



MY DAUGHTER

the Middle Linebacker (and NFL Coach)!

BY STEVE SCHECTER

If someone told me that my oldest daughter Phoebe would grow up to eat, sleep, breathe American football, I would have thought they were crazy. But as it turned out, maybe we should have named her Mike.

As a child, Phoebe wasn't even remotely interested in American football. Her world was about horses, which she loved. Phoebe even adopted a Premarin foal. However, she was always an athletic kid. She played team sports starting in middle school then into high school. She captained the lacrosse team and played goalie, played on a boys' basketball team, and even had scholarships to play sports in college.

As Phoebe was pursuing her dreams of working with horses, she got an offer to work with the Dutch Olympic 3-Day Event Team for the 2012 London Olympics and beyond. Her mom is British, so she has dual citizenship, which made the required move to the UK a bit easier. It was as an expat that Phoebe first really discovered American football. It turns out that she was working long hours and was missing American culture. She was scouting around for opportunities to meet people and make friends when she saw an ad for American football trials and thought that might be fun. She tried out and made both the Birmingham Lions American Football team and Great Britain's National team, the GB Lions.

MY DAUGHTER, THE LINEBACKER

Initially, Phoebe played quarterback, but her true calling came when she found out she liked the physicality of hitting people and was very good at it. She then settled into the position of middle linebacker (a.k.a., "Mike" in football parlance). Whenever I tell people what position she plays and show them a photo of her, everyone's jaw drops. Most people would not expect a 5'4" 145 pounder to be the Mike.



Phoebe tackling as she plays safety on the Staffordshire Surge Men's team.

In a few short years, Phoebe became

captain of Great Britain's women's American football team and has brought the team to rank fourth in the world. She also plays for the Birmingham Lions, five-time national champions. She has won numerous MVP awards and captained the Great Britain Lions to a silver medal at the IFAF European Championships.

MY DAUGHTER, THE NFL COACH

As Phoebe's playing career is coming to a close, she has sought ways to give back to a community that gave her so much. So she started to help fledgling and youth teams, which led her to get level 1 and level 2 UK coaching qualifications. She then got her first coaching internship opportunity with

the University of La Verne, an NCAA Division III school. From there, she got an opportunity with the Buffalo Bills in the NFL, followed by stints at Bryant University and Stanford University in NCAA Division I. Finally, she was asked back by the Buffalo Bills this pre-season and was then hired for the full season.

MY DAUGHTER, THE TV STAR

Since Phoebe is only the fourth woman to secure an NFL internship, as you might expect she has attracted her share of media attention. She has been a commentator on BBC American football broadcasts, a contestant on *Ninja Warrior UK*, and has given many TV and radio interviews with the BBC and many other international media outlets.

MAKING DAD PROUD

Phoebe has made her dad so proud of her accomplishments on the field and off as:

Player

- American football
- Cheshire Cavaliers Flag B
- Birmingham Lions Women's Tackle
- Staffordshire Surge Men's Team
- Great Britain Women's Flag and Tackle Football

Kabaddi (yet another contact sport – Google it)

- Captain, UK team
- Player, US squad

Coach

- Buffalo Bills
- Stanford University
- Bryant University
- Staffordshire Surge Men's and Women's Teams
- Great Britain Women's Flag and Tackle American Football teams

Business/Media

- Model
- Owner, physical training business
- Ambassador for a sports nutrition company
- Unofficial spokesperson for American football in the UK
- Speaker for the NFL's conference on opportunities for women
- BBC commentator
- Contestant, *Ninja Warrior UK*

She did all this in just five years having no real experience – just the drive and desire. I can't imagine what the next five years might bring her.



Phoebe at the Bills training camp.



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