

In the world of sports, just about everyone loves to cheer for the underdog. And throughout his long career, Doug Flutie has always been the underdog. This article tells a little about Flutie's career, especially his final game at Boston College, which many consider to be one of the most amazing comebacks in college football history.

The Little Engine That Could

by Hank Reilly

1 Most people have heard the story of the little engine that could. Even though it was too small and too old, it somehow managed to pull a huge train up a steep mountain when a powerful locomotive found the going too tough. In many ways, the story of Doug Flutie's long football career is the story of the little engine that could.

2 At five feet nine inches tall, Flutie stands on the small side of average compared to most men, but he is tiny compared to many professional football players. Nevertheless, he has accomplished things no one ever expected of him. After he left college, Doug played for the New Jersey Generals of the United States Football League. Then he played for the Chicago Bears and the New England Patriots in the National Football League. Next, he became a star in the Canadian Football League and led his teams to three Grey Cup Championships. He also won the Grey Cup Most Valuable Player award in 1992, 1996, and 1997.

3 Not done yet, Flutie returned to the NFL in 1998 and helped the Buffalo Bills make the playoffs. In 1998, he was named the Comeback Player of the Year and was selected to the Pro Bowl. The following season, Flutie led the Buffalo Bills to the playoffs again. Still game, Doug signed a six-year contract to play for the San Diego Chargers.

4 Despite all these honors, awards, and achievements over a span of more than 20 years, Flutie is probably best remembered for a single game played between Boston College and Miami University. The game was played during Flutie's senior year on the Friday of



Thanksgiving weekend in 1984. Bernie Kosar, a future NFL star, led the powerful Miami Hurricanes. Miami scored often. A Miami player named Melvin Bratton scored four touchdowns, including a 52-yard run in the fourth quarter, but somehow the Boston College Eagles kept within striking distance.

5 As time was winding down, Flutie ran for a touchdown and threw for two more. However, with only six seconds to go, it seemed clear to everyone that the game belonged to Miami. On the last play of the game, Flutie was almost tackled as he scrambled to evade the defenders and throw one of the most memorable passes in college football history. He released the ball from his own 37-yard line. It traveled over 63 yards in the air!

6 The Miami defenders had no idea Flutie could throw the ball so far. As a result, they allowed a Boston College receiver named Gerard Phelan to get behind them. When

Flutie’s “Hail Mary” pass landed in Phelan’s arms, Boston College completed its miraculous comeback with a 47–45 victory!

7 Flutie had completed 34 of 46 passes for a total of 476 yards and three touchdowns. He’d also run for a touchdown, and—partly as a result of that final play—he was awarded the Heisman Trophy, which is the greatest individual honor in college football.

8 Off the field, Doug Flutie has met and triumphed over other challenges as well. His

young son suffers from autism, a serious disorder. Therefore, Flutie established the “Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism,” in his son’s name, to benefit all young people who suffer from this malady.

9 And if all of this isn’t amazing enough, Doug Flutie is still active as backup quarterback for the New England Patriots! The guy who was too short to be a professional quarterback has proven that he can not only play, but he can win.

- 13 Which reason **best** explains why many fans have cheered for Doug Flutie throughout his career?
- A They like to see an underrated player succeed.
 - B They admire his charitable work for sick children.
 - C They would cheer for anyone who played against Miami.
 - D They are impressed that he has played in three different leagues.
- 14 What is the purpose of paragraph 1 of the article?
- A to summarize Doug Flutie’s career
 - B to describe Flutie’s relatively small stature
 - C to compare Flutie’s career to an inspiring story
 - D to give readers background information about football

- 15 The **most** famous game of Flutie’s career came when he played for the
- A Buffalo Bills.
 - B San Diego Chargers.
 - C New Jersey Generals.
 - D Boston College Eagles.
- 16 Why is this article considered nonfiction?
- A Football is a very popular sport.
 - B The incredible events really happened.
 - C Doug Flutie has often appeared on TV.
 - D Flutie’s life sounds like a made-up story.

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What makes Doug Flutie's career in football special? Use important and specific details from the story to support your answer.
