

EMPTYWHEEL'S FAMOUS FOOTBALL TRASH TALK* SUPER BOWL XLII EDITION

Well, Championship Sunday was a bit of a letdown. No one claimed the much prized Hubcap, the Pack packed it in, LT was MIA, and nobody noticed that the asterisk was still in the title. There sure has been a lot that has happened since, most of it having to do with the most famous foot in the world. That foot would, of course, belong to Brady, Sir Tom. Uh oh, this just in, hot off the wire (Oh my, this is really rich, heh heh):

BREAKING NEWS: HAGGIS DEMANDS SENATE INQUIRY INTO PATRIOTS SPYGATE SCANDAL; COMPARES MATTER TO TORTURE TAPES DESTRUCTION!

The ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee wants N.F.L. Commissioner Roger Goodell to explain why the league destroyed evidence related to spying by the New England Patriots.

...

In a telephone interview Thursday morning, Senator Arlen Specter, Republican of Pennsylvania and ranking member of the committee, said that Goodell would eventually be called before the committee to address two issues: the league's antitrust exemption in relation to its television contract and the destruction of the tapes that revealed spying by the Patriots.

"That requires an explanation," Specter said. "The N.F.L. has a very preferred status in our country with their antitrust exemption. The American people are entitled to be sure about the integrity of the game. It's analogous to

the C.I.A. destruction of tapes. Or any time you have records destroyed.”

...

Mr. Specter first wrote Mr. Goodell about the tapes on Nov. 15. ... The league responded to Mr. Specter late Thursday afternoon.

...

“It’s premature to say whom we’re going to call or when. It starts with the commissioner. He had the tapes, and he made the decision as to what the punishment could be. He made the decision to destroy them.”

Mr. Specter said it had not been determined when Mr. Goodell would be called before the committee.

Jeebus, I don’t even know what to say. I kind of thought we had seen governmental actors functioning at the outer boundaries of surreality yesterday with Mukasey, but I should have known better than to count out the Scottish Haggis; and boy did he ever come through. I guess, before moving on, we should note that the Haggis is a rabid Philadelphia Iggles fan and penned his first letter right before said Iggles were to play the Asterisks Patriots.

Okay, back to your regular programming. Scottsdale/Phoenix is currently the happening party central place to be in the world right now. Hollywood and New York must be flat out empty; because every celebrity you can imagine is running around here. Every bar, restaurant, nightclub and, ahem, gentlemen’s club is standing room only with long lines outside. Unless I have lost my ability to spot them, we also apparently are having a top shelf hooker convention too (not that there is anything wrong with that). Its not just the Super Bowl either, the Phoenix Open started today. For those of you not familiar with the Phoenix Open, it is, without any question, and by a large margin, the wildest and craziest golf tournament on the PGA Tour. It is also the largest, drawing over

500,000 drunken, amorous attendees every year. Not to mention Obama was here Wednesday night and Big Dog Clinton here Thursday night at ASU. It is absolutely nuts out and about. Every other car on the freaking road is a limo or town car chock full of beautiful people.

We had the Super Bowl here before, and truth be told, the actual game is almost secondary to all the hoopla going on leading up to it. Super Bowl XXX. I went to that one, and here is what I remember: My friend and I had pretty good seats, but were right behind some child TeeVee star named Joey Lawrence; I had never heard of him, but he sure did attract a lot of attention from girls too young to be of any use to my friend and I. Very annoying. Oh yeah, I think Diana Ross landed on the field in a heeliocoptah to do the halftime show, and the 'Boys beat the Stillers, but I didn't actually see much of that. Here's whats up this year.

THE PATRIOTS* – The first injury report of Super Bowl week came out Wednesday, and Tom Brady was on it – for his shoulder. No mention was made of the world famous ankle sprain that set off paparazzi pandemonium when Brady was spotted in the boot. Brady practiced fully both Wednesday and Thursday, and his ankle was not heavily taped, as it supposedly had been Monday. Brady has been listed with a shoulder injury since the opener of the 2003 season, which is Coach Bill Belichick's tweak (Really? He would do such a thing? Shocking!) at the NFL injury reporting system he abhors. Receiver Jabar Gaffney was limited in practice Wednesday, though, with what is apparently a legitimate shoulder injury. Roidney Harrison has a slight thigh twitch, but reportedly is juiced and ready. Thats about it. The 18-0 killing machine that is the New England Patriots is healthy, rested and ready to rock and roll.

THE GIANTS – I can't tell you how bad it burns to not be talking about the Packers here (Phred knows). There has been a little Plaxico Duress caused by his – gasp – trash talking; and

Michael Strahan has been a walking talking sideshow, but a darned amiable and funny one. You gotta love the guy. Jeremy Shockey is out; and as far as I know, he isn't even here. Plaxico now has a swollen left knee in addition to the ankle injury he had ~~that kept him out of~~ in the conference championship game where he caught 11 passes for a gazillion yards. He'll be fine. Cornerback Aaron Ross had some kind of undisclosed bug, but will be fine for the game.

THE BATTLEGROUND – Super Bowl XLII is being played in University of Phoenix Stadium, located in a suburb known as Glendale, on the west side of Phoenix. From the outside, the thing looks like the Jupiter 2 spaceship from Lost In Space. Seriously. Inside, it is almost exclusively granite gray and cardinal red. I am told that some local football team, semi-pro I believe, plays there. I can't personally attest to that, but it was a fine place to see the Rolling Stones on their last tour; that I can vouch for (Keith makes Dick Cheney look healthy, but he sure hasn't lost much of his edge). In fairness, despite the garish color scheme, it is a pretty cool joint. The link above has a lot of neat links and information about the stadium, and is worth checking out. The weather forecast is for sunshine and partly cloudy Friday and Saturday, with clouds and possible rain by Sunday night. No worries mates, ~~the Jupiter 2~~ University of Phoenix Stadium has a retractable roof and is extremely well climate controlled. There will be none of those turf issues like at Heinz Field or the frozen tundra of Lambeau. You see, they have the whole field on some kind of fancy dan plate on wheels and literally roll it, in one piece, into and out of the stadium to maximize the quality and maintenance of the turf. It will be immaculate and the logos are painted and ready to go.

Well, thats it. Oh yeah, I was at a gig with Paris Hilton and Pam Anderson earlier today. Neither seemed particularly impressed that I was bmaz from Emptywheel. My wife was disappointed; she was hoping they would take me off her hands.

Look for further updates either here or in the comments. This is, sadly, our last dance for the season; so don't be like Nancy Pelosi, put it all on the table, let it all hang out, enjoy and hoop it up. Beer thirty starts now and runs until the fat lady is done singing. Show Time Baby! Crack open a cool one and start trashing up the joint!

Update from emptywheel (and thanks to bmaz for all the great trash): ESPN has asked a bunch of famous people for their picks. Most of them, being pop culture icons, are completely obscure to me. But my favorites are:

GEN. MIKE HAYDEN

Director of the CIA Giants, 28-24. The spread favors the Pats, but careful intelligence work looks beyond the obvious. The Giants are hot now. Three playoff wins on the road (like the Steelers before Super Bowl XL). Regular season finale shows they match up well against the Pats. Besides, nobody's perfect!

SERENA WILLIAMS

Tennis player/Venus' little sister
Giants, because of Eli Manning being the younger brother.

BILL O'REILLY

FOX TV host Giants, 31-30. Destiny.
[In case there was any doubt about which was the Republican team]

SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER

D-NY I've been a Giants fan since I was five years old. I can remember watching Charlie Connerly, Sam Huff, and Alex Webster. Back then, the two most important Roosevelts to me were Brown and Grier.

Update II from bmaz Saturday morning: This live report is coming in from EW's Senior Snarlgate Correspondent, bmaz, on location near the ESPN command center at the Southbridge Waterfront in

Old Town Scottsdale Arizona. Reports are flying fast and furious about illegal signal stealing by the Patriots in previous Super Bowls; most notably Super Bowl XXXVI between the Pats and Rams, and Super Bowl XXXIX between the Pats and Eagles. There now appears to be corroboration, at least as to SB-XXXVI, where the Patriot's former video coordinator, Matt Walsh, reportedly has evidence in the form of inculpatory tapes on the Rams and is willing to testify, but wants a subpoena because he is concerned about retaliation from the Patriots and rabid fans. This matter is getting serious, is not going away, and is really starting to affect and tarnish the credibility of the Patriots and what they have accomplished according to many fans, especially fans of the New York Giants and, of course, the Philadelphia Eagles' fans like Snarlen Spectre.

There are two scandalously hot rumors that have surfaced just this morning and are burning through the whole scene here in Old Town Scottsdale as I type this report. The first involves the Patriots using secret Russian spy/surveillance technology acquired by the team in a surreptitious deal with Vladimir Putin that was negotiated by Rupert Murdoch. The second involves a collaboration between Senators Arlen Spectre and Kitty Bond to instigate a formal investigatory commission, similar to baseball's Mitchell commission, to investigate the exploding SnarlSpyGate controversy and that will be headed up by ~~respected~~ former Senator Ricky Santorum. It is unclear, at the time of this posting, how strongly these shocking and destructive rumors will take hold and spread through the sports and traditional media that the scene here is absolutely saturated with.