



NUMBERS FOR WOMEN KEEP GROWING IN NFL – IN STANDS & FRONT OFFICES

Women are involved on every level in making the NFL America's most popular spectator sport.

The number of women in the coveted 18-to-34 age group watching NFL games on broadcast TV rose 6.5 percent during the 2006 season, the second straight such increase. More than 45 million women watch NFL games weekly and women watch the NFL more than any other sports league.

PETER ROBY, director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University believes that the growing number of female fans helps explain football's increasing popularity.

"The thing that has contributed in the last 20 years to the NFL's growth is the number of females who are passionate about football," says Roby. "It seems to me that the females are as committed as the men. I think it's a result in part to females, while they're in college, developing an affinity for the game."

Meanwhile, in NFL front offices across the country, women are making their names known and their voices heard.

JILL STRAFACI has climbed the financial ranks over 18 seasons to her current position as senior vice president of finance of the Miami Dolphins. As the owner/executive vice president of administration of the New Orleans Saints, **RITA BENSON LE BLANC** was instrumental in the club's success during the 2006 season.

While women such as Strafaci and LeBlanc have been constants within their organizations, new faces are beginning to shine. **VICKI VANNIEUWENHOVEN** recently became the first female vice president in the Green Bay Packers' 89-year history. As the vice president of finance, Vannieuwenhoven leads the day-to-day financial operations of the club and works on NFL economic issues such as revenue sharing. She recognizes the unique position she is in and maintains that it is not being a woman that sets her apart.

While Vannieuwenhoven insists that in her experiences with the Packers, "gender has never been a factor in decision making," she admits that, "in retrospect, it is an honor and a privilege to be in this role [as vice president]. If it can send a good message, that's great. It probably does open the eyes of some people who might look at the organization as being all male."

Gender aside, Vannieuwenhoven says, "It is just so exciting to be working for one of the top organizations in all of professional sports. To be a part of the NFL is truly a great thing."

While many of these female NFL high-ranking officials influence the corporate side of football, **TINA TUGGLE** keeps her focus on the players. As the new director of player development for the Tennessee Titans, Tuggle oversees programs such as player assistance, career development, internships and financial assistance.

Tuggle is successful at her job because of the good relationships she has not only with the players, but also with their wives, girlfriends and children. Her interpersonal skills in addition to her vast knowledge of the organization have served her well in forming these connections and offering sound advice.

What led Tuggle to a career in player development?

"My mom was a foster parent and a nurse, and I always thought I needed to be in a helping profession," she says. "This just kind of came to me more than I came to it," she remarks on her unique position.

Strafaci, LeBlanc, Vannieuwenhoven and Tuggle are some. But there are many more such women who are contributing to the NFL's success.

A list of female executives in the NFL at the vice president level and above:

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Charlotte Anderson	VP/Director of Charities & Special Events	Dallas Cowboys
Kim Babiak	VP of Marketing	Houston Texans
Lisa Baird	Senior VP of Consumer Products & Marketing	National Football League
Katie Blackburn	Executive VP	Cincinnati Bengals