TRIPLE CROWN TRASH TALK

An outstanding weekend of sports is on tap. And, believe it or not, we are going to lead off with baseball. The end of the regular season was as compelling as has been seen in a very long time. While most of the attention was focused on the battle between the Yankees and Orioles, Miguel Cabrera pulled off a Triple Crown and the amazing Oakland Athletics caught up, and on the last day of the season in a head to head matchup, passed the powerful Texas Rangers to win the AL West. In the National League, the Natinals, despite parking their ace, Stephen Strasburg, for the season won the East going away and the defending champion Cardinals sneaked into the playoffs with the second wildcard.

Whew, that is a lot of hardball goodness, and then came…..the one and done wildcard night. And what a night it was. Buck Showalter and the O's went down to Texas and took it to the Rangers. So, the Rangers are done just that fast, and the O's move on to meet the Yanks. But all hell broke loose in Atlanta as, apparently Roger Goodell's replacement refs have moved on to MLB. The umps blew a call on the terminally quirky "infield fly" rule and arguably cost the Braves, and the retiring Chipper Jones, the game. A riot nearly ensued and, as ugly as it was, you have to sympathize some with the fans in Atlanta, they got hosed. Nevertheless, the Cardinals will move on and the Braves are done.

And then there is the Tigers' Miguel Cabrera, who has, in a quiet workmanlike fashion, won the hallowed Triple Crown. Rookie Mike Trout of the Angels was phenomenal, but my vote is that Cabrera is the MVP. You win the first Triple Crown in 45 years and, in the process, power your team into a division championship and the postseason, that is the definition of a MVP. I was alive and kicking when the last Triple Crown was won by Carl Yastremski in 1967. When you

consider that the two best hitters in the intervening 45 years the game has seen, Barry Bonds and Albert Pujols, couldn't do it, it is all the more remarkable that Cabrera has. Hat's off to Miggy. Detroit pride isn't just cars now. Simply great stuff.

The class of the college games this week are all in the SEC. Most weeks a matchup of unbeatens such as #4 LSU at #10 Florida would be the top game on the slate. But I think both those teams are a little overrated this year and the game is a tossup. If the Gators can hang tough on defense, they might pull off the upset. But the real game of the week is #5 Georgia at #6 South Carolina. The days of Fun & Gun are over for the 'Ole Ball coach Steve Spurrier, he now runs a fairly conservative game management offense that relies of super back Marcus Lattimore coupled with a very aggressive and good defense. This is going to be a great game, and I look for the Cocks to come out on top.

West Virginia at the Longwhorens should be pretty interesting too. Will be exciting to see if the new version of RGIII, Geno Smith of WVU, can get untracked for another big day. Don't think he will have another 8 touchdown day like last week against Baylor, but here's hoping he lights up Texas. Honorable mention to Northwestern at Penn State. The Fighting Journalists – er, Wildcats – are a shocking 5-0 and leading the Big 10.X. But the game is in Happy Valley and the Nittany Lions are starting to gel after all the turmoil. With a couple of breaks, PSU could be 5-0 too, and I think they are going to take this one in a small upset.

For the pros, well what could be better than Peyton versus Brady? Nothing. That is the marquis matchup for the week. Denver has a far better defense, the Pats still have a better offense. Which is going to give? I have no idea, but it will be fun to see. By the way, you think we talk trash here? Holy smoke, get a load of the Twitter Fight that Brady and Manning got in yesterday. It was so fun that half of the QBs in

the league piled on by the time it was over. Seriously, you HAVE to check this out, it is hilarious.

The other compelling game is Iggles at Stillers. As badly as Philly and Vick have sucked, they are still 3-1 and Big Ben and the boys loping along at a disappointing 1-2. I think that changes this weekend and Pittsburgh wins the battle of Pennsylvania. The Steelers get a big shot in the arm with the return Troy Polamalu, James Harrison and Rashard Mendenhall to the lineup. Look for the surprising Vikings to run their record to 4-1 with a win over the seemingly woeful Titans, although with Matt Hasselbeck taking over for the injured Jake Locker, Tennessee has a shot. The Sunday Night game is the Bolts at Aints. Nawlins has to snap out of their slide, right? Maybe, but the Bolts won't make it easy.

Lastly, the F1 Circus is in Suzuka for the Japanese Grand Prix. Built in the early 60s as a Honda test facility, Suzuka is a beautiful circuit by any measure, and certainly the best of the Asian circuits by far. The Red Bulls of Vettel and Webber have the front row. Jenson Button was third fastest in qualifying, but is assessed a five place grid penalty for swapping gearboxes, so will start in P8. Kamui Kobayashi put on a show for his home country, put in the fourth fastest time and will start from P3 due to Button's penalty. Points leader Alonso will start from the third row, which puts him at a disadvantage in his battle with the surging Vettel. Coverage starts on Speed at 1:30am Sunday EST and 10:30pm Saturday night PST. It is always a good race at Suzuka, tune in.

As a parting shot, who knew Michael Phelps could golf? Dude drained a 159 foot putt. Wow.