



It's time to kick back and watch the Bolts

Now that the Super Bowl matchup is set, it's time for NFL fans far and wide to celebrate.

Celebrate what, you say? I know that all those Cowboy fans out there are probably in no mood for festivities considering the foul ending to their first year under the guidance of head coach Barry Switzer. But contrary to popular belief, there is life beyond the boys from Big D.

Speaking strictly as a fan, it is a pleasant surprise to see the San Diego Chargers represent the AFC in the biggest game of the season.

Not since the 1968 New York Jets has there been such a decided underdog in the Super Bowl. And it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what hap-



CHRIS METZ

pened in that game.

I can certainly empathize with the idea that the last weekend's Dallas-San Francisco game was an important game, important enough for *Sports Illustrated* to label it as the real Super Bowl.

But as far as I can tell, the 49ers thumped the Cowboys pretty good. Actually, the Cowboys did a dandy job of beating themselves with an impressive

array of early turnovers on the quagmire at Candlestick Park.

Enough Cowboy bashing though.

It's very refreshing to see the Chargers make it to their first Super Bowl if not just because, finally, NFL fans are spared of the messy blue and red massacres that have taken place in the last four NFL Championships.

A round of applause is in order for the Buffalo Bills in recognition of their efforts above and beyond the threshold of pain. Not since a Richard Simmons visit to the *Late Show* with *David Letterman* has there been such a blatant display of disrespect for the human spirit as there has been in letting the Bills into the big game for four

straight years without a win.

So this year, instead of readying ourselves to once again feel sorry for the Bills and their cast of postseason underachievers, we fans can eat, drink and be merry knowing full-well that the 49ers are going to pound the living daylight out of the Chargers anyway. I'm not so red-hot on the 18-20-point spread, but if things go according to my Tecmo Super Bowl on Nintendo (49ers win 42-13), there could be some happy gambling 49er fans stumbling around on Super Bowl Sunday.

For Oregon fans, the game features three ex-Ducks, at least on the sidelines. Eric Castle figures to see pockets of time in the San

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Oregon's other basketball team overcoming obscurity

PORTLAND (AP) — For years, the Portland Pilots have played, and usually lost, in relative obscurity.

They are Oregon's "other" college basketball team, and they never attracted much attention to their picturesque campus on the bluff above the Willamette River in north Portland.

Until now.

The Pilots are off to an 11-3 start under first-year coach Rob Chavez and, for the first time in the school's history, opened their West Coast Conference season with two road wins and look to keep their record perfect with home games against St. Mary's Thursday night and Santa Clara Saturday night.

"I'm surprised probably more than anything of how quickly our kids are picking up our system," Chavez said.

That system is pressure defense and transition offense.

"Everything is spawned off our defense," center Kurt Ranta said. "We just play tough,



aggressive out-in-the-land defense that creates a lot of turnovers and easy transition baskets."

Chavez, 36, took over after ex-Portland Trail Blazer Larry Steele was fired last year. Chavez compiled a 136-24 record at Chemeketa Community College in Salem before leaving to coach at Maryland-Eastern Shore in 1992.

His first Maryland team was 12-15, and his second was 16-12, the school's first winning season in 13 years as an NCAA Division I school.

Ranta, a fifth-year senior, says the difference between Steele's regime and life under Chavez is discipline.

"Coach Steele knew the game as well as Coach Chavez," Ranta said. "It's just that he tried to implement it in a way that a pro coach would use with pro players. I don't think it worked at the college level."

Chavez had to prove he meant what he said. At one point, he kept star forward Canaan Chatman out of the starting lineup for one game for missing a team meal.

"It's hard when you've got some guys in the program who are used to having their way," Ranta said. "He knew that and instead of just trying to change it night and day, he makes corrective steps in little amounts."

Chavez said he understands how difficult it has been for Chatman and guard Ray Ross, who started their careers at Oregon State, then transferred to junior college before moving to the Pilots.

"I think they have adjusted extremely well," Chavez said. "I think I'm their fifth coach in five years. They've been bounced around a lot from coaching staff to coaching staff."

Chatman is averaging 18 points and 6.4 rebounds per game. Ranta is averaging 15.9 points and 6.1 rebounds per contest.

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Charger fans anxiously wait for chance at Super Bowl tickets

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Wednesday was T-Day for thousands of season-ticket holders, the momentous day they found out whether they were selected to buy tickets to see their beloved San Diego Chargers play in their first Super Bowl.

For many, there was disappointment. For the chosen few thousand, there was glee at getting a chance to see the Chargers play the heavily-favored San Francisco 49ers in Miami on Jan. 29.

"God, I was nervous," said Timm Tesch of San Diego, who went to the Chargers' ticket office at Jack Murphy Stadium and calmly absorbed the news that his name was chosen in a computer lottery to buy two tickets for \$200 apiece.

"I don't know what to say," said Tesch, who quickly realized his good fortune. "I get face value, whereas some people are paying \$1,000 apiece. I've got reservations for two with a broker for \$900 apiece. I'll call the guy back and politely tell him to keep his tickets."

Two of Tesch's friends also are season-ticket holders. One

SUPER BOWL



49ers vs. Chargers
JANUARY 29, 1995

got tickets, the other didn't.

"We might have to leave the women at home," said Tesch, who's had his season tickets for nine years. "We'll have to handle that delicately."

The Chargers conducted the lottery Sunday night after San Diego upset the Pittsburgh Steelers 17-13 at Three Rivers Stadium.

The lottery was based on longevity, meaning a person who held season tickets since 1961, the Chargers' first year in San Diego, had 34 chances.

Letters were mailed on Tuesday to notify the 4,500 lucky season-ticket holders that they could buy two tickets apiece.

Many, like Tesch, were too

impatient to wait for the mail and headed for the stadium.

"I didn't want to wait," Tesch said. "I couldn't wait."

Ron Tuck, director of ticket operations, said reactions were obvious.

"Disappointment if they didn't get them, or ecstasy, jumping up and down, screaming and hollering if they did."

By midday, at least 300 people had called the ticket office. For the majority, the news wasn't good.

"We didn't get any. I'm very cranky," said Cathie Fryer of Orange County, whose father first bought season tickets when the Chargers moved from Los Angeles in 1961 to play in San Diego's Balboa Stadium.

For Fryer and her husband, Steve, it was a double loss. Besides the account her father opened in 1961, they bought more tickets when the stadium was expanded in 1983.

Getting tickets through the lottery was the only realistic way of going to the game. And the odds were slim. Ron Tuck, director of ticket operations, said the Chargers have 16,700

season-ticket accounts, for a total of 48,000 season seats.

"We were hoping to get them," Fryer said. "We've been fans forever, and unfortunately, we're not the type of fans who can pay \$1,000 a ticket."

"I talked to a couple of other people and they said, 'Cathie, that's the way the Super Bowl is. People are going to pay \$1,000 a ticket.'"

Fryer works for a travel agency in the Los Angeles area, but the agency did not buy Super Bowl tickets and she said she'd have to go through a broker to get some.

Despite her disappointment, "I will always cheer for my beloved Chargers," Fryer said.

So will Tesch, who was off to make travel arrangements. He had heard it might take four or five days after the Super Bowl to get a return flight from Miami.

"It'll be well worth it," he said. "It's a once in a lifetime thing. This is the very first time they've gone, and I've never been to a Super Bowl."

And he thinks the Chargers are going to upset the 49ers, 24-17.

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The Super Bowl Matchup

Chargers-49ers Series History
By The Associated Press

49ers lead series 4-3
(Home Team in CAPS)
1972—SAN FRANCISCO 34,
San Diego 9
1976—SAN DIEGO 13, San
Francisco 7, OT
1979—SAN DIEGO 31, San
Francisco 9
1982—San Diego 41, SAN
FRANCISCO 37
1988—San Francisco 48,
SAN DIEGO 10
1991—SAN FRANCISCO 34,
San Diego 14
1994—San Francisco 38,
SAN DIEGO 15

Super Bowl Facts and Figures

AT STAKE — National Football League Championship for the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

PARTICIPANTS — San Diego Chargers (AFC) and San Francisco 49ers (NFC). This will be the first appearance for San Diego and the fifth for San Francisco.

SITE — Joe Robbie Stadium, Miami. This is the second game to be played at Joe Robbie Stadium and the sixth in Miami.

SEATING CAPACITY — 74,500.

KICKOFF — 6:18 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

NETWORK COVERAGE — By ABC-TV to approximately 226 stations and throughout the United States plus Puerto Rico, Bermuda, Bahamas, and Antigua.

By CBS Radio to more than 375 stations within in the United States. The Armed Forces Television and Radio Network will also provide broadcast throughout the world.

The game will be distributed internationally by the NFL and ESPN International to more than 150 countries.

The game telecast will include 18 cameras (including three super slo-mos); five hand-held (including two super slo-mos); two blimp cameras; two remote pan and tilt cameras on the goal posts; and 20 videotape machines.

Former umpire dies at his N.Y. home

ENDICOTT, N.Y. (AP) — Former major league umpire Ron Luciano was found dead Wednesday in the garage of his home. He was 57.

Police said Luciano was discovered at about 3:50 p.m. in the garage area of his home in Endicott, just west of Binghamton.

Luciano wrote a book about his baseball experiences, *The Umpire Strikes Back*, in 1982.