



PEOPLE DON'T WANT 'SAFE FOOTBALL'

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Just about 10-years ago when I was doing a national sports radio show, I told my audience that the National Football League was on a path to ruination. Many people who were listening to my show back then chuckled and told me I was simply being a contrarian.

I said that the NFL was headed for big-time trouble. People smiled and told me to hold the hyperbole for another day.

I stated that it was my belief that the NFL had lost its meaning, lost its soul, and lost the very idea of what made the NFL the greatest sports league in the history of modern times.

I said that the NFL (and this was TEN YEARS AGO) was fast becoming a game that was becoming an unrecognizable entity, a game that was changing and morphing into an arena league product played on 100-yard outdoor playing fields. That balance was missing in the game, that defensive football was being castrated in the name of more offense, more and more points, and that the on-field product that was becoming a shell of its former self.

Fast forward to today and tell me where we're at?

The NFL is an unmitigated disaster, a mess of titanic proportions, with a product on the field that looks nothing like the game I fell in love with so many years ago, in short, the game of football has become a pathetic spectacle.

To date, through the first seven weeks of play, the league has broken offensive records in regard to points scored and touchdowns. Thus far through this 2018 season, the NFL has seen a total of 577 touchdowns and a total of 372 passing touchdowns. These are video game numbers and that is exactly what the game has become. Consider the 2018 NFL season to be Madden Football come to life on NFL playing fields throughout the country.

Ten years ago I said that the continuing changes to the rules of the game was making the NFL product something very foreign, much less satisfying — and that I felt as though I was watching imitation football being played most every Sunday in far too many of the games. How prescient I turned out to be, eh?

The constant 'fear factor' that the NFL has capitulated to over the years has rendered the game impotent in so many ways. The overcorrection in lieu of the very physicality of the game has resulted in an embarrassing form of football that is as far away from the fundamental ways the game was always intended to be played that words alone truly cannot capture how bad it has become.

Let me state again what I stated all those years ago, or, just about the time Roger Goodell walked into the commissioner's chair:

1-You cannot make the game of football 'safer.'

2-People don't want 'safe' football.

At this point, with as many revisions as the league has made and with as many things that have been taken away from the sport so far as the defensive side of the ball is concerned, they may as well junk the entire league and liquidate all of the franchises because the game is now a hollow representation of what it once was and will never be again.

Real football fans understand that the game is physical, that players will get hurt on occasion, that players have always gotten hurt throughout the history of the game, and that all of this is a by-product of playing the game the way the game was meant to be played.

With the complete and total emasculation of defensive football the game has become a joke, unwatchable all too often, and the disgust level across the country is rising, not only with fans of the sport but with players as well, guys who are now voicing legitimate concerns that the game they themselves once knew is no longer a game they are allowed to play any longer.

Quarterbacks, as far as I'm concerned, should not be allowed any more protections on the field than any other player regardless of their position. Quarterbacks have always gotten hurt and injured throughout the history of the game, and nothing should change in this regard, its why they have something on NFL rosters known as backup quarterbacks.

This season we have been introduced to, of all things, 'weight distribution' on quarterbacks when being sacked or hit by defensive players. Not only is this something that can and has been interrupted differently by various officials, but its also something that takes away from the very instincts of defensive players seeking to make a play that helps their teams to win football games. What was once admired as a great play is now called a penalty and it is costing teams games.

Let's get one thing straight, and this will alienate the do-gooders and the snowflakes who have bought into the propaganda that has made the rounds for a while now, real NFL fans want physical football, they thirst and crave it, they want slobber-knocking hits on the field – and there is nothing wrong with any of this! Let me ask you something, with all of the new rules that have been implemented with the primary objective being to make the game safer, are players still being concussed, are players still be injured, are players still being placed on injured reserve lists? Last season, with new rules in place, concussions actually increased from the year before!

This season has also seen this ridiculous lowering of the head rule, where the emphasis is to take the head out of the game, and you don't even need to be a scientist to acknowledge and understand that this is an impossibility. Helmets are continuing to touch against each other on almost every single play for crying out loud, and the subjectivity of this new rule (like most every new rule introduced) is completely based on what officials are calling what games and what they happened to see, or, what they think they saw.

You can pull on my heartstrings all you want to and tell me about such and such player needing to retire because of the effects of football on their bodies — I get all of that. What I also get is that those players are in the extreme minority, including players who have suffered such debilitating effects from playing the game that it has altered their quality of life after they remove their shoulder pads and helmets for the final time. What is not in the minority are players who have had appreciable careers in the NFL who have gone on to live completely healthy and productive lives after their careers have ended. In these cases, those players are the majority.

Football will always come with inherent risks and dangers, its been that way since they started to play the sport, and nothing will change in that regard no matter how many rule changes they

make and no matter how much more they continue to destroy a defensive players ability to play the game in a way that allows that player to help his team win. However, with the rule changes they have made, and with more yet to arrive, what they have managed to do is to pare the game down and make it something very different from what it was intended to be.

It is amazing to me, in fact, it is stunning to consider, that with the way the game has been shaken down over the last few years by players seeking cash payouts for one reason or another, that the league has not mandated that each and every player who enters the league must sign a waiver holding the league and its owners harmless in the way of future lawsuits. In fact, if this is not done sometime soon, what is to prevent the NFL from being sued time and again for however long the league continues to remain in business?

The entire 1985 Chicago Bears defense would be outlawed in today's NFL climate, Mean Joe Greene would be suspended for half the season, Ronnie Lott would be completely ineffective in todays game, and virtually every great defensive player with a bust in Canton, Ohio, would be told that their style of play was too neanderthal for today's watered down NFL.

I make no apologies. Today's NFL is a wretched display of 'football lite', and it continues to get worse with each passing week. I want my football played hard, with big hits, with the elimination of this ridiculous 'defenseless player' garbage that we hear about so often. By the way, what is that exactly, can someone define for me what in the hell a defenseless player even is?

We don't want this NFL, Mr. Goodell, we reject this NFL, and we'd like our football back, the game you took away from us, the game that used to provide so many great moments, so much fun, so many glorious battles on the field that once made the NFL must-see stuff.

This thing you give us today? It's unrecognizable...just as I said it would be about ten years ago.