

# Trouble in the NFL

by Al McGilberry

Professional football is in trouble. The strike is almost six weeks old and there's no settlement in sight; fans all over the country are wondering why. The answer, folks, is money, lots of it.

Fans are so used to reading about the big stars who receive big money—the Bradshaws, Swans, Dorsetts, etc., it has made the fans feel that all the players are overpaid and greedy.

Well it's time the American public woke up. It's the owners who are greedy and want all the money for themselves. And why not?

Football players from pee-wee leagues to the pros are conditioned and programmed to be robots. The coach is God and they do His will. The players start getting pennies in high school, dollars in college and when they get to the professional ranks they have forgotten what it is to think for themselves.

The owners are like most corporate officers. The workers are only a means to an end, tolerated to get to the bank. All N.F.L. owners have vast interests other than football. Some are in oil, lumber, real estate, and on many corporate boards across the country. They run all their businesses for profit and big profit—and treat their help like property to be bought and sold at will. So this is the type of mentality the N.F.L. players are up against.

It is remarkable that the leadership of the Association is sticking together. Owners have always been able to buy some players to keep the flock in line. They promise radio and T.V. announcers jobs, later coaching positions and the like. What do you think is holding the strike together this time?

You know, it's the black players who are rocking the boat. Under the strong leadership of Gene Upshaw the black players have a man, like

Curt Flood in baseball, who can't be bought. He realizes there are very few black quarterbacks in the pro game, no black general managers, very few coaches or radio or T.V. announcers, etc.

The N.F.L. must now face the fact of racism that has ruled the game from its inception. These words are never spoken but all fans really know. The black players realize they must make their living now. Nothing is promised to them when their careers are over.

Many of the black players never achieve the same pay scale as white players. Remember the great Jimmy Brown getting \$65,000 and Willie Joe Namath getting \$410,000? Can you really see the difference? The players on special teams and the down linemen must love Gene Upshaw and Garvey for holding the ground for their future and families. Solidarity has now reached the N.F.L.

The new television contract is over in five years and then pay T.V. will pay the freight. The players must receive some of that money. So it's now or never for the players' union.

The owners might blow this season to prove their point but it's too late now. They could have given up more of the profits years ago. The white players also realize that their plight is the same as the blacks. So the union will remain strong and Gene Upshaw and company look good to me.

I like what is now happening in the world of sport. Did Martin send his spirit into Gene? Fans should write to the T.V. corporate offices and demand the end of the strike. Then pressure will be put on the owners to negotiate in good faith. Now tell me, who are the good guys and who are the bad guys? Let's play ball.



Calvin Peete has won four major tournaments on the PGA Tour this year, the first time that feat has been accomplished by any golfer. Peete has been on the Tour only six years, and did not take up the game until the age of 23. Despite never having had a formal lesson, he has been the Tour's most accurate player off the tee for two years in a row. Above Peete is congratulated by Bruce Lietzke (right).

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