

Every TCU point worth a donated turkey

Posted Thursday, Dec. 10, 2009

<http://www.star-telegram.com/sports/story/1823674.html>

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When Gary Huddleston of the Kroger grocery chain was approached before the season about donating turkeys to the Tarrant Area Food Bank based on the touchdowns by the TCU football team, he had no reservations about the idea, but he had one question for Rudy Klanchnik, who is the ISP network representative for TCU.

"I asked Rudy how many touchdowns did TCU score last year," said Huddleston, Kroger's director of consumer affairs for Texas.

The Horned Frogs had a record 56 touchdowns last season, but Huddleston quickly learned that the turkeys donated would equal the number of points, not touchdowns. The Frogs scored a record 437 points in 2008.

"And I was like, 'Oh, now I get it,' " Huddleston recalled.

The Frogs, with one of their best offenses in TCU history in 2009, helped shatter the single-season scoring record with 488 points. They scored 64 touchdowns, including three by the defense and three on kick returns. The scoring bonanza helped put the Frogs (12-0) in the Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 4.

All those touchdowns also will help 488 families have a brighter holiday season, thanks to Thursday's donation to the Tarrant Area Food Bank from Kroger and TCU football. Appropriately, four member of the Frogs' offense — quarterback Andy Dalton, receiver Curtis Clay, tackle Marshall Newhouse and center Jake Kirkpatrick — were on hand to help unload some of the turkeys from a Kroger truck at the food bank.



Unpacking turkeys are (l to r) Gary Huddleston of Kroger and TCU players Marshall Newhouse, Curtis Clay, Andy Dalton and Jake Kirkpatrick. (Photo from Tarrant Area Food Bank, which not photo on Star-Telegram.com or in Star-Telegram print edition.)

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"I'm glad the points we scored could go to a great cause," said Clay, already dreaming of topping 500 points next year. "We have a lot people coming back and that's a nice goal to have. We could possibly reach it."

For the players, who are finishing final exams and will practice with pads Saturday for the first time in nearly two weeks, the tour through the food bank was an uplifting experience.

"I've been fortunate enough to always have a roof over my head and clothes on my back and food on the table," Newhouse said. "I know there are people that are less fortunate."

"It feels good to give back to the community. People have been supporting us all season. Fort Worth is an awesome place and this is the least we could do."

Kirkpatrick was happy the Frogs' success helped those in need.

"It's cool that us doing well on the football field helps out other people," said the junior. "Hopefully, next year we'll get even more."

Having TCU football stars take the time to help the food bank not only boosts the spirits of the food bank staff, but also helps spread the word on local hunger problems, said food bank executive director Bo Soderbergh.

"Our relationship with TCU is really important to us," said Soderbergh, a 1975 TCU graduate. "People look at the company you keep and you can't keep much better company than this. We're proud of their involvement and support."

By Stefan Stevenson
Star-Telegram.com
December 10, 2009