

International Students Story

By: Jason Kang

For many international students, especially those of East Asian background, football remains a foreign sport. There is a large presence of Asian international students, most of whom are Chinese, on campus who've had no prior exposure to football before the Big 10 game, and those who have absolutely no knowledge of the game due to a simple lack of interest.

Many have found different reasons to attend the game, whether that may be to feel like they are part of the American culture or to just see and get a grasp on how football is played and how it's such an intense sport.

Pat Tsai, a Rutgers sophomore from Taiwan, attended the Penn State game and enjoys attending big games despite not knowing much about the game.

"I really don't care about football. However, as a student here at Rutgers, I feel like I must go to the games to make my college experience worthwhile," Tsai said. "I want to wear red and chant just like everyone else. I want to make fun memories during my stay here."

Some students like Dae-Youl Choi, a South Korean native, remain flustered when it comes to the terms of football. The Korean visual arts major had heard about American football in Korea but never understood the sport completely.

"I finally began to understand the term touchdown when I went to the Howard game with two of my American friends and they explained it to me," Choi said. "It was very fun and I hope to go to games again if I'm not busy."

Busch campus, which is the science part of the campus, is home to High Point Solutions Stadium, and has a significant amount of Asian students who reside within the large campus.

Despite the close proximity of the stadium to the residence halls where many Asian students reside, Justin Yuan, a Rutgers sophomore from Beijing, has never attended a Rutgers

football game nor does he know much about the sport.

"I only watched the Super Bowl because I was curious about football in the beginning but I am still unfamiliar with the rules and how some of the scoring works," Yuan said. "I know football is a big tradition for Americans but for us, it doesn't have a big meaning. But we like basketball and soccer. I know many Americans do not like soccer."

For some, they are starting to assimilate to the American culture by developing a greater appreciation for football, attending football games and watching games on the screen. "It's not easy," said Zhicheng Li, a Rutgers freshman, who attended his first football game two weeks ago. "I think by learning how football is played and appreciating football, it will help me make more American friends because we would share a common interest. The Penn State game was a very new experience for me and helped me learn more about football and why everyone loves it so much."

Although football may mean nothing to these native Asian students, some enjoy attending the games just for the reason that they are bored on the weekends and have nothing much else to do besides studying for their exams.

Junyi Wang, who is from Chengdu, a city located in Southwest China, is a Rutgers junior who did not attend one Rutgers football game until the Arkansas blackout game last year. Wang vividly remembers the scene at the stadium, and had an awesome story to tell to her family and friends back home.

"That was the first game I went to with my roommate because I always dreamed of going to a football game after coming here. Also, we wanted to have fun because all we did was study and study, even on weekends," Wang said. "Some students were painted red and drunk, all in their black t-shirts, chanting RU so loudly. I felt that football was such a big deal to our school and to the whole American communi-

ty."

Shameer Singh is a 21-year-old international student from India who loves football and enjoys rooting for the New York Jets and of course, his school football team.

"When I came here four years ago, football was very unfamiliar to me. However, I started watching NFL games every Sunday with my friends and even played flag football as an outdoor sport," Singh said "At first, I thought it was more boring than soccer but as I kept on watching, I learned that it's such a great game with so much physical contact." "It was a very sweet experience, but mostly because of the atmosphere. Screaming and chanting with the fans was fun because I felt like a part of the crowd," Tsai said.

