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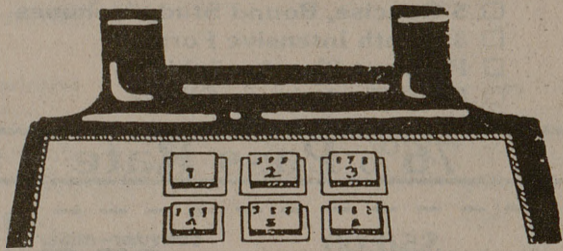
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Sports

Super Bowl XXI diminished in quality due to pro football's lack of integrity

By Hal L. Hammons
Sports Writer

Well, the time is upon us. That spectacular of spectaculars known throughout the civilized world and North Dakota as Super Bowl Sunday draws nigh. The culmination of 25 weeks of speculation, anxiety and armchair quarterbacking is coming to a head.

Viewpoint

Be still my beating heart. Where is some World Cup action when you need it?

The New York Giants vs. the Denver Broncos? Forgive my anti-American attitude, but I could care less.

Don't get me wrong. I am the biggest of football fans. I eagerly await each season, preparing for the advent of a new season in late July, going into a state of mourning around mid-January.

But this year was the final straw in a long-standing feud I have been carrying out with "professional" football.

I have wearied of renegotiations of multi-year contracts that most individuals not named David McWilliams would feel bound to fulfill.

I am bored with prima donnas who don't feel it is necessary to demean themselves by being under the authority of their employers.

I am tired of Pete Rozelle trying to find a court that will tell Al Davis that Davis can't move his team to Los Angeles if he wants.

I am nauseated by Indianapolis Colts owner Bob Irsay, who spirited his team out of Baltimore, thus making an excellent argument that George Steinbrenner has an equal.

I am disgusted with "fans" whose strength of loyalty is directly proportional to their team's won-loss record.

And don't even talk to me about the USeless Football League — if there still is one.

The National Football League's problems have outgrown the National Football League. And in trying to alleviate the problems, they have created more.

Classic case of above: I remember not long ago when the biggest gripe against pro football was the length of the games. Now those with power have decided they can help out officials by using instant replays on some close calls.

The results? About 400 calls reviewed in 224 games, fewer than 10 percent actually overruled, three-to-five-minute delays becoming commonplace, crucial calls missed, and a herd of zebras afraid to make close rulings for fear of being called wrong in front of millions.

I said it before the season started, and I will say it again: give officials another control over the game and they will find another way to mess it up.

Remember when the NFL decided quarterbacks did not deserve to get tackled like normal players? Enter the infamous "in-the-grasp"



rule. If a quarterback is ruled to be in the grasp of a defender, the play is stopped and a sack is recorded.

Honestly, when was the last time you saw a defensiveman have a real hold on a quarterback, one that would not be escaped, and the quarterback did not get a face full of grass anyway?

Whoops. Artificial turf. Which brings up more problems. Those on high have decided that grass is too much trouble to take care of. And that if domed stadiums come into vogue, fans won't have to sit through rain and snow.

The modification on the drawing board is a radio link between quarterbacks and wide receivers so they can hear each other even when "The Wave" roars about them in hostile surroundings.

The game has become such a spectacle that fans no longer cheer

for teams at all — they cheer for characters. Why do you think McMahon has sold so many shirts?

The game has become so unal that, for entertainment, fans resort to watching Ham stank a cooler of Gatoraid next to empty its contents into the head of his coach to celebrate other Giants victory. An empty head in anticipation of when he will pull off the dirty deed on Sunday.

It took the Chicago Bears to inject fun into the game, overweight defensive linemen disguised as a running back for a kitchen appliance, "Bunch" and "The Smurf" good effort a few years ago, and, too.

But funny nicknames and characters is not the way to interest back into the game. It happens when fans become ant upon them and the runs bare.

Witness the playoffs of 1986: who was left? The unplugged, the "Skins were the Broncos were, and are. People across the country hadly rooted for the Browns, of all teams, simply there was nobody else worth for. And now even they are. All that's left is Carson Cooler against some team jerseys. Well, root for the fun is of the essence. I think homework.

Ags don't want to be surprised in meeting with last-place Owls

By Hal L. Hammons
Sports Writer

Coming off a big win over Houston in G. Rollie White Coliseum Monday night, Texas A&M faces a somewhat smaller obstacle tonight at Autry Court in Houston against Rice.

Rice is 6-10 this year and occupies the conference basement. The Owls are winless in five conference games.

Texas A&M Head Coach Shelby Metcalf is not taking them lightly, though.

"We had just better be ready to play," he said. "If we play hard, we are pretty good. But if we are not, we are in trouble."

Metcalf said the main chore tonight will be keeping Owl high scorer Greg Hines in check. He said Keron Graves would start the game against him, with John Trezvant guarding him some as well.

Hines is coming off a 26-point effort in Rice's 80-64 loss to Baylor Sunday.

Aggie center Mike Clifford said the team's defensive plan throughout the season has been to focus most of its attention on the opponents' high scorer, and that would not change with Rice and Hines.

Clifford said the Aggies could not afford to look past Rice, since the

conference race is underway and each game is important.

"We are not going to take them lightly," he said.

He did say, however, they were hoping to give some extra playing time to some of the substitutes that have not played much. He said the team had played a lot of basketball over the past few days and was hoping tonight's load could be spread out between several people.

"After the Houston game," Clifford said, "we realize we are that much closer to first place."

The Aggies are only one game behind conference-leading TCU at 4-1 in conference and 12-4 overall.

Combined salaries of New York LB Taylor, Denver QB Elway stand at \$1.75 million

DALLAS (AP) — The highest-paid players with the New York Giants and the Denver Broncos — the foes in Sunday's Super Bowl — have combined salaries of \$1.75 million, according to NFL Players Association records.

Broncos quarterback John Elway made \$900,000, placing him at the top of his team's pay chart, according to figures obtained by the Dallas Morning News.

Giants linebacker Lawrence Taylor's \$850,000 salary for 1986 makes him the highest-paid NFL defensive

player as well as the top earner on his team, the newspaper said.

The No. 2 salary for the Broncos goes to wide receiver Steve Watson, who had total compensation of \$600,000 in 1986, including a salary of \$500,000 and a \$100,000 reporting bonus.

The second-highest-paid member of the Giants is quarterback Phil Simms, who earned \$650,000.

Each of the 45 Broncos on the active roster for the Super Bowl made an average of \$232,400 in salary and bonuses. Each of the Giants made an

average of \$213,777.

Each player on the winning team will get playoff compensation of \$64,000, or \$21,333 for each of three playoff victories. Members of the losing team each will receive a total of \$46,000.

But any player with a base salary over \$341,328 made more per game during the regular season than he will make per game for participating in the three playoff games.

Seven Broncos and five Giants fall into that category, according to the players association figures.

Turbiville will retire as A&M Sports Director

Texas A&M Sports Information Director Tom Turbiville announced Tuesday that he will retire from his post as sports information director and be found in a placement.

Turbiville worked for A&M Sports Information Department for almost three years and said he plans to enter private business in Bryan Station.

"I felt it was the best time and my family to change right now," Turbiville said.

He said he believes the A&M athletic program — the football program — come very successful.

"Maybe, I'll be able to do that (success) as a fan on a hired hand," Turbiville said.

He said the question in sports journalism, especially the larger media centers, is a part in his decision.

"There's still some sportswriters out there," Turbiville said. "But I feel those are becoming outnumbered."

Turbiville said he will be on the job until A&M Sports Information Director Jackie Sherrill can take a vacancy and a smooth period can be ensured.

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