



TURN OUT THE LIGHTS, THE PARTY'S OVER.

By Kerry Schmidt February 08, 2009

For those of you that are old, like me, you certainly remember the beginning years of Monday Night Football. The egotistical Howard CO!-SELL. And of course, his party partner, Dandy Don Meredith, a former Dallas QB.

As each game wound down, Meredith, accompanied by the several cocktails he had consumed during the broadcast, would break out into song: "Turn out the lights, the party's over. They say all good things, must come to an end..."

And he would be intellectually reprobated by Cosell, who himself was often full of spirits, Then the lost one, Frank Gifford, would try to summarize, then just give up.

Ah, those were the good ole days.

However, now comes the darkness. No more football for seven months.

But wait! The ever so exciting Pro Bowl is today. Breathtaking. BARF!

I have watched perhaps just less than one half of the Pro Bowl. Ever. Total.

And, to make it ever more exciting, the NFL is seriously considering having the 2010 PB played the week before the SB. And not in Hawaii. Miami.

How in hell will that work? Many of the players will be on the SB teams, and I'm sure that the coaches of said teams would love having their players risking injury before the SB.

Plus, the only reason half of the Pro Bowlers play in the game is the free week in Hawaii!

But, this SB did happen.

It is estimated that over 100 million words were written about this epic occurrence, most of it redundant.

The game.

Many headlines asked, "Best SB Ever?" And since a goodly number of scribes, refreshed at the Press Bar, fawned over the spectacle, said yes.

But not me! Not a chance in hell!

It was more akin to an NBA game. You know, where not much happens 'til the last few minutes (4<sup>th</sup> quarter in SB this year),

The first three quarters saw mostly frustration, some good defense, and many mistakes.

But the 4<sup>th</sup> Q was excellent. Warner woke up and so did Larry Fitzgerald. The Cards took the lead with just over 2 ½ minutes left.

Then Roethlisberger totally redeemed himself for his miserable performance in his first SB win, and, as Steve Young described it, "he was Joe Montana- like."

Finish with the great "toes inside the white line" catch by Santonio Holmes.

Pitt wins.

The other Pitt receiver, Hines Ward was MVP, and all the tipsy writers bestowed the greatest catch award to Holmes. "That was the game winner, they all agreed."

Technically, from the final score, it was.

But NO WAY was it the play of the game!

That play took place on the last play of the first half.

Pitt up, 10-7, Cards with 2<sup>nd</sup> and goal at the one. Try for a TD pass on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> (if not there, throw the ball into the seats), then kick a FG. Then, the Cards would be, at least, tied at 10 all, and have a good chance to carry a 14-10 lead to halftime.

Now, the REAL play of the game. For some insane reason, Warner tried to force one in there and big-gutted LB James Harrison, somehow intercepted it at the goal line, and then commenced to



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rumble, bumble, stumble, waddle his way the length of the field before collapsing in the end zone. Pitt 17-7 at the half.

Watching Harrison “fleet foot” it down the field was akin to watching a rhino stumble into a mud hole.

Yes, that play was a THE backbreaker. AZ, had they scored, would have had all of Big MO going to the Bruce Springsteen concert, and I think they would have won.

But they did not, and thus the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter ONLY, was, perhaps the greatest ending to a SB. But??? Remember last year? Helmet catch and winning TD?

You judge. And the Giants win last year was a huge upset. This was not.

Hey, at least some folks in AZ got an extra goodie in the 4th Q.

Comcast’s Tucson area showing, somehow, was interrupted by a 30-second hard core porno piece. Bet that started a few old farts’ hearts!

One final maybe. Back to Holmes’ winning catch.

He celebrated big time afterwards, and should have received a 15-yard penalty (according to officials who reviewed the play after the game).

That meant that Pitt should have been forced to kickoff from their own 15. Thus, AZ would quite likely have had great field position. Whatever. It’s over.

Thus, the anointing by many as the best game. Not by me.

Then, the next day, many of these same scribes, hangovers and all, wrote abundantly on how Pitt is now THE BEST team in NFL history. After all, they have now won 6 SB’s, more than any other team. The Greatest?

B.S. Not a fricken chance. Maybe 4<sup>th</sup> best. See below.

Somehow, perhaps due to the imbibing aspects the ever-so-self-important scribes indulged therein, forgot that the NFL actually started playing championships way back in the late 1930’s. And beginning with the 1947 season, the NFL officially held a “NFL title game” at the end of each season.

Somehow, all seemed to think the NFL Championships began in 1967 – the first SB game.

Thus, many a great NFL Championship Game was, apparently dismissed outright, at least on February 2, when anointing the Steelers as NFL Gods.

Hey, what is now called “The Greatest Game Ever Played,” was the 1958 NFL Championship between the Baltimore Colts and the New York Giants in Yankee Stadium.

Played in bitter cold on December 28, 2008, this game had at least one thing in common with the last SB. A brief black out occurred when someone inadvertently knocked a cable loose. Just a blank screen. Not even some good porn!

The great Johnny Unitas completed 3 consecutive passes to Raymond Berry for a first down at the Giants’ 13 and with only seven seconds left, the Colts kicked a FG sending it into overtime. Giants won the coin toss, but went 3 and out.

Led by Unitas and Berry, the Colts drove 80 yards, culminating with fullback Alan Ameche bulling it in from the one. “The drive” took 8 minutes and 13 seconds, and the Colts won, 23-17.

But I guess that game, and many others, did not count when knighting an “All-Time” best team. Going back to the old days and some of their great championships, here’s the final OFFICIAL tally: Green Bay Packers have 12 NFL titles! The Bears have 9 and the Giants have 7. Only THEN do we have Pitt at 6!

Nothing against the Steelers. They have won more SB’s than any other team. However, some of the greatest games of all time happened long before 1967!

Now, the ever important commercials. For \$3 million for a 30-second spot, we had the big build-up to the “Commercial Game.”

Which commercial(s) would be the best?



Again, the Budweiser Clydesdale horses took 3 of the top 6. But in an upset, the No. 1 spot was a Doritos commercial.

Now what made that so special, you could say, was that it was thought up, made, filmed and directed by two un-employed brothers from Batesville, Ind. who had never made a single piece of film that aired anywhere!

And, they filmed the whole damn thing for a whopping \$2,000! Pocket change for all the big guys. For their efforts they were awarded \$1 million by Doritos, who had sponsored an amateur ad contest, only to see the above 2 win the big prize for their product.

Now there most certainly was one commercial that did not compete, but should have. I would have LOVED to see this one on TV.

If you can, or did, get a copy of last Wednesday's USA TODAY, look at page 4A (front section). If not, read below.

It took up one half of the page, vertically.

With a mostly black/dark gray background, the top left corner had two, one inch letters: **K-Y**. Strap yourself in.

Then, taking up the remaining upper half, were two mid-size "tubes." One was blue, the other pink. Best description I can give is they looked just like, well, DILDOS!

And right below them, in dead center, were the words:

**This year,  
Cupid has an arrow  
for both of you.**

Then you scroll down and 3/4ths of the way, on the right side, were two of the said tubes, side by side, in a package. A blue and a pink.

And below them, beginning with the blue, then pink you had, **yours + mine**. on the package.

At the bottom of the add, they "spelled it out."

**Happier Valentines's Day  
From K-Y Brand YOURS'S + MINE**

It then gave their "Climax Finish."

**Experience the first lubricant designed especially for couples. Inside are two products, each with its own sensation. His is exciting. Hers is thrilling. And when they combine, there's an amazing reaction.**

**Learn more at ky.com** Note: Wonder how many wives wondered what that was all about? Well sports fans, I can't speak for anyone else, but I would have LOVED to have had that one somehow shown on the TV screen.

Hell, if they can interrupt Tucson with porno, why not this "harmless?" ad?

That commercial, even if it did not win a top award, I can assure you that it would have been the most talked about one, BY FAR!

Good stuff.

Since football is finished for awhile, let me close on a far-from-happy note.

This has hit the news before, but given the coverage of the SB, this dark side of the game was put front and center, though still mostly ignored.

Today's super rich, self-important players (and owners) could not care less about the great ones, their old time "Band of Brothers," who made this game what it is today. Which means, the millions for today's players (and billions for owners) that has been earned off of the blood, pain and forgotten broken bodies of those who paved the way.

You may have heard in the past how Mike Ditka has led a push for the league to help the great many of those old-time heroes who are down and out.



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Many are near broke, some penniless. A great many live within ravaged bodies so ripped apart by their gallant struggles of yesteryear that they can barely function in today's society.

And no health care is made available to them. NONE. The NFL, estimated to be in the top 100 largest corporations in the world, with combined worth of many billions of dollars, does very little for those who built the foundations that they now live on in luxury.

At the very least the NFL needs to provide some type of medical insurance for these former players.

Not all, of course, are destitute. Some have invested and do well. But even those individuals, they cannot get health insurance.

If they have money, you say, they can buy it like us. NO NO NO!

They fall into a classifications called "UNINSURABLE." (Yes, Ins. Cos. keep lists strictly baring such "bad risk" individuals).

Due to their broken down bodies, no insurance company will sell them ANY insurance.

I KNOW!! I myself have had 26 major orthopedic surgeries. I have 6 titanium rods, 5 titanium cages, 8 screws and 2 plates in my back alone.

Add in a full titanium right knee and some other items, and....well, it takes me 10 minutes just to get out of bed some mornings. My wife says when I get up it sounds like I'm making popcorn. She kids me, saying when I croak she will cremate me. Says she'll "melt your ass down, you'll finally be worth something."

But not funny.

I have great insurance, since my wife is manager of HR at a major hospital. (Why do you think I married her? Just kidding!). But I have tried to buy "extra" insurance, even that "AFLAC."

Once you are on the uninsurable list, never a chance. And, that also goes for life ins. I tried to get more myself. No one will sell it to them.

Minnesota Vikings' center, Matt Birk sought donations for ex-players.

Given the run up to the SB hype, he sent letters to every single NFL player in the league today: A total of 1,649 potential donors. Many of them very rich.

He asked them to donate a portion of their Dec. 21 game check.

The response? Strike up the band, ready for the big finish. As of the week leading up to the SB, 15 players responded! 15!!! Out of 1,650!

A frickin disgrace!

Ditka, who spurs this need, said, "What does that tell you? It's a dog-eat-dog world. They only care for themselves."

The late Gene Upshaw, former head of the NFLPA, will be succeeded by someone yet unknown. And, the owners say they will suspend the "salary cap" rule and thus throw out the contract after the 2010 season. Strike? Lockout? Who knows.

But that will just push those foundation builders further down the food chain.

CB Dwight Harrison, 60, could be the poster boy.

10 years in the NFL, 2 pro-bowl appearances. Now lives in a trailer. Can't watch the SB since he can't afford cable.

And get this! He is having to sue the NFL because they are trying to CUT OFF what little benefits he has! He is acting as his own attorney, since he cannot afford a real one.

Far too many concussions, blows to the head. Speech impaired. Walks with a cane or walker.

Like everyone, he is not eligible for Medicaid until he turns 65. Many will not make it to 65!

A small TV piece on Harrison was shown on TV during SB week. Few saw it. He simply said, "The question I have, is WHY?" He then broke down and walked away.

Just like all the rich players and owners of today have walked away from him, and hundreds, maybe even thousands of others.



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Yes, it was another great SB. All the glitz and glamour. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent.

But now the lights are out until next year. And the forgotten ones, the trailblazers, they hobble back to their poverty, racked with pain and little or no hope.

Yes, there is a dark – very dark side to all of this.

Perhaps I should have saved this for a column all to itself, since it makes this one too long.’

But I say, what better time to shine a light on this problem than during the biggest, brightest light in all of football? The SB.

I wonder if some of the Harrison’s even know – or cared – who won the damn game?!

God, maybe I’ll go find a Dwight Harrison and share my single malt!