

Former Raiders coach John Madden dies at 85

By **JOSH DUBOW**
The Associated Press



The Associated Press, File
Oakland coach John Madden stands on the sideline during an NFL football game in October 1978.

John Madden, the Hall of Fame coach turned broadcaster whose exuberant calls combined with simple explanations provided a weekly soundtrack to NFL games for three decades, died Tuesday morning, the league said. He was 85.

The NFL said he died unexpectedly and did not detail a cause.

Madden gained fame in a decade-long stint as the coach of the renegade Oakland Raiders, making it to seven AFC title games and winning the Super Bowl following the 1976 season. He compiled a 103-32-7 regular-season record, and his .759 winning percentage is the best among NFL coaches with more than 100 games.

But it was his work after prematurely retiring as coach at age 42 that made Madden truly a household name. He educated a football nation with his use of the telestrator on broadcasts; entertained millions with his interjections of “Boom!” and “Doink!” throughout games; was an omnipresent pitchman selling restaurants, hardware stores and beer; became the face of “Madden NFL Football,” one of the most successful sports video games of all-time; and was a best-selling author.

Most of all, he was the preeminent television sports analyst for most of his three decades calling games, winning an unprecedented 16 Emmy Awards for outstanding sports analyst/personality, and covering 11 Super Bowls for four networks from 1979-2009.

“People always ask, are you a coach or a broadcaster or a video game guy?” he said when was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. “I’m a coach, always been a coach.”

He started his broadcasting career at CBS after leaving coaching in great part because of his fear of flying. He and Pat Summerall became the network’s top announcing duo. Madden then helped give Fox credibility as a major network when he moved there in 1994, and went on to call prime-time games at ABC and NBC before retiring following Pittsburgh’s thrilling 27-23 win over Arizona in the 2009 Super Bowl.

“I am not aware of anyone who has made a more meaningful impact on the National Football League than John Madden, and I know of no one who loved the game more,” Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said in a statement.

Burly and a little unkempt, Madden earned a place in America’s heart with a likable, unpretentious style that was refreshing in a sports world of spiraling salaries and prima donna stars. He rode from game to game in his own bus because he suffered from claustrophobia and had stopped flying. For a time, Madden gave out a “turducken” — a chicken stuffed inside a duck stuffed inside a turkey — to the outstanding player in the Thanksgiving game that he called.

“Nobody loved football more than Coach. He was football,” NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement. “He was an incredible sounding board to me and so many others. There will never be another John Madden, and we will forever be indebted to him for all he did to make football and the NFL what it is today.”

When he finally retired from the broadcast booth, leaving NBC’s “Sunday Night Football,” colleagues universally praised Madden’s passion for the sport, his preparation, and his ability to explain an

often-complicated game in down-to-earth terms.

Al Michaels, Madden’s broadcast partner for seven years on ABC and NBC, said working with him “was like hitting the lottery.”

“He was so much more than just football — a keen observer of everything around him and a man who could carry on a smart conversation about hundreds and hundreds of topics. The term ‘Renaissance Man’ is tossed around a little too loosely these days, but John was as close as you can come,” Michaels said.

ON THE SLATE

THURSDAY, DEC. 30

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL
Joseph at Dufur, 1:30 p.m.
Sherman at Wallowa, 4 p.m.
Stanfield at Enterprise, 4:30 p.m.
Four Rivers at Cove, 5 p.m.
Union at Weston-McEwen, 7:30 p.m.
PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL
Joseph at Dufur, noon

Sherman at Wallowa, 2:30 p.m.
Stanfield at Enterprise, 3 p.m.
Four Rivers at Cove, 3:30 p.m.
Union at Weston-McEwen, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, DEC. 31

COLLEGE MEN’S BASKETBALL
Eastern Oregon at Corban, 7:30 p.m.
COLLEGE WOMEN’S BASKETBALL
Eastern Oregon at Corban, 5:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 1

COLLEGE MEN’S BASKETBALL
Eastern Oregon at Bushnell, 5 p.m.
COLLEGE WOMEN’S BASKETBALL
Eastern Oregon at Bushnell, 3 p.m.

TUESDAY, JAN. 4

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL
Imbler at Elgin, 5:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Enterprise, 5:30 p.m.

Joseph at Wallowa, 6:30 p.m.
Grant Union at Union, 7:30 p.m.
Powder Valley at Cove, 7:30 p.m.
PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL
Imbler at Elgin, 3:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Enterprise, 4 p.m.
Joseph at Wallowa, 5 p.m.
Grant Union at Union, 6 p.m.
Powder Valley at Cove, 6 p.m.
Pendleton at La Grande, 7 p.m.

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