special thanks should also go out to Mike Guttman and Dave Haydel for doing a great job





running the entire tournament. I must add Norbert to the "well done" list as well, as he was gracious in defeat and a great competitor to the end. Everyone congratulated Butch and Norbert for a great game and the weekend came to a close.

For my first Miggle tournament I thought it was a great weekend. Everything from the food to the tournament, to the people playing, watching, organizing, selling, or just hanging out...it was an event the Landsmans should be proud of. Having said that, everyone usually has some thoughts on what stuck out or what could be improved, here are a few of mine:

- 1. Keep the basic tournament format the same. It was a great way to play a lot of coaches.
- 2. The dinner was great, keep doing that, even if you have to charge in the future, it was a great way to start the weekend.
- 3. Come back to Columbus, Ohio (OK that may be a selfish wish).
- 4. Wherever it is, the Embassy Suites is the right place to hold the tournament, especially that breakfast!
- 5. I think the championship game should be longer. Maybe 45 or 60 minute halves, so that the two best players really have some time to showcase their talents.

Well, that's about it. Thanks to everyone who made the weekend so great and here's to hoping I can make it to many more. If you have never been or played in the Miggle tournament, then I strongly recommend it. Don't worry about whether you are good enough, just show up and play in the games. More importantly...just have fun!



# CONVENTION RETROSPECTIVES

BY SMOKESTACK & NATIONAL



or something that almost didn't happen, what an event it turned out to be! We, as a community, were crushed when the Landsman's decided to cancel the 2010 convention. But after some talks and discussions with various people in our hobby, they decided to travel to Buckeye country, Columbus, Ohio. Home state to some of the greatest creative minds today: Aaron (AJ) Johnson, Dewayne Jennings, Bruce Watts, Frank Jacobs, Chris Fields, and the Mid-Ohio football league.

Ohio is rich with Miniature Football tradition, the greatest painter in the history of our game lived in Ohio. MFCA HOF inductee, Dirk Thomas ran the Akron league here. So from an electric football stand point, Ohio was a perfect choice. The home town coaches were up to the challenge of being great hosts. Dewayne called on some of his old friends, some former Buckeyes, and some former NFL players to attend the dinner and speak about the game of Electric Football. But that was Friday evening. Let's back up a few days.

This party was started on Wednesday by a few coaches who got in early, and even more including the F.O.T.H. showed up on Thurs-



MFCA HOFer, Mike Turner, (The most travelled coach in the hobby) visits with Mike Guttmann at the start of the convention.

day. Jim Davis, aka the HULK, was one of the first to arrive for a record 16th time. Only the Landsman's can say that. The coach that logs the most miles on these conventions, Mike Turner, and his son Javon, were checked in at the beautiful Embassy Suites on Wednesday as well. What has become a tradition at the Miggle conventions is our meet and greet. Several coaches will congregate in the lobby and meet the coaches coming in. I had the privilege of riding in the shuttle from the airport with Michael & Delayne Landsman, probably the only two people in the sport that could upstage the National One.

John Martin showed up shortly after with enough cigars to take care of a small army. Adult beverages, snacks, boards, laptop, you name it-he had it. He was given (the now famous) "Room 409". Anyone and everyone who stepped in that room had a great time. There was so much traffic, that the windows had to stay open the entire weekend just to keep the room cooled off, and aired



Delayne Landsman goes over the setup with Margie as they prepare for the onslaught of anxious Electric Football shoppers looking for their first taste of the new products.

out. Room 409 was the place to be... only room 317 could argue about being the best room during the convention, but that's for another time and story. Friday morning was soon upon us as all the coaches were finishing up breakfast.

Before we turn to the actual convention and tournament, let's turn our attention to what brought us here and what keeps us coming back. Matt said it well in a forum post just after the convention. The names are too numerous to name here. One of the most intriguing parts of the entire weekend is putting real names to what are often "chat board handles". Some of these names are humorous and tell something about the individual. Some of the names are from childhood or our youth transgressions, meaning, we really don't want to get into how we got the nick name.

Part of the infamous Room #409 "Rat Pack". Front to back: Corey Johnson, Ed Scott and John Martin



Miggle makes it a point to unmask our personas by mandating that we wear our name tags at all times once we cross into the dinner or show threshold. It is here that we can finally put the faces to the names and settle in with new friendships. It never ceases to amaze me how many new faces grace us with their presence. While there



were many who could not make it this year for legitimate (and some personal) reasons, this article salutes all of us in the hobby from the west coast to the east coast and everything in between including all north and south quadrants. So, before we get our undies in a bunch, let's get real and give everyone their just due and props. First, for making it through to a new year and second, as we look forward to the exciting new developments and innovations as we go forward in our hobby. We missed a few faces this year, Wolf and Manhattan Ray

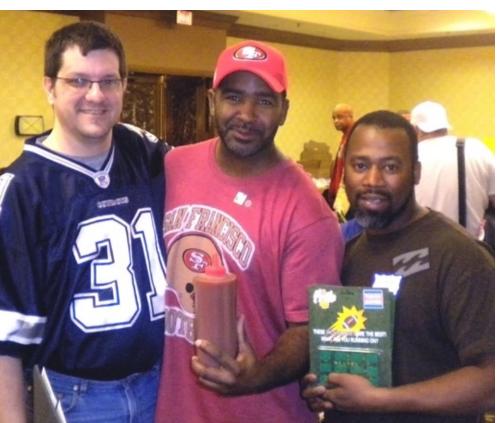
(and his infamous portable never ending bar) to name a couple. But, like other areas of the hobby, when there is a need someone usually steps up to fill the void. So, the spark bowl and skills challenge continued to be welcome additions.

We had the extreme pleasure of seeing the Dixie league (many who made their way from Atlanta and all points) show up with solidarity. I can't recall ever seeing so many new faces stand up and introduce themselves to the many who gathered at the Friday welcome dinner. This is a special time. It is a time for reflection and catching up. It is also a time, as the "National One" says, to "reach out your hand in friendship and say hello and welcome someone in..." We saw Dewayne Jenning's mother and all the attendees' precious children in tow with their parents. We saw wives, girlfriends, and significant others. Some of the new faces included (but were not limited to): Karim, Joe Ram, Frank Jacobs, Mike Tush, Dave Roller, Geno, Flynt, Rafiyq, and countless others too many to name. The usual suspects were there. We also saw the emergence of Coach Bruce Carter and Joel Pritchard. We knew these guys as strategists. We now know that they have been recognized for base training as evidenced by Butch's fine run through the brackets.



Joe Ramaglia, J-E-T-S, Jets Jets, was one of the many new-comers to the Miggle convention. In the background, notice all the required nametags on Kelvin Lomax.

It is hard to say anything negative about the choice of hotel. No surprises here. Everything was as advertised. The rooms were clean and updated. The staff was courteous and showed great restraint when the young ones got rambunctious and when some of our revelry went outside the limits. The dinner itself and awards were classy and well orchestrated. Bringing some Buckeye greats from past glory



years was a nice touch. There were inspirational words for our youth and young people. Very fitting and sage advice from athletes who have aspired and then achieved their dreams. I don't know about you, but it was a curious choice for the location of a local gentlemen's retreat. It was literally situated at the entrance to the hotel. The free shuttle to and from airport was a welcome bonus as this helped keep expenses down. They even chauffeured many of our guests to local shopping and dining destinations.

The story closes with a few random thoughts and observations. The entire weekend (almost a week for some) brought different perspectives and experiences for many. The common denom-

Corey Johnson shows off his new BBQ sauce brought all the way from the South while he poses (he is always posing) with Matt Culp and Karim Campbell.



inator is (and continues to be) the love of the hobby and the genuine concern for others. We might skip our high school, fraternity, or college reunions, but we try not to miss opportunities to catch up with the good friends that we have made in this great hobby of ours. It was an extreme pleasure to see Adrian at the event. Life has a way of reminding us to slow down at times and remember what is important. For forty-eight to ninety-six hours we can escape into the wonderful kaleidoscope that we have created. It is a true mosaic of different cultures, value systems, traditions, beliefs, and ways of doing things.

The beauty of it is we can unwind and relax around a common goal of fun and friendship. Whether you immersed yourself in base training, caught up on some league games, watched the NFL playoffs, supported Miggle and its many exhibitors by making investments, created new passions for your kids or friends, ate or slept until your heart was content...we have to agree that this was one for the ages. Times are tough. Money is tight. The job situation is tenuous at best. We have learned from our own daily lives and the things that we share with one another, that it is our family and loved ones, our religion or faith that truly binds us, and most importantly...our health that matters most. It is comforting to know, as a keen observer, that many of us have our priorities in order.

So, I close with a challenge to you. Give more than you take from the hobby. Leave the hobby (if you must) in better shape than when you found it. Help others enjoy the game. If you are a talker ,then learn to be a listener. If you lack patience for new hobbyists, then slow down and put yourself in their shoes. Someone took you by the hand and was patient with you when you stuck your head in the door and peered over a board. Don't tear down your own league mates. Build them up and revel in their triumphs on and off the field. If your feathers have been ruffled lately...unruffle them! Celebrate what makes us unique and passionate about the hobby. Let's spread the love!

#### Best Moments of the Weekend

Seeing all the first timers at the dinner reception. Having former Buckeye players attend and speak. Watching the young kids of our coaches taking a liking to the game.

Coach Lomax getting beat by JoeRam. Earlier in the week Lomax had offered to give Joe some tweak tips and show him some  $X \notin O's$ , but Joe turned the tables on the old wise one in the tourney. Talk about the student schooling the teacher.

Witnessing the arrival of Mike "Make it Rain" Tush. Talk about exploding on the scene. Forget National, you want to hang out with this guy.

Room 409. That room was the place to be all weekend. Great stories being told by some of the vets of the hobby/sport. Some great Herf action well into the wee hours of the morning.

Getting calls from coaches who couldn't make it, but were going crazy because of it. Watching all the Cowboys fans dressed to the T as their team got set to battle the Vikings.

## Did you notic∈?

That Mid-Ohio commish Jeff Priest was hardly at the hotel. No worries though, Frank Jacobs picked up the slack and demanded games be played.

That HOF'er Mike Turner and "Make it Rain" Mike Tush have the same initials, and are about the same height.

After every Viking touchdown somebody screaming "Go Vikes" from the 4th floor balcony.

That the big room was being locked at midnight, so there was no time to have a Green Room Rumble.

John Martin & Frank Jacobs may be the tallest coaches in the MFCA.

Damon Lucas and Shawn Noble didn't have custom figs to sell.

Dave Haydel and Guttmann gave more options to the second contestant of Deal or No Deal!!! Nat'l still hasn't received his medal.

Joel P had some of his famous BBQ sauce with him.

The guys in room 317 were playing Xbox 360 all weekend.

### Migsle Toxis TUBOR

#### Funniest Moments

Mid-Ohio game, Big Will vs Chris. Chris is stacking the box in support of the run, and letting Will's receivers run free. Will has seen enough of this and repeatedly tells Chris you are going to respect my passing. Chris just chuckles, and keeps on lining up, maybe mumbling an "okay" here and there. The play is set, Will says "passing", Chirs in a shocked tone says "yeah", Will responds,"I told you you're going to respect my pass!" He gets a man wide open, only 1 defender in the vicinity. Will grabs the ttqb, gives Chris one more I told you to respect my pass, and then throws an INT!!!

Matching Frank Jacobs do his impersonation of his college coach Lou Holtz. If you closed your eyes you would swear it was Lou.

Watching Andrew Stewart and Brian Healy go at it during the tourney. Just like husband and wife....don't ask who's the wife!!!

How bad Jim Davis's limp got when Delanye turned EF coaches into movers Friday morning. She asked if anyone could help unload the truck. The other GLEFL coach Ken Allen turned into the foreman and was pointing and directing but never did any lifting.

Dearell Brevard got up during a Herf in room 409. Не шепt into the bathroom and walked straight out the door without saying bye or anything. He had that blank look of the people in that new movie, "the Crazies." One witness said he thought he was going to walk right thru the railing and off the 4th floor. Even the next morning some coaches were asking...Did you see Dearell last night, he was there, but he wasn't. What happened to him? 2 words, Widow Maker..a nickname for a rather strong/full bodied cigar that was apparently too much for Mr. Brevard.



# "It is like a golf swing" ... those were the first words I ever heard from Ron Bell, when we first met at the 2004 Miggle Convention in Chicago. I had seen him at many of the conventions before but this was the first time I went up

met at the 2004 Miggle Convention in Chicago. I had seen him at many of the conventions before, but this was the first time I went up to him and asked him for some of the secrets to his passing game. His unusual pre-pass ritual of lining up his thumb and taking some

practice strokes before making the pass, always astounded me...but there was no questioning the results...deadly accurate passes. It is no secret that Ron can pass, but did you know his first ever pass came just six months before his first Super Bowl? Passing aside, Ron's life has been a true success story, as he has been successful at every buzz of the board and at every part of his life. His story is similar to all of our own, when we talk about electric football, but the man that makes up Ron Bell goes much deeper than his beloved plastic New Orleans Saints or his throwing motion. This story is about a man who has suffered through some hardships, experienced some of life's high points and about one of the nicest "gentlemen" you will ever meet in this hobby. This is also the story of a true Legend of Miniature Football. Ron has attended 10 Miggle Conventions. In 10 tourneys he has won four Miggle Tournament Titles, has had five Super Bowl appearances, seven final four appearances, nine "elite" eight appearances, a host of big play moments at the Miggle Conventions and the only coach in the history of electric football to win three consecutive championships...Ron Bell is regarded as one of the greatest coaches ever to play the game.

So what makes up a Legend of Miniature Football? Is it playing in every tourney in the country and winning them? Is it playing year around...non-stop? Ron will



be the first to tell you that he plays electric football in the fall, goes and plays at the Miggle Convention, and then hangs up his team for the rest of the year until fall rolls around again. Some coaches have asked, "Why doesn't he play year around or in other tourneys?" The answer is quite simple...to him and too many of us...Miggle is the biggest and best gathering of coaches there is. No other tourney attracts him and everyone that has played at a Miggle tourney will agree...it is a very level playing field. Ron's gift to the hobby of electric football has made him one of the all time greats and that gift is his continued high level of play and his ability to be a strong ambassador of the hobby. He has never turned anyone away, who has asked for help and he has been a true fan of the hobby, by helping new coaches year in and year out at the Miggle Conventions. His competitive spirit is always at the highest level, (as illustrated by his refusal for an interview from a CBS anchor woman while he was in the middle of the game in 2004) and his polite and polished persona only adds to his tremendous high level of sportsmanship. I can tell you first hand...it is hard to win at the Miggle Convention. It takes focus, practice, patience and the ability to adjust. For myself, to just get out of the Round Robin would be an accomplishment...to make it through the elite eight would be a dream come true...to make it to the final four...unthinkable...to win a Miggle tourney...well...that would take divine intervention. Ron Bell has done it year in and year out and has set the standard at this beloved tourney. With that said...it is my pleasure to tell his story and to give everyone a glimpse into the life of a gentleman from New Orleans, who loves this hobby, as much as all of us do. Ron Bell truly is a Legend of Miniature Football...here is the Ron Bell story.

# AKRON, SPIT BALLS AND GROWING UP

Ron Bell was born to James and Roberta Bell on October 23rd, 1968 in Akron, Ohio. He lived in Akron, Ohio only briefly, as at the age of four his father took a job in New Orleans as an aerospace engineer after working at Goodyear in Akron...and he has been in New Orleans ever since. His early years were typical for the time and his two older brothers, Rob and Gary and his younger sister, Lora, made for a close and loving family. His family was a sports family, and at the young age of four Ron immediately showed an interest in football and baseball. He loved football, but he mostly played baseball growing up, playing from grade school all the way through college at Florida Tech. He played shortstop his entire life and he truly enjoyed everything that baseball had to offer. But although one of his passions was baseball, he still managed to play football up until his junior high years. Can anyone guess what position he played in football? To no surprise, the great passer in electric football was also a great passer in the real game. Ron played quarterback and safety throughout his football career, and like baseball, developed a love for the game.

His first introduction to electric football came through his oldest brother, as Ron discussed with me through our interview... "My oldest brother was who I played my first electric football



game with. I remember him having the Cowboys/Dolphins and Redskins/Dolphins Super Bowl games in the early 70's. I can distinctly remember, that my parents didn't allow me to touch his electric football stuff, because I was too little. I wonder if that original ban from the game led me to become so infatuated with it." Around the age of five, Ron finally got his first taste of electric football, when his brother, Rob, sat him down and started his EF career. Ron then started his own solitaire league in the fourth grade, but his most memorable moment came with his first career win... "My first game I received was the Cowboys/Broncos Super Bowl. I think I got a new one every Christmas for the next several years, as well as, tons of teams through the years. My first EF victory, that I recall, involved a four-play goal line stand against my brother in the last four plays of the game. That was a big day for me! I also used to play with my Dad all the time. I used to give him a generic yellow team and I would have the NFL allstars. With that combo I would try to destroy his team. He actually beat me once...he must have cheated." Ron continued to play the game through grade school, middle school, high school and two years into college.

One thing some coaches may not realize is that the Bell household



was a running household. As a matter of fact, Ron never used a TTQB to pass; instead they used to pass using a straw...yes I said straw. Spit ball passing was invented by a kid that lived down the street from Ron, as he explained... "We never passed using the conventional quarterback in our games. It was somewhat awkward to use at my young age, instead we would take a spit ball, put it in the straw and place it just above the quarterbacks' head, when we were ready to pass. If we hit the receiver, then it was complete. Sometimes it stuck to the receiver, which was rather neat for us. However, even though we used spit balls to pass, I primarily ran the ball almost all the time. We also used a coin toss, as well, for passing and other parts of the game. We also used spit balls for a baseball game my brother invented". Ron's first official TTQB pass attempt did not come until six

months before his first Miggle Convention. He learned how to pass from a guy he met online by the name of Mike Maroney, who eventually came to New Orleans to show him how to hold the



As a matter of fact that first pass would be a big moment for Ron, not only because it was his first, but it gave him confidence to throw from thereafter. In the 2000 Miggle Championship Game

"You really had to work and be creative to gain yards on him. I would say that Ron is one of the classiest champions I have played against." Matt Wavra

quarterback and the mechanics of the pass. He really did not learn how until his first appearance at the Miggle tourney.

### **SUCCESS AT MIGGLE**

Ron walked away from the game half way through his college years. He instead turned to video games, as a release from the daily grind of school life. 10 years went by before he got back into the game. His same older brother, Rob, that initially got him into the game, was responsible for getting him back in. As with many dads, who played the game as a youngster, Rob got his son an electric football game for Christmas. As Ron was helping his nephew setup the game, he noticed the 1997 Miggle newsletter inside the package. He was amazed to see that people were still playing this game and that there were even national tournaments...and that was all it took. Ron decided, then and there, that he must not only go to a Miggle Convention, but he must also win it. He sat down and put together a three year plan and three years later he won his first of four Miggle Titles. Ron got a team together and began to practice to prepare for a trip to a Miggle Convention; although he did not make his first tourney until 2000 in Washington, D.C. Ron used the "Video Contest" to get into tourney. In his first game at Miggle he did not throw one pass for the first three quarters, then it happened...the big moment...he threw his first pass in the fourth quarter for a big gain...and he has been passing ever since. against James Crews, Ron threw every down of the game. His new found skill would lead to one of the most thrilling moments of his electric football life...a close win for his first Miggle Title, as Ron recalls... "It was a great game and I had to score late to pull out the win, but I felt a big thrill when I won that game. It was like I was a kid all over again."

After his win in Washington D.C., Ron returned a year later to play in Canton, Ohio at the 2001 Convention. He found the competition tough going, but again he made his way to the Championship game to face an electric football great-David Redmond. As with the year before, Ron kept to the passing game, only this time it took a score with: 07 left in the game, to pull out his second straight Miggle Championship. Now noticed as the guy to beat, Ron had a huge target on his back for the following 2002 tourney in Memphis. However, as the two tourneys before, he found a way to weave his way through the competition to the Championship game. This time he would face off against MFCA Hall of Famer Mike Turner and again... it would be a close game....but Ron would come out with a third straight Miggle Championship. What an accomplishment for a coach, who had come a long way. His three year plan to win a Miggle Championship turned into a "three-peat" and a first in electric football history. Three championships in three years, little did Ron know that some tough tourneys lie ahead for him and some hard times.



# KATRINA, ANOTHER CHAMPIONSHIP AND TV

In 2003, the Miggle Tourney went to the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana. This time around Mike Turner would find a way to win, as he defeated Ron and knocked him out of the tourney. In 2004, in Chicago, Ron made a great run in the tourney, as he made it to the Championship Game. It would be Edgar Downs, who would defeat Ron in the Miggle Championship Game, in one of the most exciting Miggle Championships ever played, as he defeated Ron in overtime by one single yard. That would be Ron's only loss in a Championship game. In 2005, in Pittsburgh, he would lose to Norbert in the Miggle Final Four. But all the losses over the



RON BELL IS ONE OF THE KINDEST, GENEROUS, AND CONSIDERATE PEOPLE YOU WOULD EVER WANT TO MEET OUTSIDE THE ELECTRIC GRIDIRON. HE IS PROBABLY THE LAST PERSON YOU WOULD WANT TO SEE ON IT. RON'S A FIERCE COMPETITOR WHO COULD TEAR YOU UP DURING THE GAME THEN BE THE FIRST TO OFFER YOU A BEER AFTERWARD. KEN ALLEN

three years, paled in comparison to what took place on Monday August, 29th, 2005.

Hurricane Katrina, with its 110 mph winds and destructive force, slammed into New Orleans and the surrounding area. It caused severe destruction along the Gulf coast from central Florida to Texas, much of it due to the strong storm surge. The most severe loss of life and property damage occurred in New Orleans, Louisiana, which flooded as the levee system catastrophically failed, in many cases hours after the storm had moved inland. Eventually 80% of the city and large tracts

of neighboring parishes became flooded, and the floodwaters lingered for weeks forcing many to move away from the area permanently and leaving others homeless. There was a tremendous loss of life, as at least 1,836 people lost their lives in the actual hurricane and in the subsequent floods, making it the deadliest U.S. hurricane since the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane. Ron and his family were forced to evacuate and after two weeks, were finally allowed back in to their home. Ron and some coaches were just about to start a new league and he had just completed a team in preparation for the new season. Normally, he took most of his players with him during

an evacuation, but this time he did not and when he got home, he could not believe the devastation to his hometown of New Orleans... "When I got back, the first thing I noticed was kickers, bases and players at my front door. The house was completely covered with debris, including figures and teams that I had put in containers. We had two feet of mud throughout the entire house and it was the same story for everyone throughout New Orleans. To put it simply...everything was everywhere...imagine just filling up the house with water and swishing it around for an idea of the results. I lost a lot of good EF stuff, but we had the important things...we were alive. A lot of people moved back to New Orleans to rebuild. We lived in St. Bernard Parish, just outside of New Orleans and St. Bernard was the hardest hit area in Louisiana. A lot of people moved back there, but we chose to relocate to a spot in New Orleans that wasn't as heavily damaged because we had small kids and didn't want them to go through the whole re-building process. My wife's entire family is from there. It was such a sad sight and we knew people who stayed on our





street and died in the storm. I must admit... I thought about us staying behind and riding it out, but we were so glad we evacuated when we did. Electric football was far from my mind during this time". And understandably, Ron decided not to make the trip to Baltimore for the 2006 Miggle Convention. He was missed, but everyone at the convention was just glad he was all right. It just goes to show you, that life is so unpredictable and that it should be cherished every day.

After a year away from electric football, Ron got a chance to rebuild his life and be thankful for surviving such an awful year. In 2007 he returned for the Miggle Convention being held in Jacksonville, Florida. It would be a tremendous return for him, as he once again made his way through the tourney field. Not only was he back, but he went on to defeat Bryan Nutt in the championship game and clinch his fourth Miggle title. He said afterwards that this might have been his favorite tourney yet, mostly because it had been a few years since he won and he had been through so much personally after Hurricane Katrina. The 2007 Miggle Convention was also his NFL Films debut, as they were at the convention to shoot a documentary on electric football and Ron was one of the few to be highlighted in the film and he had this to say about the experience... "That experience was one of the coolest experiences of my life. It was very funny what they did with all the footage and the fact that I made the comment of hav-

ing to leave the interview, because I had a game in a few minutes and I did not want to miss it. My only regret was that I was not able to be a little sillier about the whole thing. My family and friends loved the whole segment and I still get some kidding around about it." Even though Ron had made the "big time" when it comes to sports interviews with NFL Films, his very favorite interview came on an ESPN Radio interview he did not long after the Miggle Convention. He had some fun with with the announcers and soon had them rolling with laughter...as this time he allowed himself to be a little silly on the subject of electric football. And of course no one will forget his 2004 spot on CBS evening news... Ron has had his share of the spot light for this hobby.

## FAMILY, THE FUTURE AND SECRETS TO SUCCESS

Now let's fast forward to just a few weeks ago in Columbus, Ohio. Ron's 2008 and 2009 Miggle Campaigns ended with some early exits, as the competition just seems to get tougher as time goes on. This year in Columbus, Ohio Ron did well for himself in the tourney. This year Ron made it to the final four before being defeated by the eventual champ, Butch Carter, by the final of 8-0. With all his success, Ron is still a family man first and foremost. He has an 18 year old step son, Blake, who

is a good EF player himself. He has attended several Miggle conventions with Ron. However, his four year old son is addicted to the game and plays with his dad on a daily basis. Yes, another Bell will be carrying the torch in the new future! An attorney for Progressive Insurance, Ron enjoys his family. He has a stepson, Blake; a six year old girl, Brenna; a four year old son, Brooks and a very supportive wife who he has been married to for almost eight years-Tessie. He had this to say about his wife... "My wife is very supportive. She's been with me since I got back into the hobby over 10 years ago. Down South it is customary for the Groom to have a cake at the wedding as well. Mine, of course, was a replica of an EF game."



When I asked Ron about the future of the hobby he let me know he is very concerned about the hobby in particular Miggle Conventions... "It is my hope that the Miggle Convention lasts forever, because I'm bringing Brooks next year and I'm sure every year after that. I'm looking forward to sharing some more wonderful experiences there with him." He also men-

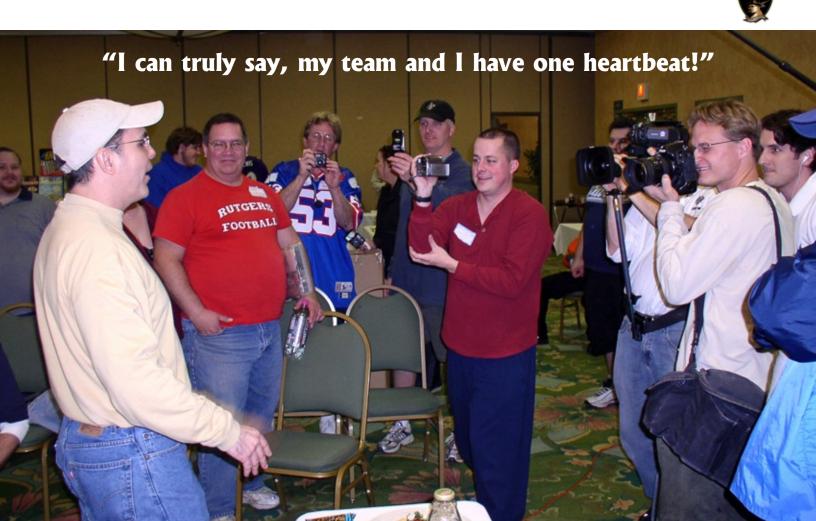
"RON BELL IS JUST AS MUCH A STAND-UP INDIVIDUAL OFF THE ELECTRIC GRIDIRON, AS HE IS AN INTENSE COACH ON THE ELECTRIC GRIDIRON." DEWAYNE JENNINGS

tioned several coaches who he has the utmost respect for, from playing them through the years. Some of them were Norbert Revels, Edgar Downs, David Redmond, Frank Johnson, Matt Wavra, Myron Evans and Mike Turner to name a few. And finally, I asked him for some advice for a new coach just playing in their first Miggle Convention or game of any kind...here are some of Ron's secrets of the game... "First is preparation. If you practice, work on your plays and have a game plan, then you can go far in the tourney. Next, passing is key. Approach passing like you would golf and practice the release of the ball, just like you would practice a putt. However, if you are a new coach at Miggle, then I would urge you to run the ball, because passing does take time to learn. The most important advice I can give to a new coach...just keep it fun. You can be competitive and still have fun."



## **RON BELL AND HIS LEGACY**

Ron Bell's legacy is one that the electric football community should be proud of. He has been a huge supporter of the hobby, while continuing to play at a very high level for over 10 years now. His legacy to the sport of electric football will and always is his fellowship and gentleman demeanor he shows to all coaches to whom he plays. His legacy as a family man is just as special, as he loves his children and wife and is able to share his love for the hobby with them. For me personally, I just love to watch him play the game and someday wish to be at his level. This gentleman from the South is a champion in electric football, in family and in life...and he is truly a Legend of Miniature Football.





n november 7th, 2009 BAM coaches descended on the "Toy Wiz" in nanuet, NEW York, for the bis APPLE miniature football LEAGUE Championship tournament.

# OPENING ROUNDS

This year all remaining participating teams were seeded based upon their regular season wonloss record. The 49ers, Jets, Raiders, Redskins, Ravens and Buccaneers all received first round byes. The Titans, of Antonio Jones, battled the Browns, of Drew Sparks, with the Titans coming away with the win, 10-7. In the other opening round game, Coach Roosevelt's Dolphins put on an impressive running show, defeating Coach Slate's Packers, 35-21.

# ROUND OF EIGHT

The round of eight saw some great match-ups: Kevin Boddie's Redskins dominated K-Lo's Ravens, 21-3; the FOTH's 49ers snuck by Antonio's

Titans, 14-12; Greco's Jets controlled both sides of the ball, shutting out the Dolphins, 27-0 and Morgan Scott's Raiders and Coach Karim's Buccaneers (2008 runner-up) battled into overtime with the Raiders pulling out the win, 13-7.

# SEMI-FINALS

In the Semi-Finals, it was the Jets against the Raiders in one game, and the Redskins versus the 49ers in the other. Morgan had a tough time getting the Raider ground game moving against a tough Jet defense. Coach Greco combined solid defense with consistent offensive play, posting a 24-7 victory to secure his first berth in the BAM Super Bowl. First year BAM Coach, Kevin Boddie, led his Redskins to a seemingly comfortable lead, but had to hold on and complete some key passes late in the game to defeat Corey's 49ers 28-25, and advance to the Super Bowl in his first BAM season.





# JETS VS. REDSKINS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2009 CHAMPIONSHIP SUNDAY

Here is your Super Bowl wrap up for BAM Super Bowl II.

## FIRST HALF

Joe Greco brought his Jets to face the Redskins of Kevin Boddie in BAM Super Bowl II. Coach Boddie won the toss and deferred to the 2nd half – so Joe Greco's Jets received the opening kick. Starting with the ball on his own twenty yard line, Greco completed 3 of 7 passes, moving the Jets into field goal range and an opening drive score with a 39 yard field goal.

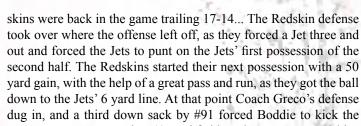
Coach Boddie and his Redskins also started their first possession at their own 20 yard line. After converting two third and long plays for first downs, the Redskins drive eventually stalled at the Jet 48 yard line and they punted into the end zone. The Jets then took the ball 80 yards in five plays, capping the drive with a 60 yard touchdown pass, and the Jets took an early 10-0 lead.

The next few possessions saw defensive domination, as each team began to find weaknesses in the opposing offense. Both teams were forced to punt on each of their next two possessions. A key development on the Jets next possession had long reaching ramifications, as a "shake of the box" took out the starting quarterback for the Jets.

However, it did not immediately affect the team, as on second down, of their next possession, Coach Greco executed a 48 yard pass play, moving the ball to the Redskins' 17 yard line. On third down, with 33 seconds remaining in the half, Coach Greco completed a pass to #17 for the touchdown and the Jets took a commanding 17-0 lead.

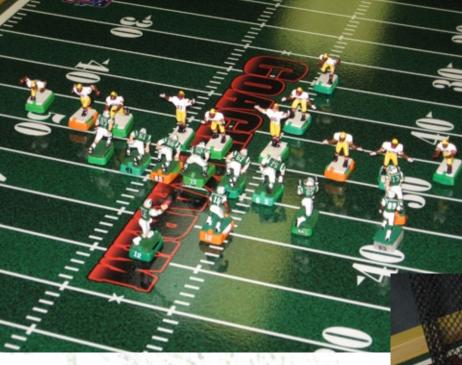
Back came the Redskins! The Redskins returned the ensuing kick-off 66 yards to the Jets' 28 yard line. On the next play #42 got open, as he did all weekend, and Boddie completed the pass moving the ball to the 9 yard line. On the next play Redskin QB #17 ran the draw and scored to make it 17-7 Jets at the half.

JETS	HALFTIME STATISTICS	REDSKINS
5	First Downs	4
0	Rush Yards	3
206	Passing Yards	89
8/22	Pass Att / Comp	6/15
1 of 4	Third Down Conversions	2 of 6
1/10	Penalties / Yards	1/5
1/-10	Sacks / Yards Lost	4/-38
26	Offensive Plays	26
15:35	Time of Possession	14:25



game tying 40 yard field goal. (Jets 17 – Redskins 17)

On the ensuing kickoff...great kick-off coverage forced the Jets to start with the ball at their own 20, and an incomplete pass and two small gains, left the Jets facing a 4th and 1. The start of the fourth quarter had the Jets punting once again. The result of the punt was a 32 yard punt return, to give the Redskins great field position at the Jets' 38 yard line. On first down, Coach Boddie completed a pass to #87, who advanced the ball to the Jets' 20. The Redskins picked up 16 yards and another first down on their next play. Then, on third and seven, Boddie left the ball with his quarterback (#17) on a bootleg left and scored his second touchdown of the day, as the Redskins' led for the first time in the game, 24-17.



# SECOND HALF

The Redskins had an uphill battle in front of them, but they continued the momentum they had in the first half. Coach Boddie's Redskins opened the second half with the ball and went right to work. They drove 70 yards in 7 plays, while completing six consecutive passes. They finished off the drive with an 11 yard touchdown pass to #89 and the Red-



Back came the Jets...following an excellent kick-off return to the Redskins 48 yard line, Coach Greco put together his best Jet drive of the second half, moving the ball to the Redskins' 26 yard line. But four consecutive incomplete passes led to a turnover on downs. Following his defensive stand, Coach Boddie put together a drive to seal the victory. The Redskins moved the ball to the Jets' 44 and, and on 1st down, he completed a pass to a player who was getting open all day long... #89. He broke free... ran past a couple defenders... and into the end zone. The Redskins now held a two score lead 31-17 in the fourth quarter.

The Jets Coach Greco battled furiously to the end, but hopes of a miracle comeback were dashed as the Redskins defense sacked the Jet quarterback on fourth and 10, as the game came to an end... Final 31-17 and Coach Boddie and his Redskins were BAM Super Bowl II Champions!

# BAM SUPER BOWL II FINAL STATISTICS

Jets		Redskins
5/12/0	Rushing: Car/Yds./TD	4/12/2
11/33/233/2	Passing: Att/Comp/Yds./ TD	19/34/317/2
3/-28	Sacked: #/Yds. Lost	5/-54
79.48	Passer Rating	107.11
28:37	Time of Possession	31:23
5/4	Sacks/Hurries	4/3

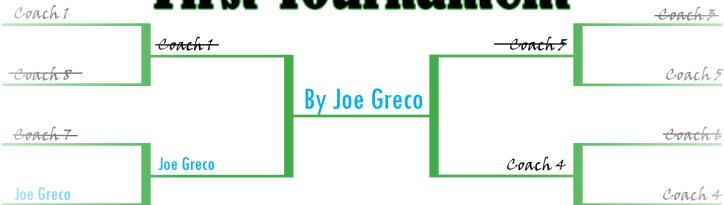








# How to Prepare for Your **First Tournament**



Today we have many coaches who are either just getting back into the hobby or have played solitaire and would now like to either join a league or perhaps participate in their first tournament. Having returned to Miniature Football myself back in early 2006, it can be very intimidating when you first venture back into playing competitively. I went with my son to the 2006 Miggle Convention in Baltimore to see what it was all about and to familiarize myself with how the game was now being played. Seeing all the coaches with their teams getting ready, all the familiarity and camaraderie among everyone there and then watching the tournament unfold, left me a little apprehensive about actually participating in the future.

That all changed when I decided to play in the BuzzFest Tournament in March 2006. Having played in that first tournament and then numerous ones thereafter, I would like to take this opportunity to help you prepare for your first time back. The purpose of this article is not to necessarily discuss strategy, but rather to make you approach your first tournament feeling a little more comfortable. One thing to keep in mind is that the coaches and tournament organizers are extremely happy to see new coaches join the hobby and will really embrace you.



Once you have decided to play in a tournament the most important thing you can do is to get a copy of the rules under which you will be playing. I cannot emphasize this enough. The one thing that always amazes me is how many coaches simply show up at a tournament and have not familiarized themselves with that tournament's particular rules. You should always carry a copy of the rules with you to refer to. Do not take for granted that the coach that you are playing knows all the rules, because he probably



Article author, Joe Greco, poses with his MFCA Leather Helmet award after competing at the 2009 MFCA Convention. These awards are symbols of achievement showing that we have properly prepared for the event.

THE TWEAK WINTER 2009 33

doesn't. Do not be afraid to take out and refer to the rules, if you have any uncertainty as to how a certain situation should be handled.

The rules themselves help define the type of team that you should bring to the tournament. The first thing I look at is the maximum number of figures that you are allowed to have and if your team can all be in one color uniform or if you have to play offense in dark and defense in white. This is extremely important when building your team. Playing with one color is a lot simpler, as you can use some of the same players for offense, defense (if you choose) and most importantly special teams. Most tournaments have some form of kick-offs, which require kick coverage. When playing with offense in dark and defense in white you must make sure that you have enough defensive players that have the ability (speed) to get down the field to cover kicks. I have seen many tournament games decided by a kick return going for a touchdown.



Be sure to attend the coaches meeting, held prior to the event and don't be afraid to ask questions. Many issues, that could arise during the event, can be avioded with a well run rules meeting complete with on field demonstrations. These photos are from the 2009 Miggle Coaches Meeting.



You must also check to see what the maximum weight is for the figures and if custom figures are allowed. In the past, most tournaments were simply 3.2 or 3.3 grams (figure plus base weight) in weight, so you basically just took your Miggle figure and put him on a base and were good to go. With all the advancements in the hobby this is no longer the case. If you are playing in a tournament, which has a higher weight limit, say 4.0 grams, you want to make sure that your players are brought up to that weight to help you be more competitive. You should check your rules to see what substances are permitted for bringing your team up to weight. In addition, most all tournaments require that your team be "checked-in" to be

inspected for compliance with the rules (weight, figures etc.), so you should arrive on the scene having already weighed your team and included in your box everything that you will need to compete. The next thing that I do is carefully read the rules as there are many different rule sets.



When looking at the rules I focus on several main areas:

## Set-up and audibles

Some tournaments strictly require set-up within a certain amount of time, others have guidelines to be followed. You should be prepared to set-up your offense and defense in a proper and timely manner. Nothing aggravates an experienced coach more than when his opponent continually lines up off sides, or with an improper number of men on the line of scrimmage etc. It tends to slow the game down to a crawl. Likewise nothing impresses an experienced coach more than when a new player arrives on the scene and lines up properly and in a appropriate amount of time. After your initial set-up you should know which players and how many the offense is allowed to pivot and likewise how many the defense is allowed to counter with.

## Running Game

There are a few basic factors that I look at in the running game. The first one is how many men you are allowed to have in the backfield. Many tournaments only allow you to have a quarterback and up to two running backs, whereas others allow you to have three. Secondly, I look to see is if the QB is allowed to pitch the ball or not. In some tournaments you simply call out the number of the runner and then the board is turned on. In other tournaments you are allowed to start the running play with the QB having the ball, turn the board off and then decide if you want to keep the ball with the QB or pitch the ball to another eligible back. You should also check to see who controls the switch on a straight running play. In some tournaments, if you are simply going to let a running back carry the ball, the defense would run the switch until the play is completed.

## **Passing Game**

This is an area where you will find the most variations. Some tournaments simply use "Stop and Pop", where you throw the ball to an open receiver using a TTQB or TDQ quarterback. Other tournaments allow you to use "Passing Sticks", where the ball is not actually thrown, but rather an eligible receiver runs towards a "football" that is placed a designated distance from the receiver and the pass is deemed complete if he hits the marker. Still other tournaments have you replace the eligible receiver with

34 WINTER 2009 THE TWEAK

a "Target" that you would have to hit for a pass to be completed. There are too many differences to go into here however, the tournament rules should clearly detail the method that they are using. If you require additional information regarding any of these methods it can be found by doing a search on the MFCA forum.

Within the passing game you should also pay particular attention to the rules governing a "Sack" particularly whether you can simply throw the ball away if you do not have an eligible receiver open or if this is considered a "Coverage Sack." Once again the rules should clearly cover each of these areas.

#### Defense

You could write an entire book on defense. For the purpose of this article I will just point out a few things to look for. You should check to see if there are any guidelines with regard to the initial set-up prior to a play. Most tournaments have some limitations regarding the "Stacking" of players. You should check to see what spacing between players is required. You should look to see if there are any limitations regarding the figures themselves that you are allowed to use. Some tournaments may limit the number of "Cover Corners" (players with their arms outstretched) that you are allowed to use for covering receivers. You should also check to see if you are allowed to adjust player's dials during a play. Many coaches will have their safeties set to spin, as if they are in zone coverage, and will then adjust the dial to make a tackle on a receiver after the completion of a pass.



Don't let a misunderstanding of the rules lead to this! Knowing the rules of the tournament, being prepared and asking questions ahead of time will help not only you, but all coaches, so that everyone can have a good time, fair play and a fun and successful tournament experience.



Pre-game setup is important! Make sure you have all equipment needed to play the game, copy of rules, QB's and Kickers, balls and extra balls, passing equipment such as sticks and targets, yard markers and timers.

## Special Teams

As I mentioned earlier, you should make sure that the team you bring includes

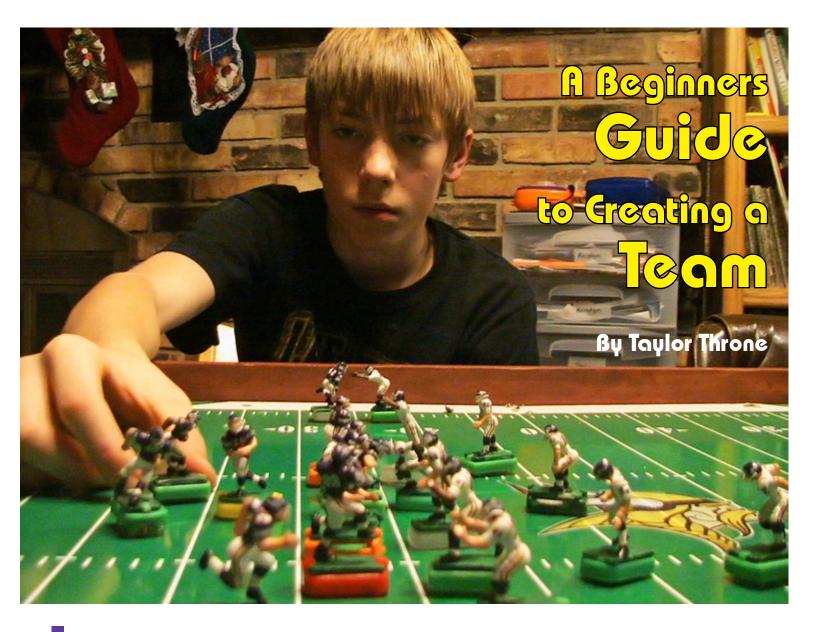
players that can play special teams. For covering kicks, you want players that can run straight and are reasonably quick, for returning kicks you want players that can block up front and a return man that can run the length of the field. Many tournament games are decided on a kick being returned for a touchdown.

I have also found that one of the most important weapons in Min-



iature Football is to have a great Field Goal kicker. I have seen many games decided because one coach either did not bring a field goal kicker, or did not have the confidence to attempt a long field goal or simply missed a kick. While it may take you a while to become a good passer or to develop a strong running game, there is nothing that prevents you from immediately having a great field goal kicker. Any time that you can put points on the board, that just moves you closer to advancing in a tournament.

I hope that you have found this article to be worthwhile in your preparation. If anyone has any questions or could use a little more detailed information please do not hesitate to send me a PM on the message board. At your first tournament do not be afraid to ask questions, everyone is extremely willing to help you. Most of all...just have fun!



n this article, I will walk you through, step by step, on how to create a team. This is the quick and easy guide to get you started in the world of Miniature Football. I hope this is helpful, especially for coaches just getting back into the hobby. First, you need to choose your team. It can be a college team, an NFL team or even a fantasy team. It's your choice.

## **Getting Started** Researching the Team and Purchasing Figures

Once you have decided on your team, you will need to find its' roster and depth chart. This can take hours to find, or it could be just a few minutes. Your team can consist of 80 guys, 50 guys, 35 guys, or even just 22 guys. Finding a website that has your team's depth chart is the first thing. Secondly, you will need to put important information, such as the player's name, position, number, and skin tone, into a spread sheet document, such as excel. Once your excel document is completed, you should print it off and keep it beside you for the moment. Now comes the fun part...researching for your team. Find pictures of players on that team and use them as inspiration for the figures you are about to paint. For example, did they wear gloves, have special pads on or use certain brands of shoes. Also, find out if your team's offensive line was a zone blocking team, or if your team ran the west coast offense. Some other information you need to find out is your team's defense. See if they ran a 4-3 or a 3-4, a 3-3-5, etc.

Once you have researched your team, the next step is to order your figures. If you are going all out on your team and are building them for 4.0 grams, then I recommend you order FF.net figures and some Fab 5 figures from Miggle. If you are just creating a team for you to play around with, or to compete at a lower weight limit with, then I recommend purchasing some nice Buzzball and Miggle figures, but it really matters on what your taste in figures is. So, at this point you have received your figures. You need to take them to the lab



and remove the excess plastic with an emery board and an exacto knife, and then you should give your players a bath in soapy water, preferably cold water.

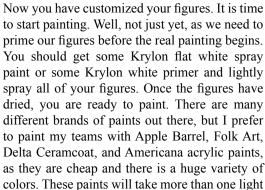
Now you are ready to start customizing your figures, which is an optional step. Hopefully, you know what you are going to do with each player. Each player should have a specific purpose, whether that is to loop around the right tackle or left tackle as a running back, or to be a blitzing line backer, with no arms exposed to get hooked.

## Customizing and Painting

Customizing is pretty simple and there have been many articles written in this magazine, over the last two years, with examples of different methods of customizing, so I will give you my quick and easy way to customize. First, buy an exacto knife, epoxies sculpt (optional), a Bic lighter, some "CA" super glue, and Zip Kicker Accelerator. Simply cut the arms off of your figures and reposition them, or move the figure back on the platform, bend an arm with the heat of a lighter and dump the figure into cold ice water, etc. Experimenting with

different poses of the figures is part of the fun, and more than likely, you will form a new pose no one has seen before or is unique to the player.





colors. These paints will take more than one light coat though. If you are looking for a guide to buy paints for each NFL team, then you can try the following website: http://www.sport-slizard.com/customs\_paint\_nfl.php. Another source of paints can be found at Miggle.com. Miggle supplies a variety of colors and sells high quality paints specifically for this hobby.

A quick "in between" step, before you start painting, would be to buy some decals online. You could also make your own decals, as shown in a previous article done by Al Dunham. Al gave complete instructions in the Fall 2008 issue of *The Tweak*. I recommend, however, that you purchase decals when you are a beginner. There are several coaches who offer high quality decals for a variety of teams.

Now is the time to start painting. You have made a quick trip to the craft store to buy your paints (even Wal-Mart carries most acrylic paints) including the jersey's color, the pants' color, the helmet color, white, black, and white and black skin tones. Before you start painting though, make sure you take a look at your team's color scheme and uniform first. When purchasing brushes, you will also need to pick up some 10/0 spotters and liners or 5/0 spotters or liners. Then get three flat tipped brushes; one that is small (you will use this for decaling) and two that are medium sized. You will use these for applying a clear coat or painting the base of your player. Another thing that you should pick up would be some gloss "Modge Podge" (glue for applying facemask). Also get some green paint to paint the platform of your player. A good site to see your team's color scheme is at: http://www.weirdwolf.net/FFP/

I like to paint one player from head to toe first, to see what my team will look like. Get out one of your figures and paint his skin, followed by his jersey, then pants, helmet, socks, and shoes. After this, carefully paint the platform. Your first player has just been created (make sure you leave breaks in between painting each different color). Now you can assembly line paint, by painting all of the players' skins, followed by all of the players' jerseys, pants, helmets, socks, and shoes. Then you can paint all of the players' platforms. There is no need to be super precise when painting the skin tone. The rest should be semi-precise.



So, your team is painted, but not looking too good? This is the touch up stage, where you go back to each player and make it "perfect". Once you are happy with your team after making the small touch ups, it is time to start decaling. When I decal, I like to use scissors that are very small, so you can cut with some detail. You can deliberately cut the decal out, as long as you don't interfere with any other decals. Place the decal into water that is at room temperature. Wait about a minute and pull out with a wide tipped paint brush. Press the decal against the table that you are decaling on and "drag" it-carefully. It should come off easily, so now you can apply it to your figure. You do not have to be precise when applying it, just get it on there. Then take your exacto knife and move it into position. Next, take some toilet paper and get the excess water off the decal. Perfect! You can now spray the player with decal bonder from Testors or Testors 1261, which seals the decal in. Keep decaling your team until your team is entirely finished.

## Facemask and Chinstraps

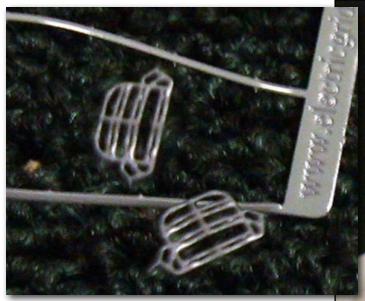
The next step is to order some facemasks. If you are doing a modern team, then order from either Miggle.com or go to the MFCA website... click electric gridiron and order the "Revo" facemasks. If you are doing a team from the 70's, order the throwback facemasks. Before you put on the facemask, you need to put on the chinstraps first. To do this, you will need to take some white paint and paint a dab on the chin of your player. Then you can take some masking tape and spray paint it in the white that you used in the beginning to prime your players. Once the paint has dried, cut the tape into very small strips...this is what you are going to use for chinstraps. Next, put a dab of Modge Podge at the chin and apply the chinstraps. You can skip this step all together if you wish, by purchasing the chinstraps from Miggle.com, but you still may want to

use some Modge Podge when applying the chinstrap. Now it is time for your facemasks. First, twist them off the spruce and "bend" them into a perfect curve around the handle of a paint brush. Take a spotter paint brush and dab some gloss or matte Modge Podge onto the sides of the helmet, then simply apply the facemask to it, making sure the facemask is in the position you want before you set them aside to dry.

Once you have applied facemasks to your entire team, you will need to seal them. Do you want your team to be flat or gloss, or flat with a glossy helmet? If you want your team to be all flat, then take Krylon matte finish and spray your entire team. If you want your team to be all gloss, then take Testors 1261 and spray your team with that. If you want your team to be both gloss and matte, then I recommend

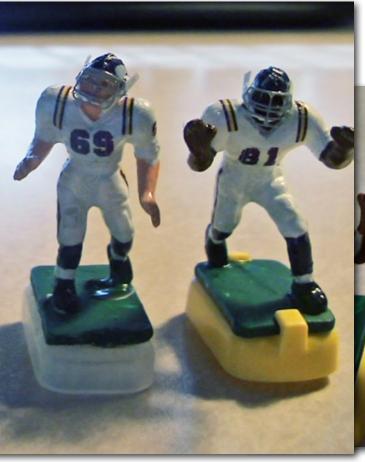


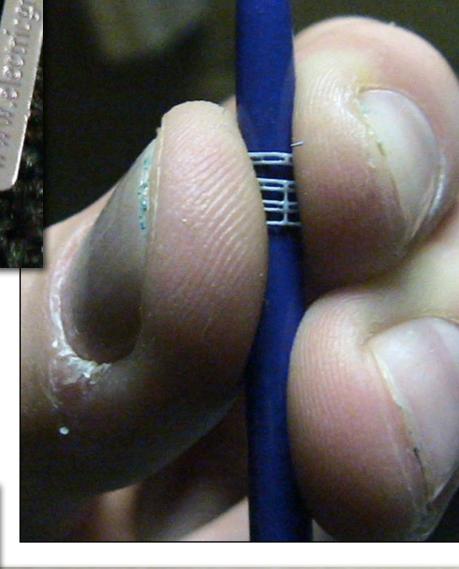




you buy Delta Ceramcoat gloss and spray your team with either Testors 1260 or Krylon matte finish and then brush the gloss to the helmet. An optional thing to do is to take some modge podge and apply that to the bottom of your platform. Next, dip your figure into a bucket of sawdust (this is perfect for grass), then paint it green!

Congratulations! You have created an "MF" team. Now base them up and they are ready to hit the field. I hope that you have been inspired to get out there and paint your own team! Next time: More on how to customize.







THE TWEAK WINTER 2009 39

# THE MFCA REMEMBERS RHIANNA LOUISE RUTLEDGE

MAY 24, 1991 TO DECEMBER 24, 2009



Rhianna was an up and coming premed student at Texas Tech University when she lost her life. A day before her untimely death, Rhianna was doing something that she did so many other times before, and that was: serving people, handing out food, comforting the homeless and giving gifts to people for the Vernon Wells Perfect 10 Foundation. These acts of kindness were just a small indication of the amazing life she lead.

In a time when young people are questioning ethics and morality, Rhianna lived an exemplary life, as she was a Christian woman, who loved everyone she came in contact with. Her life is a testament to what is good about the human spirit and the gift of family, charity, service and hope.

THE AMAZINGRHIANNA FOUNDATION
PO Box 151598
Arlington, TX 76015
www.amazingrhianna.com

