



# NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

## “The Huddle” by Bill Curry

*Played at NFF Annual Awards Dinner on Dec. 11, 2001, at the Waldorf Astoria in New York*

“The football huddle is a metaphor of our culture; imperfect like all metaphors. In that huddle are a bunch of folks that are black, brown, white, red, yellow, liberal, conservative, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu. We are slim, fat, short, tall, fast and slow. We are analytical people, and we are impulsive people. We have some of the finest men on Earth, and heaven knows, we’ve got a few rounders(?).

“We have been through the fires of Bear Bryant and Bo Schembechler, or some such coach that knows how to extract every ounce of our energy. Americans see all of that, and they resonate with it. They crave it. They take it and us into their hearts. The men who have earned a place in the huddle have experienced the miracle of a team. The training camp experience is unbelievable. It is day after day, week after week, two-a-day, three-a-day practices in the heat, often with 14 pounds of equipment. Many drop out. Numbers thin, and everyone starts thinking about quitting. Trust me, everybody.

“For those who do stay, there is the opportunity to participate in the greatest team sport ever devised. It is the only sport in which every player needs every teammate on every play just to survive. We learn ever so slowly that our differences do not matter in the huddle. After we trudge in after every interminable workout, we know that sweat smells the same on everybody’s body. When we get busted in the mouth, that blood that trickles is the same color. Everybody’s tired. Everybody’s hurt.

“It is in this process that the miracle occurs. Men who have been raised to hate each other’s guts become brothers. I’ve seen racists reformed. I’ve seen the most unlikely hugs after victories or losses. I’ve seen inner-city kids invite country boys to the mountains to go home with them for Thanksgiving Dinner, and I’ve seen those invitations accepted and reciprocated, thus affecting

parents' lives. Our players become brothers for life. It is what America is supposed to be, could be and might be in our best dreams.

***ABOUT THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION & COLLEGE HALL OF FAME***

*Founded in 1947 with early leadership from General Douglas MacArthur, legendary Army coach Earl "Red" Blaik and immortal journalist Grantland Rice, The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame is a non-profit educational organization that runs programs designed to use the power of amateur football in developing scholarship, citizenship and athletic achievement in young people. With 120 chapters and 12,000 members nationwide, NFF programs include FootballMatters.org, the College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta, The William V. Campbell Trophy presented by Fidelity Investments, annual scholarships of more than \$1.3 million and a series of initiatives to honor the legends of the past and inspire the leaders of the future. NFF corporate partners include the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl, Delta Air Lines, Fidelity Investments, Herff Jones, New York Athletic Club, Pasadena Tournament of Roses, PrimeSport, SKP, the Sports Business Journal and Under Armour. Learn more at [www.footballfoundation.org](http://www.footballfoundation.org).*

**The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame**

***Building Leaders Through Football & Supporting***

- 773 Colleges & Universities • 70,000 College Football Players***
- 15,585 High Schools • 1.1 Million High School Football Players***