

TRASH TALK: NCAA ON THE WAY TO SAVE THE DAY!

This joint needs some football, and the college kids are back to give it to us. We have already seen a couple of notable things. First, Wisconsin looked scary good, even though it was Podunk State (UNLV) they clobbered. No, the Runnin Rebs were not much of a substitute for the real power of the Big-10.2, schools like Michigan State, Iowa and Nebraska, but seeing the traditional Badger offensive juggernaut on the ground suddenly paired with a Cam Newton type of polished slick QB was something altogether new. They may have something good up there in Cheeseland. On a more local note, the ASU Sun Devils also tore apart a weaker foe from Nowheresville (UC-Davis), but again the thing to note is the QB position looks stabilized for once with Brock Orsweiller and the Devils may actually have some game this year.

Last night there was simply an awesome game, 14th ranked TCU at Baylor. TCU who went 13-0 last year and won the Rose Bowl, got beat in a barnburner by the Baylor Bears 50-48. And TCU had to score 25 points in the 4th quarter to get that close, but damn near pulled it out. Baylor had its own stud QB, Robert Griffin III and man was he lights out 21 for 28, 359 yards, 5 TDs and no picks. Oh, dude can run too.

So, the big game today everyone is waiting for is Western Michigan versus Big Blue in the Big House! Okay, not really. But, hey, you have to pay attention to these things lest the Wolverines nearly pull off an upset over a favored opponent like they almost did against Appalachian State. In other Big-10.2 news you can use, disgraced criminal Sweatervest has been picked up as a replay consultant for the Colts. I wonder if he will be getting a tattoo to commemorate the occasion?

Eh, back to real football...the kind played in the Pac-10.2 and SEC.X (X=most players in the SEC cannot count high enough to know how many teams there are in the conference). Clearly the Big kahuna today is the Quackers from Oregon and the Tigers of LSU in the Jerry Jones Palace. You know, when the Chinese overrun us and invade in the name of democracy, you think they will loot Cowboys Palace, er Stadium? This is a HUGE game for the first week, as the Ducks are ranked 3rd and the Tigers 4th. Despite how hinky early preseason rankings are, that sounds about right, they are both superb teams. LSU has a bit of a QB problem though, as projected starter Jordan Jefferson is suspended after being charged with felony burglary; Jarret Lee will fill in, but has some experience (presumably in football, not felony crimes, but in the SEC you never know). Oregon QB Darron Thomas also has issues, but is going to play after convincing officials he was asleep and sober in that pot filled car going 118mph. Oh, the driver of that car was cornerback Cliff Harris, who is suspended for this one game. The net balance, after taking into account the respective criminal dockets, should favor Oregon who, with Thomas and tailback LaMichael James, just have too much firepower.

The other giant tilt is Boise State at Georgia. The Broncos have deadly accurate and savvy QB Kellen Moore and are always well coached and prepared by Chris Peterson. They spread you out and light you up which, coupled with a smart ball hawking defense, makes them consistently good. The Dawgs have been up and down the last few years, but look to have a decent team this year, and are ranked in the top 20 preseason. Here is the thing, the Broncos will, and do, play anybody anywhere. Oh, and Kellen Moore is 38-2 in his first three years as a starter. That militates in favor of Boise State, despite some of the TV pundits picking the Dawgs to upset.

Couple of odds and ends. The Minnesota gophers at the USC Trojans might actually be a pretty interesting game. Tommy Trojan may be a sleeper

this year, even though still finishing out probation. In F1 news, the weaker sister team to the dominant Red Bull team, Toro Rosso, is getting a seriously major cash infusion from Abu Dhabi's Aabar Investments, through their cut-out, Swiss bank Falcon Investments. Along with factory expansion and enhancements, this should make Toro Rosso much more competitive. One problem, however, Toro Rosso still depends on engines purchased on contract from Ferrari, and Ferrari will never give them quite exactly the same grade of motor as they use on the factory cars. Oh, and in the baseball/legal world, REggie Walton has denied Roger Clemens' motion to dismiss based on double jeopardy, and ordered him to stand for a retrial. Predictable, but disappointing, even though Walton lashed into the prosecutors for misconduct pretty hard in court.

One final note. Next weekend is the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, which was the last points race in 1961 and where the Driver's Championship was decided and awarded. It was a momentous race on a great number of levels historically, including the crowning of the first American champion, Phil Hill, and the tragic death of his main competitor, and teammate, Wolfgang von Tripps. I am going to try to get together a special presentation for the occasion (but do have a busy week, so we will see). At any rate, the Italian at Monza is always incredible, so buckle up folks!