

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



938 Negotiating with Tom Brady — How Would You do?

Tom Brady threw a short pass to Mike Evans in the end zone a few days ago, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers were well on their way to a win over the Chicago Bears. It's what happened after the play that got everybody buzzing. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's next, on The Extra Point.

Tom Brady threw the ball, receiver Mike Evans caught it for the touchdown. Evans then went to the end zone seats and — as he usually does — handed the ball to a fan as a great surprise souvenir. This particular fan, Byron Kennedy, happened to be wearing a Mike Evans jersey. Evans spotted him standing between two Bears fans and gave it to him. Evans then slapped hands with Brady and both players ran back to the Tampa bench.

The announcers began talking about the play being Brady's 600th career touchdown pass, then showed a short video clip of a Tampa Bay staffer telling Evans that he had just given away this special ball. Evans' reaction was, "What, I just gave that ball away?" It's not even clear if Brady was aware of the significance of the play.

Then, minutes later, there was another shot of a Tampa trainer asking Kennedy for the ball, and he handed it over.

In the aftermath, sports commentators and the Internet exploded. Almost everyone discussing the issue said Kennedy made a mistake in giving up the ball. He should have waited, then worked out a deal with Brady.

When asked later, Kennedy said he told the trainer no twice, then finally gave in when he was told Brady really wanted it, and he was promised another ball, a Brady jersey, and other things. He did ask for a round of golf with Brady.

The Buccaneers came up with a package

which included two signed Brady jerseys and a helmet; a Mike Evans jersey and his cleats from the game; \$1,000 to spend in the Buccaneers store; along with season tickets for the remainder of the 2021 season, and next season as well. All that is likely worth \$7,000-8,000.

An auction house stepped into the fray, saying the ball was probably worth \$500,000. A football analyst chimed in that the man who owned the ball that was Brady's first-ever touchdown pass, in 2001, had recently sold it for \$425,000. Other sources claimed the 600th TD ball might be worth upwards of \$750 thousand to a million — and that's now. Five or ten years from now, it would fetch more.

Brady, when asked, said with a laugh: "Byron realizes that he gave up all of his leverage when he gave the ball away. He should have held onto it." So, Brady is actually sort of roasting the guy.

After he saw public opinion strongly go against him and the Buccaneers for coming up very short in their compensation to Kennedy, Brady announced he was also kicking in a full bitcoin, on top of the other goodies, finishing off by saying, "At the end of the day, I think he's making out pretty well." Apparently, no golf date with Byron.

There is a lesson here, and Brady taught it with his comment. In a negotiation, the one with the greater leverage will do better. Once your leverage is gone, you're at the mercy of the other party to give you what you want. If Kennedy had taken the ball and locked it up in a safe deposit box, then asked to play golf with Brady, his request almost certainly would have been agreed to — in addition to all the rest.

(Con't.)

Another part of the lesson is that the party who wants it more will give away more. Brady wanted the ball in a big way. If you're negotiating with a party who desperately wants what you have, the best practice is to slow down. The longer you take to respond, the more the other party will want to speed up, and they likely will increase their offer.

Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones commented on this, and said he'd have announced, "I love this ball and I'm going to keep it until I'm 90!" The message that the ball was not for sale would have made Brady — as well as a lot of wealthy memorabilia collectors — chomp at the bit and drive up the price.

Did Byron Kennedy do the right thing? Are the commentators and analysts wrong, and what Kennedy received is more than generous? Did Tom Brady and the Buccaneers play him? What would you do if that ball was in your hands?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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