

CHAMPIONSHIP SUNDAY TRASH TALK

Well, here we are at Championship Sunday weekend. It seemed like only yesterday that the NFL season was tearing through a hasty preseason after the lockout, and the Packers were beating the Saints in a season opening Thursday night shootout. And now we are down to the penultimate games. Gents are visiting the Niners, and Ray and Reed are taking a trip to Foxborough. Good stuff.

First game up is Ravens at Pats. We know the players and lowdown on this already: the unstoppable force of Tom Brady, Wes Welker, and the ["Boston TE Party"](#) of Gronk & Hernandez, versus the immovable object of Ray Lewis, Terrell Suggs and Ed Reed. For the Ravens to have a chance, they have to get a great game out of Flacco; he is capable of it, but only sporadically. Even if the Ravens get Flacco and Ray Rice untracked, they have to outscore Brady. Tough job, I don't see it. Now the better question here is asked by Robert Kraft via PFT: Is Bill Belichick the [best coach in the history of pro football](#)? Yes, Kraft really went there. I will throw that out for discussion, but I am going to weigh in with no. I got Lombardi easily in the first spot, followed by Paul Brown, Bill Walsh, George Halas, and a three way tie between Don Shula, Chuck Noll and Tom Landry. Bill Bel is getting there, but not yet.

The second game on tap is the better of the two, Elite Eli and the Giants going to San Francisco with an aching in their heart for another SuperBowl. Again, the book on both teams is pretty well known by now. The 49ers are way more solid on both sides of the ball than many thought, even though their D was pretty well understood to start with. And Alex Smith is a competent pro QB now. But the Giants just look like they are on a roll like they were in 2007 and Green Bay was last year. Good team, hot at the right time. Oh, and Jean Pierre-Paul is flat

out a stud; if he stays healthy enough throughout his career, this kid is potentially Hall of Fame material. Dude can ball. And, the Gents might be a little pissed that Niners great Jerry Rice thinks that battering ram [Brandon Jacobs is "soft"](#). Really Jerry? Come on man. Hard fought game, but the Gents bring it home.

Last, but certainly not least, we have a big announcement to make. Our long time friend Randiego, aka Surfer Dude, up and [got hitched](#) a couple of years ago. At 2:30 pm yesterday, he and the lovely Mrs. Randiego welcomed a new son, James, into this wild world we live in. Congratulations folks, from your family here at the Emptywheel Blog! My guess is that James' first surfboard has already been acquired. Baby James will be coming home soon, and the Zep has an app for that.

Pretty exciting stuff we gots going on here. But a touch of sadness too. The great blues and soul singer [Etta James has passed on](#). Etta was something else; man could she belt out a tune. My intro to her was the summer of 1978 when she opened for the Stones in Tucson. Much of the crowd was restless for Mick and the boys, but Etta James blew the place seriously up. Later Linda Ronstadt, who was in town visiting her parents, came on and joined Mick for a version of Tumbling Dice that may never be topped. But that is another story, this is about Etta, and she was something else. The above video is of "Pushover" which she first recorded in 1963. It is killer. RIP Etta.

That's it folks, rip this joint!