

Memorable childhood experience

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Memorable Childhood Experience

For months I had watched the team from my couch. I was too young to have watched Joe Montana in the 1980s, but it was impossible to escape the legend that had built up around him and the San Francisco 49ers. While Montana had been traded to the Chiefs a few years earlier, much of this legendary team still remained. I grew to love this team and would read magazines about the various players. Jerry Rice, perhaps the greatest receiver in the history of football, was still one of the premier players in the game. Ronnie Lott, one of the most ferocious free safeties in the NFL still anchored the defense.

While legendary quarterback Joe Montana was gone, Steve Young had emerged as a serious force. Not knowing much about the intricacies of the game I grew to love watching Young play because he could scramble and make sensational things happen. For the last few years the team had gone deep into the playoffs, but had always been beaten by the Dallas Cowboys. I hated the Cowboys. But this year was different; they had brought on sensational cornerback Deion Sanders and were easily the most exciting team in football. As such it that year it became a childhood tradition of watching the games on Sunday.

When my parents told me that in December we would be visiting San Francisco to celebrate the birth of my cousin and get to go to a game, my mind immediately shot to the team. Not that I didn't appreciate having a new cousin, or visiting California, but after-all this was the 49ers. Looking back on the experience I laugh at my singular focus on the team. We would fly into the Bay Area and my parents and I toured the city. I witnessed

Alcatraz in the background, went up and down the famous hills, and over the Golden Gate Bridge. Today these are the important experiences, but back then they were only roadblocks between me, Candlestick Park, and the 49ers taking on the Denver Broncos.

As we entered the stadium I remember being awestruck. I had seen replays on television of famous games that had been played here - dramatic comebacks orchestrated by Montana to send the team to the Super Bowl. I don't remember much about the actual game. I remember focusing on the players and being mesmerized at being able to see them in person. The game itself was a blowout, with the 49ers destroying the Broncos. Lopsided victories were sort of a 49ers tradition. Rather the joy in watching the team was in viewing their excellence and efficiency.

After the game ended we left and went back to our hotel. The memory remains one of my fondest of childhood, as it was one of the few instances when my current interest and passion coincided with its actual realization. That year the 49ers would go on to win the Super Bowl - their first in almost five years, and the first with Steve Young. Ultimately, when I look back on that childhood experience I consider that my passion for the team may have been inspired by the same chemistry and efficiency that would lead the organization to this championship victory.