

TRASH TALK: THE TRASHIEST TALK EVER TRASHED

[NB: check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

I'm braced for the crabbing sure to come with this post: "But this is Trash Talk, it's supposed to be about *sports!*"

Uh, it's TRASH talk, which is talk about trash. Not all trash is exclusively about sports.

There are also more sports than those contained on a field or played with a ball, for that matter. Like the sport of celebrity watching – just ask Golf Magazine.

This week's Trashiest Trash Talk covers the intersection between sports trash and celebrity trash – when popular performer in Entertainment Industry A meets popular performer in Entertainment Industry B and begins dating.

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Travis Kelce, tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, has something going on with mega pop star Taylor Swift.

In case you have not been on the planet the past few weeks, here's what's been happening: Kelce, who plays for the Kansas City Chiefs, confessed awhile back to his brother Jason Kelce, who plays for the Philadelphia Eagles, that he had unsuccessfully tried to slide his digits to Swift via a friendship bracelet at the Kansas City stop of her "Eras" concert tour.

People became invested. Travis Kelce later said he "threw the ball in her court" and told Swift, "I've seen you rock the stage in Arrowhead. You might have to come see me rock the stage in Arrowhead and see which one's a little

more lit.”

Plot twist: Swift showed up at his game last Sunday and sat in a suite next to his mom. Swift and Kelce – now known as “Tayvis,” “Traylor,” “Swelce” or “K. Swift,” depending upon who you ask – even left the game via Kelce’s convertible. Photos have since surfaced of the two of them together looking quite chummy.

It’s not an unbelievable pairing. Both Kelce and Swift are 33 years old, Kelce being only a couple months older than Swift. They’re from neighboring Rust Belt states; Kelce is from Westlake, OH and Swift was from West Reading, PA. They both have established careers and aren’t hurting for money or attention though Swift’s income is far greater by a dizzying magnitude.

Unsurprisingly, the internet has gone bonkers about this couple. Kelce already had a good size fanbase because of his achievements on the field (“one of the greatest tight ends in NFL history (top five, to be exact). He’s also won two Super Bowls, has 825 receptions for 10,000+ yards, and 71 career touchdowns”) and appearances off the field (star of E! Entertainment’s Catching Kelce reality TV dating show as well as advertising appearances).

And then there are Swift’s Swifties – a legendary massive fandom who’ve followed her work as far back as 2004.

Will any of the buzz around this pair do anything for NFL football? Many football fans may find all the hoopla a distraction from the sport. But it’s possible a new audience and a new generation of football fans may emerge from this pop culture convergence.

There are already multiple articles with explainers about football aimed at Swifties.

Imagine what Swifties could do to ticket and

merch sales this season given the size of Swift's audiences like the one in Kansas City which set the "Tayvis" buzz in motion. Kelce himself could earn another \$5-\$10 million this year; his merchandise sales exploded by 400% last weekend thanks to the "Taylor Swift effect."

Given Taylor's has already met and been hanging with Kelce's mom at the game last weekend, this is going to be this season's personality angle to watch.

There's just one problem – a rather ugly downside. If this couple doesn't last, you can expect a crash spread across entertainment media and yet another mega hit record complete with breakup song about a tight end.

Swift is expected at MetLife Stadium tomorrow night to watch Kelce and the Kansas City Chiefs against the New York Jets. Kickoff is at 8:20 p.m. ET.

The NFL has already been capitalizing on this in its promotions, of course. Can hardly wait for the breakup song swatting that kind of opportunism.

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Speaking of Taylor Swift, the pop star deployed her own "Taylor Swift effect" for the benefit of democracy this week:

"...Just days after Swift urged Swifties to register to vote on National Voter Registration Day in an Instagram Story, shocker, they listened and signed up to do their civic duty in record numbers.

On Wednesday (Sept. 20), Vote.org's communications director, Nick Morrow, wrote on X (fka Twitter) that Swift's plea resulted in a tidal wave of new registrations. "Fun fact: after @taylorswift13 posted on Instagram today directing her followers to register to vote on @votedotorg, our site was

averaging 13,000 users every 30 minutes. 13!" he revealed, noting the cosmic coincidence of the bump coalescing with the singer's favorite number. ..."

More of this kind of opportunism, please and thanks!

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In other sports news –

- The 44th Ryder Cup's Day 2 just wrapped. As a family member concisely put it after yesterday's golf matches wrapped up, "Team USA got waxed!" Team Europe led the US as they teed off this morning at Marco Simone Golf and Country Club near Rome, Italy; they hung onto their lead through the end of play today. It's not looking good for Team US this year.
- Green Bay Packers sent a message to their ticketholders encouraging them to resell their tickets to Packers' fans after this Thursday night's game when the Detroit Lions won 34–20, propelling a sea of blue jersey-wearing Lions fans onto Lambeau Field. Apparently the sight got Packers' dander up more than the Lions' holding the Pack to a mere total 27 yards rushing.
- As anticipated, MSU Spartan's head coach Mel Tucker was fired this week for his "inappropriate and unprofessional conduct" relating to interaction with a sex abuse prevention activist. Tucker has indicated he'll sue MSU for wrongful termination.

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Bring your trash here; consider this an open thread.