

NCAA CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP WEEKEND TRASH TALK

In the Pros and Joes discussion, this weekend features the Joes. It is the conference championship weekend, and the final action before the Final Football Four are selected. So, let's start there.

Utah was well on its way to a potential Championship final four appearance for the Pac-12. Nope. The Oregon Quackers made the Utes Duck. Bigly. Oregon undoubtedly goes to the Rose Bowl, and who knows about Utah. Their extremely good defense was shredded by the Ducks. Ouch. There are five more critical games on the schedule today, and Cincinnati and Memphis for the AAC is the lesser of them, though it may well be a fantastic game. It is in Memphis at Liberty Bowl stadium, so I will roll with the Tigers at their home.

With the Utah fail, that means Baylor versus Oklahoma (shoutout to our departed friend Freepatriot, who loved the Sooners), may well mean a final four berth. It is a neutral site. Something smells of a Baylor upset, but the Sooners are now coached by Line Riley as opposed to Bob Stoops, so I don't think so. Sooners. The BIG Championship is played in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. Would be a fantastic story if Wisconsin could beat the Bucks, but that is a bad bet. Virginia may get Cavalier and upset Trevor Lawrence and Clemson, but it would be shocking. Clemson and Lawrence started a little slow this year, but are undefeated and are averaging 50 points a game since mid-October.

That leaves the big one, i.e. the SEC championship, played in HotLanta. Georgia, the current number 4, versus the Tigers of LSU, the current number 2. Without much question the most anticipated game of the day. Frankly, it is hard to see how Ohio State ever jumped above LSU, in

fact by the record as of now, it is a joke. LSU has the likely Heisman winner, Joe Burrow, at QB, and he has been lighting people up. Georgia is really good. The defenses are both great, but the offenses, and specifically the QB's will likely determine this. Burrow just looks a lot better than Jake Fromm, I'll take the Bayou Tigers.

So that leaves the Pros. Da Bears already beat the Cowboys, which likely makes Scribe smile wildly. Dallas just does not look good, and Garrett has to be gone at the end of the season. Baltimore is at Buffalo, and the Ravens seem a good bet. But every time people write the Wagon Circlers off this year, they surprise. I'll take Jackson and the Ravens, but don't sleep on the Buffalo defense, they might contain him. Would not be surprised if the Broncos upset the Texans in Houston, but that is also not a good bet. The Steelers are here at the Cardinals. The Cards are improving, but still not that good. Duck Duck should go go against them, even in the Bird's Nest. The Rams are resurgent, and are hosting the Squawks, and that could be a great game.

There are two truly great games. The first is the Chefs of KC visiting Foxborough to see Bill Bel and the boys. Frankly, the Pats offense has looked old and bad lately, and are putting so much pressure on their excellent defense that the D is starting to falter. My bet is that Pat Mahomes engineers more points than Brady, and that is that. The second is Niners at Saints. Both teams are 10-2, and this game is almost certainly for home field in the NFC. Wow, this should be a game! Stars everywhere. Jimmy G is not up to Drew Brees' level yet, but he has established himself as a frontline QB in the NFL, and his tight end, George Kittle is the new Gronk. On offense, the nod has to go to Brees with Michael Thomas and Alvin Kamara. The SF defense, with rookie stud Nick Bosa and veteran Arik Armstead up front, is really good though. The Saints are hosting in the Superdome, and for that reason only, they get the call. Who dat?

Our colleague Peter has suggested this article on ESPN be discussed. It involves traumatic brain injury, more commonly known as CTE, but this time in hockey players.

A Minnesota judge on Wednesday ordered that a former member of the "Miracle on Ice" U.S. Olympic team should be committed to a secure treatment facility, saying the hockey star is mentally ill and dangerous.

Mark Pavelich, 61, of Lutsen, was charged with felony assault in August for allegedly beating a friend with a metal pole, breaking several bones.

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According to Cuzzo's order, one psychologist found Pavelich had delusions and paranoia, including a delusion that those closest to him were trying to poison him. Another psychologist found he suffered from a mild neurocognitive disorder due to traumatic brain injury, likely related to repeated head injuries.

Pavelich's family members have said they believe he suffers from CTE, or chronic traumatic encephalopathy, after repeated concussions from his time in the NHL. They said they started seeing changes in him a few years ago and he has refused help.

As sad as this is, it is really important. It is also something that is starting to be covered. One of the ones who has been on this story from the start is Sheila Dingus, who runs a great spot known as Advocacy For Fairness In Sports. Here is some of her writings on the NHL concussion litigation.

Music today by Pink Floyd. Enjoy the weekend folks.