

THE BLACK HOLE

The only college game that counts today is Army/Navy. It is an age old tradition, and for good reason. Also, it annually takes place in the land of cheesesteaks, so that is fun too. Kind of hilariously, CNN is hyping it as hard, if not more, than CBS who is actually carrying the game. Today is the 120th matchup.

It is an interesting year. Last year, Navy had a horrible year, and Army finished 11-2 with their third straight win over Navy. 2019 was an about face though, as Navy comes into today at 9-2 while Army has struggled to a 5-7 record. Of course in a rivalry game like this, none of that matters, they play for pride. Navy is the clear favorite, and looks good to me. GO NAVY! I'd talk about the Heisman announcement, but if Joe Burrow is not the unanimous choice, it will be a travesty.

Sunday, however, will bring down the curtain on a different tradition. The Black Hole. Long before the Patriots of Bob Kraft and Bill Bel became the most hated and arrogant team in the NFL, there was the Just Win Baby Oakland Raiders. It would be fitting if the Pats were in Oakland tomorrow to close out the joint, instead it will be the mustached Minshew and the Jags. It is sad. And, I don't care how shiny the new and expensive Las Vegas football venue is, it will never feel right.

The Raiders are Oakland, and were even when temporarily in LA. There is not enough space here to tell all the stories of Al Davis and the Raiders. But he had fantastic glasses, always, and huge balls. Davis not only took the NFL head on when they were still thought invincible, he had the guts to appoint the first woman to be an NFL CEO, Amy Trask, who served in that position from 1997 to 2013 after, literally, starting as an intern with the team. There is simply still no analog to that courage, short of Greg Popovich making Becky Hammon a key assistant coach on the Spurs.

So, here we are at the death knell of the Black Hole. This Dana Jacobson piece, with Trask, almost perfectly encapsulates the Black Hole. The denizens there are fucking nuts, and have been beautifully so. There will be a beautiful shiny new stadium in Las Vegas. A lot of the fans will still show up there. But it will never have the pure grit of Al Davis and Oakland. That will be gone forever by tomorrow night. Vaya con dios Raiders of Oakland and The Black Hole.

The rest of the NFL schedule seems rather vanilla for one of the last weeks of the regular season. Bears at the Frozen Tundra to visit the Cheeser's is interesting, as it always is. The Bills in Pittsburgh should be as well. Arguably the best game is Houston at Tennessee. Both the Texans and Titans are 8-5, but the Titans are on a serious roll with Ryan Tannehill as QB. Never saw that coming at the start of the season, and I will take the Titans at home on this one.

Raiders music by Metallica. Because that is perfect. Soak up the last rumble in the Black Hole.