

# Remaining true blue most important trait

*Team TGI, I want to introduce you to a lifelong friend and fellow Penn Stater, Robyn, who's a Bills fan but also has a special place in her heart for your Giants and most importantly — to me, at least — the Nittany Lions! I hope you enjoy her wonderful piece on being a true fan — all while hopefully making Giants fans realize that you can always have it worse. —KP*

It's more fun to root for a winner, but sometimes everyone needs to root for a loser. I should know; I'm a lifelong Buffalo Bills fan.

I was born into the Bills thanks to multi-generational ties to western New York, with its blustery, eight-month winters, its tasty hot wings and its working class fans, who stick with their team through long odds and, at this point, sometimes any semblance of logic. Despite multiple moves over the years that took me deep into the territories of the Buccaneers, your beloved Giants, Panthers and Steelers, I've held strong to my Buffalo roots — and been the butt of plenty of jokes because of it.

deemed worthy of his fickle, Calvin-like allegiance. His 8-year-old brother began offering alternatives.

"What about the Ravens? The Patriots? You like Bears," he said, his helpfulness no doubt a byproduct of the buzz that came with knowing the team he'd been rooting for had beaten his brother's.

Before the first-grader could make his selection, however, I quietly asserted that perhaps he shouldn't be so fair-weathered with his fandom.

"You know, the Panthers were actually the second best team in the NFL this year. And anyway, you know what Mommy's team is?" I pointed to the giant red buffalo on my T-shirt. "The Buffalo Bills. Did you know I've been rooting for them my whole life, even though the Bills lost FOUR SUPER BOWLS IN A ROW?"

"Whoa," breathed the 8-year-old, clearly impressed by such a stunning feat of ... ineptitude.

Evan blinked and squinted at me. "What? Why would you stay with them? Mommy there are lots of other teams...." he began, trying to ease me back toward the side of logic.

"Not everybody can win every year," I said. 'Or any year,' I heard in my head, as years of punchlines being hurled in my direction had honed my self-deprecation abilities to razor sharpness.

But I didn't want this to be about losers and winners.

"You know how some kids in your class are really super smart and others

struggle sometimes? Imagine if nobody ever cheered or encouraged the kids who struggle or make a mistake," I said, wishing Scott Norwood could hear me now. "Everybody deserves encouragement, don't you think? Everyone needs someone in their corner, cheering for them. I think every team should have fans, no matter if they win or lose."

Evan considered this quietly for a moment.

"Well I think my favorite teams are still the Panthers," he said, while I mentally pounded



## IT COULD BE WORSE...

Robyn Passante has stayed true to the Bills despite their 'stunning feats of ineptitude.'

my own fists. "And the Nittany Lions," he continued, and the Penn Stater inside me beamed almost as proudly as the mom inside me.

"And the Wolverines," declared my superhero-obsessed son. "But probably Wolverines best of all."

At that point I did what any parent in my shoes would do — I kissed his sweet head and told him I was very proud of his Panthers team, and that he couldn't have any breakfast until he took back that last part.

I've held strong to my Buffalo roots — and been the butt of plenty of jokes because of it.

*Robyn Passante*



But those ties came in handy in February, when my 6-year-old, Evan, awoke, eager to hear whether the Carolina Panthers, the team he'd rooted so hard for in the first half of last season's Super Bowl, had pulled out a win in the big game. I tried to let him down gently. "No, sorry buddy," I said. "The Broncos won." He was upset for a moment, but then brightened.

"Well I'm changing my team then," he said, mulling over which other mascot should be