

The NFL on REO: Are We There Yet?

My Final Preseason Thoughts

I wrote about preseason football last week – you can find those remarks right [here](#). I feel I should add a few more thoughts about it before we move on to more important matters.

Let's deal with the problems first:

Problem: Preseason football is not very fun to watch. Outside of the diehard fans, not many people can sit through an entire preseason game. The starters play one or two series and then the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th string guys get on the field and attempt to make their case for getting on the team. By their very nature, the preseason games are going to be less interesting because they do not count for anything. There is no real drama. Plus, the guys at the bottom of the roster aren't as good, which is why they are at the bottom, and the quality of football suffers.

Problem: There are some that believe that less preseason games will mean worse football. I disagree. Preseason football is not necessary. I concede, this might lean towards opinion, but if college and high school teams can get by without preseason games, then I am confident the NFL could as well.

Problem: Preseason football is in place to help the players get back into football shape. This one is dumb and we need to take it out of the conversation. Back in the 20's and 30's, the players had other jobs during the offseason. They did not train year-round. A lengthy preseason schedule helped them get acclimated to the rigors of the professional football schedule. This is no longer the case.

Problem: Preseason football is a rip-off for the fans. Season

ticket holders are required to pay full price for two home games in the preseason. That is reprehensible and borderline highway robbery. The owners should be ashamed of forcing their loyal fans to pay full ticket price for something that is less-than real football. This is absolutely a problem and needs to be fixed.

Preseason football is not going away. At least, not completely. I do think, given enough time and pressure, the NFL will cave and reduce the number of games on the schedule. That is the optimist in me talking though. Even so, they will never give up that easy revenue completely.

Solution: I believe most of these problems can be corrected easily and the solutions all work hand-in-hand. Since we all know that the preseason will never go away completely, how do we fix it? Well, my solution to all the problems listed above is pretty simple:

- Cut the preseason down to two games – one home and one away.
- The owners could continue to charge full price for the preseason games.
- Each team would be required to schedule a week of practice with two other NFL teams – one at home and one away.
- These practices would include an end of the week scrimmage that would be played at the venue of their choice. The home team could play the scrimmage in their home stadium, or perhaps choose an alternate venue such as a high school stadium.
- At least half of the joint practices would be open to the public – free of charge.
- The scrimmage would not be free – but the entrance fee would be substantially less than a regular season game.

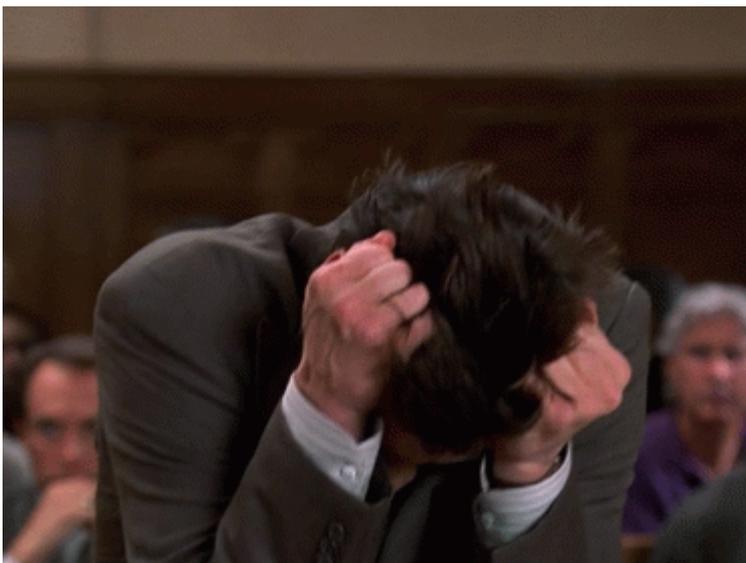
I attended a practice at Nissan Stadium, home of the Tennessee Titans, with my boys a few weeks ago. It was free. There was

an extended autograph season before the practice time where the players lined the field and fans were able to go down to the rails and interact with them. It was a very fun environment and one that can be recreated with the above suggestions. But the bonus would be the fans getting the chance to see one visiting team every offseason. Put the fans as close to the players and the game as you can and you will connect a fan base to its team. My suggestions would still allow teams ample time to prepare for the season. It would still provide additional revenue to the owners – but they would have to take a small loss initially. And it would add excitement to an otherwise stale preseason system.

The absurdity of the Colin Kaepernick conversation

Every time I hear or read a new opinion on the Colin Kaepernick debate, I look a lot like this:





We have now scraped the bottom of the barrel with the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP calling for a boycott of the NFL unless a team signs Colin. And the NAACP is not alone in this insanity. I have seen at least one prominent sports' writer call on the NFL to intervene and force someone to sign him, and I've heard national sports radio shows do the same.

Have we all lost our minds?

In no universe should any team ever be forced to sign a player. Before you get angry and try to present the alternate perspective, let me save you some time.

"The NFL owners are racist and will not sign Kaepernick because he's black!"

That is essentially what the NAACP is saying. Their entire

reason to exist is to fight for equality for people of color. They wouldn't be in this fight if they believed that Kaepernick's race had nothing to do with his lack of a job. This is an assertion so dumb, so ignorant, and so devoid of logic that I was hesitant to even address it. NFL owners have ZERO problem signing black players. Over 70% of the NFL is black. The NFL owners, the coaches, and front office people that run each team want what is best for their team. They will choose talent over just about any other metric, including off the field issues, but they will not choose talent if they believe it will damage goodwill from the fans. It is obvious that most NFL owners believe Kaepernick is too big of a distraction to warrant a spot on the team, no matter how talented he is.

Colin Kaepernick will be on an NFL roster in 2017. Injuries happen. A team will need him. He will be willing to sign for non-starter money, something that has been reported has been a sticking point with more than one team. This whole "controversy" will simply be one more example of the media's penchant for blowing a story so out of proportion that it causes everyone to lose brain cells in trying to make sense of it.

Titans Talk



Hey Titans' fans, you guys okay? Have you stepped away from the ledge after the awful first preseason game against the Jets? Good. I don't want to make too big of a deal out of it, but I followed the reaction to that game in real time on Twitter and you would have thought the Titans had just lost their 16th straight game. Fans overreact. Now, after the second preseason game, fans are back on board and buying tickets to Minneapolis for the Super Bowl. Slow your roll kids! No preseason game will tell us that much about a team. We don't know what the team even wants to see in the preseason game. Without knowing what the goals are, we can't really judge the results we see. So coming to any hard-and-fast conclusions based on what are essentially practice games is impossible. Stop doing it.

With that said, it was nice to see the Titans look like they actually cared about the game. Mariota looked great – and his leg looks 100% healthy, which to me, is the most important thing going into the season. They were missing multiple weapons on offense – Matthews, Davis, Sharpe, and Decker – and they still moved the ball effectively.

Next Week

I'm taking my boys to see the game this Sunday against the Bears. Next week I will post some in-depth commentary about the preseason game typically considered the dress rehearsal for the season. I hope to see improvement and no injuries. Hopefully, I can take some pictures as well. (Shout out to one of the coolest guys in the world and one of the biggest Titans' fans I know, Marvin Briggs, for the tickets!)

Also, we will have a special Q&A with someone that has been covering the Titans for years. We will post more about that as the week progresses.