

SUPER BOWL XXX

SPORTS EXTRA

Close game adds to the TV hype

■ **COVERAGE:** The 27-17 Dallas victory is a nice complement to NBC's broadcast

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — That was one funny Super Bowl, and then it got really good, too.

With all that excitement and comedy, it was one tough act to follow for NBC's hit sitcom, *Friends*. Combine the creativity of Madison Avenue, football analyst Paul Maguire and NBC's crack cartoonists, and you've got a mega-million dollar hit.

Throw in some football, and you've got a really rare Super Bowl.

Initially hoping for ratings in the 45 area, or about 135 million viewers, NBC might now want to set its sights a little higher after Dallas' 27-17 victory over Pittsburgh.

A blowout it wasn't. Finally.

"It's every TV executive's dream to have a great game in the Super Bowl," NBC Sports President Dick Ebersol said. "We said going in we might get a 45 rating. We'll all know in about 11 hours."

Entertaining, it was, and it wasn't all because of the Steelers and Cowboys, who put on the best Super Bowl show since the New York Giants beat Buffalo 20-19 in 1991 on Scott Norwood's missed field goal.

The commercials alone were so good you almost had to wait for the game to go to the fridge.

Pepsi wins the ad wars for its hilarious series of spots featuring a dancing gold fish, the thirsty Coke distributor who upsets the Pepsi rack at the store, the backwoodsman with the pop can stuck to his lip, and, of course, Deion as the Roadrunner. "Meep! Meep!"

A close second was Nike's salute to pee wee football. Go No. 30, and tuck in your shirt.

From an advertising standpoint, the nadir was the Budweiser frogs. When is somebody going to get ticked off at Busch for using Kermit-like puppets to make beer commercials that are so appealing to children?

Remember the furor that the comic strip camel, Joe Cool, stirred up in the cigarette ads? Same thing.

McDonald's got into the act with a very good ad about a playful T-Rex skeleton, Jack Palance was chilling as usual for Ford, and Pizza Hut was

absolutely charming with its salute to Little League right fielders.

But this, after all, was a football game, not a 3½-hour commercial, and the game had many fine moments that NBC captured faithfully.

A classic sequence came in the second quarter when NBC's cameras caught Deion Sanders trying to pull off one of football's rarest, most difficult feats — tackling someone without touching him. It was a priceless tippy-toes, finger-tips move as Deion sprawled on his face with Andre Hastings making tracks down his backside.

NBC's broadcast crew consisted of Dick Enberg, Phil Simms and Maguire, who has become one of TV's top analysts and played a large part in making NBC's three-man booth a success.

"Jonathan, you got your hands on upside down," Maguire admonished Steelers tight end Jonathan Hayes as he bobbled a pass.

And when he isn't the funny man in the booth, he is the good-natured object of a lot of humor.

When Steelers center Dermontti Dawson hiked one over O'Donnell's head, Enberg remarked, "That's the kind Paul Maguire would call fair catch on."

"The three-man team became everything I dreamed it would become back in March," Ebersol said. "I felt all along it would be great because of the obvious contrasts between Simms and Maguire — one a defensive specialist, the other offensive. One's a wonderfully humorous cynic, the other's a nice, innocent straight arrow."

Maguire was also featured in one of the cute little cartoons that NBC used to help illustrate the game. One of them had a player wearing Maguire's old No. 55 crashing through a brick wall at the 20-yard line, illustrating Dallas' proficiency in the so-called red zone.

Didn't Disney buy ABC?

It was not all funny business for the NBC crew, however. Both Simms and Maguire are good at picking apart strategies, and Enberg, working his seventh Super Bowl, makes the perfect traffic cop, keeping it from getting too busy in the booth.

Well, as producer John Faratzis put it, "We didn't have to go to our 'B' material tonight."

NFL commissioner blasts Dallas owner

■ **DISAPPROVAL:** Paul Tagliabue speaks out against Jerry Jones' marketing deals

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Just hours before Sunday's Super Bowl between Dallas and Pittsburgh, NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue issued a blistering attack against Cowboys owner Jerry Jones on national television.

Appearing on the ABC program "This Week With David Brinkley," Tagliabue was questioned about franchise free agency and issues of revenue sharing and costs. When Jones' independent marketing deals with Nike, Pepsi-Cola and American Express were raised, Tagliabue bristled.

"Jerry Jones dishonors the agreement he made when he came into the NFL partnership," Tagliabue said. "He takes what does not belong to him. The NFL is what we sell. It belongs to 30 teams, not the Dallas Cowboys."

The league sued Jones for \$300 million when the independent marketing deals were announced. Jones has filed a \$750 million countersuit.

Earlier in the week, Jones said, "That's America. America didn't come along as a commune, where people got out and worked and gained

assets and position, then turned around and gave it back to everybody else who's not working. That's not America, so I think the things that we do and are trying to do in the NFL are very helpful, or I wouldn't be suggesting them."

"I'm a long-term guy in the NFL and have a great chance of sitting here 25-30 years from now, healthwise, familywise and ownershipwise," Jones added. "So, I have as much or more interest in the future of the NFL than anybody else in the league."

Tagliabue also repeated the theme he presented Friday in his state of the league address, saying the NFL "shares the emotions of fans" losing franchises to other cities.

"It is incoherent to destroy what it took 75 years to build," he said.

When asked how the league could do that after two franchises left Los Angeles last year and Cleveland and Houston plan moves for next season, Tagliabue said the NFL is examining solutions.

"We are going to resolve this," he said. "If expansion becomes part of the solution, then we'll pursue that. If markets don't support teams, another alternative may be to relocate a team that is not supported where it is."

Litke: Switzer still trying

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Before the night was through, the line of admirers stretched all the way back to the White House.

"President Clinton," Switzer screamed into the microphone after Jones handed him the phone, "you stayed positive. And that's a lesson for all of us."

And the lesson of Barry Switzer getting to go round and round with the Super Bowl trophy in his arms for one night is this: Don't be afraid to keep trying. Sometimes, the clown is the only kid in class who knows the answer, and sometimes the kid who never studies aced the biggest exam of his life.

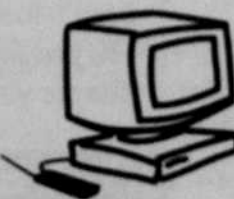
"When I stumble," Switzer said, beaming, "I just reload."

Jim Litke is a sports columnist for the Associated Press.

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