

MILITARIZED TRASH TALK

When Dwight Eisenhower warned of the creeping military-industrial complex, little did he know it would invade even the football trash talk of the liberal blog set. But, yet, here we are this week all soldiered up.

That is because the big story today is the Army/Navy game. The reason I say Army/Navy is the big story is because I refuse to discuss the sham going on at the Downtown Athletic Club in New York where the Heisman Trophy is going to be handed to a professional athlete who is also a petty thief; Cam Newton ought to be disqualified as ineligible to compete instead of playing for a national championship and receiving the Heisman. The NCAA and the BCS are both corrupt and sick jokes.

As to the game itself, it looks like a fair fight for once. The Midshipmen have won eight in a row over the Black Knights, many of the games not even close (Navy has outscored Army 89-6 over the last three games). But this year both teams have had good seasons and are going bowling, with Navy to the Poinsettia Bowl and Army to the Armed Services Bowl. The Black Knights are ranked ninth in the country in rushing (260 yards per game) and tied for 12th in turnover margin at plus-one per game. But Navy is on a roll behind senior quarterback Ricky Dobbs and the vaunted triple option offense has been grinding over opponents. There is also the measure of the common opponent both teams played this year; Navy crushed Notre Dame, while the fighting Irish fairly easily dispatched Army. So, prediction here is another solid victory by Navy, but Army may finally at least be able to get in the endzone for the first time in four years.

PROS: There are only four games of real interest this weekend: Giants at Vikes, Pats at Bears, Iggles at Dallas and Chefs at Bolts. The Giants

have had an up and down year, but seem to be generally getting things together down the stretch. Bad Eli has been a turnover machine and, of course, the Vikes have the king of turnover machines, the Geezer himself. But the Geezer is hurt, can he play? Will he start? Of course he will, that is what he does. But I would not be surprised if he is ineffective and sits down after about a quarter; especially considering that Tavaris Jackson has been okay in relief the last couple of weeks (although not nearly as good as the scores of those games would lead you to believe). This should really be an interesting game; for the most part, the Vikes have played better than their poor record indicates, but they are nowhere near last year's team. The Vikings are at home and want to finish off the season on an up note; the Giants are actually playing for playoff positioning. Toss up!

Bieber Brady and the Pats invade Soldier Field to visit Urlacher and Da Bears. Urlacher has already said the Bears are a better team. That is the kiss of death against Belichick and Brady, not to mention that Belichick has the young Pats defense finally coached up and playing solid. Pats look good in this one.

Eagles at Owboys would look to be a blowout for the Eagles. But not so fast, Dallas has been playing a LOT smarter and better since Jason Garrett took over for Wade Phillips, and Dallas has a strange way of driving the Iggles crazy and beating them, even when the Iggles are superior. Cowboys rookie wide receiver Dez Bryant is out for the season and Asante Samuel is questionable for the Eagles; both are huge. Edge here still has to go to Philly, but you never know.

Lastly, but maybe most importantly, is the Chiefs at the Chargers. The Chefs, at 8-4, have a two game lead over the 6-6 Bolts and KC won the first meeting earlier this year. So, if KC wins this one, the Bolts run of division crowns is over. San Diego, however, is on its usual end

of the year tear they always go on before Norval takes a crap in a playoff game. Phil rivers is tearing up passing records this year and Matt Cassell is likely out after undergoing an appendectomy Wednesday. That is enough of a blow to put this game solidly in the Chargers favor.

So, that is it for this week trash it up. The musical selection is from the first Jefferson Starship album, Dragonfly. I have been listening to this old wax on the turntable the last week and had forgotten just how good of an album it really was. The track here is All Fly Away, which is one of the lesser known ones, but simply a killer song.

THE WALKING WOUNDED THE NFL TREATS LIKE DISPOSABLE TRASH

Trash time people; you know what to do.

TURKEY TRASH: EAT THE BIRD AND PASS THE DAMN BALL

Eat turkey and watch football; it is what was contemplated by the primordial ooze!

TRASH TALK: THE PARITY BEFORE THE LOCK-OUT

So here's some things to contemplate about this week in the NFL. The Jay Cutler-led Bears already won this week (it helps to play a team the week after they got cleaned out of QBs), putting them, for the moment at least, half a game ahead of the team led by Aaron Rogers and miles ahead of the team led by Brett Favre (the Packers visit the Vikes this week). The Monday night game features the Bolts at Broncos, which oddly occupy the basement in the AFC West. One of the unexpected leaders in that division—KC—will likely get beat by the heretofore hapless Cardinals. The other—Oakland—heads to Pittsburgh in what is a probable, though not guaranteed, Stillers win.

That's all just weird.

Meanwhile, last year's AFC North winner, Cinci, may well get beat, at home, by the Bills (which thanks to the QB and PK-less Kitties are on a win streak of 1). Those same Kitties might have had a shot at the Boys, at home, this week, if it weren't for the sacking of Wade Phillips and Jason Garrett's order that the players start wearing suits.

Parity, baybay.

Some things, however, remain the same.

The Colts-Pats game is likely to be a cracker; both teams are playing behind form, but both are still winning. I think Peyton still has the Pats' recent number, even in Foxboro.

And the Gents-Iggles game—for first in the NFC East—will be an exciting, meaningful game. I say the recent rule still stands: if Vick starts and finishes that game, Iggles win (though the Iggles won't demolish the Gents the way they did the Skins).

In the not-quite pro league, Boise State will continue to delegitimize the BCS, Stanford will win the Big Game, Cam Newton has a weekend off to spend with his father's money, and the Big Ten Championship is still a close exciting contest (one that won't be disrupted when the Badgers visit the Big House this weekend). The Cornhuskers-Aggies and the Buckeyes-Hawkeyes will be the games of the weekend.

Except that the game of the week was already played this week. The best game of the week, in any sport, had to have been the UConn Huskies—with Maya Moore and a bunch of freshmen—just **barely** beating Baylor and their ten foot tall phenom Brittney Griner to keep their 80-game win streak alive. Watch out Wooden!

But back to pro football. The NFL Player's Union is gearing up for a big fight against the Jerry Jones and Al Davises of the league, who are threatening a lockout. They did a conference call and launched a website this week to educate fans about what a lockout will mean. Among other details:

If there is a lockout, an estimated \$140 million would be lost in each NFL city.

The owners have negotiated TV deals that guarantee them revenues even if games are not played in the 2011 season. The guaranteed television revenues that approach \$4.5 billion, coupled with the elimination of \$4.4 billion in player salaries and benefits during a lockout, could make a 2011 season without games profitable for the owners.

Recently, the NFL said it would not continue active player healthcare in a lockout.

The average NFL career is only 3.6 years. It takes 3 accredited years to get just 5 years of post career healthcare.

In other words, at a time when municipalities all over the country are struggling to pay the bills, the fat cats running the NFL would take \$140 million from city economies so they can get something—\$4.5 billion in TV revenues—for nothing. No games. No trash talk.

I'll be tracking the union negotiations in the coming days. In the meantime, consider signing the player's union's petition to tell the owners to stop being such greedy bastards.

TRASH TALK: LAST CALL FOR THE F1 CIRCUS, CRUNCH TIME IN NCAA FOOTBALL

A little late to the post with Trash this weekend, had an issue crop up last night after a long week. But we are getting down to crunch time in both Formula One, last race of the season and it will decide the Drivers' Crown, and it is now down to the last make it or break it couple of weeks in college football ahead of the conference championships. And, of course, there is a full slate of NFL games too.

So, I will be along in a bit with some actual content. Or maybe Marcy will slide some in too. I am sorry, long night and a bit of an aimless day so far and i need to get the post up and quit waiting for my fingers to spew out some malarky from me. So chat away, make your own prognostications and let loose. See, you get what you need!

Update: Okay, two bits of content, at least.

First, I think this is all a plot to make sure Boise State has a shot at #1 by the end of the year.

The No. 2 [Auburn] Tigers brushed off the storm brought by allegations of a pay-for-play scheme with another dominant offensive performance, beating Georgia, 49-31, in front of 87,451 to clinch the Southeastern Conference West championship and a berth in the conference title game.

There was a renewed allegation last week from an agent's representative that Cecil Newton Sr., Cam Newton's father, solicited money from Mississippi State when his son was being recruited. That is an N.C.A.A. violation that could result in Newton's being declared ineligible, even if Cecil Newton did not solicit money from Auburn.

This is all headed to Auburn being disqualified just in time to leave Boise State with the best record.

And then there's the NFL game of the weekend. Well, maybe not. While I'm looking forward to the Pats-Stillers game, I think the Brownies thumping of the Pats exposed the real New England, so I expect the home team Stillers to win handily.

Which brings us to the Ryan bowl. In the Manning bowl, the expected winner-Peyton-won. And you gotta place \$\$ on Rex here. But I'm going to bet Rob Ryan's Brownies surprise the J-E-T-S-Jets this weekend.

And in the loser bowl? The Bills will finally get their much deserved first win against the Stafford-less, Hanson-less Lions (though I hope not). Go Kitties.

ZENYATTA! AN LA WOMAN RUNS FOR THE ROSES & HISTORY

This weeks sports trash talk is dominated by a grand lady, Zenyatta. Win, lose or draw, she has earned the attention.

TRASH TALK: GIANTS V. TEXAS

Apparently, football started early this week, with San Francisco's team beating the Texas team one TD, a conversion, and a field goal to a TD on Wednesday, and shutting them out last night with three field goals. I understand the quarterbacks in these games have been a big part of the story, with the QBs from Texas playing like Tony Romo in a big game, and the QBs from San Francisco recalling Montana or Young; ah, the good old days! You know you're in trouble when W looks to be the bright spot from the mound for the Rangers. May the Giants continue to score touchdowns over the evil Rangers!

Meanwhile, weird things are going down in the preprofessional football league. We're well into the season, and yet the Big 10.2 still has 3 teams in the top ten, with the Spartans at the Hawkeyes one of the better games this weekend. Soon to be Big 10.2 team, the Huskers, face a big game at home against Missouri. And in bmaz' part of the country, the Ducks will see whether the Spoiled Children have really returned to their winning ways yet. As for the Wolverineenies? Is it too soon to speculate whether JoePa will outlast yet another big program coach when he hosts RichRod this weekend?

The big drama in the pro leagues has to do with whether age and injuries will end the Geezer's 291-game consecutive streak. I'm with BillBel on this: nahhh!! Favre has started every game since **before** Clinton was elected! No puny thing like broken bones and a penis scandal will keep him out. That said, much as I believe the Pats' record grossly overstates their ability this year, I do think the Pats will beat Randy Moss in his return to New England.

But the Vikings-Pats game isn't even close to the most interesting game of the week (even if bmaz and I will be at each others' throats during it). I think the Stillers—who **have** earned their 5-1 record, will prove the champs are still suffering from a season long hangover. Likewise, I fear the Packers' joy at beating the Geezer will be short-lived as they travel to play the Jets (though I do hope against hope that Russ Feingold's attendance at the Packer's victory over Favre will give him just enough juju to pull off a win in WI).

Meanwhile, does Randiego even read these threads anymore? Or does he cower away with the knowledge that the Bolts are likely to be 2-6 by Sunday after the very good Titans come to town? Jeebus, after all the mental errors Norv's players made last week, I am gobsmacked he still has a job.

And Monday Night's game? It's never sane to bet against Peyton at home, but with the absence of Dwight Clark, I think the Texans might just pull off a repeat of their win against the Colts earlier this season. So which team do you think will be leading the AFC south on Tuesday?

Finally, let me confess to an unusual bout of optimism and predict that the newly healthy Stafford and his Kitties will surprise the Skins this week.

TRASH TALK: IT IS ALL ABOUT DALLAS

Yankees get bounced, Rangers on the way to their first World Series and Brett Favre is going back to Lambeau. Oh, and the first ever Korean Grand Prix is being run and the new track looks good.

TRASH: THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

Was discussing the state of the NFL last night with Marcy, and the prevailing opinion was an unusual lack of particularly exciting or compelling story lines. A strange parity and blaah seems to have set in to the league that hardly ever suffers from that. So, guess what, screw it I'm going with baseball as the lead.

The rookies on the LCS big stage Texas Rangers had the mighty Yankees on the ropes last night and forgot to step on the beast's throat. Can't do that with the Yanks, and the Rangers paid the price by giving up five runs in the eighth and losing game one 6-5. The young Rangers needed to close out the opening win at home and failing to do so has got to be deflating and forfeits home field advantage. Not a good sign; the Evil Empire looks to be on the road to yet another World Series.

However, the biggest and most compelling sports story of the weekend by far is the battle of aces in game one of the NLCS. Halladay of the Phillies versus Lincicum and the Giants. Dayn Perry at Fox Sports is wondering if it is the best pitching matchup in postseason history. I dunno about that (and Perry seemed to forget about the Bob Gibson showdowns with Denny McClain and Mickey Lolich in the 1968 World Series and the Gibson-Jim Lonborg game seven

matchup in the 1967 Series), but tonight's Doc v. Freak show is right on up there. Both are former Cy Young winners, Lincicum has two and Halladay will almost certainly win his second this year. All Roy Halladay has done is throw the second no-hitter in MLB playoff history (after throwing a perfect game during the regular season). And Lincicum, well some folks think his two hitter against the Braves the night after Halladay's no no was an even better pitching performance than Halladay's no hitter. This is going to be some must see baseball teevee.

On the college gridiron, there are a couple of important games that will separate wheat from chaff. The Arkansas Hogs at the Auburn Tigers is one of those games. The Hogs damn near beat Alabama and would be undefeated if they had; Auburn is undefeated at 6-0 but has not had to play a team like Bama or Arkansas yet. Auburn at home is the safe pick, but the Tigers' pass defense is weak and Ryan Mallett is very good; Hogs may pull off the road upset. Texas is not up to snuff this year, but should pose a solid test for the supposedly rejuvenated Nebraska Cornfuskens. Nebraska always looks "back" and then starts running into real teams in the late season conference schedule and gets exposed. Maybe not this time though, Taylor Martinez has the Huskers as solid as they have been in a very long time. Still, I dunno, this is a tossup. The Sweater Vests are at Camp Randall and the Badgers. If there is a football god out there, please let Wisconsin knock off OSU and spare the country another one of their poor showings in the BCS Championship game. Lastly, Ricki Stanzi and the Iowa Hawks visit Denard Robinson and the Wolverweenies in teh Big Haus. Both teams come in with only one loss; one will leave that way and in good shape, the other will fall to also ran status. Robinson is so exciting he may be able to overcome the Rich Rod fail factor. Maybe, but I don't think so. Ricki can play too and Kirk Ferentz can coach circles around Rich Rod; Hawks leave with a win.

As I said in the opening, the NFL just seems in the doldrums right now. Cowboys should be good but suck, they are so lame it is hardly even worth the while to root against them anymore. Rest of the NFC East is playing okay, but not great. Saints are just muddling along; they really lost some spark when Reggie Bush went out, although their problems were already apparent even before that. The Bears look like the class of the league so far, but they sure don't feel that good to me in the gut. The Packers have just been decimated by injuries; even though Rodgers looks to play after getting a mild concussion last week, Green Bay has real problems. And the NFC West? Jeebus, the Cardinals are leading the division and have given up 50 more points than they have scored this year.


Doldrums in the AFC too. Pats seem okay on offense although not well balanced; defense is, um, spotty. Chargers have been an enigma so far; guess Norval must still be their coach. Chiefs have been a pleasant surprise, but they don't have the goods yet to keep it up. KC is building and sure looks to have a bright future in a year or two. The whole AFC South is 3-2, but none of them seem dominant. That leaves the Ravens, Stillers and Jets as, really, the class of the NFL at this point. All three have knock down and lock down defenses and more than competent offenses. You would have had to say the Ravens and Jets had the edge with Big Ben out, but now that he is back, that is not so clear. Gonna be a slugfest down the stretch among those three it looks like.

Dirty Birds at Iggles looks like a good game; would look like a *really* good game if Mike Vick were healthy and starting, but he is not. Kevin Kolb no match for Matty Ice. Ravens at Pats also looks interesting, but Ray Lewis and the boys can stop Brady and, well other than Welker it is not clear, a lot better than the Patsies can stop Ray Rice, Quan Boldin and Joe Flacco. Boldin does not make a ton of noise like the standard prima donna wide receivers in the

league these days, but man is that guy a team leader in the clubhouse and on the field. He is what Ray Lewis is to a defense and that is the difference for the Ravens. Peytons at the Skins Sunday night could be a decent game. Or Manning may chew up the not quite Shanahan rebuilt Skins; I think that is a fair bet actually. And last, and despite the hype, maybe least is the Boys at the Vikes. Whoever loses this game is done and gets the fork them. They both suck, but it is in the Metrodome and that is tough, so the edge go to the Vikes. Oh yeah, some guy named Favre may actually start at QB for Minnesota. The increasingly cackling and tabloid like sporting press seems to think this is news. It is not. He may be hurting and over the hill, but the dude always straps em on, laces em up and takes the field. He will again.

Honestly, I can't wait for Zenyatta and the Breeder's Cup; football is getting boring.

TRASH TALK: DOES ANY QB STILL HAVE THE TOUCH OR TIMING FOR RANDY MOSS?

 On the plane from Edinburgh to London the other day, I sat next to two guys who were heading to talk to some football team called Arsenal to teach them how to promote their brand worldwide like the NY Giants do.

So forgive me if the following post betrays how far out of "touch" I have been wrt American football in the last week.

Best as I understand it, here is the big news. Randy Moss got traded to Minnesota for next to nothing. Now, backstage, I noted that this might not make that big a difference to the success of

the Pats. After all, I said, Tom Brady's deep accuracy has been off since he blew his knee out. But the boys I mentioned this to suggested that the timing indicated something else might better explain why Brady lost his deep touch for Moss. Meanwhile Moss' new QB has his own "touch" issues. And when asked about those touch issues, the Geezer responded he "had his hands full ... trying to get some timing down with our guys."

Poor Randy Moss. No one has touch or timing for him.

Ahem.

Good thing we have football to distract us from this Randy Moss soap opera.

All you need to know about the college kids is that the Spartans are going to have to try to stop Denard Robinson in the Big House. There is some game of interest in Florida, I'm sure. But I'm not entirely sure what that's about. Go Wolverineenies!

As for Pro Ball (the Giants kind, not the Arsenal kind), the highlight of the week is definitely the touchy Geezer's Monday Night Football return to New Jersey; let's hope he finds his timing to beat the Jets.

Though I think a game with two QBs who still have touch will be more interesting: Aaron Rogers heads to Donovan McNabb's new home. Rogers will out-touch McNabb in this one.

While we're talking about the NFC North, the Rams-Detroit game will be quite interesting, as two teams beginning to turn around horrible programs. With Stafford still out, I think Rams will notch another win.

But the surprise game of the weekend pits the only undefeated team in the league—the leader of the AFC West—against the team tied for last place in the AFC South. That's right. KC in Indy can't be assumed to be a blowout in Peyton's favor. (Well, on second thought, given that it's in Indy, I take that back.)

On that note, let me raise an issue I've been thinking about for some time. BillBel traded Moss for a 3rd round pick, presumably on the assumption that, with two picks in each of the first four rounds of next year's draft, he can build the team of the future (right—as Tom Brady and his diminishing deep touch continues to age). The old BillBel might well have been able to do that. But I've always wondered how much BillBel's past shrewd personnel decisions had to do with Scott Pioli, and how much had to do with BillBel. I dunno. At this point in the season, I'd take Scott Pioli with those two picks a round in next year's draft over BillBel and Brady's diminishing deep touch.

Let the trash begin.