



BUSY FOR THE NEXT 20 WEEKENDS. CALL ME NEXT YEAR!

By Kerry Schmidt

Yep, college football opened up last Saturday with some great games, and this weekend, TA DA! The NFL is here at last. Savior of our beer soaked brains.

Before I get into a bit into last weekend and a look forward, I have an extremely difficult, yet important situation to talk about. Get serious now, because this affects men, women, and all genders!

Caster Semenya, an 18- year old South African 800-meter runner who set a world record in the event last month.

And as usual, a drug test was taken to make sure no doping took place.

So, the test was run.

The IAAF has received the test after 2 weeks, but the results are “inconclusive,” IAAF spokesman Nick Davies said last Thursday.

He added it may take a couple more weeks.

Why so long? Well, the tests have no proof, one way or the other, whether Semenya is a man or a woman. Or an “it”. Or a “manwo,” or whatever.

Now here is my favorite part. A story in Australia’s *Sydney Morning Herald* said that the test shows that Semenya has both male and female sexual organs! Say what?! Wow, I guess he/she can actually and literally “go screw her/his self!” Definitely no problem getting a date any night “it” chooses.

Favorite part No. 2. Davies comment would seem to be easy enough, but...

He said, “I simply haven’t seen the results. We have received the results from Germany, but they now need to be examined by a group of experts, and we will not be in a position to speak to the athlete about them for at least a few weeks. After that, depending on the results, we will meet privately with (the “it” athlete) to discuss further action.

For brevity, I’ll call this athlete “sheit.”

My first thought was to simply have sheit drop drawers and let the peeping Toms see whether sheit has “an innie or an outie.”

But it gets pretty complicated – that’s the woman half.

Now the paper does not state what “down there” looks like, but states that the “reports show Semenya has no ovaries, but rather has internal male testes, which are producing large amounts of testosterone.

Wow, sheit really is turned inside out!

The IAAF says sheit probably would keep “her” (since she ran as a woman) medal because the case was not related to doping.

He added, “Our legal advice is that, if she proves to have an advantage because of the male hormones, then it will be extremely difficult to strip the medal off her (bad choice of words), since she has not cheated.”

He wrapped it up, I guess, by saying “(sheit) was naturally made that way, (What God made stays that way) and (sheit) was entered by her team and accepted by the IAAF.

This is truly a case of the problem being strictly an “inside job.”

My advice to sheit: Just hang in there.

On to football!

Last weekend had some great college games. And some predictably crappy ones.

Florida, at game time was a 71 – yes, 71 point favorite over Charleston Southern. They failed to beat the spread, winning by “only” 62-3.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

As I complained last week, I think it sucks that the top ranked teams feel it is necessary to open against some vegetable. I know they pay the hapless school \$450,000 to come down and get the poop kicked out of them, but it's a farce.

Yes, these junior college like teams, well, 450 K is a heck of a lot of money to them, which they need, but still, this is against any semblance of decent sportsmanship.

Now, Florida is only a 36 ½ point choice over Troy. Hmmm, must be an actual school.

The then ranked No. 16 Boise State beat 14th ranked Oregon, 19-8, giving the Mountain West Conference more juice to be ranked a BCS conference (remember, Utah went undefeated last year, and drilled once ranked No. 1 Alabama in the Fiesta Bowl.)

But after the game, it got ugly. Oregon RB LeGarrette Blount was suspended for the remainder of the season for punching Boise State DE, Byron Hoot on the chin.

I guess the suspension was warranted, but how about Hoot.

He most definitely started the fiasco. After the game, he got facemask to facemask with Blount and yelled some good trash talk at Blount, then smacked him on the shoulder pad. Thus, the jaw shot.

What punishment did Hout get? Absolutely nothing!

I believe there should be some middle ground on that incident.

My team, Southern California, had questions for this season, since they lost 10 of their 11 defensive players, including their 4 All-American LB's. Eight of those players were drafted in the first round, the other 2 in the second.

And, the big Q was that it did not seem that Pete Carroll had his next great QB in line, since he had had 4 in a row, all of them All-Americans and two won the Heisman. Note: A third did not win it because USC RB Reggie White won.

But for the first time EVER in USC history, they started a true freshman, Matt Barkley, who just turned 19.

Carroll said he never thought he would see that happen.

Carroll, never one to heap praise on his players, said, among other things, "This is NOT a typical kid." During his 66 word discussion on Barkley during the post game media moment, Carroll used words such as "gifted, amazing, unusual and exceptional."

Barkley is a typical looking Southern California kid: Blond hair, blue eyes, good looking. At 6'3", 235 pounds, he has a rocket arm.

He started as a true freshman at Mater Dei High School, in Santa Ana (30 mi. south of LA) a perennial national powerhouse. Mater Dei had also never started a true freshman.

In USC's 56-3 win over San Jose State, Barkley was 15 of 19 for 223 yards, 1 TD, no INT's.

Carroll says the main thing he needs to do with Barkley is reign him in. "He has a cannon for an arm, he can throw the ball 70 yards, but I want him to mostly do the short, under type stuff. I don't want him forcing the ball. As he matures, then we'll see some bombs.

And, passing is not a must for USC this year. They rotate 6 RB's, EVERY ONE who was a high school All-American and each one was ranked in the top 10 RB's in the country. Including Joe McKnight, the top rated RB in the Nation 2 years ago. He went to HS in the New Orleans area, but LSU never had a chance.

Using all 6, USC ran for 399 yards last week, McKnight for 169 yards (an 8.9 yard average) and 2 TD's.

Despite losing 10 of their 11 defensive players, they just trotted in new ones, 7 of whom are slotted for All-Americans. "They just seem to re load every year," said Ohio State coach, Jim Tressel, who hosted USC yesterday.

Ohio State is in need of a big win. They went to the BCS title game two years in a row, getting beat by over 20 points each time, first by Florida and



the following year to LSU

Last year, they lost to USC, 35-7.

Florida and LSU, both SEC teams that have speed. Maybe Tressel can learn that word. The SEC, Pac 10 and the now learning Big 12. The Mountain West Conference has concentrated on speed the last several years, explaining why they are suddenly whooping up on some of the big name teams. See Boise State and BYU last week.

This is a “must” game for us,” said Tressel. We have been looking at this date since mid season last year.

Ohio State has always been seen as a Big-10 Powerhouse. But outside of the Big 10, they more resemble an outhouse.

“It’s a fact,” said Tressel, so “we have to change it to get the monkey off our back.”

So if you were to watch only 1 college game yesterday, it should have been this one.

No. 3 rated USC is a 7 point choice over No. 7 Ohio State.

While USC won easily last week, Ohio State nearly lost to usually pitiful Navy. Navy had pulled to within 2 with just over a minute left. They went for a 2-point conversion and it was intercepted and run back for 2 points (a college rule), thus Ohio State, who had been a 31 point favorite, was lucky.

Perhaps they were looking towards yesterday, as they have for over a year.

The keys will be USC’s All American safety, Taylor Mayes, who at 6’ 3’’, 234 pounds, runs a 4.29 40, and hits like a Mack truck. On the Buckeye side, you have sophomore QB Terrelle Pryor, himself 6’6” and 235.

Can USC’s totally revamped D (they held San Jose State to 121 yards) and their rotating 6 RBs handle OS? We’ll see. And, how will the true freshman QB do?

”I’ve never been out of California, and playing in front of 100,000 fanatical OS fans, is, well, it should be fun,” he said.

It most certainly is THE best game of the week. Unless you’re dying to see Florida/Troy.

The other big game will be Notre Dame – Michigan.

Both storied teams have spent the last 2 season deep in the tar pits, something that their fans are certainly not used to seeing.

But both teams opened with big wins, albeit not against any top school. ND beat Nevada, 35-0, while MS defeated Western Michigan, 31-7.

Both of the two above are don’t miss games.

The other big win last week was the Mo Mos defeating then No 3 Oklahoma, 14-13. But an asterisk must be there. OK’s Heisman Trophy QB, Sam Bradford, hurt his shoulder in the second quarter and remained out.

You have to love 82-year old Joe Paterno, head coach of Penn State for about a zillion years (45, actually.)

Last year, he sat in the coach’s booth, but got his needed hip replacement this past off-season. He was asked if he would now run out of the tunnel with his team. “Well, I won’t beat that Jamaican kid, but I’ll wobble out there.”

Overall, you have your choice of 16 college games.

The NFL actually started Thursday night, with a battle royal, Pittsburgh vs. Tennessee. If you love crushing hits (boy, I do) and defense, you got it.

Pitt won in OT, 13-10 Some fantastic collisions! Trust me, Pittsburgh’s strong safety, Troy (a USC grad) Palamalu, is a beast!

Sunday’s NFL gives you 3 really good games. The Eagles/Carolina, Giants/Washington and Minnesota/Cleveland. Well, the Browns suck, again, but you watch to see the ageless Favre.

Hope he knows the plays, since he does not know when to retire.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

Then we get not 1, but 2 games Monday Night. Whoa! “After midnight, let it all hang out...” as the song went.

By Tuesday morning, you will need to introduce yourself to your wife. Again.

For the first time in, well, forever, nearly 40% of NFL teams are in danger of having some, or all of their home games blacked out locally. The NFL rule is that if not sold out 72 hours in advance, blackout.

Now all these teams and the league, are trying to come up with a wide variety of ways to afford tickets in these tough times. Basically, they all set numerous ways to pay, some have free food, but you still have to fork over the bucks.

One suggestion was right on. Given the bad times, why not give the remaining tickets each week to a needy kids charity, let them go to the games. Tax write offs, and many happy kids.

Chances of that happening? Like the Saints winning the SB. No way any NFL team is going to give away a nickel!

And, them tickets ain't cheap!

The average cost of NFL tickets this year is \$74.99. Dallas? With the new stadium, cheapest ticket is \$159.65.

The “Fan Cost Index”, or average price for a family of 4 for tickets, soft drinks, hot dogs, 2 small beers, programs and caps is \$412.64. Oh, parking is extra. Average, \$25.

Speaking of expensive Dallas, the so called “America’s Team.” With their brand new \$1.2 billion stadium, the team is worth the most of any sports team, roughly \$1.85 billion.

The cheapest team? Oakland, at \$785 million. With brain dead Al Davis still at the helm, I’m surprised they are worth that much. They really suck.

And how has “America’s Team” done lately. Bet you can’t guess when the Cowboys last won a playoff game. Hint. Tony Romo was 14! Yep, last playoff victory, 1996. America’s Team my ass. God I hate Dallas, so this couldn’t happen to a nicer bunch of jerkoffs. Especially Jerry Jones, whose ego is as big as his new stadium.

Looking for some “comeback,” teams with new QB’s?

Lead with Favre at Minnesota. They have the best RB in the league, great offensive line, very good D and 2 excellent WR’s. All they need is a good QB. Is Mr. White Beard, Favre, the man? Well, the Vikings playbook is identical to GB’s, so fits right in. Could be interesting.

But they are in the same division as Chicago and Green Bay. Oh, Detroit is in there also, but they don’t count.

Tom Brady. Is he healthy enough to again lead his Pats to the promise land?

The Bears. In the past 50 years, total of 2 QB’s have been to the Pro Bowl.

Well, Jay Cutler, obtained from the Broncos when they tried to sign Matt Cassell and Cutler demanded out, he threw for and AFC-best 4,526 yards last year.

Thus, the hype is boiling over. Talk of SB is constant!

NOTE: Cutler’s record as a starter, including college, is 28-54. And wait until November with the sub freezing temps and swirling winds that can send a pass backwards.

Vick in Philly. Good or not so good. McNabb says great. But Philly fans’ can reach the end of their frozen ropes very fast. They hate Santa Claus.

So, if McNabb throws one INT, will the Vick calls begin?

Fickle Philly. Love you one minute, hate you, well, the same minute.

Matt Ryan and Joe Flacco. Rookie sensations. What about the dreaded “second season?” We’ll see.

This is a very long column, but only because it’s about the ever so needed football.

So, who, the so called experts, will get the holy grail?

Sports Illustrated’s so called Super Guru, Peter King, has it all figured out.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

In the AFC, he has the Pats, Steelers, Texans and Chargers winning their divisions, with the Ravens and Colts as wildcards.

In the NFC, it's the Giants, Bears _see King believe above hype, Falcons and Seahawks, with the Packers and Vikings the wild cards.

He has the Pats over the Chargers in the AFC Championship, and the Bears over the Pack in the NFC

In the SB, Pats again, over the Bears, 30-27. I say neither one of those teams will be in the SB.

What in the hell is in that hype he's been drinking?

Anyway, I check ALL his picks every week. He usually comes in with between 4-6 every week.

Last year? My notes say he made 1536 predictions, including the playoffs.

His record? 662-874!

Get out your dart board and fire away.

Another quick story to put you asleep. January 26, 2003. This was the last SB I covered.

King was sure Oakland was going to kill TB. I ended up giving him Oakland and 15 points (Oakland was a 6 ½ point favorite), but he had to give me 20-1 odds.

I bet \$100. Secret: Gruden had coached Oakland that previous season and taught QB Rich Gannon all he knew. Along with Oakland's play book.

TB safety John Lynch told me before the game that they knew every play they would run.

In fact, as Gannon would start to call it out, Lynch would finish it for him!!!

TB killed Oakland, by well over 20 points.

King tried to get out of the bet, but his fellow SI writers forced him to pay this nobody that bested him. He wrote me check for 2 grand.

Sweet.

Weather report for Nawleeeeeeens– no hurricane, just a storm. Predicted 25 MPH winds and up to 15 inches of rain.

Fantastic. Watch football all weekend on my 52" flat screen with surround.

Plenty of single malt will be involved. Starting now, Friday afternoon.

If you read this whole mess, my hat goes off to you!!

PS. My longest ever, 2,783 words, all useless.