

Radio heroes share tailgating secrets for success

THE ARMCHAIR QUARTERBACKS Special to the Gamecock

The Armchair Quarterbacks are perhaps Carolina's best-known tailgaters. For two years, they have dispensed their sporting wisdom both on their weekly radio show and their TV program, The Armchair Quarterbacks' Tailgate Party.

Chip "Tomahawk" Collins: The process of planning for tailgating usually takes longer than the tailgating itself. It's not as easy as it seems. You must decide if you are going alone or in a group. If you are going in a group, how many people will be in your group? Once the quantity of the group is set, the next question is, who is going to drive? The bigger the car, the more people, and, therefore, less to pay to park at Tally-Ho. However, is many people want to leave the games at different times, it may be better to take more and better vehicles.

What time do you leave? Night games are great, because you can

party your butt off Friday night, and still have time to recover and be ready to go at 2 p.m., which should give you plenty of time to get to the "Ho". However, day games are a bitch. Leaving at 10 a.m. after getting in at 3 a.m. the night before is not easy. You'll learn to live with it.

What about nourishments? Food and drinks are a must. It is best to divide the task of obtaining food, alcohol, mixers, ice, etc. That way, no one has a lot to do, but everyone has something to do. Don't forget your cooler...drinking warm beer in 90 degree weather sucks.

After this, your are ready to go. It's a long and arduous struggle, but you will be set for a wonderful season of Gamecock football. Oh, by the way, don't forget you ticket.

"The Big Guy" Pat McNeill: Since I have tailgating with Chip and the folks from the Palmetto Legal Society, I can assure you that he knows his stuff. I just want to add a few words on the all-important subject of preparation.

Parking- Hey, you don't have to park at Tally-Ho to party there. There's a nice neighborhood back there with people who will let you park there for a modest fee. Sure, you may have to walk a few blocks, but it's worth it.

Paper and Plastic - We do an actual tailgate party each week on the TV show to put us in the proper spirit. One week, I brought over a big spread from PoFolk's only to find that I had forgotten the plastic silverware. If you have ever seen "The Sportin' Fool" Tim Thorsen try to eat mashed potatoes and gravy without a fork, you understand the need for silverware. It also helps to stock up on cups, napkins, paper plates and paper towels.

Music - You don't need to bring your own music. There are always plenty of folks around with giant speakers who want to share their tunes with the rest of the country. But, if you don't agree with the taste of the people parked around you, will be wishing you had brought

your own discs. Get the picture? Make sure the guy with the beat car stereo is the one driving for your own group. For the die-hard fans, you should consider bringing a battery-powered TV, either to catch the day games or the pre-game show.

Timing - Don't lose track of time! The Gamecocks' "2001" ritual is a lot more exciting if you are actually INSIDE the stadium at your seats while it's going on.

Refreshments - I know I don't need to remind you guys to bring the adult beverages with you. But wait! There's more! As a non-drinker, I assure you there is a lot more to tailgating than open containers. Bring lots of soda, preferably in 12 pack or 3-liters bottles. Why? First, the person who is driving your car home is going to need them. Second, you do not want to run out of mixers two hours before the game time.

Have you ever been to a tailgate where everybody brings drinks but nobody brings food? It's a long trip to Mickey D's when that happens on Saturday. Do it right. If you are not bringing the grill, stick with the food that can be served cold. This does not require hours over a hot stove. No one has ever been turned away from a tailgate for bringing a big box of fried chicken and biscuits. Bojan-

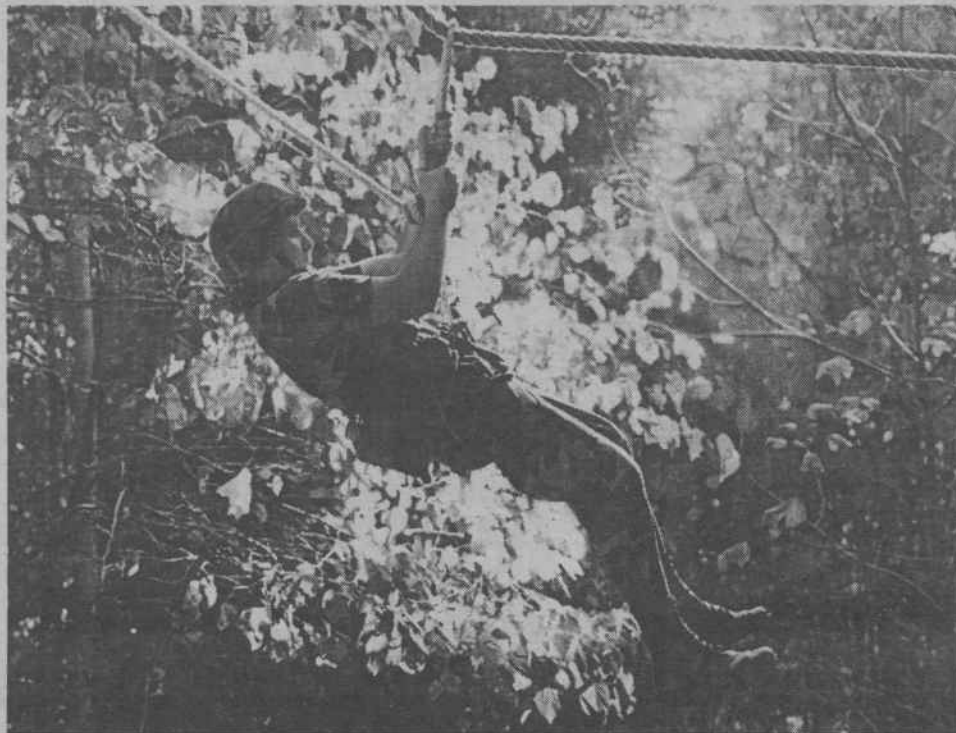
gles, KFC and PoFolk's make the best. If you are sick of chicken, subs are also a good choice.

One final piece of advice: Do it early. If it is a day game, go to the store on Friday before you go out. Have the ice waiting in the freezer when you wake up on Saturday. And remember, use the bathroom before you leave for the tailgate.

You can hear Pat, Chip and the rest of the gang Fridays at 5 p.m. on WUSC, 90.5 FM or watch them this fall on WCFG-TV, Channel 4 on Gamecock Cablevision. Don't miss it! Be there!

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