

Pepper and the Wishbone



Franklin C. (Pepper) Rodgers has been a head coach in college football, the United States Football League and the Canadian Football League. He was the head coach at University of Kansas, UCLA (1971 – 1973), and Georgia Tech (1974 – 1979). He was a member of Georgia Tech's 1952 national championship team as a backup quarterback and placekicker. As a coach, he led Kansas to the 1968 Big 8 championship, the Jayhawks' last conference championship in football.

Alumni and fans at UCLA made Rodgers' life miserable the year his Bruins got off to a horrible start. Nobody in Southern California would hang out with him. "My dog was my only true friend," Rodgers said.

"I told my wife that every man needs at least two good friends. She bought me another dog."

Rodgers was tough in the face of adversity, however. When his players at UCLA were having difficulty adapting to the wishbone offense he had installed and the school's alumni demanded that he adopt another system, Rodgers didn't budge.

"The wishbone is like Christianity," he said. "If you believe in it only until something goes wrong, you didn't believe in it in the first place."

The observation is well made. For people of faith, as is true of non-believers, things don't always go the way we would like for them to. Trouble comes along, tragedy strikes, setbacks occur.

But as the Apostle Paul instructs, we are to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Staying the course with faith in the future brings its own reward.

– Beecher Hunter