

F1 GERMAN GP AT NURBURGRING & A NEW YORK RAINBOW IN THE NIGHT

This weekend does not bring the excitement of last did with the Women's World Cup, but there are three notable events, two of which are even sports related.

First up is the German Grand Prix from the famed Nurburgring in the Eifel Mountains. Nurburgring was also the site of the 1961 German Grand Prix. Continuing with this year's homage to the 50th anniversary of the Championship season for my late friend Phil Hill, let's go back for a minute to the sounds and smell of The Ring in 1961.

Nurburgring was a far different circuit in the 60s than it is today. Phil Hill took pole position in qualifying by shattering the lap record, becoming the first person to lap in under 9 minutes, with a stunning lap of 8 minutes 55.2 seconds (153.4 km/h or 95.3 mph) in the famed Ferrari 156 "Sharknose". In the race though, Phil could not match Stirling Moss in his Lotus-Climax. Here is the Wiki description:

The race was won by British driver Stirling Moss driving a Lotus 18/21 for privateer outfit the Rob Walker Racing Team. Moss started from the second row of the grid and lead every lap of the race. It was the first German Grand Prix victory for a rear-engined car since Bernd Rosemeyer's Auto Union Type C took victory in 1936. Moss finished just over 20 seconds ahead of Ferrari 156 drivers Wolfgang von Trips and Phil Hill, breaking a four-race consecutive run of Ferrari victories. The result pushed Moss into third place in the championship points race, becoming the

only driver outside of Ferrari's trio of von Trips, Hill and Richie Ginther still in contention to become the 1961 World Champion with two races remaining.

It was the last home country appearance for points leader von Trips before his death at the Italian Grand Prix five weeks later. His second place finish saw Ferrari secure the constructors' championship. The remaining championship points scorers were all from British racing teams. Scottish driver Jim Clark (Lotus 21) was fourth for Team Lotus; former motorcycle World Champion John Surtees (Cooper T53) was fifth for Yeoman Credit Racing and young New Zealander Bruce McLaren was sixth in his factory-run Cooper T58.

The Nurburgring of today is a far different, more sterile and safer track, and much shorter, with a length of just under 3 miles as opposed to the former 14 miles plus. Mark Webber of Red Bull was fast in practice Friday and took pole today with a surprising P2 for Lewis Hamilton of McLaren. Sebastian Vettel in the other Red Bull is in P3, the first time he will not start from the front row this year. The Ferraris of Alonso and Massa will start in P4 and P5 respectively. The race day weather forecast is for cool temperatures, clouds and some rain, which should make for a very interesting race. Again, the assholes at Rupert Murdoch's Fox TV will make US F1 fans watch the race on a tape delay, starting at 12 EST and 9 am PST.

In other sporting news, it looks like the great NFL Football lockout is in its last throes. From Marke Maske at the Washington Post:

NFL player leaders are scheduled to meet Monday in Washington, where they are likely to recommend approval of the lockout-ending collective bargaining agreement already ratified by the league's franchise owners, several

people familiar with the deliberations said Saturday.

The lockout could officially end next Saturday with the opening of the free agent market and teams beginning training camps, those people said, cautioning that those plans were subject to change. The 10-year labor agreement first would have to be ratified by a majority of the nearly 2,000 NFL players.

But if free agency begins and training camps open Saturday, the preseason would be likely to be played as scheduled beginning Aug. 11, said those people familiar with the situation.



graphic by Lance Bass
<http://twitpic.com/5uxcd2>

Lastly, and quite charmingly, we have the first vows in New York resulting from the recent passage of marriage equality in the state. As soon as the clock strikes midnight, Kitty Lambert and Cheryle Rudd are going to be the first married under the new law at a rainbow-lit Niagara Falls. From The HuffPo:

Two Buffalo women plan to be the first to legally wed under the state's new same-sex marriage law, which goes into

effect on Sunday, one month after Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed it into law. The pair, Kitty Lambert and Cheryle Rudd, are to be married the minute after midnight as the Niagara Falls are lit up with the colors of a rainbow.

Sounding much like any other nervous newlywed-to-be, Buffalo resident Lambert told HuffPost they were “really excited, a little overwhelmed, a whole lot frightened.” After 11 years together, she said, “I don’t know why I’m frightened by this commitment.”

Jitters or not, the couple has a big ceremony planned. Lambert, 54, and Rudd, 53, have five adult children and 12 grandchildren. The umbrella advocacy group New Yorkers United for Marriage is promoting the marriage as the first of its kind in New York State. Local politicians will be in attendance along with an estimated hundreds of friends and gay rights advocates for a meal, speeches, and a candlelight procession on Goat Island that will lead across Bridal Veil Falls and then to Luna Island. And the falls, of course, will be illuminated to look like a rainbow, a symbol of the gay rights movement.

That is pretty darn cool. Hats off to the happy couple, and let’s hope they find happiness on the other side of their rainbow.

ON THE WISDOM OF KEEPING UP OFFENSIVE

PRESSURE

As we hear about how heroic this victory was over the next few days, remember what went into it: first, superior fitness. Thankfully these women did not rest on their reputation for greatness, but instead put in the hours of training to make sure that if they had to, they could beat one of the best teams in the world a person down.

And just as importantly? Offensive pressure. Relentless, fearless, offensive pressure.

Good luck, women!

TOM BRADY ET. AL V. THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE STAY DECISION


Judge Susan Nelson of Minnesota District Court has denied the stay of her decision on Monday lifting the lockout imposed by the owners collectively acting as the National Football League. Here is the hard hitting order denying the say and granting the players a temporary victory.

“MADE IN AMERICA” IN THE 21ST CENTURY

[youtube]SKL254Y_jtc[/youtube]

In Trash Talk, bmaz wrote about a “lunchpail” Superbowl, pitting two teams named after people who make things against each other: the Steelworkers versus the Meatpackers. And the game ended appropriately, with a team owned by the people of a small city, having gone to a monstrous stadium as much a tribute to one arrogant man as it is a sports venue, taking home the trophy named after the man who put their city on the map. We can rest easy as Jerry Jones and the other greedy bastards threaten to lock out their players, knowing that the spirit of the game will be in the hands of the people of Green Bay.

All of which was the perfect background for this ad, as much a tribute to a city and a way of life our elites would like us to forget as it is an ad for a car. The visuals are amazing—not just the great monuments of Detroit, but (at :16) the juxtaposition of the disaster porn that our media have lapped up in the last couple of years—“a town that’s been to hell and back”—with the American flag—“the finer things in life.” (It was perhaps a better tribute to our national anthem than the one Christina Aguilera gave.) And, then, with Joe Louis’ fist punctuating the image, followed quickly by Diego Rivera’s tribute to industry, the ad laid out its creed in a working man’s voice.



You see, it’s the hottest fires that make the hardest steel. Add hard work and conviction and the know-how that runs generations deep in every last one of us. That’s who we are. That’s our story.

All culminating in a synthesis of the grit of Eminem and the uplift of gospel.

Yeah, there’s an irony at the heart of the ad: as the tagline “Imported from Detroit” suggests. We’ve been sold to the highest—the only—bidder, for scraps. And it took the genius of a metrosexual Canadian-Italian to reclaim the dignity of America’s industrial base.

Made in America isn't as simple as it used to be.

Back in the 70s, as our industries were first struggling against the challenges of globalization, the unions had a campaign—Made in America—that appealed to the pride and perhaps parochialism of average Americans as reason enough to buy a product.

As the last few decades have shown, it turns out that Made in America wasn't reason enough.

This ad, I think, tries to reclaim that idea, to appeal to the dignity of the men and women in flyover country so often maligned by “experts” who know little about what they write.

Now, it's probably not the [story] you've been reading in papers, the one being written by folks who've never even been here and don't know what we're capable of.

Who knows if the ad will work? Who knows whether it'll sell cars; who knows whether it'll convince a region barely regaining confidence after a terrible trauma to believe?

But whatever the cynical calculations behind this ad, whatever the value of the Chrysler 200, someone needed to tell this story.

SUPERBOWL XLV TRASH TALK

It is SuperBowl Weekend and time for the biggest, and sadly last, NFL Trash Talk for the season. Let's roll!

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN: CHAMPIONSHIP SUNDAY NFL TRASH TALK

Yep, that's right folks, it's the Final Countdown. No, I am not talking about the sudden exit of the narcissistic scold Keith Olbermann from MSNBC, the news will go on just fine without him, and MSNBC will undoubtedly continue to funnel an endless supply of slime through our teevee sets. No, I'm talking about the battle for berths in the SuperBowl. And a couple of really great matchups are on tap. Packers/Bears and Steelers/Jets. There is no way to say any of the four are here by fluke, they earned it and deserve to be playing on Championship Sunday.

First up is the Black and Blue Division throwback grudge match between the Green Bay Packers and Chicago Bears. Titled *Town versus the Monsters of the Midway*. Hey, this just reeks of football the way it was designed and meant to be played. The ghosts of the gridiron will come for this one. Halas, Lambeau, Lombardi, Butkus, Sayers, Starr, Nitschke, the list is endless. At 181 games, it is the longest and most storied rivalry in the history of pro football, with 21 NFL Championships between the two (Green Bay 12, Chicago 9) and four SuperBowl crowns (GB 3, Bears 1). Even better, the game won't be played in any pansy assed dome. Nope, real dirt, sod and grass with heap load of wind and cold. Gonna be a scorcher, with the temperature expected to spike at 20 degrees, wind chill down to 10 with wind off Lake Michigan and possible lake effect snow. Booyah. Perfect.

We saw a preview of the conference championship between these two in the last week of the regular season, with the Pack eeking out a hard

fought 10-3 win that they had to have to get in the playoffs at all. But Aaron Rodgers, Clay Matthews and friends have been on a serious roll since then, with convincing wins over Philadelphia and Atlanta. Oh yeah, and it is not just Charles Woodson any more, Tramon Williams has risen from undrafted obscurity to be a big game difference maker. The Bears come in as the number two seed, but are a little harder to gauge as they had bye and an absolute blowout of Seattle last week. But I have to admit, the Bears are better than I gave them credit for. Their defense is once again tough and aggressive, Urlacher is healthy and playing with abandon and Jay Cutler has seemingly matured into a consistent quality pro quarterback. Despite being at home on Soldier Field, I think the two defenses cancel each other out and it comes down to leadership on offense. On that front, I will take Aaron Rodgers and the Pack for the win.

The nightcap features the Jets and Steelers in the Big Ketchup Bottle. Another game in the elements and on natural ground. From PFT:

In Pittsburgh, weather forecasters are predicting single digit temperatures on Sunday evening when the Steelers and Jets face off at Heinz Field. That could mark the coldest playoff game in team history; the temperature dropped to nine degrees in 2005 when the Patriots beat the Steelers.

Awesome. That's only about 65 degrees less than where my seats for the game are located. The Jets are somewhat remarkably in the conference championship game for the second year in a row and in both years of the still nascent career of Mark Sanchez. You have to give the kid some credit, and a heavy helping to Rex Ryan too, he has really coached them up. They have an attitude and win, lose or draw, that is their character and they roll with it. The brash Jets are the buzz in the air, but the team on the other side of the ball just shows up and does

what they always do. Bring their lunchbucket and get physical. Big Ben isn't exactly Joe Montana stylish, but he is a load, is tough as nails, doesn't quit and has a proven knack for the moment and big games. Rex Ryan isn't the only guy who can coach up a defense, Dick Lebeau has been wreaking defensive havoc in the NFL since well before Ryan was born, and he clearly is not done yet. The Jets have the buzz, but the Stillers have the goods. And Troy Polamalu, Big Ben and Hines Ward. That's a winning formula.

Get the beer, heat up some hot toddy, ready the chips and dip, cause whoa nelly we got a couple of real barnburners today. Here is a little pep talk for the occasion. Let's get it on! Oh yeah, and to Mr. Olbermann, don't let the door hit you where your head is on the way out.

[Editors Note: I sincerely apologize for the link in the first paragraph to The Final Countdown, now that nasty bit of big hair 80's trash earwig music is going to be rattling around your brain, killing perfectly good gray matter, like it has been mine ever since yesterday.]

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFF TRASH TALK

The most exciting weekend of the pro football calendar, divisional playoff weekend is here!

MOVE OVER 2010, IT'S A

NEW YEAR OF TRASH TALK!

It is hard to believe 2010 is over and gone already, but nevertheless we have blasted through another year here at Emptywheel full of substantive and important issues on the merits and fun and relaxation with Trash Talking. And another year of football is heading down the stretch. Big props to the TCU Horned Frogs who capped a perfect 13-0 season with a solid game and huge win over the powerful Wisconsin Badgers. By the way, non-AQ schools are now 4-1 vs AQ schools in BCS bowl games, those stuck up holier than thou Big-10 and SEC school officials ought to just shut the fuck up about TCU and Boise State not belonging on the big stage.

After yesterday's debacle, however, you have to wonder if the Big 10 belongs on the big stage. The three yards and a cloud of dusts managed to go 0 for five in New Years day bowl games and actually managed to lose four of them all in the same time slot. In all, Michigan, Michigan State, Northwestern, Penn State and Wisconsin all lost. Michigan and Michigan State just flat out got embarrassed. Pretty bleak, and Ohio State still has to play another SEC school, Arkansas, so if the past decade's record by the Big-10 against SEC schools is any indication, it could still get worse for the Big-10. To be fair, my beloved Pac-10 did not, except the Ducks and the Trees, have a really great year overall either, and we still do not know how those two will perform in their respective bowl games.

Now, on to the pros, who are completing the final Sunday of the regular season. The biggest game by far today is Da Bears at Green Bay. Hard as it may seem to believe, the Pack needs to win to even get in the playoffs. But Aaron Rodgers is back from his concussion and absolutely shredded the Giants last week, throwing for over 400 yards and four TDs. The Bears cover two pass defense is not a good matchup for the GB passing

attack, so Julius Peppers and the line are going to have to get constant pressure on Rodgers if they want a chance to win. Bears have looked very solid for several weeks now, and Jay Cutler has been playing surprisingly consistent QB for them; but the edge has to go to the Pack on the Frozen Tundra today.

Their records may not be very good, but the Rams and SeaSquawks are playing for the NFC West title and attendant home playoff game. Will it be an 8-8 St. Louis or a 7-9 Seattle that emerges? The Rams have really been surprising this year, even though young Sam Bradford has had a little bit of a slump the last few weeks. Seattle QB is a concern, Hasselbeck is questionable and Charlie Whitehurst inexperienced and shaky. But the game is in Seattle, which evens things out quit a bit. This is a toss up, but I am rooting for the Rams.

The Giants not only have to beat the Skins, but have to also have the Bears beat the Packers to make the playoffs. Coughlins job is probably safe with a win irrespective of whether that results in a playoff berth or not, but a loss to Washington might make his retention shaky. Especially with Bill Cowher indicating he is ready to return to coaching. The Giants should win this game in spite of it being at Fed-Ex Field. Jacksonville needs to beat the Texans in Houston and have the Colts lose at home to the Titans in order to win the AFC South and make the playoffs. Neither are likely to occur. Look for the Texans to play for Kubiak's job and win over the David Garrard less Jags, and Peyton to take care of business for another division title.

Philly hosting the Cowboys should be an interesting game; Cowboys are playing much better and the Iggles are suddenly in a funk; but the game is in Philly and I will take Mike Vick and the Eagles for that reason. Dallas reportedly is going to make Jason Garrett head coach for next year. The rest of the schedule is mostly just marking time; look for Niners over

Cards, Tebows to lose to Rivers and the Bolts,
Saints over Bucs, Falcons over Carolina, Chefs
over Rayduhs, Ravens over Bengals, Steelers over
Browns and Pats over Fish. That leaves the Jets
and the suddenly semi-respectable Toronto Bills.
Jets are already in for a wild card and have
little to play for, which makes this a toss up.

That is the schedule folks. Blend up some Bloody
Marys and cut that hangover edge, get your couch
freak on and let's rumble!

FAT TRASH

Get some food, find the couch and man the remote
– it's time for some football!

SNOWY AND WOODEN TRASH

Yakkety Yak, Take Out The Papers and the Trash