PURE MICHIGAN TRASH TALK

Michigan's official tourism and advertising campaign has been called "Pure Michigan" for a while now. They do some beautiful advertising that has commercials reaching nationwide, if not world wide. And so it is we go to Pure Michigan for this week's trash talk. Because all the good ball is in Michigan this weekend.

First up in Pure Michigan is The Mighty Fighting Journalists of Northwestern at the Big House in Ann Arbor to take on obnoxious Coach Baggy Chinos and the Wolverweenies. Obviously, most Americans are properly rooting for the Journalists. Michigan got beat in week one when they went west to Rice-Eccles Stadium to visit Utah. Things did not turn out well for the Weens, but in hindsight it turns out that Utah is really good. Michigan has won all their games since then. Northwestern is undefeated and has been surprisingly good in getting there. The line favors Michigan by 10, and all the experts are picking them. I think 10 points is way too much with these two defensive minded teams (they rank one and two in defensive points allowed nationally), but no question Michigan is favored in the Big House. I think the game will come down to whether the Journalists can get Justin Jackson going on the ground. If they do, this could be an upset special. Frankly, the only other NCAA game of note is Cal at Utah. The last two undefeated teams in the Pac-12, and only one will leave still in that status. QB edge goes to Cal's Jared Goff, but the Utes are awfully well coached and are at home. I'll take the Utes.

The other Pure Michigan special this week is Cardinals at the Lions. The Battle of the Emptywheel Blog. The Kittehs are down on their luck, and got hosed at Seattle last week. The Cards got beat at home by the newly Todd Gurley invigorated Rams. The Cards were terribly off offensively. Much of that can obviously be attributed to St. Louis' terrific defense, but

it was more than that. Carson Palmer and the boys just never seemed in synch. I actually thought Detroit played a good game in Seattle and looked solid. It is still not clear they can keep Stafford from getting killed though, and that is not going to get any easier against the Cards defense. But the Lions have too much talent to lose every game, and they may well get off the snide this week in an upset.

Other games of interest in the NFL include Squawks at Bengals. This really could be a great game, and we are going to get a good glimpse as to whether Andy Dalton and the Bengals have really turned the corner this time. I think they have and beat the Squawks. Also the Rams visit the Tundra at Lambeau. The Rams are way better than you think, especially with Gurley untracked. But Lambeau, Rodgers and the Pack are a load I'm not sure St. Louis can overcome. Still, look for a great game. All the ESPN loud mouthed yokels are yammering about the Patriots at the Cowboys. This would have been worth the talk if Romo, Dez Bryant and a handful of others were not out for Dallas. But with a still pissed off Tom Brady, and Bill Bell coming off of an extra bye week to scheme? Yeah, good luck with that 'Boys. Believe it or not, the Broncos at Raiders might also be pretty interesting.

The F1 Circus is in Sochi this weekend. There are still some rough edges on the young Sochi circuit. They barely got it ready for last year's inaugural Russian Grand Prix. Far better this year, but still having growing pains. In spite of that, I really kind of Sochi. Toro Rosso's Carlos Sainz had a nasty crash at Practice Three this morning, but has been pronounced okay at the hospital. Still, he will be held for observation, and will not join the grid tomorrow. Qualifying is going on as I write, with Rosberg and Hamilton fast, and Valterri Bottas and Vettel just behind as we reach the Q2 cutoff. Massa didn't make Q3, but there is Bottas currently in P3. Bottas really clicks at Sochi, having made the podium last year. Massa, his Williams teammate, however,

seems not to like Sochi. Was off the pace last year too. Weird.

Anyway, in other news Jeb! Bush did NOT, I repeat NOT, smoke weed with Bill Belichick in high school. Well, you know, of course not. Everybody knows Bill Bel smoked hash, not weed!