



Tim Royers

2016 Nebraska Teacher of the Year

Extra Yard for Teachers Trip

by Tim Royers

This past fall, thanks to the College Football Playoff Foundation and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the 2016 class of Teachers of the Year were surprised to find out that we would have one more official trip to take before we handed the baton off to the various 2017 teachers of the year: a trip to see the national championship game for college football! For the first time ever, through their Extra Yard for Teachers campaign, the College Football Playoff Foundation was going to bring all of the Teachers of the Year to Tampa to enjoy the game and all of the great events leading up to the championship. Not only would I be attending, but our spouses were able to come as well.

Unfortunately, a rare snow and ice storm in Georgia delayed our intended departure. We planned on leaving Friday evening to make it into Tampa, but our flight was cancelled and we had to settle for a 5:30 am wakeup call the next morning. That meant that I had to miss the Extra Yard for Teachers Summit, and from

what I heard from all of my friends that were already down in Florida it was a great event. Teachers from our cohort and from the local area were able to hear from a number of great speakers about the power of education and the value teachers have in our society. It was an awesome pep rally for the profession. But, thanks to mother nature, we did not arrive in Tampa until Saturday afternoon.

Saturday, January 7, 2017

That night, we were able to attend one of the concerts that the College Football Playoff was putting on, featuring Rachel Platten and Flo Rida. Thankfully we were treated to the inside VIP section, since it was almost as cold in Florida as it was in Nebraska!



Sunday, January 8, 2017

The next morning, I had a chance to participate in the Extra Yard for Teachers 5k race. When I had packed my bags the forecast said it would be in the low 50s Instead it was in the mid 30s, so I scrambled to put on what extra layers I had since we had to be ready for the race at 6:30 in the morning. The race itself was great – most of the route took you along the water with a great view of the city. I managed to run the race in just under 24 minutes. Pretty far from 1st place, but a time I'm pretty proud of!

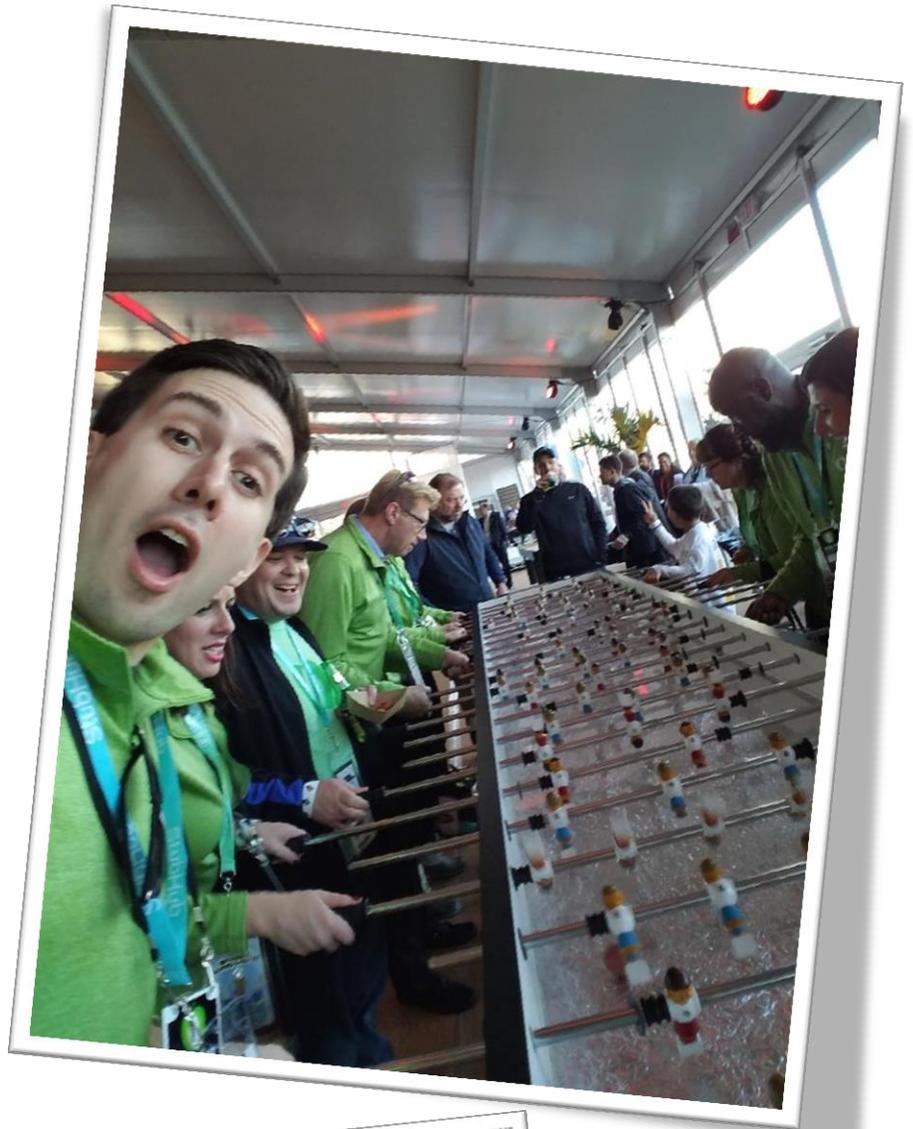


That night we were able to attend the Taste of the Championship, an amazing event with even more amazing food. The College Football Playoff invites chefs from the local Tampa area and from across the country to come in and make one dish for people to try. This year it was hosted at the Florida Aquarium in downtown Tampa, so you were able to wander the facility and see great displays of marine life while enjoying tons of great food from fish and chips to pork loin to pie! It was great and we had the opportunity to talk to the media about our trip and to meet some football greats from both Alabama and Clemson.



Monday, January 9, 2017

Monday was the day of the championship. We not only got to attend the game, but also attend the commissioner's tailgate before as well. They had tons of great food (call me simple, but the tater tot bar was the best part), live music, and games to play as well – including the biggest foosball table I have ever seen!



We had great seats for the game, and we had the privilege of being honored at halftime after both bands performed. As icing on the cake for what was already a great trip, I managed to run into a former student in the tunnel before halftime that played in the Clemson band!

The best part of the trip was simply seeing how much support the College Football Playoff wanted to give teachers. Every single person that attended the championship game was given a \$25 gift card to Donors Choose to help fund a classroom project of their choice. We are talking about millions of dollars donated in a single evening. To have people thank us and shake our hands as we walked back to our seats after half time was incredibly humbling. I cannot think of a better way to finish my time as the "reigning" Nebraska Teacher of the Year. It was a once in a lifetime experience.

