

TRASH TALK - CLASH OF THE TITANS EDITION

It's trash talk time again. And this week we have a great slate of games, so let's get down to the nitty-gritty. I know, I know, we've got to get this guy out of our hair, but once again the world seems to revolve around randiego. You've got a dynamic blog owner, and a loyal janitor, and *still* the world revolves around a surfer dude from San Diego. Go figure. Must be teh Rio Grande Mud that Mr. and Mrs. Randiego are stuck in with their Texas Tech jones.

NCAA: The mondo game of the week is the Texas Tech Red Rayduhs of Lady Randiego versus the Oklahoma Sooners. This game is not just huge to our favorite surfers, this is, indeed, the biggest game of the week for the nation. Let's take a look at the breakdown for the game courtesy of Fox Sports:

The biggest game in the nation, the Red Raiders are playing to reach the Big 12 championship game and possibly the national championship game, while an Oklahoma victory can throw the Big 12 South division into a tiebreaker scenario that would involve Texas Tech, Texas and Oklahoma. The Sooners have never been more explosive on offense than they are right now, gaining 674, 528, 508 and 653 yards, respectively, against Kansas, Kansas State, Nebraska and Texas A&M. The biggest difference has been a running game that's taken off behind a line that's once again living up to its preseason expectations. Chris Brown and DeMarco Murray have combined for 1,623 yards from the tailback position. At Texas Tech, everything seems to be fine-tuned in coach Mike Leach's "Air Raid" offense. QB Graham Harrell is quickly approaching the 5,000-yard mark, WR Mike Crabtree is playing better than his Biletnikoff

Award-winning season a year ago and the running game has never been stronger under Leach. Tech is averaging 132.6 yards per game (No. 73 in the nation). First won to 50 wins? Perhaps.

FAST FACTS: Red Raiders – The offensive line has yielded 15 sacks in a whopping 622 pass attempts. ... The Raiders are one of five teams in the league with at least 20 sacks. ... The offense is 48 of 58 on trips to the red zone. Of the 48 scores, 43 are touchdowns. Sooners – Lead the nation in scoring, averaging 51.4 points per game. ... LB Travis Lewis ranks 10th nationally in tackles, registering 10.5 per game. ... OU is 9-9 under Bob Stoops when playing higher ranked teams at home.

Sam Bradford is a very fine quarterback, and Bob Stoops always has a tough defense. But I think Graham Harrell, Michael Crabtree and teh Rayduhs de Rojo will rule the day in Norman. Sorry Freep, the Sooners are later.

This is kind of scary, but most of the rest of the good matchups are in the Big 10. Not sure what kind of alternate reality that puts us in, but there you have it. And of those, let's face it, the biggest is still Michigan at the Ohio State University. Big Blue goes to the Big Horseshoe. Gonna have to vote with my heart instead of my head and root for the Wolverineenies. It has been a tough year on EW's local gridiron scene. The Lions; well, good grief, they couldn't be worse if Charlie Brown was their kicker and Lucy Van Pelt their holder. Then Big Blue has a far worse rebuilding year under Rich Rodriquez than anybody envisioned. So EW needs some pigskin cheer up there. Go Big Blue!

The other Big 10 tilt that is prime would be Michigan State at the Penn State JoePas. Should be a good game, hope it is not Paterno's last game in Happy Valley. Also keep your eye on BYU

at Utah; it is actually a very important game. BYU is tough, but if Utah gets by them, and Boise State wins out too, it is going to seriously screw with the BCS fatheads. Here's hoping.

NFL: The game of the week is the J E T S Jets, Jets, Jets at masaccio's Titans. Now this is an interesting clash. It is a Clash of the Titans, because, you see, the original name of the Jets in the old AFL was the Titans. So, there you go. Here's the rundown:

Not so long ago, Brett Favre and Kerry Collins weren't even expected to be starting this season. Now two of the NFL's oldest and most experienced quarterbacks will square off in the most highly anticipated game of Week 12.

...

Collins has thrown for 519 yards with five touchdowns and one interception in road wins over Chicago and Jacksonville. He hadn't thrown for 200 yards in any of his previous eight games, during which he totaled three TD passes and three interceptions.

...

Favre's been able to rely more on the rushing attack, which has averaged 163.8 yards and scored eight touchdowns over the last five games. Thomas Jones tops the AFC with 854 rushing yards and will be seeking his third straight 100-yard game after running for 104 in a 34-31 overtime win over New England last week.

...

Favre will be challenged by a Titans defense which has given up the fewest points in the league, is tied for second with 15 interceptions and ranks third in the AFC with 28 sacks – 10 in the last three weeks. Star defensive tackle Albert Haynesworth has seven sacks and keys a defense which has allowed one 100-yard rusher all season.

You know where I'm going. That is exactly right, I am picking the Titans all the way baby.

The second big game of the week, and it is almost surreal to say this, involves the Arizona Cardinals. Crikey, this must be an alternate reality. The Gents are coming to town to hook up with the Cards in teh Big Toaster. The Giants at 9-1 and the Cards at 7-3 are arguably the two best teams in the NFC and this should be a whale of a game. Kurt Warner is literally have another MVP caliber season, and it is no joke that Larry Fitzgerald and Anquan Boldin are the best receiving pair in the league. If you haven't seen much of these two, take a gander, they are something special. Then there is Bad Eli. Manning that is. Don't know if y'all are aware of this or not, but EW ain't really a fan of the Manning brothers. Any of them. Must have something to do with the Pats, I dunno. It's not like they have beaten the Pats out of the championship, first one brother, then the other or anything. Oh, wait.... Cards are really tough at home and are starting to really look good. I'm taking them in an upset. Jeebus I know I'll regret betting on the damn Cards. Oh well.

Next, we have the Pats at the Fish. This is arguably as big a game as the first two. Both teams are 6-4, but the Dolphins are 2-1 in division play while the Patriots are 2-2. In their first meeting of the season, the Dolphins blew out the Patriots at Foxboro by 25 points; this game looks to be much different. If the Dolphins can manage to pull out a win, they will really have the inside track for a playoff berth and the Patriots will be hurting. The Pats won't be fooled by the Dolphins wildcat formation this time and will win easily.

Okay that brings up the last game on this week's review list. That would be the Colts visiting the Chargers. Now it's a good thing that I was able to pick the Patriots over the Dolphins, because much to Marcy's chagrin this game involves another one of those evil Manning brothers. And, boy is she going to hate this, it

looks to me like the Colts are going to turn the Bolts home into Peyton's Place. There just isn't much to say here except that the old Norval Turner, that we all know and love, is back in all his glory; and that, combined with a couple of big injuries have left the San Diego SuperChargers in a world of hurt. But other teams manage to pull together past key injuries (read Cassell and the Pats still putting up a show without Brady, Harrison and Thomas), but the Bolts have tanked. That's Norval folks. colts win this and keep their surge toward the playoffs on track (not Palin).

Epilogue: First off, the video today is from that L'il Old Band From Texas. It is a live version from 2003 of *Just Got Paid Today* from ZZ Top's ~~first~~ second (h/t Bell) album, Rio Grande Mud. The bearded boys can still crank. This video, *Francine*, is what I had in mind when I set out today, but this is a family blog (Great video but very brief, maybe 6-8 seconds of semi-nudity) so I let discretion be the better part of rock and roll valor.

☒ Secondly, a bittersweet farewell to a true all time great in sport. A woman who dominated her sport arguably like no other, the female Tiger Woods, has played her last match. Annika Sorenstam. Annika was maybe, for a four or five year period, the most dominant golfer on the planet; no less than Tiger Woods made that statement. Sorenstam is the only female golfer in history to have shot a sub-60 round in competition and finishes off with ten major titles and 72 LPGA victories for her career. She was the individual NCAA champion *as a freshman* at the University of Arizona. Her 90 international tournament wins as a professional make her the female golfer with the most in history. Best of all, she was one of the classiest people ever. Cheers Annika, best of luck and thanks for the memories.