

END OF YEAR/NEW YEAR'S BAD BOY TRASH TALK

It is yet another end of the year. On a weekend, that, with the New Year holiday, will stretch out. So this will likely be the Trash Talk post that takes us through all that.

Speaking of an end of the year compendium, do go read Alex Pareene's on the Huff Po. It is pretty spectacular.

Before we get to football, let us get to some historical level of skiing by Mikaela Shiffrin. Lindsay Vonn, appropriately, has the love and attention of the public attuned to skiing, but Mikaela Shiffrin deserves the same amount. If not more. What she has done, and is doing, is beyond remarkable.

Mikaela Shiffrin became the most successful female slalom skier in the 52-year history of the World Cup by winning the final race of 2018 on Saturday.

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Only Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark has won more World Cup slaloms. He claimed victory in 40 events between 1974 and 1987.

By winning Saturday, Shiffrin also became the first skier, male or female, to win 15 World Cup races in a calendar year, moving one victory past men's overall champion Marcel Hirscher of Austria, who has won 14 times in 2018.

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Give Ms. Shiffrin a little attention. These are world class and historical level feats she pulls off every day.

Back to football. The games come up as this – First, there are the critical BCS games: Notable to this blog, the Gators and Wolverines are about to tangle in the Chik-fil-A Peach Bowl. This is literally Marcy versus Jim thing, will either one of them weigh in?

Later, of course, are the BCS semi-final games. First up is Oklahoma versus Bama. Oklahoma has an offense that only a team like Alabama might contain. I think the Crimson Tide rolls on, but it is no given, because Kyler Murray is scary good. In the other semi-final, Clemson, who would have been a heavy favorite against a Notre Dame team that arguably should not even be here, has three players suspended at the last minute. The most prominent of which is on defense, Clemson's offense will be okay. Is that enough? Probably, but if you want to bet an upset, this could be it.

Off to the pros: The Colts at Titans is literally a play in game. The winner goes to the playoffs and the loser goes home. Captain Andrew Luck seems healthier than Marcus Mariotta. It is really hard to discount the extremely plucky Titans. But the Colts seem to have found some magic in the second half of the season. So, against some instincts, I will take the Colts to win even in Tennessee, though I am no where near sure of that. The next most winner take it game is Bears at the Vikings. Bears trying to find a

way to a first round bye, and Vikes looking to clinch a wild card spot in the playoffs. The Bears sure look like the better team at this moment, but it is in Minnesota, not Soldier Field, so this looks to be a really interesting tossup.

Raiders are at Chiefs. Chucky had a nice little PR spot with that win over the Donkos on the MNF closer for the year, but it is pretty hard to see them winning in KC. Chargers at Broncos is a far harder call. The Bolts look to be a far better, and healthier, team right now. If the Iggles beat the Skins, and the Vikes lose to Da Bears, Nick Foles and the Eagles slip back into the playoffs, as improbable as it may be.

Lastly, and curiously, maybe most interesting, is the Brownies at the Ravens. The once Cleveland Browns versus the now Cleveland Browns. With the playoff hopes of the old Brownies, and now Ravens, on the line. This is simply precious. And, in case you have not been watching, Baker Mayfield and the Browns have been on a roll. This should be an incredible game, irrespective of how it plays out.

This post has music from some lads from Liverpool. Bad Boy is one of their more under appreciated tracks. Behave yourselves!