

Walsh, Gregg have different ideas on game

DEARBORN, Mich. — Super Bowl week has been so exciting the highlight so far was when San Francisco Coach Bill Walsh dressed up as a bellboy.

Even his players didn't notice. With Super Bowl XVI only three days away, both the Cincinnati Bengals and the 49ers are keeping low profiles. Anything that can be tacked on a locker room blackboard to motivate the other team is avoided, and the operative word is "normal."

Walsh, speaking before the team's Silverdome workout Wednesday, insisted that preparations for Sunday's epic are business as usual.

"I have to apologize to you, but I don't have the attitude that this is a Cecil B. DeMille production," Walsh said. "It's not that much of a spectacle. I'm sorry, but I don't put near the impact on the Super Bowl buildup as the public does."

San Francisco quarterback Joe Montana said: "This isn't a big deal, at least thus far, and I think Coach Walsh has made sure that things remain on a normal schedule. He has done a great job in keeping everyone loose. Things are organized and on schedule."

Cincinnati Coach Forrest Gregg, trying to shed his image, put on his Rodney Dangerfield impression Wednesday and got little respect from newsmen.

"There are more writers, photographers and TV people here than I thought there were in the whole world," Gregg said, "and I know our players are looking forward to talking with you."

The last remark was Gregg's obvious attempt to get away from his reputation for sheltering players from the media. He said Monday that his team would meet its scheduled media obligations but would do nothing more than cooperate with the throng of news people covering the first northern Super Bowl.

He also knew the Bengals had been told horror tales about his disciplinary ways before he arrived Dec. 28, 1979.

"The basis of my coaching philosophy is discipline, having a well-conditioned team and total preparation from the standpoint of both the coaches and the players."

Walsh acknowledges that the Bengals, 1 1/2-point underdogs, will enjoy a size and strength advantage Sunday, but the NFC Coach of the Year isn't sure power is a key factor anymore under pro football's new dynamics.

"I think the present rules make for a dramatically different game than we had a few years ago, especially the passing game," Walsh said. "Receivers have more access downfield and size is not as important as movement. If we have an advantage it will be quickness, certainly not size. They have some massive players."

Ditka says he's home at last as Chicago coach

CHICAGO — Mike Ditka is finally where he feels he belongs — as head coach of the Chicago Bears.

"I believe everyone has a destiny in life and I believe the Chicago Bears (job) is mine," said Ditka. "It may sound corny, but maybe that's what the Good Lord meant for me."

The long-anticipated reconciliation between Ditka and Bears' owner George Halas, who traded the All-Pro tight end to Philadelphia when the two had a falling out in the late 1960s, was made official Wednesday.

Like Ditka, Halas saw Ditka's return as something just short of inevitable.

"He did sort of loom up" in the pool of possible replacements for the fired Neil Armstrong, Halas said.

Halas also said the hiring of Ditka, an offensive assistant coach for the Dallas Cowboys for the past nine years, completes his "game plan" for the rejuvenation of the Bears, who finished a dismal 6-10 last year.

But while the crusty 86-year-old owner may think things have settled down, everyone else seems to be left with a lot of unanswered questions which Halas won't answer.

The role General Manager Jim Finks will play in the operation of the club is still a mystery. Finks was absent from the Ditka press conference, just as he appears to have been absent from most of the decision-making in the Bears' front office since the end of the season.

But Halas continued to assert that Finks was happy with his largely undefined role, and did shed at least a glimmer of light on how Finks will spend his days.

"Jim Finks will be in charge of gathering all the information on the draft and submitting it to me and Mike," he said. "It's not a one-man operation."

Though Halas has settled the fate of half the coaching staff — announcing he'd retain defensive coordinator Buddy Ryan and his assistants long before he hired Ditka — the future of offensive coordinator Ted Marchibroda and his assistants is still up in the air.

"If their philosophy runs parallel to mine," Ditka said, "there's a good chance we'll keep some of them." Ditka, who was traded to the Eagles in 1967 because of personal differences with Halas, promised to be more successful than the four coaches who have attempted to follow in "Papa Bear's" footsteps since then.

"The other coaches who succeeded Coach Halas didn't come from an organization like the Cowboys," he said. "I've seen what it takes to win. Now, the problem is to convey it."

Jackson still deciding; may sign with California

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Reggie Jackson's agent met Wednesday with California Angels' Executive Vice President Buzzie Bavasi, but said he still was talking to other teams and did not anticipate the free-agent slugger to sign for a couple of days.

In a statement released by his secretary, Jackson's agent Gary Walker said, "I have had two more definitive conversations with Ted Turner (of the Atlanta Braves) and Hank Peters (of the Baltimore Orioles). I talked to George Steinbrenner (New York Yankees' owner) Tuesday for 10 or 15 minutes. We agreed that I would get back with him as soon as we have completely defined the other offers, which will be done in the next day or two."

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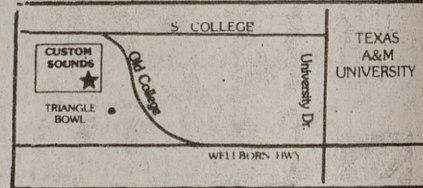
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