



THE GREAT OF: 2008 AND WORST: AND 2009??

By Kerry Schmidt

12-28-2008

I hope every one of you had a very Merry Christmas, and will likewise have a Happy New Year! And, it IS Merry CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR. NOT the generic “Happy Holidays.” If these specifics offend anyone, GOOD!

All you frickin agnostics, atheists, Muslims and the too many ACLU jerk-offs can do you know what to yourselves!

If Christians in some Islamic countries even tried to worship, they may well have been executed! Keep your towels wrapped around your heads, girls, but don’t tell us how to celebrate Christmas! Before I get to 2008, Sports Illustrated has gone to the dogs.

On the cover of their season finale (12/29), they have a picture of a dog on the cover.

Being on the cover is a great honor. But a dog?

Well, that dog, named “Sweet Jasmine,” is a 35 pound pit bull.

It was just one of over 50 pit bulls that were taken from Vick-Dog’s “dog-fighting” property.

It is a feature article, and I began to read it, but the first three pages featured, in gory detail, all the terrible, grisly aspects of this horrific, ghastly scenario.

I can see absolutely no reason why SI had to rehash this aspect of the year old story. We were subjected enough – too much – back then.

They should have just published the second half, which told the wonderful story of how more than half of these dogs are recovering/have recovered, and are in foster care and many have been adopted. Thus, many were spared being put to sleep.

And in the beginning, PETA, the SPCA and the Humane Society insisted that they be euthanized. They said “The cruelty they suffered is such that they (sic) can’t lead a normal life.”

Well, they could, and have been saved.

But why SI had to remind us of the horrors they did suffer was stupid!

If they intended this to be a feel good story, they screwed up.

So, let’s look at some of the top stories of 2008.

Picking them 1, 2, 3 and so forth is hard to do, so, in no particular order:

Michael Phelps’ winning 8 gold medals. But in this, are two stories within a story.”

In the 100 meter butterfly, Serbia’s Milorad Cavic led Phelps the entire race. Until the last second. Cavic, for whatever reason, raised his head above the water to check on his position. That, according to Phelps, caused Cavic just enough “drag” for Phelps to hit the “touch pad” by one, one hundredth of a second to take gold.

In the first replays of the finish, it appeared Cavic had won. But a spectacular underwater shot by a Patrick B. Kreamer, EPA, showed Phelps’ long middle finger (giving the finger is good here) touching first. And, with today’s technology, the computerized touch pad proved that Phelps exerted the 6.6 pounds of pressure first. Thus, drive for eight goals was intact.

But, it took a much over-looked teammate, Jason Lezak, to give Phelps the impossible.

Lezak, at 32 the oldest member of the team, swam the final lap of the 4 X 100 freestyle. In the 2000 and 2004 Olympics, with Lezak swimming the final lap, the US lost.

And in China, as Lezak dove into the pool for the last leg again, he was .6 one hundredths of a second behind Alain Bernaid, the Frenchman who, the week before the Olympics, said they would “smash” the Yanks.

Lezak had never beaten Bernaid, but “somehow,” as he said, I was able to catch up and beat him. Lezak caught Bernaid in the last three meters and won by .08 hundredths of a second.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

So, sans Lezak, Phelps would not be the giant, all-world sensation he is. He would have just been “the guy who tied Mark Spitz.”

Without Lezak, Phelps may not be a multi-millionaire and the athlete of the year.

As Lezak COULD have said, “there is no I in team, but there is a ‘me.’”

How about Tiger Woods being other worldly Tiger. He won the U.S. Open – playing on a broken leg and torn ACL in his knee.

He never mentioned anything about it until after he won, on the 19th hole in a playoff.

There have been many great majors in golf, but this has to me THE ultimate.

With my 49’ers, mention “the catch,” and everyone in S.F. knows it was Dwight Clark’s TD catch to beat the Cowboys to advance to their first SB win.

But this 2008 catch may just be the greatest ever.

Late in the 4th quarter of the SB, the “third best” QB in the Manning family, broke away from a sure sack and heaved a desperation 40-yard pass across his body. David Tyree, an unknown receiver, somehow leaped, got one hand on the ball, then pinned the ball to the top of his helmet and kept it there as he was smashed to the ground.

There have probably been more replays of “the catch” than any other play in SB history.

Two plays later, Manning hit Plaxico “gunslinger” Burris grabbed the winning TD pass.

NOTE: It’s quite unlikely that Burris will duplicate such a pass anytime soon. The “shooting yourself” is another 2008 story in itself.

The 2008 Wimbledon. Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer played an incredible, nearly 5-hour match. There were more fantastic shots in this match than in all the athletes that have shot themselves. Nadal won the match in the final game tie-breaker, 9-7.

John McEnroe, who lost the 1980 epic Wimbledon to Bjorn Borg, proclaimed this match as the “greatest ever.”

Back to the Olympics. A nearly unknown to most fans, Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, won both the 100 and 200 meters, shattering the world records in both. In the 100, a race usually won by a last split-second lean, was so far ahead he slowed down, arms outstretched. Many said, had he kept running full tilt the last 15 meters, he would have knocked “at least” another 2/10ths of a second off of his world record 9.69 seconds. Many had predicted, for years, that the 9.7 mark “may well never be broken.”

Dana Patrick, drove herself into title IX history, becoming the first female driver to win an Indy car race, when she won in Japan.

She had become a household name when she finished 4th in the 2005 Indy 500.

Big Brown easily won the Kentucky Derby and Preakness, but jockey Kent Desormeaux, in the Preakness, inexplicably pulled Big Brown up, finishing last.

No solid explanation was given, but Desormeaux said he “sensed something was wrong with his horse.” and he finished last, a first ever after wining the first two of the Triple Crown.

In the Kentucky Derby, Eight Bells was running 3rd, when he suddenly pulled up, and went down. She had to be euthanized on the tract, due to two broken front ankles. It’s possible that Desormeaux may have had that on his mind, but we will never know.

In the final of the men’s NCAA basketball tournament, Memphis led Kansas, 60-51 with 2:12 to play.

Memphis had been “terrible” all year at the free throw line, so KU fouled them every possession. It worked. Memphis made only 2 of 13 shots, and KU hit a miracle 3-pointer to tie the game in regulation, then easily defeated the mentally broken Tigers.

The Boston Celtics won their 17th championship (they won only 22 games in 2007-08), the first since 1987, defeating their arch rival, the L.A. Lakers. Note: With 17 titles for Boston, and 14 for L.A., they have combined to win one half of the 64 NBA championships.



Peeking into 2009, these two teams may meet again.

Tampa Bay, with the worst record in baseball in 2007, made it to the WS. With the second lowest payroll in MLB.

Historic Yankee Stadium closed for good, on September 21. Arguably, no stadium has a more storied history than any other.

When Babe Ruth hit the first HR there in 1923, he said, "I was glad to have hit the first HR in this park." He then added, "God only knows who will hit the last one." Jose Molina, hardly in the same stature as the Babe, is the answer to what will be a trivia question in years to come.

Roger Clemmons, one of the greatest pitchers ever – 354 wins, saw his sure-to-be Hall-of-Fame spot fading, having being accused of using steroids.

And of course, the Yankees signed another mega player. Thus they have shelled out over one BILLION for just four players. What recession?

There are many more, but I will bore you with enough junk without them.

The NFL season comes to its regular season finish today, with a lot at stake.

There will be 8 division winners and 4 wild-card spots.

Before today's games, only 7 teams have clinched either a division title or a wild card. That leaves 12 teams vying for the final 5 spots.

Reading all the possibilities of division and wild card winners, there are a total of 51 combinations on who, how, where these final teams finish.

Vegas's bookmakers must be having giant orgasms right now.

The big surprise, Miami, who was 1-15 last year, can clinch their division with a win. Also, Arizona has clinched the weak NFC West. They could finish 8-8. There are 11 teams with at least 10 wins, and some will not make the playoffs because of teams like Arizona.

The Bears are one team that can make the playoffs if about 30 things happen. They beat the Packers in OT Monday night, but the coin toss for OT bounced off the helmet of Bears' LB Brian Urlacher. Have no friggin' idea what that meant, but it was cool.

The Cowboys are the gossip gods.

Picked by many to go to the SB, they must win just to make the playoffs. With all the stars, some of whom – see TO, PacRat, ah, Man, are stirring the pot. And, the Cowboys have not had a winning record in December in 12 years (they are 1-2 going into today).

"America's Team" (puke again) is at Philadelphia today and are a 1 ½ point underdog, so all may come crashing down on TO and company tonight. Enjoy your New Year, Jerry Jones, you poop head.

Deion Sanders said on TV, "the turmoil is just getting started."

Then, ta da, we have Detroit!

What a great year they have had.

The Tigers were favored to go to the WS. They died from day one.

The Pistons aren't setting the NBA on fire.

And of course, the Lions. They can set an all-time low by losing today, thus, 0-16!

Then you have their mayor who is in jail, and the Big Three Auto companies begging for bucks and may go belly up. Not to mention their 3rd from the top murder rate.

They also have a very f...d up sportswriter, Rod Parker, Detroit News. Parker asked coach Rod Marinelli about his defensive coach, Joe Barry, who happens to be married to Marinelli's daughter.

He said, "Coach, do you wish your daughter had married a better defensive coordinator?"

Marinelli showed some class – a word unknown to Parker, and ignored the question. He later stated that they (sportswriters) can attack me, but if you attack my daughter, I've got a problem with that."



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

Fox's Terry Bradshaw, said on TV, "You know, Rob, you're an idiot. You're just a flat out idiot!"

Parker has apologized, but what a frickin a..hole.

Some other good year-end quotes.

Fox's Jimmy Johnson, had a dog deliver an envelope to him on TV (his picks of the day) to hype the upcoming Fox movie, "Marley & Me."

He noted, "... this shows how far we've fallen."

After a great start, Favre and the Jets have lost 4 of 5, and there is talk of Favre's bad shoulder.

Another surprise team is New England. Sans Tom Brady, they are 10-5. They could finish 11-5 and watch 8-8 teams make the playoffs (see above).

Final comment on the NFL. This works for 2008, and for many years on either side.

ESPN's Tom Johnson, on pain in the NFL. "Most fans don't know what it is like to a 25-year old guy to crawl across the floor in the middle of Sunday night trying to get a drink of water."

OUCH.

Well, I have no idea how 2009 will work out, but with the great economy and all, it should be another screwed up year!

I don't go out on New Year's eves anymore. Dangerous. It's amateur night.

But you can be SURE there will be a few wee drams of my BEST single malt.

Happy New Year to all.