

TRASH TALK: THERE WILL BE FOOTBALL

The big news of the morning may be the latest maneuvers of the Murdoch scandal.

But we've also got real sports news.

It looks like the assholes running American football will beat the assholes running America to crafting a deal. The key breakthrough came Friday with the settlement on a new rookie payment scheme that would basically limit how much teams have to pay their first round picks in their first five years.

The rookie wage system had been a key part of that complex work in recent weeks. Exact language of the rookie wage system is being worked out by both sides' lawyers, sources told Mortensen, but a management negotiator agreed that the rookie system was "done."

According to sources, the terms agreed to on the rookie wage system are, in part, as follows:

- Five-year contracts, with a team option for the fifth year.
- If the team option is exercised, in the fifth year the top 10 picks would receive a salary equal to the average of the top 10 player salaries at their respective positions. That money would be guaranteed if the option is exercised after the third year of the contract.
- If the team option is exercised, in the fifth year picks 11-32 would receive a salary equal to the average of the Nos. 3-25 salaries at their respective positions. That money would be guaranteed if the option is exercised after the third year of the contract.

It sort of feels a lot like concessions the UAW made in recent years to make sure older workers keep getting wages negotiated years ago, while screwing newer workers.

There are still a number of issues to be worked out: how to account for wages lost in the negotiating period, how to end the various legal challenges, what to do in the anticipated free-for-all free agency period immediately following a settlement, and some safety and workman's compensation issues. But these will probably be resolved by Wednesday, in time for the NFLPA to vote on it and then-football!!

This is all proof, I guess, that Eric Cantor is a bigger dick than even Jerry Jones.

Which brings us to the other football, the beautiful game. At 2ET, the US takes on Japan in the Women's World Cup championship game.

I, frankly, am unprepared to bet on who will win this. The Americans have been finding a way to win the key matches, most spectacularly with their victory on PKs last weekend. And Japan has never beaten the Americans. But Japan beat tournament favorite Germany and the exciting Swedish team by simply refusing to let them have the ball; it's hard to beat that kind of ball control. The Japanese passing game is wonderful to watch.

Frankly, I will be thrilled with either team winning this game, so long as it is as exciting as the matches that got these teams here. The US believe they are destined. But Japan has been playing as inspiration to their country in the aftermath of this year's earthquake and tsunami. A win for either one makes a great story.

The press is making this out to be a duel between US forward Abby Wambach—who has scored key goals in the last three games—and Japanese midfielder Homare Sawa—who is playing in her fifth world cup and, like Wambach, is the emotional leader of the team.

Just as much, it'll be a duel between US keeper

Hope Solo—whose stop in PKs last weekend made the difference in the win over Brazil, and Japan's keeper, Ayumi Kaihori. On paper, Solo is the much better keeper. But Kaihori has not made any mistakes in the elimination games and her confidence appears to be growing.

Me, I think it's going to come down to how well Lauren Cheney, Wambach, and Megan Rapinoe (who will probably come off the bench). Cheney's been key throughout this tournament; Rapinoe has had a key role off the bench in the last few games, including the assist on Wambach's header to tie the game against Brazil and put it into PKs. And of course Wambach seems to manage to find a way to win every time. If these women take enough clean shots on goal, they will win. But if Japan manages to dominate ball control as they have and limit those shots, they may well surprise the US.