



NBA FINALS; FRENCH OPEN TENNIS; MLB BASEBALL. AND MUCH LESS.

By Kerry Schmidt      May 31, 2009

Bits and pieces of a lot of stuff today. Obviously, the big sports story is the NBA Playoffs. ABC/ESPN were having orgasms (last week) over the hoped for match-up between Kobe and the King.

Well as this is being written, the King's chances of getting to the finals are a long shot. The Lakers, in a tough battle themselves, should be there. We'll see. Cleveland did win at home Thursday night, thus now they are down 3-2, but they must win at Orlando.

Only the refs can sway this for the Cavs. And who knows, with the league and TV seeing a possible loss of millions.....

Now I mentioned last week on how bad the officiating was in these playoff games.

Enter Sir Charles. Barkley said "...people who don't otherwise watch the NBA, they are not seeing normal play. It's been terrible officiating. I shouldn't say they stink, but I'm going to say it. They have been stinking the entire playoffs."

My man. Love a guy who calls it like it is.

A reader emailed me and asked if I was going to mention the French Open – that's a major tennis tournament, in case you did not know. I know, just don't care.

So in an off hand way, I'll give them some ink.

First off, who in hell came up with the scoring system? I mean, in baseball, a run is a run.

Football is a TD, FG or safety. Soccer is a goal.

Scoring in tennis is 5, 15, 30, 40, and game. And if you don't score a point, you lose 40-LOVE.

"Forty-love." What in the hell does that mean?! At least make it 40-hell. I mean, you want to kill your opponent, not "love" him

If anyone out there has any sensible explanation for how and why this scoring method was invented, let me know. I don't give a tinker's damn, but I'd just like to know which drunken/stoned idiot came up with those numbers.

And if a game is tied, you go to the "tiebreaker," which must be won by two points, i.e., 9-7. But then it will go down in the win column as 7-6. Say what?

Only other games I know where you have to win by two are ping pong and bad mitten. Maybe volleyball, not sure.

And I won't even get started on the huge, scientific difference between "clay courts" – French Open, Grass - Wimbledon and then just "hard surface," which I think is asphalt or something. Rafael Nadal has won 29 straight matches on clay. Roger Federer was the top dog, but Nadal kept on winning, especially on clay. Don't really care, but it is interesting to watch them hit 150mph serves. Actually, all you see is a white blur. Great reflexes to even return it.

A-Rod. Again. He went 5 for 5 in Texas, his old team where he was booed loudly and syringes were held up.

By going 5 for 5, he raised his average to .259. Hell, for 15 mil a year, that's damn good.

Bet you anything he is selected for the all-star game.

Speaking of same, Manny Ramirez is currently fourth in the balloting for outfielders for the All-Star game. He finishes up his 50-game suspension for roids, and so he will be just in time to be an All-Star. He and A-Rod should have a lot to talk about. Listen in: "Hey Rod, did it hurt when they shot your butt like that?" "Oh yea, Man, burned like crazy. But sometimes, getting a pain up the but is cool. How about you?" Manny: "Not too much, but my voice rose an octave and I was very moody about every 30 days. Don't quite know why." And so forth.



Yes, all the fans have totally forgiven A-Rod and Manny for their juicing, and many are saying things like “they are innocent until proven wrong – say what?”

I wonder where that leaves Barry?!

Former A’s slugger and head juicer, Jose Canseco, has dipped to all time lows.

He lasted 77 seconds last week when he had a MMA fight against some 7-foot Korean. Last summer, he was TKO’d by Sai Sihakama, former pro football player.

He was placed on probation for bringing a “fertility drug” across the Mexican border. Hey, is there a thing going on between him and Manny.

Fertility for fun? Toss in a Viagra and who knows.

Sad, though, to see how far he has fallen. But since his “tell all” book of steroids, he does not get much sympathy from fellow players.

Fifty years ago this week, what baseball historians call “The greatest game ever pitched,” occurred.

May 26, 1959. Harvey Haddix, Milwaukee pitcher – all 5’ 6”, about 150 lbs, threw a perfect game. For 13 innings! And then he lost. An error put a man on in the 14<sup>th</sup>, and later scored on the only hit Haddix gave up! He earned the nickname Hard Luck Haddix.

Today, it’s rare for a pitcher to even go 9 innings, let alone be perfect.

NFL fan favorite T.O, now with Buffalo, got his tweeter going. He tweeted blame at Cowboys offensive coordinator Jason Garrett and QB Tony Romo for making him leave Dallas.

Buffalo is perfect place for him. They have only 2 seasons. 4<sup>th</sup> of July and winter. And, no one ever talks about Buffalo, so he will whistle through it a.. and no one will hear. Good.

Michael Vick is now home under house arrest.

As I have said many times, a goodly number of people who are close to him say he has truly changed. He’s very humble, they say.

Commissioner Goodell still loves that “real remorse:” thing.

One individual who is with Vick 24/7, says his “inner circle” of friends will be critical. He has to cut ties to the associates who were not positive influences on his life (see his ghetto crack buddies who were paid many \$ by Vick to just “take care of things,”) and surround himself with allies such as former Colts head coach, Tony Dungy.

Vick’s home confinement ends July 20. He will be on probation for 3 years thereafter, but sources say Goodell will address Vick’s status after July 20.

We heard about the \$10 construction job, but a hint of what may come involves his pending bankruptcy. If he is allowed to return the league, the bankruptcy could well be handled quickly. If not, ???

There certainly is a history of NFL players who went to jail and returned to the league. St. Louis DL, Leonard Little, “pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter” after a car he was driving hit and killed one Susan Gutweiler in 1998. His blood alcohol level was twice the legal limit.

Little got “little.” 90 days in jail and an 8-game suspension: For killing someone! There have been at least 2 other DUI cases where the athlete were responsible for a death, and both returned to play within the year.

So, it would seem to me that Vick will play again. I was pretty certain that it would not be this season, but now I don’t know. I think he should. He’s done every bit of his time and he should be allowed to move on.

We’ll see.

Note: There are already whispers that if he is not allowed to play this year, that “certain individuals” will cry race, as the other athletes above were all white.

QB Tom Brady, on the cover of the June 1 Sports Illustrated, says he is completely healed and expects to be better than ever.



# OFF THE WALL SPORTS

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And as you know, he married top model Geisele Bundchen. Lots of big sports stars marry beautiful women. But this may be a first. Yes, there allegedly is a “pre-nup.”

That it so that Brady will not be able to get too much of Bundchen’s money! Yep, that’s correct. While he makes around 15 million a year, she makes nearly twice that much. Not a bad gig.

The Pats ousted their first 2 back-up QB’s, so they must be pretty sure of Brady.

Golfer Jon Daley’s 6-month suspension is over. So, at least for the moment, his Hooter’s highlights moments are history.

He played 8 times in Europe and says he wants to get back and try to “rectify myself.”

His story has been told and rehashed over and over. Drinking, gambling and excess in just about all else.

Truly a waste of great talent.

I see somewhat of a parallel with Sergio Garcia. Yes, Sergio. While he did not gamble, he did love to party. How much he drank is not important, it’s how often he partied. Great talent and potential, but partying when he should have been practicing. I feel that if he had devoted himself to golf, not women and parties, that he would have been THE challenge for Tiger. He could have been Tiger’s other half to Palmer/Nicholas.

Quickie on college football polls. As I said a few weeks ago, the coaches took the high road on their votes for team rankings. The coaches votes for the final standings will be kept secret! AFCA Executive Director Gant Teaff said, “...making our poll the best poll it can possibly be.” SAY WHAT!?

Translation. Since no one will know how we voted, we can play favorites and politics all we want. COOL.

Back to the NBA.

The shock that Cleveland likely will not make the finals is bewildering to most.

They had the best record in the league – 66-16, and swept their first 2 opponents by an average margin of 18.6 points.

So what went wrong?

First off, the Eastern Conference only had 3 really good teams: Cleveland, Boston and Orlando. The 2 teams that the Cavs slaughtered in the first 2 rounds were collectively 6 games under .500 for the season.

Over confidence could be a part, but basically, Orlando has 5 very good players. Cleveland has the Great One in James, but not a lot of help. And, James took it all on himself. He could score 40-50 points whenever needed, but Orlando was Ok with him getting his. They just wanted to stop all the rest. And they have. Partly because they are focused on them, and even more, was that James was trying to do it all. By himself.

Compare James’ play to that of Kobe. Sure, Kobe could score 40 or more points whenever he wanted. But that left it all up to him. Instead, he is much more experienced than James, and he sets out to be the decoy. Their win last Wednesday night, saw Kobe time and time again drawing 2 or even triple team to him, then he would pass to an open big man inside for an easy dunk or to a wide open teammate for a 3-pointer.

Only if the opposition tried to play Kobe one-on-one, with no help, would he take it himself and usually score.

In their 3 wins, Kobe has averaged 13 assists. Yes, when he feels he must, he can take over, but he is better, and also thus his team is much better when he creates openings for others.

Yes, James gets some assists – he had 13 Thursday night, and they won.

But once he starts a drive to the bucket, he gets double or triple teamed, yet more often than not, he will still take the shot. He does make it sometimes, and get a free throw, but he misses or turns it over more than he makes it happen.



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I am certainly not criticizing James. He just has not learned the intricacies of the team concept that Kobe has mastered so well.

Look back at Kobe when he had only been in the league 5-6 years, and he was like James is now. Once Shaq left – Kobe wanted him to leave so that he could be “the man” - Kobe soon learned that he was not a one man wrecking machine.

As great as James is, and he is a BEAST, one man cannot defeat 5.

Orlando leads 3-2, but take away that unbelievable “catch and shoot” miracle 3-pointer in game 2, and Orlando would be resting up for the winner of the Lakers/Nuggets.

Kobe has learned in their conference finals, that Odom, Bynum, Trevor Ariza and Pau Gasol, all big men, can be killers!

In game 5 last Wednesday, he accounted for 19 points, all but 3 inside, by last second pass offs to any of the big men inside. The prime example was when he went up for a jump shot, drawing 3 men to him and he fired a shot to Odom who laid it in for an easy 2. And, he was fouled, thus a 3-point play.

And, Denver has been losing their cool. They have earned 11 technical fouls, and, after making some shots, they walked by the Lakers bench and mocked them. A. Technical. B. It fired up the Lakers.

After game 5, one anonymous Denver player told the Denver Post that the Lakers “paid \$50,000 to win that game.”

That has all the signs of a bewildered, defeated team, one that concentrates on what the officials may or may not do instead of what they need to do.

Denver may well have won Friday night, but with game 7 in LA, look for a Lakers/Orlando finals.

Yes, James is reigning MVP, and deservedly so. But Kobe is the MAP, the most assists player.

He makes “no-names” look like stars. That is why I pick them to win it all, barring injuries.

LA does not cry over what they think were slights against them. They move on to the next play.

Denver? They let those little things fester, and it kills them.

Look for some real throw down wrestling these last two games. And, at some point, Denver will, again, lose their cool.

Damn, this column ended up being way to serious. But I put the serious s..t at the end, since you probably fell asleep already.

Time for several wee drams of single malt. May switch to 18-year old McCallen tonight.