



# NFL adds wildcard teams

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL decided on Thursday to add two more wild-card teams to its playoffs, a move designed to bring in more television money and streamline the somewhat Byzantine tiebreaking system.

The dramatic change in the playoff system, to begin next season, was announced at the same time the NFL reached agreement with ABC on a new contract that will net it close to \$1 billion over four years. It will mean that 12 of the 28 teams will now make it to the post-season.

Network sources said the two new playoff teams were added as part of the ABC package after the network demanded something extra in addition to Monday night games and one Super Bowl for the price, estimated at slightly over \$900 million.

The NFL already has reached agreement on cable contracts with ESPN at TBS for \$450 million each, meaning it already has nearly \$2 billion worth of contracts while negotiations with NBC and CBS continue.

"Additional television revenue was an obvious factor," NFL spokesman Joe Browne said.

"But many clubs had also expressed interest in adding teams. Some suggested we break all ties with games on wild-card weekend. This accomplishes the goal of adding new teams without diminishing the importance of regular-season play."

And commissioner Paul Tagliabue said of the new format:

"We expect the two new first-round playoff games to create added competition and excitement around the league."

The move comes a week after another groundbreaking revenue-producing step, the expansion of the season to 17 weeks in 1990 and 18 weeks after that.

Under that change, each team will get one week off next year and two weeks off in the following years with the extra week between the championship games and Super Bowl eliminated for 1990.

But while each team will continue to play 16 regular-season games, the networks will get additional weeks of NFL football, meaning more advertising revenue for television and more money for the NFL.

The new agreement with ABC nearly doubles the network's payments — from \$120 million a year under the old agreement to \$225 million under the new one. It also nearly ensures that the basic over-the-air format will remain the same — with CBS and NBC carrying Sunday games.

"This expanded agreement with ABC sports indicates our satisfaction with their award winning presentation to viewers for two decades," Tagliabue said.

## Ag swim team qualifies Lutz in 200 IM

The Texas A&M men's swimming team qualified its first person for the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships Thursday at the SWC tourney in Austin.

Freshman Steve Lutz recorded a school record 1:48.64 in the 200 Individual Medley. He beat the existing record by more than two seconds, and beat the NCAA qualifying time by more than a second.

A&M is in fourth place after the first day of competition.

## Love Raffle

(Continued from page 9)

people to come out to the game.

"I was sitting at breakfast one morning when he came up to me and said, 'Hey Joe, what about if we have a 'Win a Date with Joe Deegan Raffle?'"

Deegan just stared at his coach, wondering if Thornton was under too much strain.

"What are you talking about coach?" Deegan asked.

Thornton then relayed his wife's idea, and Deegan fell in love with the idea.

That is until things got rolling. Fliers were distributed around campus, and the contest was announced at A&M home games.

"I said 'sure', but I didn't expect all the fliers and stuff," Deegan said.

Still, Deegan was willing to do his part for the team and he also realized with the amount of playing time he was getting, it was the only way he was going to get a little publicity.

"This is going to be a blind, blind date," Deegan said. "The way I look at it, my playing time's been a little limited, but if I can't get any, I might as well get a little publicity."

Fliers litter the campus and newspapers carry the story of the sophomore guard who is being raffled off to love-hungry women. Joe's got the publicity he asked for. The question is, can he handle it?

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