How to be a Football Mom

They may cheer for different schools, but these Katy moms are on the same team when it comes to supporting their sons on the football field



Written by Tassie Hewitt | Photography by Sara Isola

Nothing signals fall like the first football game of the season. A group huddles together in matching jerseys while sizing up their opponents. As the first notes of the fight song blare across the field, they break and position themselves in the bleachers, pulling dark sunglasses out of their bags in one synchronized move. They are formidable, fierce, and fearless. They are the football moms.



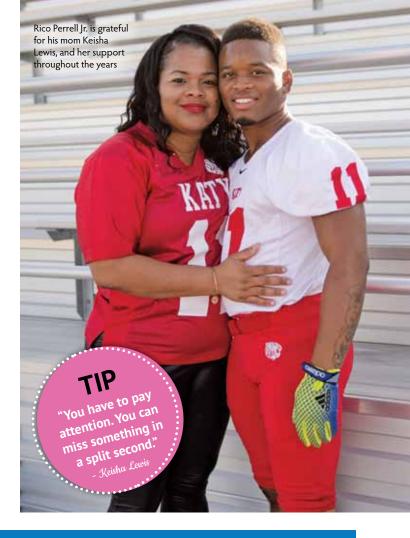
While some moms like Tinsley grew up in football families, others, like Keisha Lewis, are new to the game along with its rules and traditions.

The first game she attended made her turn red. "I was new to the area, and I wasn't aware of how big football was and how everything was done," explained Lewis, whose son, Rico Perrell, Jr., is a senior running back and wide receiver for Katy High School. "I just grabbed something out of the closet and threw it on. When we showed up, everybody had on red. I was so embarrassed."

Like other dedicated football moms, Lewis now wears her school colors and makes her son's games a priority. "Whatever I have to do, the game comes first. The kids may not act like it, but it's important to them that you're there for them every step of the way," Lewis says. "The football family at Katy is close-knit. It's a community. I've never seen anything like it. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world."

One Big Family

With all the that time players, parents, and coaches spend together at games, pep rallies, and team events, it is no surprise that special bonds form both on the field and in the bleachers.



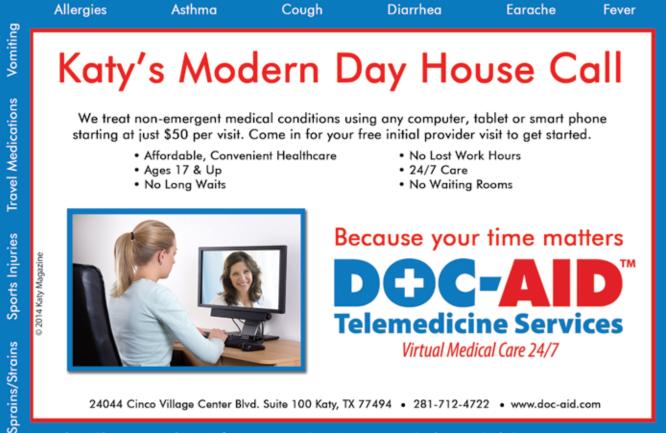
Flu/Colds

Headaches

Infections

Medication Refills

Nausea



Respiratory

Rash

Pink Eye

Sinus Infections

Sore Throat



"We get to know each other through football," says Julie Schwarz, whose son Eddie Schwarz is a senior defensive lineman at Taylor High School. "I always thought Katy would be a great place to live if you didn't have family nearby, because we're like one big family. It's Texas. It's excitement. This is what it's all about."

Eddie Schwarz agrees. "We have a great brotherhood, a neat coaching staff, and great fan support," he says. "A lot of my motivation comes from my teammates. You want to play well for them. They're working hard, too."

Even players who are new to the area feel the positive spirit of Katy football. "Everyone is loving and caring," says Rico Perrell Jr., senior running back at Katy High School who moved to Katy his junior year. "The first day I came, they took me in like a brother. They didn't treat me like a stranger. It was a warm welcome. I'm really blessed and honored to be with Katy."

Going into Overtime

Football moms go to great lengths to make sure all the players know they are superstars. Volunteers take turns hosting meals for the teams and coaches. They decorate locker rooms before the games and pack snacks for their teams to eat on the bus. They set up tunnels for their teams to run through at the games and line up on the field to cheer





their players to victory. They are active members of the booster club. "I enjoy going out and supporting the whole team," says Tinsley. "As a senior parent, I really like the line that we form outside the locker room and the prayer that we say before each game. Those are things that make it special."

Safety is Priority

To football moms, safety is worth more than two points. "Injury is my number one concern," says Hughes. "We're usually praying, closing one eye, and watching the game with the other."

Other moms consider the emotional health of their sons as well. "I don't want this to be the highlight of their lives," says Lacy. "I want them to know this is just a small portion of the amazing life they're going to have."

Still, the life lessons that players gain from football far exceed the risks involved. "There are a lot of lessons that come out of playing football, [including] to work hard and not give up just because the going gets tough or something is confronting you," says Letter.

Thanking Mom

Players notice and appreciate the support from the coaches, fans and community, and especially from their moms. "That she comes to the games makes me play better," says Perrell. "She knows me and knows where I come from and what I've been through."

In fact, football moms know all the dirt. They are there each afternoon, holding their noses as they collect their son's practice clothes. They are there to coach and cheer.

"It's more than just the whole washing of my clothes," says Letter. "She helps me a lot with the emotional side. Not giving up is always a big thing in our family." Their support means everything to Tinsley. "It's one thing to have your team support, but it's another thing to have your family's especially your mom's," he says. "That's the greatest support you can have."

Win or Lose

Football moms stay until the last note of the fight song fades into the distance and cheer until the final player disappears from the field. On game night, whether they bandage and encourage or congratulate and celebrate, they know that every player is a winner. That's all that matters for this team behind the team. They are visible, vocal, and victorious. They are football moms. KM

TASSIE HEWITT is a freelance writer and former Taylor football mom who wore blue to all the games and trained herself not to blink when her son was on the field.



- Learn the game well.
- Be ready for extreme weather.
- Order your mom spirit wear early.
- Establish fun game day traditions.
- Don't be a hover mother or a coach.
- Relax and have fun. These days will fly by!

