



ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL? PRAISE THE LORD!

By Kerry Schmidt      09-06-2009

NOTE: Several readers emailed me asking for some more of the crazy, etc players. If I have enough room at the end, maybe, but two weeks is enough for now.

NOTE 2: Some freakin how, as I was nearly 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the way through this frickin column, somehow I hit some \*)&\*^&(\*^&()\*(^ button, which completely erased the column. I am really happy about destroying over 3 hours work, so this remake may suck, but at least something shows up.

Thus, this computer nearly became the first “flying computer,” as in flying out of my office into the street!

While MLB is coming down the stretch where the games actually mean something, they are about to be well over shadowed.

Why? Football is here! Yes, MLB is great, and the WS the culmination of a very long season, but like it or not, football has long since overtaken baseball, and by a large margin.

In today’s column, I will take on college football, since it started yesterday.

Now the NFL is, in most ways, the most popular, but college football is far more pure insanity.

The millions of alumni wait all year for football to begin. The foaming at the mouth has become like a rabid dog, and nothing matters except each Saturday.

And, for a goodly part, both man and wife are just as hypnotic for their alma mater. However, should the wife not be as interested, well, she virtually disappears from life as far as hubby is concerned.

However, I have seen many cases where husband and wife are equally insane, and one couple I know, well, they hire a “nanny” or two on each weekend, and the little ones have new “mommies” for a couple of days.

Many go to both the home and away games.

Down here in the south, as I have said in the past, SEC football is not a sport: It is a religion.

They worship at the goal posts of (fill in the team’s name).

At least the wife will not have to worry about hubby having some type of extra marital affair.

Beginning this weekend, until the bowl games are over, men forget what sex even is.

Their hard-ons are for their beloved alma maters, even if a number of them flunked out early on, they still love their school.

And virtually every team has their arch rival. For example, say that Auburn is 3-7 when they play Alabama. If they should beat the Crimson Tide, their season is a complete success; the overall record means nothing.

And tailgating is a religion of its own. LSU has been rated the top tailgating team for several years in a row.

A large, specially added parking area is reserved for RV’s. You can arrive at 6 PM Friday night, and can stay until 6 PM Sunday.

The season’s cost is \$25,000 and there is a 10-year waiting list.

Also, the LSU baseball stadium is right there, and they sell out the 20 luxury boxes. There are a couple of giant TV’s, a bar is built in just for football, and the cost for these are also \$25,000.

Sold out long in advance. And, many of these folks do not even have one of the 99,650 tickets.

But with the booze, that does not matter.

But as great as college football may be, there are a couple of things about it that, well, suck.

First off, they continue to put out the initial polls ranking the teams, 3 weeks before the season begins.



# OFF THE WALL SPORTS

---

Many a voice is beginning to push for the first poll to not be released until 2-3 weeks into the season.

It is pretty hard to know what a team REALLY has this year, since so many may have graduated – or flunked out or been arrested and kicked off the team, that you don't really know.

The reason why this is big for the schools is, even if they should lose a game early on, they pretty much stay in the top ten.

And, the pre-season picking is pretty much subjective.

A great example is last year, when Alabama was not even in the top 20 pre-season and was No. 1 by week 6.

Another interesting differential. This from the ever so accurate computer ratings that factor into the weekly and final polls.

The pre-season AP poll has the top 10 as: Florida, Ohio State, Texas Oklahoma, Southern Cal, Alabama, Virginia Tech, Ole Miss OK State and LSU.

The infamous computers, who most certainly know how the temperament, toughness, etc of players, has Southern Cal rated No. 1. Ohio State is 5<sup>th</sup>, LSU 6<sup>th</sup> and other major differences.

Gotta love those computers. Just like mine (see above).

The other part that sucks, and I say this is even more of a farce, is the first couple of games that the top teams play.

Let's take a brief look at the tough opening weekends of a few of these top teams.

No. 6 (or No. 2, depending on the poll) Ohio State was a 28 point favorite over Navy yesterday.

No. 8 Penn State was 27 over Akron (big time school). No. 3 Oklahoma, 23 over the Mo-Mos, Brigham Young.

And, how about the top two pre-season ranked teams? How tough is their opening act?

No. 2 Texas is a mere 42 point pick over La.-Monroe.

And the topper, is top ranked Florida. They, say the odds makers, should defeat something called Charleston Southern by a mere.....64 points!!!

Now, sports fans, that will be a highly competitive game.

I will give two teams their due.

No. 16 Boise State defeated No. 14 Oregon, 19-8 on Thursday night. At least 2 teams belied up to the bar and opened the season with a competitive game. Many of the others in the first couple of weeks will resemble a slaughter house.

I just never can understand why they feel a need to do this. Yes, they want to keep (prove?) their top rated spot(s), but I say if Florida does not cover the 64, it's a moral victory for that glorified high school they played.

But, Florida has to meet mighty Troy in week two, so....

However, the rankings are there, so deal with it.

Now I will say this. I have to agree with Florida being the top ranked team. No question.

They were the National Champions last year, and return 17 of their starting 22 players, including QB Tim Tebow. He won the Heisman in his sophomore year, was third last year, and who knows this season.

Tebow is a fanatical Christian, but is also as competitive and tough as any player I have seen.

Every game, he finishes with his face, uniform, et al, bloody and dirty.

Just watch how he exhorts his teammates during the game.

He and Florida are absolutely willing to die to become back to back champs.

An example. Junior All American defensive end Carlos Dunlap, the MVP of last year's national championship win, says, "Our goal...is to be the best damn defense to ever play in college football."



# OFF THE WALL SPORTS

---

LB Brandon Spikes, during a time out in the season opener last year, tore into a group of players, screaming and pounding his fists, demanding better and more domination. And this was in the middle of a 46 point win!

Spikes is a senior, who passed a sure multi-million dollar NFL contract in history, so as “to be one of the greatest teams ever.”

Ah, I think they are on a mission.

Now they are in the tough SEC, but they play only 2 teams therein, LSU and Georgia that are ranked in the top 25.

As great a college QB as Tebow is, most say he will not be drafted very highly, at least as a QB. He is big, 6’5, 235 pounds, and he will run into a wall – he often does. He can pass, but certainly is not a typical drop back QB as the NFL needs.

Anyway, like the Gators or not, it will be interesting to see if they can repeat.

Have you ever wondered how/why the odds on games are what they are?

Many think that the X number of points is how much the “experts” feel that team is better than the other.

Not a chance.

I have written two complete columns on all the betting over football. Each one has concerned a Super Bowl.

Jay Kornagay, who is head of the sports book betting at the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas, has been my source.

There are over 1,000 different bets you can make on the SB, but that is for a different time.

The odds that you see every week are, basically, the number of points that Kornagay and others feel is the closest number that bettors will think is right.

Sometimes, you will see a game where the points are set at, say 13, but that quickly comes down to, say 11 or even 10 ½.

It is lowered because that meant that a majority of bettors were taking the 13. Thus, the number is quickly lowered so that the bettors will pretty much take either side.

The ideal set up, and money maker for these bookmakers, is if the money is bet exactly 50-50 on either side.

That means that they take the losers money, and still get 10% of the winners.

If it is huge on one side, and that side wins, the bookies take a hit.

Prime example. The SB two years ago, where the Giants upset New England.

They began the spread at 12 ½, and it got down to 10 by game time.

Jay estimated that the bookies at all the hotels in Vegas lost over 2 million bucks.

Thus, the point spread you see is simply what they think the fans will agree with. Pure and simple.

There are some other teams that have some problems this year.

Notre Dame, perhaps the most storied college team ever, was 3-10 in Charlie Weis’ first year, and just about .500 last year. He plays teams like Washington and Washington State, combined record last year of 2-22. NOTE: W State had the 2 wins, so....

Michigan is another usually big time powerhouse. Rich Rodriguez had the first Michigan losing season last year since Lyndon Johnson was president.

But he too got himself a tough schedule, teams like Eastern and Western Michigan (at least he covers both sides of the state) and Delaware State.

Plus, Michigan has some problems with breaking NCAA rules on practice times.

LSU’s Les Miles. The National Championship was 20 months ago. Last season, he was 3-5 in the SEC. Believe me, patience is not a long suit with SEC fans.

Bobby Petrino, now of Arkansas. His leaving West Virginia was a mess.



# OFF THE WALL SPORTS

---

In the SEC, his team plays Alabama, Florida, Ole Miss. and LSU.

Big one: Jim Tressel of Ohio State. His team has been killed by So. Cal and Florida in two championship games. He hosts SC on Sept 12. SC is not the NO. 1 team, but let's see if Tressel can claim a modicum of respect at home.

Speaking of So. Cal, Pete Carroll, well, he has another QB in his never ending line of great ones. He has lost 4 games in the last 5 seasons.

Last but not least, the two oldies but goodies.

82 year old Joe Paterno and 80 year old Bobby Bowden. Paterno has one more win than Bowden for all time wins. But should either or both falter this year, look for the calls for the wheel chairs, oxygen tanks and so longs.

I was going to get a bit of MLB in, but since I lost 3 fricken hours....

All I'll say is that this year, at least, money talks.

If the season ended today, 7 of the 9 highest payrolls would be in the post season. The Yankees have about a zillion dollar payroll, so if they don't win it all this year, well, the new stadium may implode.

Enough. Nearly )&%^\*%&)( hours to end up with this s..t.

Good by and good night. At least a half bottle of single malt will die, starting very damn soon!