

# BIG GAME TRASH

With September out of the way, the rust is off the gridiron and we are getting into the heart of the football season. Heck, we even got a cold snap going here in the desert. Got down to 72 degrees last night, and the high today will only be in the low 90s. Brrrrr. Smells like football weather. It is time for some big games.

**The Student Athletes:** In the Big Mitten, the Wolverineenies are taking on the Spartans. Nothing would crash Rich Rodriguez back to earth faster than a loss to Michigan State. This is the first real test Big Blue will face this year; to win in Sparta, they are going to have to do better than scrape by with last second victories over also rans like they have the first four games. Smells like an upset. Oklahoma versus Miami will either be a great game or a Sooner blowout; it is up to the Hurricanes to decide, and they sure looked mediocre last weekend. Young Landry Jones for the Sooners is looking very good substituting for Sam Bradford. Oklahoma is safe. LSU at Georgia is too close to call and should be a really good game. The game I am most interested in is USC and Cal. Both teams seem to be less than advertised so far this year, but this game will have huge ramifications for the conference crown and likely the Rose Bowl matchup for January. Who knows which Bears and Trojans will show up, but if pressed, I guess I will roll with USC here. Matt Barkley is back, and the freshman may still be getting his sea legs, but he is clearly critical to the Trojans offense, they looked very pedestrian without him.

**National Favre League:** Clearly the game of the weekend is the Lions and Bears. Okay, just kidding. The Pats host the Ravens in a real early season gut check. The Pats are 2-1 and have looked only so-so through three games. Tom Brady really is a little tentative, and opposing defenses have been blitzing the bejeebies out of him with success. They really need to get Fred

Taylor and the Law Firm untracked. Bill Belichick needs to use the Law Firm more I think. Hard to pick against the Pats at home, but I will. Joe Flacco has turned into Daryle Lamont for the Ravens. The kid can flat out throw the ball downfield and the Ravens finally have an offense to match their defense. Ray Lewis still rules the field when he is on it, having another career year so far. The most interesting game this week may be the Jets at the Saints. Rex Ryan's defense meets Drew Brees and the Saints offense. I don't know if Mark Sanchez can keep up yet with Brees and the Saints point production. I'll take the Saints here.

The Bolts travel to The Big Ketchup Bottle to visit Mike Tomlin and Big Ben. I am tempted to take the Bolts, but cannot. Big Ben will squeak out a hard fought win, but the Steelers really miss Polamalu. Look out for Dallas visiting the Donkors, it has an air of an intriguing game. Josh McDaniels has Denver at a surprising 3-0, nobody saw that coming. Dallas is 2-1, but looks flaky and Mile High is still a tough place to play. Both Marion Barber and Felix Jones are hurting for Big D, look for the Broncos in an upset. Well, that is it for the pros – looks like a great slate of games.

**Formula One:** Only three races left in the season. Jenson Button is still leading the point chase and is 15 up on teammate Rubens Barrichello. This weekend is the Japanese Grand Prix. Suzuka is a great track unless it is wet. There is a lot of parity among the teams in F1 right now; this has not been seen for a long time. Even Force India is competitive lately and Adrian Sutil has one of their cars qualified on the outside of row two again. Sebastian Vettel is on pole with Jarno Trulli in P2 and Hamilton in P3 after a wild and crash filled qualifying. This is a track that should suit Vettel, if his car holds up look for him to do well. For the championship, the only two with a realistic shot are Button and Barrichello; from here on out relative points between the two will be critical. Fifteen points is a lot to make up in

F1 with only three races to do it in. Suzuka should tell us whether Jenson has it buttoned up or not.

**Other Stuff:** I was all set to publish, but it turns out there is one other game of note to discuss. Apparently there is some wretched old washed up geezer still out there tarnishing his legacy and he might make it into the game. Who says Brad Childress doesn't have a sense of humor? He put Favre on the injury report this week. I actually heard some dope on ESPN discussing whether Favre would start. Yeah, he should be able to make it I think. The opponent it turns out is the Packers and apparently this Brett Favre guy has a history with them; should make for an interesting game Monday night. Charles Woodson has a bad foot, look for the Vikes to put both Berrian and Percy Harvin on his side and see how Woodson runs. Speaking of running, Adrian Peterson can do that; but Ryan Grant may have a tough go of it against the Norske defensive front. That will put it on the shoulders of Aaron Rodgers, and he and Donald Driver should both have big games. For all the build up over Favre and Rodgers, I expect the defenses to control this one. The Vikes are really solid on defense; no huge names other than Jared Allen, but they are all good. The Vikes know what this game means to the old man. My guess is Favre will have some troubles; he has always been prone to getting too hyped up early in big games and despite all the platitudes about treating it as just another game, it is not just another game. Fall is in the air and the Monday Night Lights shining on the Black and Blue slugfest and Brett Favre playing the Cheesers for the first time. What could be better than that? What are the odds John Madden happens to show up at the game?