

Tuesday, July 1, 2008

### **Roger Goodell a huge crybaby**

Waa, waa, we can't take care of ourselves, waa, waa, even when these rookies have NO BARGAINING POWER AT ALL we give them too much money, waa, waa, we need rules to keep ourselves in check, waa, waa.

News to Roger: contracts for employment are not rewards. You do not earn the right to get paid a lot of money by playing well in the past, except insofar as your past play indicates that you might be a good player in the future. Roger, you have an undergraduate major in economics! I would expect you to understand this. No, Roger, I know you understand this, economics degree or otherwise. I know you're up there on the stage putting the word out that you're going to be asking for even more concessions from that giant fucking pushover Gene Upshaw at the next round of bargaining. You already own players basically in perpetuity, you don't have to give them guaranteed money in their contracts, you have a salary cap, there's no free agency to speak of, there's no trade activity, players can't celebrate the way they want to, they can't take their helmets off (and thus make themselves more recognizable and marketable personalities), retired players don't have decent health coverage, and you rule by fiat. What the hell more do you want, Roger? Back the hell up and let us enjoy our Jake Longs and Jamarcus Russells.

And by the way, if I ever hear you refer to anything causing things in the NFL to be "financially unworkable" again, I swear to god I'll say the meanest things about your mother. The league is raking in money hand over fist. Hand over fist! I don't even know what that means, but I know it means "metric asstons of money"! Jake Long wouldn't get \$30 million guaranteed unless the Dolphins could afford it. You know that. So stop playing dumb and start focusing on the real problems. Like whether you're going to let Pacman Jones actually be called Adam on TV or not.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 14:38

Friday, February 29, 2008

### **San Francisco signs a wideout**

Isaac Bruce has apparently signed a two-year deal with the 49ers. Bruce has never played a day in his career outside a Rams uniform, winding up with 197 games on that team, racking up over 14,000 yards. He's 36 years old this year, and in two of his last three seasons, he hasn't been able to get on the field for all sixteen games. His rate stats have also declined from his prime years, of course, but he's still probably better than Darrell Jackson, who was most definitely miscast as a #1 receiver.

Given the poor quality of the 49er receiving corps last year, pretty much anybody would be an upgrade. Which is kind of a backhanded compliment for the deal, but it also illustrates how necessary it was to get somebody in that role who can at least approximate a receiving threat. Will Bruce and Jackson be a fearsome twosome for Alex Smith to use to strike fear in the heart of defenses everywhere? Of course not. But paired with Vernon Davis and Frank Gore, and with some further development from Arnaz Battle, maybe the offense can avoid being awful.

...

Ok, ok, I can't keep a straight face any more. I meant Shaun Hill, of course, not Alex Smith.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 21:26

Monday, December 10, 2007

**The Mike Vick Redemption Story (in two years)**

Keyshawn Johnson just beat me to it, but is there any reason why, if Mike Vick comes back, he shouldn't come back as a running back, wide receiver, cornerback, or even linebacker? (He'd obviously have to bulk up in prison to do the latter.) Defense might be wasting his ridiculous moves, and to a certain extent the same could be said about wide receiver. But running back? Particularly as a running back who could throw the ball at any moment? Why not?

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 19:09

Saturday, March 3, 2007

### **49ers Make a Splash**

I can't really keep up with football players because I never know who any of them are, but the 49ers just signed the guy who's apparently the best defensive (maybe best overall) player on the market, Nate Clements. To haul him in, they gave him the richest deal for a defensive player in history, \$80 million over eight years, \$22 million of that guaranteed money.

The Niners also signed up Michael Lewis, the former Eagles strong safety. I'd heard of Lewis, which probably reflects the difference in TV time between the Eagles and the Bills, Clements' old team.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 11:35

Monday, February 19, 2007

### **Norv Turner gone after all**

I'm not sure it's disaster for the 49ers that Norv Turner is leaving to become the head coach of the Chargers, but it's not like I'm happy about it, either. The Niners have a young offense that still has some growing to do, and when you take away the guy that's been credited with a lot of the growth that's already been done, you certainly run the risk of retarding that growth.

That said, as long as Frank Gore continues to get the job done, the offense should be fine, but it sure would be nice to see Alex Smith grow into the kind of quarterback that a #1 pick should be.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 12:10

### **Norv Turner gone after all**

I'm not sure it's disaster for the 49ers that Norv Turner is leaving to become the head coach of the Chargers, but it's not like I'm happy about it, either. The Niners have a young offense that still has some growing to do, and when you take away the guy that's been credited with a lot of the growth that's already been done, you certainly run the risk of retarding that growth.

That said, as long as Frank Gore continues to get the job done, the offense should be fine, but it sure would be nice to see Alex Smith grow into the kind of quarterback that a #1 pick should be.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 12:10

Monday, January 15. 2007

### More on Chargers-Patriots

John Clayton criticizes Marty Schottenheimer for being too conservative and "playing the field position game" while praising the Patriots to high heavens for knowing how to win in the playoffs.

John Clayton a few paragraphs later points out that the "strangest" play in the game was when Marty went for it on 4th and 11 early in the game. Uh, Mr. Clayton, that's not conservative play-calling. Besides which, it wasn't necessarily that strange. The Patriots, as I recall, had the wind at their backs in the first quarter, which might be one reason why Schottenheimer didn't want a 49-yard field goal try.

Meanwhile, LDT called out Bill Belichick because of what the Chargers perceived as a classless celebration on their logo at midfield (apparently, it included finger-pointing and mocking Shawne Merriman's sack-dance), saying, "They showed no class and maybe that comes from the head coach." The Patriots are just making enemies left and right, aren't they? The Jets (with the Mangini feud), the Colts (with constantly whooping their asses in the playoffs), and now the Chargers.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 12:01

### Conspiracy theorists, unite! (Chargers-Patriots)

There's no doubt that the Chargers lost their game to the Patriots. The punt-return fumble was especially crucial. But can I just ask whether the conspiracy theorists are going to come out of the woodwork for this game like they do every year in the NBA?

I refer, of course, to those two awfully borderline personal fouls called against the Chargers. One Charger appeared to be celebrating a bit too much, but how could the referee not notice that it was the Patriot player who reached out and shoved the Charger? And as to the push in the pile-up that led to the Chargers having to kick off from their own fifteen yard line, I can't remember a game in which I haven't seen a little extra roughness in the pile, especially with players trying to get opponents off of their teammates (which is exactly what was happening there).

I'm of the belief that if you're going into an inherently rough game and calling unnecessary roughness on somebody, that roughness had better be damn well unnecessary, not maybe-probably-kinda unnecessary.

This is all particularly true if you're going to ignore "Roy" Hobbs taking a swing at a Charger receiver downfield blocking on a running play. If you ignore things like that (which happen multiple times every single game), then you have to ignore all the marginal stuff.

But, boy, it was all worth it to see Indianapolis and New England back together again, right? yawn

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 01:14

Sunday, January 7, 2007

### **Today's playoff picks / Why I'm not going to be an agent**

I have no documentation of this, but I had both the Colts and Seahawks in yesterday's games (the Colts because they're a vastly better team than the Chiefs and the Seahawks because they were playing at home). I figured the Seahawks game would be close, but obviously you can't anticipate the craziness that ensued.

I'll try to go 4-0 today as I pick Philadelphia and New England to win. Those aren't exactly controversial picks, although some people will get seduced by the Giants' offensive talent.

The Patriots-Jets game is tough because while I'm not a Patriot-hater, they're not my favorite team to root for, and I really like Chad Pennington and Eric Mangini, so I'd like to root for the Jets, but I just don't think they're ready to beat Bill Belichick in the playoffs.

Also, check out this story in Variety and/or Jerry Crasnick's book License to Deal to see why I've completely abandoned the idea of becoming an agent. It's a ridiculously cutthroat business, and I'm not the type of person that would succeed there, I think.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Books, Football, Law, Magazines, Movies, Non-Fiction, Reading at 12:39

Monday, October 30, 2006

### **Michael Lewis on Bill Parcells**

People who read the New York Times ought to read this Sunday's sports magazine's profile of Bill Parcells by Michael Lewis. It's about what you expect from Lewis, presenting a well-written and intriguing portrait of Parcells while always keeping the economic side of the game close at hand. He discusses, for instance, the proliferation of "non-uniformed" personnel (coaches, assistant coaches, associate coaches, trainers, assistant trainers, etc. etc.) and the evolving understanding of which positions are most important on the field (noting the vastly increased salaries of left tackles (to which subject Lewis devoted an entire book) and cornerbacks).

These observations will probably seem more like insights to casual fans than the hardcore (I'm closer to the former), but a clear exposition of the interesting implications of economic changes in the game is worthwhile nonetheless.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 17:15

## Blog Export: Beaneball, <http://beaneball.org/>

Thursday, February 23, 2006

### **From Swan Valley to Oakland in a blink of the eye**

The Raiders have hired a guy whose last two jobs were "bed-and-breakfast operator" and "mayor of Swan Valley, Idaho" to be their offensive coordinator. Wow. The NFL may be unawesome in a lot of ways, but in terms of pulling random coaches out of its collective ass, they're the greatest.

Story here.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 16:27

## Blog Export: Beaneball, <http://beaneball.org/>

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

### **Kornheiser?**

So, uh, how about Tony Kornheiser playing the 3rd man in the booth on Monday Night Football next year? Kornheiser? Really?

If ESPN really wanted a Dennis Miller character, they should have just gone back to the real thing.

Kornheiser.

Wow.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 20:22

Monday, January 16, 2006

### I feel like Don Cheadle

I'm not sure I remember the last time I was this excited about the NFL playoffs. For some reason, I chose this year to be the one where I watched pretty much every minute of all the games, and I've been rewarded with some pretty remarkable action.

Who gets shut out in the playoffs? Even better, who gets shut out in the playoffs after scoring the third-most points in the entire league? As Chris Berman might say, the Geeeeeeee-men, that's who. Eli Manning? 113 yards. Tiki Barber? 41 yards. Panther defense? Absolute domination. Obviously, this game wasn't much for drama, but the spectacle of the shutout was pretty cool.

Speaking of spectacle, how about Mark Brunell throwing for 41 yards against Tampa Bay ... and winning? And it's not like Clinton Portis (53 yards) carried the load. No, this one was all defense. The Washington d-line must have tipped about twelve Chris Simms passes, which is part of a league-wide trend toward tipping passes, but also part of Simms not playing like he's 6'4". Really, if you're that big, you should be able to get your ball over the line.

I didn't watch the Steelers-Bengals game as closely, largely because I knew Cincinnati didn't have a chance after Carson Palmer went down. Jon Kitna played valiantly, I thought, and he made the most of the skills he has (his mobility, mainly) to cause some trouble, but it was pretty clear that it wasn't going to be enough. I, like Bill Simmons, was hoping the Bengals could get to the Super Bowl just for the spectacle of seeing Chad Johnson navigate Media Week.

New England-Jacksonville was never really competitive and generally didn't really have a lot to recommend it. Oh well. I predicted that whoever got to 10 points in the Carolina-Chicago game would win it. Instead, the teams combined for fifty and the game ended with Rex Grossman trying to lead a final drive for a touchdown and two-point conversion to tie the game. He's about as qualified to lead that drive as I am, though, so the ending was predictable. Both defenses disappointed me, but what really killed Chicago was poor traction: two times, a defensive back fell down, allowing Steve Smith to score a touchdown. Who knows what happens if the defenders keep their feet in those situations.

Washington-Seattle wasn't ever really in doubt, even after Shaun Alexander went down. Washington just didn't have the horses to stay with the Seahawks. Alexander's injury creates an interesting situation for next week, when both Seattle and Carolina could be missing their running backs.

The Patriots-Broncos game was hugely disappointing to me. I'm not what you'd call a Patriots fan, but I have some unreasonable dislike for the Broncos, probably related to some combination of feelings against Mike Shanahan and Bill Romanowski. New England just made far too many mistakes, uncharacteristically, and paid the price.

And the best for last. Pittsburgh dominated Indianapolis for about 55 minutes. They were getting to Peyton Manning, not letting him get good throws off, shutting down Edgerrin James, and generally coasting on the strength of two good early drives. You can't keep a good offense down forever, though, and I really started to believe once Manning led the Colts to two touchdowns to bring the game within three points. Then ... wow. The failed fourth-down conversion deep in Indianapolis territory. The Colts timeouts forcing Pittsburgh to do more than just kneel. The devastating Jerome Bettis fumble. The return for a touchdown stopped by Ben Roethlisberger grabbing Nick Harper's ankle. And the most accurate kicker in the history of the league absolutely shanking the final field goal.

And can I just add a note on Nick Harper? Didn't he play a magnificent game? He gets stabbed by his wife, gets his knee smacked around early in the game, and then, with the exception of one pass interference call, plays great, culminating in nearly taking a fumble 98 yards for a likely-game-winning score.

Here's to hoping the next three games are just as good. I'm rooting for the Steelers and Seahawks, and I think the Steelers will win, but I'll have to reserve judgment on the NFC game until we know the status of the two running backs.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Football at 10:58

## Blog Export: Beaneball, <http://beaneball.org/>

Tuesday, August 23. 2005

### **F.U.T.O.**

Via Offwing Opinion, here's a brilliant idea to "help out" T.O. in his quest for less hunger for his family.

Posted by jason in Football at 20:07

## Blog Export: Beaneball, <http://beaneball.org/>

Wednesday, July 6, 2005

### **My funeral will be green and gold**

This is sort of sweet, if a little bizarre.

Posted by jason in Football, News at 21:17

Sunday, February 29, 2004

### **Terrell Owens' predicament**

This whole thing where Terrell Owens' agent didn't file paperwork on time to get his player out of his contract is really funny. TO is now claiming that it's not his agent's fault, it's the fault of the 49ers and the NFL. I can see it being the NFL's fault, if they truly didn't disseminate the information that the deadline for paperwork filing had been moved up, but I fail to see how the 49ers relate to all this.

TO accuses the team of a lack of loyalty because, I guess, they didn't tell him when the new deadline was. But what's loyalty? How can he rip the Niners for lack of loyalty in an off-season when he was about to void his contract and sign with another team?

I'm not saying that he should be demonized, either. But this loyalty card that gets played on both sides, management and labor, in sports all the time is patently ridiculous. Why should there be any loyalty? Sports are a capitalist endeavour. Everyone's trying to maximize how much they can get, so it's hypocritical for either side to claim that anything but personal benefit is driving decisions.

Posted by jason in Football at 00:26