

CARRIER CLASSIC, VETERANS, LIONS AND HUSKERS TRASH TALK

Alright, as you may have heard, there has been a bit of excitement in college sports this week. We first hit on it last Saturday as we slid into another seemingly routine weekend of trash talk. But it has indeed mushroomed into an oxygen consuming goliath and, quite frankly, it has that level of significance in many respects. Marcy has done a couple of very good posts on the background and why Penn State is special in her life and that of so many others, and a more detailed post on timing and charging details. There is a little of my input in the latter, but I will be along, in a separate post, with some thoughts and observations on the legal status of the overall Penn State matter.

I will also be along with the college football rundown for the weekend as an update to this post in a little bit and, likely a separate post for the NFL Sunday slate, because there are some great games, including Jets and Pats.

But, for now, the first ever Carrier Classic is starting on ESPN and, I have to say, this thing looks freaking cool. They have a first rate court set up, with stands and all the hoopla, on the USS Carl Vinson, a 1,092-foot-long, 244-foot-high floating battle city. It is still on the water though, and it is outdoors in the port at San Diego. That is going to affect the shooting and play of the teams a little, just how much we will see. Oh, and Mr. and Mrs. Obama are there. It is a really great gig for Veteran's Day. Gotta love it.

Tonight's classic pits the Spartans of Michigan State and Tom Izzo against the Tar Heels of North Carolina and Roy Williams. Seriously, college basketball does not come much more steeped in tradition than that. Carolina has owned MSU lately, winning seven of the last

eight and the Heels are pretty much a consensus preseason number one in the land. Hard to pick against them. But never count out any team coached by Tom Izzo, even though the Spartans are looking at a rare rebuilding year. Magic Johnson, Mr. Sparty himself is in the house as is the Tar Heels' Big Game James Worthy. Guess Michael Jordan is too busy trying to screw current players now that he is ownership in the NBA.

Anchors Aweigh mateys! See you in comments and will add in college football later tonight, but feel free to trash on any, and all, subjects you can think of. Drink sailors!

Saturday's College Football: Okay, the Carrier Classic was pretty cool and the shots looking out over the court and off into the ocean sunset were simply stunningly beautiful. But we are on to football. The Gulf coast Pirate's Houston Cougars have already done their work and moved to a remarkable 10-0 after rolling up 73 points on woeful Tulane; the Cougs need to be rewarded with a substantial bowl game. Similarly Virginia Tech has already dispatched the Rammblin Wreck of Georgia Tech and looks good for the ACC championship game.

The most important game today is not the Penn State game against Nebraska; no, the most important game is the Oregon Quackers at the Home of the Tree, Stanford. Stanford is number 4 in the BCS and Oregon number 7; the implications are simply huge for both the national championship picture as well as the North division berth in the Pac-12 championship. Both teams have good defenses and fast, wide-open offenses. Both have extremely good ground games (nobody notices this about Stanford, but they really do). Everybody knows about the Duck's LaMichael James, but Sethfan Taylor is a killer too. There are going to be a LOT of points scored here, but Stanford is at home in Palo Alto and I will take Andrew Luck over Darron Thomas; a hard fought win for the Tree is the prediction.

TCU and Boise State is always a good game, but TCU is not the team it has been the last few years, the Broncos should roll again. Auburn versus Georgia will be a great SEC game; I'll take Georgia this year. Oklahoma State is in Lubbock. Texas Tech has had an up and down year; here's hoping they get it together for an upset of OSU. Florida at South Carolina will also be a pretty good game. I would have taken the Gamecocks easy before Marcus Lattimore went out for the year, but now it is a tossup.

That leaves the game that will, for mostly all the wrong reasons, hold the nation's attention today, Nebraska at Penn State. Obviously there is a situation going down in Happy Valley. It is not so happy these days. Comments discussion in Trash Talk is always wide open, but I am not going to go into substantive analysis of the facts and legal analysis here in this main post body. There are already three substantive posts where we have done that (here, here and here) and I will likely be along with something more later today or tomorrow.

But the game itself is very notable as the Nittany Lions are 8-1 and undefeated in Big-10.2 play. Their last three games of the year are, however, starting today, Nebraska, Ohio State and Wisconsin the last two on the road. Both have pretty solid defenses and spotty offenses. Despite being without Paterno and the assistant coach who was effectively offensive coordinator, Mike McQueary (who claims to be in protective custody and double fisted drinking), my guess is the team is way more focused and motivated under interim coach Tom Bradley. Bradley has been there a long time and can run the team just fine, in fact he was already doing a lot of that when Paterno was still there. McQueary may actually be more of a loss during the game. But it is Senior day and the last home game these players will play at Penn State. If Penn State quarterback Matt McGloin, who was very close to Paterno, can put together a decent game, then I think the Nittany Lions surprise a whole lot of people and pull off the win. Say what you will

about the mess roiling PSU, the kids on the current team did not do that; I will be rooting for them today.

There you have the rundown. Lots to jaw about today, we will do a separate post for the pros and tomorrow, and there are some good games there too. Let the trash flow!

Notice of Errata: Um, I actually did mean to mention the Mighty Ephs versus the Jumpin Jeffs. Yes, today it is the official "Biggest Little Game In America" and they will be playing for all the NESCAC marbles. Amherst rolls in undefeated at 7-0 and Williams right behind at a respectable 5-2. The Lord Jeffs are led by super running back Evan Bunker, while the Ephs seem to have a last minute question at QB between Chris Cleary and Adam Marske. This is gonna be a real barnburner humdinger as Keith Jackson would say!