



The NFL's 'Honey-Do' Offseason Giants' Kicker Tynes Eats Cold Sandwiches, Drives to Therapy and Gets the Twins Ready for Karate

By ADITI KINKHABWALA

Usually, this time of year, kicker Lawrence Tynes has an omelet for breakfast, maybe even a waffle, in the cafeteria at the Giants' Timex Performance Center. These days, Tynes has a protein bar in his car.

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Emile Wamsteker for the Wall Street Journal

Rather than work out at the Giants' Timex Performance Center during the NFL lockout, kicker Lawrence Tynes stretches at the Excel orthopedic rehabilitation center in Oakland, N.J.



In ordinary times, Tynes gets a hot lunch, too, specially cooked and nutritionally coordinated by the Giants' chefs. These days, lunch is a cold sandwich Tynes throws together with his wife.

His morning commute to physical therapy and training is now half a mile from his Oakland, N.J., home instead of the normal 30 minutes to East Rutherford and, really, for him, this NFL lockout isn't much more than a bunch of trade-offs. For now.

"I think if there's not something done by May, maybe June, players will start getting antsy," Tynes said. "May-ish, that's when we'll probably get worried."

Here at the start of April, one day before a Minnesota hearing date that could lift the owners' lockout, the prospect of a fall without football still seems far off. And so, players like the 32-year-old Tynes are going about the business of preparing for football, albeit a little differently. And to the liking of their wives. "I do love having that extra set of hands in the morning," Amanda Tynes said. Pointing to the couple's three-and-half-year-old twin boys, she said, "Getting them dressed, making lunches—we can each take one of them now. Usually, he gets up, leaves for work and it's a free-for-all here."

The Tynes boys have Saturday morning karate with offensive linemen Rich Seubert's and Chris Snee's sons and with running back Brandon Jacobs's son, too. Amanda Tynes says on those mornings this past month, the Giants' wives have all joked about how the lockout has given them an extra four or five hours a day with their husbands.

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"We say, 'We love this lockout,'" she said. "It's just a joke, obviously. None of us are in free agency and our husbands have been playing for a long time, so we can laugh about it." And yet, that they do drives home the almost surreal sense surrounding the labor mess: It doesn't yet seem real, much less frightening. Take Tynes. He's had three surgeries this offseason: a hernia surgery in January, one to have bone spurs removed in his left ankle on Valentine's Day and a third on his right heel and Achilles on March 2. He came out of a walking boot three weeks ago and has been working out at the Excel orthopedic rehabilitation center in Oakland since then.

Sure, the other physical therapy patients are more of the geriatric variety than professional athlete. And he only occasionally sees Snee and center Shaun O'Hara in the Excel weight room, unlike the three dozen teammates he'd ordinarily hang out with at the Giants' facility. But all last week, he went through the same circuit of physical therapy, conditioning, weight lifting and cooling down that he'd do under the watch of the Giants' trainers.

He wouldn't start kicking 'til later this month anyway, and he said he and long snapper Zak DeOssie—who just recently tagged along on a Tynes family ski vacation to Colorado—have plans to start working at one of Oakland's two high schools if they're still locked out by then. Holder Sage Rosenfels likely won't fly in from his Minnesota home, but Tynes said soon-to-be second-year punter Matt Dodge will come in from North Carolina.

Players aren't covered by their NFL contracts during this lockout, so working out on their own—in what is essentially unsanctioned activity—can be risky. Suffer an injury now and a team can choose not to pay a player's contract whenever a new league year does begin.

For the specialists, though, Tynes says, "It's pretty simple. We're not running routes or anything like that." Still, Tynes does have work to do this offseason. The NFL implemented new kickoff rules last week. Tynes's teammates will now be lined up a little closer on kickoffs, and those kickoffs will now come at the 35-yard line, not the 30, a move Tynes decreed as "awesome."

"There's a lot of things we can do with that," he said. The Giants and their opponents combined for only seven total touchbacks at windy New Meadowlands Stadium last year, so he's looking forward to playing with the new parameters.

If, of course, this labor mess sorts itself out. (If the federal judge grants the players injunctive relief Wednesday and tells teams to open their doors, the NFL's owners could just as quickly appeal that ruling and keep the lockout in place.) Until then, there's been a little extra furniture moving and a whole lot of spring cleaning at the Tynes house. Amanda laughingly says her husband's new routine after coming home from the gym is to ask, "What are we going to do today?"

But in the end, Tynes says, "I'm fine. Certainly I enjoy going into work and seeing the guys. I miss them."
And anything else?

"The hot breakfast and lunch," he said. "I do miss that."