

× MY FIRST  
Football Game

PEGGY EVANS | 44  
Glen Mills, Pennsylvania

"MY BRUISES  
ARE LIKE  
BADGES  
OF HONOR."

"Four years ago, I started keeping a gratitude journal. About two weeks into it, I realized that everything I was grateful for centered on what my kids did, what my husband did—what other people did. And it hit me, what am I doing to make *me* happy?"

"Soon after that, I heard about a women's national football team nearby—it's now called the Delaware Griffins. Two days later I was trying out. I walked home with a playbook.

"I grew up in Pittsburgh and was a huge Steelers fan. I played in pickup games with neighborhood boys. But this was before Title IX, so girls couldn't play on the big school football team.

"Stepping onto the field the first time—putting on the pads and helmet—I felt like a giddy kid. Of course I was nervous about getting hurt. My husband and some of my friends thought I was nuts. But it actually feels good to get fired up, trash-talk and slam into someone. I love the competition.

"The first game I played, we lost; I think it was 48-0. That season was all about learning—how to catch, how to block. Each game, I picked up a new technique. The next year we were a minute away from making it to our Super Bowl.

"For me, it's thrilling just to outrun women half my age—being able to score, the glory of it all. I'm out there having the time of my life."

—AS TOLD TO DARA PETTINELLI