

# 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 Rodgers 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, Cincinnati, 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.