

Super Sportscaster Curt Menefee

written by
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Super Bowl XLV may be a month away, but sportscaster Curt Menefee's been preparing for the pigskin championship all his life. He's not so much an Xs and Os man, but an inquisitive sideline guy, picking up personal strategies and player stories to advance NFL game-day coverage for Fox Sports.

The scouting report on Menefee himself starts just down the road in Atlanta, where he grew up playing football as well as baseball. He knew he wanted to cover sports for a living and ran the gutsy option to attend Coe College in Iowa, even though it didn't have a journalism or communications program.

Almost 30 years later, one could argue Menefee has scored the ultimate professional touchdown by fronting "Fox NFL Sunday," America's most-watched pregame show. The engaging sports- and people-lover holds a ticket to travel the world following the game, its players and fans. TALK Greenville caught up with the single sportscaster on his way to Dallas-Fort Worth, the site of Super Bowl XLV.

TALK Greenville: So you're counting down to the big day?

Curt Menefee: The Super Bowl host

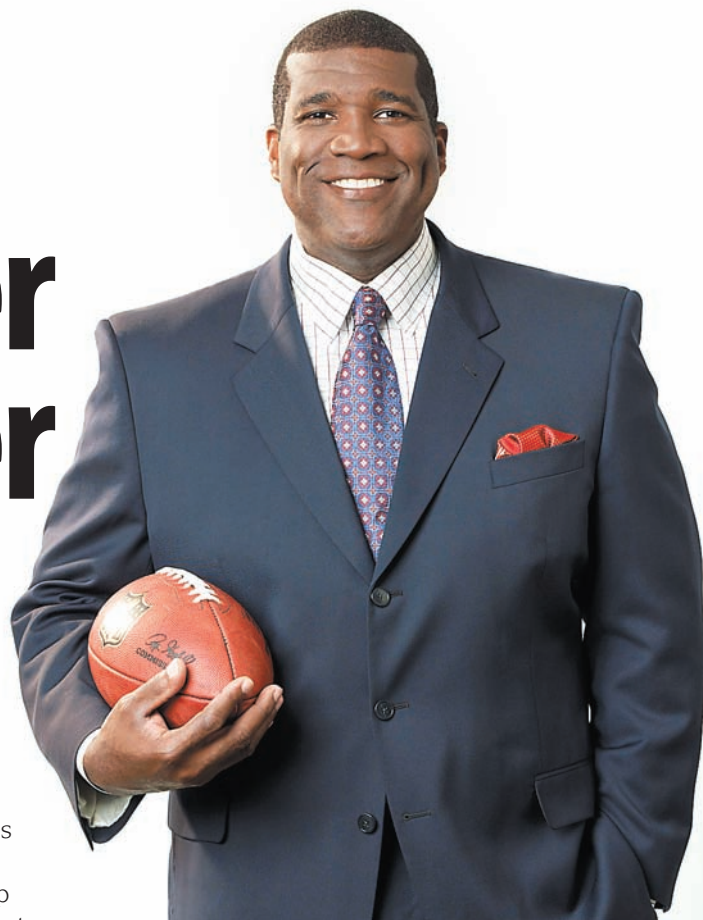


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committee has a big event tomorrow. I'm going to be the master of ceremonies. Jerry Jones will be there, the governor of Texas, Rick Perry, Troy, Emmitt, Drew Pearson, Tony Dorsett.

TG: Do you call the new stadium JerryWorld or the Death Star, like the locals?

CM: (laughing) I'm kind of leaning toward JerryWorld right now. It's fantastic. I've been all over the world and there's nothing like Jerry's place. If you've been to the stadium in Houston, Reliant, it was the biggest stadium in America and this is twice the square footage.

TG: Is such excess PC in today's economy?

CM: The economy has been terrible for a lot of people. But in all honesty... they're still going to sporting events. If you look at attendance for big-time college sports and the NFL, it hasn't been affected in most markets. People

like the novelty of the biggest, the baddest, the best. Everybody wants to be a part of that, no matter what it is.

TG: It's too early to know who's playing, but what can viewers expect on Super Bowl Sunday?

CM: The bottom line: The two teams that are there will be the best two teams to represent their conference. You have the two teams that have made it through the playoffs, which is the toughest time of year to play. Once you get to the post-season, it's a different game. We saw the New Orleans Saints last year. They won their first 13 games and then lost the last three and everybody's like, "Nobody's ever lost three in a row and won a Super Bowl." Not only do they get to the Super Bowl, but they won it and they won it in convincing fashion there in the fourth quarter.

TG: It's the most-watched sporting event in America. What's that like for you?

CM: It kind of goes back to what I was saying earlier. Anything you do in life and say you're going to be a part of ... the biggest, the best? How can you not be honored by that? How can you not have fun? I mean, my gosh! I get paid to talk about football for a living!

TG: You played in high school.

CM: I was one of those smart jocks. You know how there's always one to two really good students, yet really good athletes? I was a jock. I was also with all the nerds too. I was the bridge between the two groups. I blew out my knee in high school. It forced me to look at what I wanted to do. I liked sports, I wanted to be around it somehow and I explored sports journalism.

TG: You enrolled at Coe College, a Division III school in Cedar Rapids.

CM: I think it goes back to my sense of adventure. The culture and everything was so different, but it fostered a lot of other things in me. The exploration and going, it turned out to be a really good experience. It's one of those kinds of things that's come full circle. Yesterday I received confirmation I was elected to the Coe College board of trustees.

TG: Congrats! How has being from the South made you the man you are?

CM: I think it teaches you respect.

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ABOVE AND LEFT
Having fun at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital while shooting a public service announcement with his fellow football commentators and patients.

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How to respect other people, whether you call it neighborly or friendly. The person I am is certainly set up by Atlanta and that Southern foundation, that Southern tradition of kindness.

TG: You love to travel and take that respect on the road.

CM: Yeah. I've been to more than 60 countries on all seven continents. I like people! I just like meeting and talking to different people. As human beings, you find out everybody's the same, no matter where you go. It doesn't matter what language they speak, how much they make, where they live. They're trying to get the same things done. They're trying to get by and provide for their families.

TG: So you blend in?

CM: In this past off-season, I went back to Argentina and spent six weeks there. I just kind of lived the life of a stranger in a strange land and worked on my travel Spanish, which is still horrible. You learn to function on a daily basis, how to go to the grocery store, how to get your laundry done, how to travel. I was a history major, so I enjoy that part of it as well. I've been up in the pyramids and seen the Coliseum and the Parthenon, and things you read about when you're in seventh, eighth, ninth grade. I've been on the Nile, and you think, "Holy cow! These things are real." It's something you read about and know it was there 5,000 years ago and find out it still exists.

TG: As a local sportscaster in NYC, watching the World Trade Center burn made a difference in your existence.

CM: I think that has as much to do with where I am today as anything else. 2001 was going great, and people were living their life going, "I'm going to retire at 40 and do this and that." Well, sometimes you don't get to live to be 40. Following that, when my contract was up, I said I didn't want to do local sports anymore. I want to take some time off, I want to see the world, I want to be around live events more than newscasts. I want to go out and live the life I want to live. It made me make some changes.

TG: And now here you are at the Super Bowl. The biggest, the baddest, the best. 🍷

**Super Bowl XLV can be seen Feb. 6 on
WHNS Fox 21.**