

Shmanners 359: Collegiate Football (LIVE!)

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[theme music plays]

Travis: There's beach balls being passed around and my ADHD just—just triple-fired.

Teresa: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Travis: "Wah? Huh?!" Hello internet, and Columbus!

[audience cheers]

Travis: I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

[audience cheers loudly]

Teresa: I tried to get in there. It's a double applause.

Travis: Yeah. You really jumped in on my cheers. It's fine.

Teresa: It's a double applause.

Travis: Doesn't feel like it.

[audience cheers]

Travis: Ahem. And you are listening to and watching... Shmanners. Oh no, now the balls are just in the middle of the aisle.

Teresa: It's better this way.

Travis: Okay. You're listening to and watching Shmanners!

[audience cheers]

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear. We've a very long intro for live—

Travis: Yeah, no. I didn't—I've never thought about it before now, and now I'm super aware of it.

Teresa: [simultaneously] For live audiences.

Travis: Uh, I'm so excited to be in one of the best cities in Ohio.

Teresa: [laughs]

[audience cheers]

Travis: It's really up there. I would say one of the best cities in Ohio that starts with C.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Oh no. [wheezes]

Audience Member: Hey!

[scattered cheers]

Travis: It's up there! Top two at least!

[scattered cheers]

Travis: Oh! Ooh la la! What a way to start a show.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Spicy... so, uh—

Teresa: Speaking—

Travis: No, I do. I have a spicy thing I need to address.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: I went to the University of Oklahoma, or as we like to call ourselves, OU.

[audience laughs]

Travis: And I'll say thi—li—listen. Let me get ahead of it. It's UO, and I've never understand that. Why the University of Oklahoma was like, "And we're OU." That's not it. That's not the order of things! It's not the Oklahoma of University. [wheezes] And I've never understood it. But now, being back here—I was born and raised in West Virginia and I spent a lot of time in Ohio.

[one loud whoop]

Travis: West Virginia? Yeah, it rules.

[scattered cheers]

Travis: And I spent a lot of time in Ohio. When I tell people I went to OU, their faces little up! And I say, "Oklahoma." And they crash.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Uh, but much like OU—

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: —uh, the U of O was a big, big football town. And that's what we're talking about. We're talking about college football today.

[scattered cheers]

Travis: And I attended the U of O for four years as a national merit scholar. I don't wanna brag. I'm...

[audience cheers]

Travis: Thank you. I'm on paper smart.

[audience laughs]

Travis: And part of being a national merit scholar is the U of O offered me a full ride scholarship, because they collect... us. And the first home game of every year, they bring the freshman national merit scholars out at halftime on the 50 yard line to wave at the stands!

[audience laughs]

Travis: And that was the only football game I went to.

[audience laughs and applauds]

Travis: [holding back laughter] Now, let us discuss college football!

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Well, my sister went to Ohio State, and—

[audience cheers]

Teresa: Here at OSU. But—

Travis: Is it OSU here? Man, I spent a lot of time talking about OU, didn't I?

Teresa: Yes.

[scattered laughter]

Teresa: I got a little—

Travis: I don't think I'm making it—I'm not making it through the night, am I?

Teresa: —pit in my stomach when you said that. "Does he know?"

Travis: It was a bit. The whole time it was a bit... and I'm sorry.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: But I never went to a game here.

Travis: [simultaneously] I'm not sorry. I'm bigger than all of you put together!

[audience laughs]

Travis: Sorry. Okay. Focus up, focus up, you're right.

Teresa: I have never been to a game here. I did go to a game at Miami of Ohio.

[scattered loud cheers]

Teresa: It was alright. [wheezes]

Travis: Yeah.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Uh, not—not the experience I understand that happens here in this town when there is a football game.

Travis: Do you guys burn couches here?

[audience cheers]

Travis: You do?! I thought that was a WVU thing! Everybody—does everybody burn couches?

Audience: Yeah!

Travis: Where do you get them?!

[audience laughs]

Teresa: It's a college town.

Travis: Don't just say "The trash!" It's like an infinite—it's not like newspaper! There's only so many couches!

Teresa: I mean, but there's a lot of, like, students with weird, bad couches.

Travis: I would love to do a poll of, like, how many people burn couches and then the next day are like, "Oh no."

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "In retrospect, where do I sit now?"

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: "I was gonna binge stuff... "

Teresa: Who knows? You don't have a couch anymore. Sit on the floor! You do deserve it.

Travis: [crosstalk] We lived together for at least six months without a couch once.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah. We didn't burn it.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Just the person we were borrowing it from took it back. At which point we went, "Eh." For six months!

[audience laughs]

Teresa: We did a lot of bed-watching. But anyway, it's fine.

Travis: Don't say it like that!

Teresa: What?

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Sitting on the bed watching the laptop?

Travis: That's different! We sat on the bed! We didn't bed-watch.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Alright. I have to start the show now.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: So... football.

[audience laughs]

Travis: American football.

Teresa: Collegiate football.

Travis: [holding back laughter] American collegiate student football.

Teresa: Yes. Remained largely unorganized until the 1800's. Um, and this is when the intramural games began around college campuses. The murmuring, the whispers of football that began.

Travis: Okay, that's different than what I... hmm. For a second my brain was like, "Yeah. Just two teams would be playing a third team would come in, and now they're all playing each other."

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Well, at the beginning...

Travis: Get out!

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Okay, okay. So, each—

Travis: "Who are you?" "I just joined!" Tackle.

Teresa: [laughs] Each school largely had their own rules regarding football games. Uh, for example...

[audience laughs]

Teresa: I know. I know.

Travis: And no one thought until the 1800's, "Maybe not... this." Okay.

Teresa: Whatever, right?

Travis: You know what? We're just gonna outlaw knives. We can all agree on that? We can all agree, no football knives.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Princeton—

Travis: Harvard's shaking their head.

Teresa: Princeton students played a game called balown. Balown?

Travis: Like they own the ball?

Teresa: As early as 1820. Whereas Dartmouth would play what they called old division football.

Travis: Okay. Alright. We get it.

Teresa: It was like the Wild West out here.

Travis: Yeah, but it's the 1800's. Nothing's that old.

Teresa: Well. But here's the thing, right? You mentioned a third team. And what these games resembled were mob-style games, okay? There was no rule about the amount of players on the field.

Travis: Aww, yeah.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: There was no rule about the amount of players you could have, period. Uh, there was usually some type of goal that needed to be reached. But in order to get the ball—

Travis: Sure. It could've been an emotional one, though.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Sometimes, man. In order to get the ball where it had to go, there were no rules. Any types—

Travis: Just right.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Any types of atrocities—

Travis: [simultaneously] Outback Steakhouse.

Teresa: —that were committed on the field, like, everything's good! I know, right?

Travis: "Hey, man? Did you ruin my credit score?" "Football!"

Teresa: "Football!"

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Harvard was particularly feral, okay? Because—

Travis: What?!

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Because the school started a tradition in 1827 known as bloody Monday.

Travis: Now, I made the joke about Harvard having knives...

Teresa: I know.

Travis: I thought it was a joke!

Teresa: It was not a joke.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Is this what that U2 song is about? No, that's a different thing, isn't it.

Teresa: I don't think so. That's different. That's different.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: So, this—this game was played—it was giant, by the way. It was played between the entire freshman and sophomore classes.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Anybody that wanted to participate... could just go.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: But not juniors. [wheezes]

Teresa: N... no.

[audience laughs]

Travis: I like that they cut out, like, any—"Hey! No! This is your third year, right? You already have lost an eye and a leg. Get out."

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Um, by 1860 it had gotten so out of hand that the town police and college authorities banned the game. Uh, and to protest this, the Harvard students conducted a fake funeral, and declared that they were mourning for Football Fightum, which was a character they'd made to represent their game.

Travis: Okay.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Alright. Can I say? Still better than OU's—sorry, UO's mascot?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: A... wagon.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: What?

Travis: So...

Teresa: It's a wagon?!

Travis: UO's mascot is the Sooner. So, Oklahoma—you guys don't care, but it's called the Sooner State, 'cause it's a bunch of people who cheated in the land rush and left sooner than everyone else. So it's the University of Oklahoma Sooners. How do you display that on a football field? You don't. So you get the Sooner Scooner...

[single loud whoop]

Travis: ... a covered wagon that you ride out. And people cheer for... the wagon? Anyways, back to what you were saying.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [clears throat] Um, this was a very organized funeral procession.

Travis: More organized than the game.

Teresa: Yes.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Because it included four pallbearers, gravestones they made themselves out of wood, uh, and a brass band and a chaplain, who delivered the eulogy.

Travis: All of those kids asked for extensions on papers they were supposed to write.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: I'm sure they did. Um, under pressure from the city of Newhaven, Yale banned the play—the game of football in all forms that same year that Harvard had put the—the kibosh on bloody Monday.

Travis: But was Yale cool about it?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Aww, man. I don't know why I'm disappointed in Yale. I got no ties.

[scattered laughter]

Teresa: Um, just nine years later in 1869, Rutgers University hosted the first formal game of intercollegiate football against Princeton.

Travis: In tuxes.

Teresa: No, not that kind of formal.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But there were rules for this one.

Travis: Oooh!

Teresa: Which is nice. And so, uh—

Travis: First rule: students can't be paid.

[audience laughs]

Travis: It's a real problem.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: The game was very important. And even though Princeton kicked their butts, Rutgers has a cloud—

Travis: Known football powerhouse, Princeton. Are they? I don't know. Seem like nerds to me.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Uh, Rutgers has a plaque, uh, naming themselves the birthplace of college football. [wheezes]

Travis: Okay. I can do that, too.

Teresa: Yeah.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Anybody can.

Travis: I'm the birthplace of college football.

Teresa: The internet these days, you can get anything.

Travis: I'm the birthplace of internet football.

Teresa: [wheezes]

[audience laughs]

Teresa: That's the one. That's it. That's your new degree, next to sexpert.

Travis: I don't have that! Please don't—

[audience laughs]

Travis: I've been trying to fight that thing. I never wrote that. That was said in the intro without my approval for the last 12 years.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Only recently did I realize I could say "Hey, wait a minute."

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Um, and so this is when football really started to catch on in, like, an organized way, instead of a disorganized way. Um, and so between 1890 and 1905, three—

Travis: Nothing happened.

Teresa: No. Actually.

Travis: Oh. I thought it was one of those two.

Teresa: 330 college athletes died.

[audience [[oohs?]]]

Teresa: As a direct result of injuries sustained on the field.

[audience laughs]

Travis: [unintelligible mumbling] [quietly] Over 15 years? You're telling me in 15—in 15 years?

Teresa: [quietly] Yes.

[laughter continues]

Travis: [quietly] That's, like—like 22 a year!

Teresa: [normal volume] I know.

[audience laughs]

Travis: [quietly] Like, 22—[normal volume] 22 a year.

Teresa: So in 1905 Teddy Roosevelt was like, "Hey, guys."

Travis: What?! Teddy Roosevelt was like, "How many?!"

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "No! What?!"

Teresa: He was like, "We gotta do something about this."

Travis: "What?!"

Teresa: "It's a—it's a lot." Um, and so—okay. Historians are still debating whether or not Roosevelt actually said "Hey, let's fix this" or "No football for anyone."

Travis: I hope it's that second one. And then people were like, "Hey, Teddy. Come over here."

Teresa: [laughs] "We can't do that."

Travis: "You can't just say that." "Alright. No football for the mean kids."

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: "Only the gentle boys."

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] So on October 9th, 1905, Roosevelt held a meeting with a football reps from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton—

Travis: And they beat him up! [wheeze-laughs]

[audience laughs]

Teresa: No.

Travis: Before we started this show I looked at Teresa and said, "I've got a lot of energy. You're gonna hate it."

Teresa: Yes he did.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: He did say that. He did say that. And he was right!

Travis: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [takes a deep breath]

[theme music plays]

[music plays]

[music plays]

Speaker 1: I'm glad you said that, 'cause nobody says that!

Speaker 2: Can I just say thank you to you for such a thoughtful interview?

Speaker 3: Oh my god, yeah. I think you nailed it. [laughs]

Jesse: Bullseye: interviews with creators you love and creators you need to know. Listen to the Bullseye podcast, only from NPR and Maximum Fun.

[music and ad end]

[music plays]

Dan: Hey! I'm Dan McCoy.

Stuart: I'm Stuart Wellington.

Elliott: And I'm Elliott Kalan.

Dan: Listen. You like podcasts, right? Sure you do, don't try and lie to me. You're listening to one right now. So why not try a different one called our one, The Flop House?

Stuart: Uh-huh. And on The Flop House, we watch a movie and talk about it, and then sometimes we also do other stuff.

Elliott: It's all meant to be funny and fun, and we think you'll have a good time. And just to be clear, the name of the podcast is not Our One: The Flop House. It's just called The Flop House.

Dan: [laughs]

Elliott: I do a lot of correcting Dan.

Dan: The Flop House: a lot of correcting Dan.

[music and ad end]

Teresa: So they began to discuss how they could eliminate and reduce these football injuries [whispers] and deaths

Travis: Keep that down.

Teresa: So, um, people were trying to figure out exactly how they could do this. Because, I mean, if you want to play football, being injured is not something that is conducive to playing football. Right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, and so on December 28th, 1905, 62 schools met in New York City to discuss how they could make the game less dangerous.

Travis: First of all, remove the javelins.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Probably, like, the idea of people on the field, right? Limit those.

Travis: Sure. Maybe pads. Helmets.

Teresa: Pads, helmets.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Who knows? And so it was understood pretty quickly that what they needed was an external governing body. And so from this meeting in December the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States was born. It is a very, very clumsy acronym. IAAUS.

Travis: Iaaus!

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Which is now better known as the NCAA.

Travis: That makes a lot more sense.

[scattered boos]

Teresa: Right. Oh?

Travis: Oh, sorry, no, we hate it.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Where are we at?

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Sorry, hold on. Where are we at? Just, uh...

[audience boos]

Travis: Yeah, boo! I go with the flow!

Teresa: Okay. Um, and so then from 1906 to 1930, the game grew in popularity, began to modernize, and then bowl games started. The original bowl game was in Pasadena, the Rose Bowl.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And then, uh, what really happened to collegiate football was the universities in the South. They take that and they, like, ran with it? Even World War II could not stop football games. Um, and even though many players enlisted in the war, when the 1950's came around, there was a brand new invention that revolutionized America's football obsession. It was...

Travis: Television?

Teresa: Television!

[scattered cheers and boos]

Teresa: Yeah. So—

Travis: You guys have heard of it?

Teresa: [laughs] ABC Sports began broadcasting the game of the week in 1966 and, you know, we've all been obsessed with the Buckeyes ever since.

[audience cheers]

Travis: What?

Teresa: I like to hear the "woo," so I say "Buckeyes."

Travis: Oh, okay.

[audience laughs and cheers]

Teresa: Okay. So, on to some etiquette! Have you ever been tailgating before?

Audience Member: Yeah!

[scattered cheers]

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: You have!

Travis: I mean, I grew up in Huntington, West Virginia. We tailgated. And we've done stuff.

Teresa: Oh. Okay. Well, so what are some things that you should and should not do while you're tailgating?

Travis: You should... get a little drink.

[scattered cheers]

Teresa: Only a little.

Travis: A little.

Teresa: A little bit.

Travis: You should not get too drunk.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah.

Travis: You should not park on people's lawns, unless they charge you \$25 to park there.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: That's consent. That's what that is.

Travis: That's a thing—man. University of Oklahoma. It was one of my favorite things. Of just seeing, like, people ruin their lawns to make, like, 180 bucks. And I'm here for it.

Teresa: It's just grass.

[pause]

Travis: We have a home now.

[audience laughs]

Travis: You know how hard it is.

Teresa: Yeah, but I don't care. Uh, so—

[audience laughs and cheers]

Teresa: You should also, if you're going to throw the ball, you need to make sure that this is, like, actually catchable throws that you're throwing and not like, "How far can I throw this?" competition, because you will hit somebody, and they might be bigger than you.

Travis: I would also say, listen. It's okay to pretend to have rivalries and fights with people and stuff.

Teresa: [quietly] Fights?

Travis: Don't, really. Yeah, if you're like, "Oh, I'm on this side!" "And I'm on this side? Whoa-ho-ho-ho!"

Teresa: "Whoa!"

Travis: Who really cares?

[audience laughs]

Travis: The idea of fighting with people, like real-life fighting with people... you're not on the team. And even then, they also don't care.

[audience laughs]

Travis: It's okay to be like, "Ohh, you!" Don't carry that too far. And I didn't mean to say "OU." Like this—

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Oh, you! Boomer."

[scattered laughter]

Travis: Gen X.

Teresa: What?

Travis: Boomer Sooner is the thing that you say.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: And I like to yell that out now when I'm anywhere.

Teresa: I think I need a sip of wine.

Travis: Yeah, please.

[audience cheers]

Teresa: Okay. So, once you are at the game, a couple of things. Make sure that you're kind to the people directing you. They're just doing their job, right? And keep in mind that there are probably literally thousands of people, right? And so to keep things orderly, you do need to listen to people who are

telling you what to do. A lot of college stadiums have bench-style seating instead of chairs, right? So you might want to bring a cushion or one of those fun—I saw—you have, like, the seat that has the back that's strapped to it, right? So you have a little back support? Those are nice. We're over 30, almost 40, and those are nice.

Travis: Oh my god, yeah. At that point if I can bring a hammock that I could sleep in between the—um, most of the time now at least a lot of college, like, stadiums I've been to, the concession stands are run by volunteer groups that's, like, raise money for charity. And listen, they have limited resources. They don't do this on a regular basis. Lines are gonna be long, 'cause everyone wants to get a burger or whatever. Be cool. Tip them. They're there to raise money because they don't want to pay people to actually staff the concession stand, so be cool to the people working the concession stands. I've done it before. It sucks. So, like, be cool.

Teresa: Um, so a couple of things. Body paint is very common at a lot of these places, also signage. But I would encourage you if you're going to partake to think ahead a little bit, because body paint can be sticky. And you'll probably sweat, and also be miserable. So... [laughs]

[scattered laughter]

Teresa: Maybe not paint, like, your whole chest and back. Maybe, like, just a little bit.

Travis: Just patches.

Teresa: [through laughter] Just patches.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Um, also with signage, be aware—don't hold it up the whole time. People behind you want to sit down and they don't want to see it.

Teresa: Yeah. You don't want to block anybody's view, right?

Travis: Also, if you're gonna start the wave, do you have the commitment to do it?

Teresa: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Travis: 'Cause it's gonna take a couple tries, and if you stop after three, you look like an idiot.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You gotta go for it and never give up.

Teresa: Something you may not have thought of if you attend a football game is it is loud, and maybe some earplugs for you and your friends might be a very nice thing to supply.

Audience Member: [unintelligible]

Travis: What?

Audience: No! [[O?]]

Teresa: There it is. They did it.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Did you hear it?

Travis: Yes, I know how the state is spelled.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Um, also be aware that more and more people are bringing their kids to the games. Don't be a drunken jerk in front of a kid.

Teresa: Not our Shmanners listeners and fans, of course.

Travis: Oh, I thought you were saying "Not our kids. They're nerds."

Teresa: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Um, so a lot of these football games are also ticketed to the seat or the section, right? And so it is appropriate to go to wherever you bought your tickets until the game starts. Um, and then—

Travis: Oh, see? I was gonna say post-half-time, but...

Teresa: And then you can scope a little bit better seat, is what I'm gonna say.

Travis: Also be proud of me 'cause I said half-time and not intermission.

Teresa: [laughs] I am, always.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Always proud of you. Um, and so the last thing that I have to say from our writer, Alex, who enjoys—

[scattered cheering]

Audience Member: Alex!

Teresa: Yeah! Right? She's great. Who enjoys OSU. She says, um, it would never be shmannerly to root for Michigan.

[audience cheers]

Teresa: That's what she said. I didn't say it. That's what she—

Travis: I would never.

Teresa: That's what she said. So...

Travis: I would never. Thank you. Hey, sorry again that I thought OU was here.

Teresa: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Travis: Um, I'm gonna feel terrible about that for another three and a half hours.

Teresa: There is another college called OU here. Not here.

[audience cheers]

Travis: Not here.

Teresa: In Athens.

[audience cheers]

Travis: That doesn't even start with a C!

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [holding back laughter] You're right!

Travis: Yeah.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] Oh...

Travis: Boom! Mic drop! Got her!

Teresa: Don't drip the mics.

Travis: Hey, thank you, everybody. Um...

Teresa: They're expensive. [quietly] Don't drop them.

Travis: Oh yeah, it's not an SM-50. Yeah, I can't drop it. It would break. That's not funny to you, but Amanda's laughing her butt off. She just gave me a thumbs up.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Hey, everybody. Thank you so much for coming out to the show.

[audience cheers]

Travis: Thank you. Make sure you grab the posters out there. They're absolutely incredible. I'm a hot dog in it, if you haven't seen it. I know.

[audience cheers]

Travis: I had a lively debate with Bebe about if I am a hot dog, or wearing a hot dog costume. I think I am a hot dog.

[scattered cheers]

Travis: So get that poster. Um, thank you to our researcher, Alex, without whom we would not be able to make this show.

[audience cheers]

Travis: Thank you to Amanda and Paul. We wouldn't be able to do the show tonight.

[audience cheers]

Travis: Thank you to our editor, Rachel. We couldn't do the show without you. Who else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you very much.

[audience cheers]

Teresa: We also thank Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, join that group today.

[audience cheers]

Travis: Join us again on the next episode!

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to and watching Shmanners!

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it.

[audience cheers and applauds]

[theme music plays]

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