



## DARTH VADAR ABOUT TO TAKE OVER SPORT'S WORLD

By Kerry Schmidt 01-27-2008

Yep, we're just about at the dreaded "Darth Vader" time in sports.  
The dark side!

We had our preview of the "nothing happening" time in sports this past week. A few early bits and pieces of the upcoming Super Bowl, and nothing else.

Next week, we'll be drowning in so much stuff on the SB – most of it so boring and useless that you could fertilize your lawn with it. And my column will add to that pile of s..t, so get ready.

NOTE: As a preview of how much crap you will hear, there already were 13 different stories about the fact that the Giants and Pats will be playing each other only 36 days after their last contest. How can you write 13 stories about that?

Only exciting thing right now is Las Vegas is hoping that betting on the game, since it is between two big cities, will go over the \$100 million level. (this is only for legal bets placed there. It is estimated that over \$2 billion will be bet throughout the world, including illegal bets, office pools, etc.

And then, after the hang-overs from the SB SLOWLY wear off on Monday, you can pretty much forget about the sports pages.

Nothing matters in the NBA until about June, MLB and their steroids are a couple months away and, well, nobody knows about that hockey league (see ratings below).

As we say in the sports writing business, at a time like this, where you must produce a column, but there is nothing to write about, we say "you have to make chicken soup out of chicken s..t."

Speaking of NFL versus NHL (what is that?), look at a ratings comparison.

Last week's Giants/Packers overtime game drew a 31.7 rating, meaning 31.7% of houses with TV's watched the game. The Chargers/Patriots drew a 27.4 rating. In other words, over one third of the country watched one or both of the games.

The NHL (Nothing Happening League). First, you have to find out the (only) channel that carries their games. It's the "Versus" channel, an obscure cable channel. A whopping 0.3% of the channel's 74 million viewers have watched their games so far this season. That translates into about 230,000 out of 74 million are watching the NHL. Never has a sport rated this low on TV. The dog shows, bowling, pool matches and even a TV'd Chess Championship had better ratings!

And for this great following, Versus pays the NHL \$72 million a year!

The average NFL payout to the league is over \$720 million a year, so while that is a lot more money, they are getting a lot more bang for the buck than hokey-pokey.

Watching a hockey game on TV is about as exciting as watching paint dry.

Open mouth, insert foot.

Seems to be catching on lately.

Last week I reported about the Golf Channel's Kelly Tilghman's comment on how to beat Tiger Woods: "Lynch him in a back alley."



## OFF THE WALL SPORTS

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For that, she got a two week suspension and will be back on the air this weekend for the Buick open, ironically the first tournament of the year Tiger will play in. As reported, she had apologized and Tiger went out of his way to say it was “certainly a lot about nothing. I have absolutely no problem with Kelly. We’re friends.”

In her first comment(s) Thursday, she showed class. She opened with, “I’m Kelly Tilghman. It’s an honor to be with you again,” then went on to apologize again for her comments.

Well, also as mentioned, her editor, Dave Seanor really put foot in eyeball. He put a picture of a noose on the cover of Golf Magazine’s first issue after Tilghman’s comments.

The poop really hit the fan on that one.

Among many media and other outlets who were really upset with the picture, PGA Commissioner Tim Finchem really blasted the magazine and Seanor was quickly sent looking for a new job. Par for the course in such a stupid action.

Know what would be cool. As Tiger begins his play today, have a large noose hanging from the tree at the first Tee. Just kidding!!!

Well, at least Kelly was sober when she opened her mouth.

Dana Jacobson, co-host of ESPN2’s *First Take*, was suspended for “a few days” for her comments at a social event.

It was a roast of ESPN’s Mike Greenberg and Mike Golic in Atlantic City on January 1. According to The Press of Atlantic City, Jacobson was seen, onstage, “swilling vodka and cursing like a sailor,” and made “an absolute fool of herself as the crowd booed.” Hey, she was “juiced,” but not on steroids.

In her “roast” of Golic, she made vulgar references about Notre Dame (Golic played there). The references involved comments about Jesus Christ that were, well, not very holy.

This prompted the Catholic League (how many teams do they have?) to put out a statement headlined, “ESPN Anchorwoman Trashes Jesus Christ.”

When she sobered up, she apologized.

Damn good thing she was not in any sort of Muslim-type place and trashed Muhhamed, their most holy. She would have been be-headed.

Now if that had happened on TV, that would really get some ratings. Cool.

Needing equal time for the male gender side, Saint Louis basketball coach Rick Majerus also pissed off the pope.

Well, maybe not the pope, but certainly Roman Catholic Archbishop Raymond Burke. Burke has chastised rock stars and presidential candidates who he thinks might have violated Church Doctrine, and he thus lashed out at Majerus for “Airing his abortion-rights views at a rally for Hillary Clinton last week.”

Saint Louis is a Jesuit Catholic University, and thus Burke has called upon the University to discipline Majerus.

So far, nothing has been done, and Majerus lashed back at Burke. “These beliefs are ingrained in me,” he said. He added that “The First Amendment right to free speech supersedes anything that the archbishop would order me to do.”



He went on to babble about his father fighting in WWII and his uncle dying there and about other “war” things that seemed to have no relevance to the misspeak at hand. This dispute between the archbishop and the coach puts the school’s students and faculty in a tough position, pitting Catholic doctrine against intellectual freedom, reported USA TODAY. Intellectual, what kinda crap is that in a sports column University spokesman Clayton Berry would not say if the school is considering disciplinary actions against Majerus.

Personally, I think he was just plain stupid. He knows who he works for and what they stand for. He could have just gone and simply supported Clinton without getting into the abortion thing.

Actually, I think he should be lynched in a back alley by his cahones just because he supported that damn witch! Or better yet, simply lynch the damn witch, but in public. I’d pay to see that.

Oh oh, here come the watch all, hear all feds. I did a no-no. Ah, screw em.

One NFL related story is relevant now.

One of the NFL’s nicest guys, Tampa Bay’s Mike Alstott announced his retirement last week, after 12 seasons. That’s a long career for someone who epitomized the “pound it in their” type of fullback.

Whenever TB needed a “tough yard,” Alstott would sacrifice his body and get it for them.

Alstott, at “about” 265 pounds, would stick his head in any pile and gnash his way through.

His entire career was with the Bucs and he is their all-time TD leader, with 58, including one that helped the Bucs defeat the Raiders in SB XXXVII.

That was the last SB that I covered, and I interviewed Alstott after the game, and he was as polite and nice as could be, even in the hectic celebration of winning the ultimate game.

He retires with neck problems, not surprising given the job description he had. I just certainly hope that he does not have severe problems as he ages.

Hey, Poker is going all out. It already is the fastest growth “sport” on TV. Now it will come out regularly with statistics.

The World Poker Tour, the original that started the popularity of the game, has teamed with Stats LLS, the same company that provides data collection for 85 leagues, including all the NFL, MLB, NBA and other big name leagues (not the Catholic League, and, sorry, NHL).

The stats won’t just be the wins, but wins based on strength of the field (number of players entered and their rankings). They also will have a stat called the “aggression index.” It’s a mathematical formula at how many times a player raises in certain positions with what hand.

Hey, if some are on steroids, I’ll bet they are very aggressive!

Speaking of MLB getting ready for another doped up season, Jose Canseco has accused MLB and Detroit Tigers’ Magglio Ordonez of “hassling” the publisher of his second book, *Vindicated*, which was about to be released.



## OFF THE WALL SPORTS

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Berkeley Books, which published his first book, *Juiced*, which was a best seller, dropped the new book, but Simon Spotlight Entertainment picked up the rights.

Canseco says the MLB put pressure on the publisher to not publish the book. MLB has denied the allegation. And, of course I believe EVERYTHING MLB tells us.

And speaking of juicers, excuse me, alleged juicers. Roger Clemens' meeting with the Senate Sub Committee has been put off until February 5.

Who the F cares.

And, Barry Bonds has filed suit to have the perjury charges against him dropped. Again, who the F cares.

Shoot up, dope up, and "PLAY BALL."

Just to prove how slow a time it is, USA TODAY last Thursday carried a half page story on how West Virginia fans are still crazed up over Rick Rodriguez leaving as their football coach.

At an "anti-Rodriguez rally," over 300 people showed up to vent their spleens. And when all 300 of them combined to smile, you could see a total of 167 teeth.

Hey you hillbilly bob-a-loots, get over it. It's been over a month, and coaches do this sort of s..t all the time. Yes, he was sewage level about it, but so what.

If anyone really gives a damn about it, get a copy of the paper. It is really quite funny. I mean, it just proves that these back wood pecker-heads actually do not have a life.

Some of the gummed individuals who were quoted were so worked up that their tobacco juice came flying out of their jowls.

Well, Darth Vader is closing down for now.

Next week, we get to be made more bored by all the SB hoopla herein, but after that, get new light bulbs, and break out the single malt scotch.

Life, as we knew it, is over until the next football season starts.