



FOOTBALL OFF TO A GREAT START

By Kerry Schmidt

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WOW! You had 6 college games go right down to the wire and 5 NFL games, ditto. And some were wild.

But before I get into these, I have a quick quiz for you.

Does this fine list belong to the NBA or the NFL?

36 have been accused of spousal abuse.

7, arrested for fraud.

117, directly or indirectly bankrupted at least 2 businesses.

3 have served time for assault.

71 cannot get a credit card due to bad credit.

14 arrested on drug charges.

8 arrested for shoplifting.

21 currently defendants in lawsuits.

84 nailed for drunk driving just in the last year.

Take some time.

I will insert the answer somewhere in this column.

Last Saturday, you had some great college games settled in the last minute.

USC, led by true Freshman QB Matt Barkley, led the Trojans 83 yards for the winning TD and 2-point conversion for an 18-15 win over Ohio State, at State, in the final minute.

Asked about the great comeback in front of 105,000 screaming State fans, who had pointed to this game for a year (after USC thrashed OS in So. Cal last year, 35-3), he just smiled and said, "Wow, this is fun."

Another frosh, Tate Forcier of Michigan, led a last minute drive to defeat Notre Dame, 38-24, overcoming a 14 point deficit.

You also had Houston score in the last minute to upset then No. 8 ranked Oklahoma State.

Georgia Tech/Clemson and Oregon State/ UNLV also came down to the wire.

In the NFL, 4 games came down to the last few minutes.

Best two were on Monday night. Tom Brady led the Pats to 2 TD's in the last 3 ½ minutes to defeat Buffalo.

NOTE: Buffalo kick returner Leodis McKelvin had the ball ripped out of his hands for a fumble, giving the Pats the last minute winning score.

For his fumble, he went home to find his front yard all torn up, with obscenities and the score painted in white on the vandalized lawn.

Well, Buffalo only has 2 seasons: 4th of July and winter. And no other sports at all. NHL doesn't count.

Denver had perhaps the most unlikely last second win. With 11 seconds left, a Broncos receiver tipped the ball about 4 yards ahead of him where Brandon Stokley, another Denver WR was standing. It went right to him as he was on the run and took it 87 yards for the winning TD. One in a million.

Best ending of all.

The Packers and Bears had a slugfest, with most points coming late in the game. The Pack, on a long TD pass, scored with just over a minute and a half left to pull out a 21-15 win.

All this after the Bears had been predicting a SB, after they got QB Jay Cutler from Denver, proclaiming him as their great savior, or next "Great" QB. Who was their first one? Maybe Jim



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

McMahon, who won the only Bears SB in 1986, after mooning press helicopters. He was most definitely a “free spirit” Then there was “The Fridge.” What a D that team had, whew! Cutler? He had 4 INT’s. And to make it worse, the Bears lost All-Pro LB Brian Urlacher for the season.

Perhaps the Bears are going along with the Cubs’ curse.

The Colts/Jags came down to the wire, and the Niners scored with 7 minutes left to beat Arizona. There was a flip side to the good ones. Carolina’s Jake Delhomme had a miserable game, throwing 4 INT’s and passing for only 73 yards on 7 for 17, before being replaced. His QB rating was, honestly, 10.9. Don’t know how that can happen, but it did.

Carolina, with great WR Steve Smith, was picked to finish 2nd in their division, behind the Falcons.

Detroit lost their 19th consecutive game. Their rookie QB, overall No. 1 draft choice Matt Stafford, was intercepted 3 times and was 16 for 36 for 205 yards and no TD’s. And this was against the Saints defense, not a highlight last season.

Not a bad start for the first week (2nd for college).

Sure kept me glued in front of my 60” flat screen!

If you liked ugly performances, you got them. Serena Williams used the F-word several times, among other things, and lost at the U.S. Open. Very ugly.

And don’t forget the punch last week by an Oregon player.

Michael Jordan. May well be the greatest ever, but he sure stunk during his Hall-of-Fame acceptance speech.

About his High School coach who cut him from the team, he said, “I wanted to make sure you understood. You made a mistake, dude.”

When Isiah Thomas tried to lead a “freeze out” in his first All-Star game, Jordan simply talked about himself. He said, “I wanted to prove to you (Magic, Bird, (Et al) and everybody that I deserved to be there just as much as them.”

He went on to complain how the media has said he never would win like (those guys). I heard it and it made me so upset I worked harder than all of them and came out the best.”

Most of the reactions were negative. Regardless, you would not expect the “greatest” to feel the need to take shots at others. Surprising.

Throw in the Yankees, Blue Jays all-out brawl (looks good on TV, but no one ever gets hurt. They just run out and make a big pile).

Speaking of the Yankees. Commissioner Butt Selig decided not to discipline A-Rod for taking steroids and having lied about it back in 2003.

Barry Bonds, lets get him. A-Rod, he’s fine. Piss on you, butt head Seligscheisse. If you speak German, you know what scheisse means.

A feel good baseball footnote. In Philadelphia, well known for their rowdy and obnoxious behavior, got a wonderful piece on TV.

A man in the upper deck caught a foul ball with one hand. The crowd high-fived him and so did his little 3-year old daughter. So, he gave her the ball, which she promptly threw away. But the dad certainly did not act like most Philly fans. He shrugged, smiled and hugged her and all was well.

TV caught it and he instantly became “father of the year,” and was interviewed, with his daughter, on TV. The Phillies presented his daughter with an autographed baseball.

Final baseball bit. It has now been 15 years since the infamous 1994 season was stopped with 6 weeks left. The playoffs and WS, for the first time ever, were cancelled.

It took MLB nearly 10 years to get their attendance back to where it was.

I wonder if the mighty NFL is paying attention, as they come to a possible strike/lock out in 2011.



Now the NHL cancelled an entire season, but no one noticed.

Last on lockouts, et al.

The NBA referees union said last Thursday that a lockout appears “imminent and unavoidable,” following a breakdown in talks.

Both sides are saying all the normal crap, but the contract expired September 1, with no solution in sight. The NBA said they would use “replacement officials” when the season starts. Can’t wait to see how the players take advantage of that!

God, all these multi-billion dollar sports leagues. They could F up a free lunch!

And, ho hum, another group of Indians are suing the NFL to get the Washington Redskins to change their name. Fat fricken chance, Tonto.

A lot was written this past week on the passing of Myles Brand, who for nearly 7 years was President of the NCAA. He died of cancer at only 67 years of age.

I will not say much else at all, as I don’t mean to denigrate him, especially under these circumstances. I’m sure he did a lot of good.

What I will denigrate is that he was one of the leaders of keeping the BS – BCS mess. Now, if we can just get a few more of those jackasses to, well, let’s say, move on, maybe we can get what 86% of fans want. A playoff.

The only good thing about the rest is they are quite old, so.....

There were a number of very good QB performances in the NFL last week.

USA TODAY had large stories on Brett Favre – front page stuff, even though he only threw for 110 yards and a TD. Dallas’ Tony Romo got plenty of ink for his 3 TD, 0 INT’s and 335 yards on 16 of 27. And Tom Brady for his 2 last minutes TD passes. Peyton Manning got his usual big story, as he went 28 of 38 for 301 yards with a TD and an INT. His brother was 20 for 29 for 256 yards, and identical to his bro, a TD and an INT.

Rookie Matt Sanchez got a huge write up. He was 18-31 with one long TD pass and one INT. He totaled 272 yards.

And, way back on page 8, were a few short paragraphs on some guy named Drew Brees of the Saints.

He “only” went 26 for 34, for 358 yards and 6, yes 6, TD’s.

Definitely not big enough stuff to push Brett Favre off of the front page with his 100 yards and 1 TD.

Oh well, that’s “dem Saints.”

Went on the Web and found about a zillion words and pictures of the new and “Greatest Ever” Dallas Cowboys’ stadium.

It truly is fantastic. I won’t waste space talking about all the incredible things it has, including a retractable roof, AND, retractable huge glass doors at each end of the stadium. It is worth your time to check it out on the web. Many pictures and shots of the huge TV.

The stadium cost was \$1.26 billion, for the 3 million square foot play ground. Owner Jerry Jones, it has been said, actually put up over a million of his own money. Guess who put up the rest. And, guess who the owner is. Surprise, surprise, Gomer, it is Jerry Jones.

Most journalists who have taken the tour say it is, by far, the most incredible stadium ever. And, much more, they say.

The focal point is the 60-yard by 25-yard plasma screen hanging from the roof, 90 feet above the field. It cost \$40 million and weighs 600 tons, stretching from one 20-yardline to the other.

The NFL has ruled that any punt that hits it, the down will be replayed.

Dallas will coronate the grand opening today hosting the Giants.

The Cowboys, not surprisingly, have the highest average ticket prices in the league, at \$159.98 per.



Jones hopes they will break the attendance record of 102,368 set in 1957.

Now listen up to King Jones.

“This is on par with a SB. You might get a chance to do another SB, but you’ll never get another chance to open a stadium as grand as this one.”

The only remaining questions is this: Given the 3 million square feet and all the bells and whistles, which is bigger: THE stadium, or Jerry’s 4 million square feet ego?

His favorite words of all time are “I” and “Me.”

Never mind that they have not won a playoff game since 1996.

Mr. Egotistical will most certainly be shown a lot on TV Monday night.

The game may actually be secondary. (Jones, not the stadium, is first.)

Now talk about a waste of space and ink.

USA TODAY actually filled an entire page with the 2009-10 NHL schedule.

Bet nearly no one even knew that was in there. Or cared.

Same paper, on Friday, asked fans to say who should or should not be up for the NFL Hall of Fame next year. They actually asked if Emmitt Smith and Jerry Rice should be elected! You think they have a chance?

Back to the NFL. Philadelphia has a bit of a QB problem. With McNabb’s broken rib, they have backup Kevin Kolb and they just signed, again, Jeff Garcia, who carried the Eagles into the playoffs in 2006 when McNabb had a torn knee ligament. He even won their first playoff game. Most think Kolb will start, but he will be on a short leash. Even though Garcia has only been there a few days, he knows the system from 2006.

Then they also have puppy dog, Michael Vick, but he cannot play this week. Commissioner Roger Goodell has said he can play beginning next week.

Now many of the never forgiving Philly phanatics are saying McNabb should play hurt, tough it out. Some have been really vocal.

Now I have had a broken rib, and I can assure you it is extremely painful.

Just normal breathing hurts, since it puts pressure on the rib. Coughing or, God help you, you sneeze, you will double over.

And, I can assure you, if he is in there, he will have a huge X on his jersey where the broken rib is. Every defensive player will be aiming for that spot.

Sounds gruesome, but that’s the NFL. You have any injury, they will aim for it.

Also, should he take a hard shot, since the rib is fully broken, it could possible puncture a lung, so I cannot see him in playing today.

They play the Saints. Philly has a great defense, so if they can shut down Brees, with the Saints defense yet to prove they can be any better than last year’s 26th over all, they may well have a pretty decent chance.

Well, have you figured out which “group” the criminals belonged to?

Well, I’ll tell you. It’s neither.

This wonderful group of leaders are.....ta da. MEMBERS OF CONGRESS! What a team!

That’s a total of 380 out of 453. However, on their behalf, it’s likely that some of them were “double dipping” in the crime barrel.

What happened to the other 73? They must be rookies.

Yea, I know this is a sports column, but hey, being a member of the United States Congress, well, that’s sporty!

I bet they would share some single malt with me. If I bought it.