

# CHRISTMAS NUTS & BOLTS

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and all the other joyous holiday greetings from both me and Marcy. We have said it before, but not enough; you guys are the finest group of commenters and readers in the world. And we love you and thank you. Seriously. None of it happens, or works, without you. There are names I would list out, and you know who you are already, but won't because I might forget someone unintentionally. Suffice it to say, thank you one and all, you are not just "like family", you *are* family and you are valued and appreciated.

Now, as you might recall our own Surfer Dude, RanDiego, up and got hitched this year. I still owe he and Lady RanDiego a wedding present, so when the call came from the surf and sand for some Trash Talk for the big Bolts visit to Nashville to meet the Titans Christmas night, it was the least that could be done.

This has the makings of one great game. San Diego is not only on their usual furious December roll, they started early and have been relentless in maintaining it. Philip Rivers is playing MVP level quarterback, LT is healthy and productive again and the receivers (especially Vincent Jackson) are coming up huge. The defense is playing quite solidly even in an off year for Merriman. In short, the Bolts look tough. But the same can be said for the Titans, who have been nothing less than remarkable after an 0-6 start. They are now 7-7 with only a hard fought loss to Peyton and the Colts blemishing their record in the last eight games. Vince Young is no Peyton Manning or Joe Montana yet, but he has really stepped up as a pocket quarterback and leader. He is flat out getting it done. The rest of the Titans have rediscovered Jeff Fisher football too. On paper, you have to give the nod to the Bolts; but this is in Tennessee, and the Titans still have thoughts of the playoffs and, even if not the playoffs, a winning season. This

is a toss up.

Tonight is the Sheraton Hawaii Bowl, which will be shown on ESPN. SMU v. Nevada. Always a fun game to watch, this year it is notable for heralding the first return to a bowl game for SMU (Southern Methodist) since receiving the NCAA "death penalty" 25 years ago. SMU is coached by June Jones, a great guy, consistent winner, creator of wild offenses (along with his mentor mouse Davis) and the guy who coached up the University of Hawaii Rainbows to unusual heights. Lot of interesting angles there. Nevada boasts the top rushing offense in NCAA and have a potent passing attack as well. Normally, you would have to look out for the Wolfpack's tailback Vai Taua, who had a team high 1,345 yards on the ground; but he is unavailable for academic reasons as is one of the backup running backs. That is going to hurt. The average line heavily favors Nevada but I think that may have been before the unavailability of the Nevada running game was announced. I dunno, could with the equalizing factor of the missing parts for Nevada, this could be a real good one, and maybe an upset for the SMU Mustangs.

That is it for now. Marcy and/or I may be in to post tomorrow, maybe not; we will see. So, consider this an open thread for whatever you have got. We raise a toast to one and all. Cheers!