



SOME TRIVIAL CURRENT STUFF, THEN...DICK BUTKIS

By Kerry Schmidt March 29, 2009

As some long time readers may notice, I have pulled on of my favorite columns and revised this one.

And I picked out a few tiny bits that may even interest someone else.

I met up with Mr. (or Ms), Brown Recluse Sunday evening.

It's only 1/8th inch long!

But believe me, it packs a punch.

I never noticed or felt the bite.

Three days in the hospital for IV's. The 3 inch long mess of "dead tissue" looks like black puke. They say I will always have an indentation on the base of my right hand fore finger, as that area will never grow back.

So with hand bandaged up, I cannot type much, thus, a throw back was added.

MM: Big East has at least 3 teams going to the elite 8.

With all the political stuff going on re Obama's "Bankrupt bailout, Sen. Oran Hatch of Utah wants to hold Congressional hearings to "force" a football playoff.

With a new Pac 10 head who is open to a playoff, it may happen someday.

I hope it comes to pass, but Congress has other matters to screw up right now.

Lance Armstrong crashed in a race in Spain and broke his color bone. As soon as he was carted away, some Frenchies raced in and scrapped up some of this blood, to "catch him." F the French.

Just send Butkis after them.

Anyone heard of the MMA? Mixed Martial Arts. It's a new "sport" where guys with lots of Asian types of fighting get into a cage and damn near kill each other. It is really brutal.

But now, USA/TODAY will start ranking all the fighters and more air time will accrue.

The blood lust today must be really high, as this stuff is out there.

Turning back the years, we will soon have "Gladiators" fighting each other to the death. And bring back the Lions VS Christians.

At least you damn sure will not need judges to pick the winner in those two "Sports???"

Butkis would love this, especially the gladiator and lions stuff.

Doggie boy Vick gets out of jail on July 20.

Goodall says "He must show remorse." Goodell did not detail how to show remorse.

He also needs to get out from under a couple of bankruptcies.

It is likely, unless Vick opens up a Cobra/Mongoose show, he will someday be reinstated. Several teams – Seattle, Washing and Tampa have expressed interest. He could play for Cleveland. Their "DOG POUND" would fit right in.

I remember back when I was 8 years old. My dad took me to see the Harlem Globetrotters. Their ball skills and crazy hi-jinks thrilled many a kid. And adult. And 30 years later, I took my kids.

Today, they are as hot as ever, delighting fans from Dubai to Debuque.

And they have been doing these entertaining shows since....1926! 25 years before the NBA. 9 decades of great, family entertainment.

I may not be able to remember many things here in my 60's, but I sure remember Meadowlark Lemon!

How many entertainment "shows" have been popular for over 80 years?!

The biggest shock in the many years of MM occurred last week.

On the women's side. Pat Summitt, Tennessee's woman's coach, lost their first round in the MM.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

This is the first time they have not won their opening game since 1981. And that was because MM did not exist then!

So, she had never lost in the first, or second rounds since 1982.

That, sports fans, is an upset!

DICK BUTKIS

Larger letters for a larger than life man.

A few months ago the NFL came up with of the top 25 players in the last 25 years. Well, my man played before then, and I don't know where he would be ranked, but you can bet the farm that he was toughest, meanest SOB to ever put on a uniform

Most of today's generation has maybe only heard the name. Some of today's so called football fans actually do not even know who he is, and especially, what he was.

Dick Butkis played for the Chicago Bears from 1965-1973. Many say the nick- name for the Bears, "The monsters of the midway" is due to Butkis.

Ask most of the players of his era, and they will say he was the hardest hitter that ever played the game.

There is a great video out called "The NFL's 100 Greatest Hits." Butkis is in 35 of those.

He had so many crunching tackles that the NFL made a film JUST of his hits. Called it "Dick Butkis' Greatest Hits." Get a copy of that and take a look. It will make you cringe and actually scare you.

I personally know severally players who said they were actually afraid of him. I have never heard that said of any other player.

In his book, "Butkis," one of the most famous quotes was on how his ultimate wish was to hit someone, preferably a QB, so hard that his head was knocked off and rolled down the field. He then added, "I would have loved to run over and punted it."

Fast forward a moment to today. Far removed from the grime and grit of the South Side, Butkis lives in a large house in Malibu, in the hills over looking the Pacific. His three kids live nearby. But do not for a minute think that this man has mellowed much.

He still growls and sneers at things or persons he doesn't care for.

In testament to his greatness, the annual award for the best linebacker in the NFL is called, of course, "The Butkis Award."

He was asked recently about Brian Urlacher, the third generation of great Bears' LB's (Butkis first, Mike Singletary and now Urlacher).

"Yea, somebody asked me about Ur-locker (his pronunciation, for whatever reasons), he growled, and I said he needs to have some big hits. That's all, plant some people. He needs to create some more turnovers."

"I like him, but he needs to create some more mayhem out there. Really mess some things up." He is doing this interview as he rides his bicycle down Pacific Coast Hwy.

He then stops long enough to blow a big loogie, from one nostril, then the other.

For the record, Butkis recovered 25 fumbles, intercepted 22 passes and, as one player noted, "Probably forced more fumbles than anyone. Ever! They just did not keep that stat back then" Furthermore, as best as the stats can dig up, he made nearly 1000 tackles in his career. That would average nearly 11 per game!

Another former player said, "I imagine he put over 100 folks out of games. Some for several games." Six never played again.

Several other plays said that after Butkis would hit them they would pray that they could get up. Since he was in my era, he was always my idol. One time I saw him coming off the field in San Francisco after a bad defeat. One Forty Niner player walked up and extended his hand to shake.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

Butkis bored those glaring eyes at him, and in a very swift move, swung his helmet he held by the facemask in the other hand, and smashed this guys hand. He then just kept on walking off the field. An old high school story can pre-tell his mind set. During practice, he looked over at a car parked on the road. His girlfriend was in it with four other young men.

Without a word, Butkis raced over, jumped the fence, flew halfway through the open window and proceeded to beat the crap out of all four boys.

When he got back, the coach gave him hell, saying, what the hell were you doing? Those were her brothers.”

Butkis just looked at coach and growled, “So what.”

Butkis did not just tackle opposing players. He wanted the ball, a limb, at least a few fingers, and the guy’s courage. “If you hit them good, courage changes into fear,” said Butkis.

Butkis once intercepted a Fran Tarkington pass near the goal line, and instead of going in for an easy TD, he sought out Tarkington just so he could run over him. Tark did stick out a foot and trip him, but then Fran told him that if Butkis had made a more direct move, he would have quickly laid down.

Butkis chuckled and said, Where the hell would the fun been in that?”

After high school, Butkis said “I thought all this sissy stuff would end when I got to college. “But here I am at Illinois and”, “ he grins,(there’s guys in college with f.....g yellow streaks up their backs. Chickens...ts”

“And when I got to the pros, I was sure it would end. But there were still guys with their eyeballs rolling around. Big pussies.”

My favorite Butkis story is this. It was the last game of the season, in Soldier Field, temperature about 32 degrees, sleet and rain with 30 mph winds. The other team has the ball and is just running out the last 1 ½ minutes. But wait! Butkis calls a time out! Several of his teammates came over and asked what the f... he was doing. They said, “We just want to get the hell out of here and on vacation.”

Well, ole Dick ripped the helmet off of one of his players and screamed, “It’ll be over 6 f..... months before I can knock the s... out of someone, so I want to enjoy this to the end.”

Butkis was the only player I know who numerous players admitted they were “definitely scared of him.”

That pretty well described Dick Butkis.

They say Butkis did not just like football, he loved it.

“Football for me was not work, “he said. “If you love something, it’s not work.”

Butkis was always my idol, and since I lived in Malibu for 20 years also, I saw him on a number of occasions, but never got up the nerve to go talk to him.

Then one day in our favorite bar/restaurant there, he was just walking in. I went over, introduced myself and we ended up having lunch together.

He was a really nice guy. He certainly did have another side to him. Funny, generous, and soft spoken,

But he still had that bear-like tone in his voice

We were talking about something when Butkis noted a “suit” who just walked in.

There were some “word’s” exchanged, and then the guy pulled out his check book and wrote Butkis a check.

When he returned to our table, he explained how that was a lawyer for whom he had done some advertising, and the guy never paid him.

Well a couple of days later, I read in the L.A. Times about that lawyer and Butkis. Apparently the check had bounced, and Butkis went right down to this guys ritzy high rise office, barged into the conference room wherein this lawyer was with several other individuals. Butkis pulled this guy



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

out of his chair by his suit lapels, lifted him off his feet and slammed him into the office wall. Butkis left the office with some extra cash in his pocket.

In other words, despite being over 20 years removed from the violent game he loved, and his body wracked with injuries, he still kept that scowl and growl mentality. You did not want to mess with him!

It was a big story in town for some time.

And Butkis still has that old “school boy trickery.”

One of his best friends, Steve Thomas, who owns a BMW distributorship in Camarillo, CA, often plays golf with Butkis.

And, just before Butkis puts, his buddy squeezes off his pocket fart machine, and both giggle like 5th graders.

The “toy” is called a Redi-Poot, and Butkis is rarely without his. He has been known to use it in a number of white tie type affairs, as well as just being in the middle of a crowd.

As mentioned, Butkis is wracked with pain from those days. He has an artificial knee (like mine!) as well as spinal, back and neck problems. (Like me).

As such, he avoids airports when possible, as he has set off more metal detectors than a picnic has ants.

He goes most everywhere in his RV.

Butkis, who is Catholic and goes to church every morning when possible, said, “unfortunately, God forgot to tell me what to do with the second half of my life.”

He says the first part was a no-brainer. “Ideally,” he had said earlier, “I would have played my last game and keeled over dead right there.”

He is so hobbled that he leans way forward when he walks. His chiropractor said he will one day get him walking upright, “Instead of hunched over like a caveman.”

Hmmmm, a caveman. Not a bad description of Dick Butkis.

Hey, I KNOW that Butkis would share a single malt or two with me!

He might even eat the bottle after we emptied it.