



“Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now”

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Scottish Vote a Lesson in Democracy

THE SKANNER NEWS

Helen Silvis

This week, Scottish voters go to the polls to decide whether to scrap its 300-year union with the rest of the United Kingdom. Feelings are strong on both sides, and with almost 100 percent of the electorate signed up to vote, polls show voters split right down the middle.

As a Scot living in Portland, Ore., I’m watching the results with interest. I don’t have a vote, but many of my family members are voting. And even within my family, opinions differ sharply.

My mother and father, for example, who have already have voted by mail, cast one “Yes,” for Independence, and one “No”, for staying with the UK. That’s no surprise to anyone who knows them. My mother has always been a staunch Scottish nationalist. My father has always supported keeping the union. And yes they are still speaking.

That’s not true of everyone. The two-year campaign has been marked by bitterness that looks set to continue for years to come, no matter what the outcome. So what’s at stake and why does it matter to anyone outside this tiny nation of 5.3 million people?

Since 1998 Scotland has had its own parliament to govern everything from education and the environment to health and justice. But the big decisions about foreign policy and defense are handled in London, in the south of England. Scotland has a say in that parliament, but because England’s population is 10 times larger, Scots often don’t get the government or the policies they want.

In fact, Scotland’s politics have consistently run far to the left of England’s. When Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government came to power in 1979, for example, it had almost no support in Scotland. Yet that government held power for 11 years. In the current London parliament, the Conservative party under UK leader David Cameron is the largest party, but not a single Conservative member of parliament was elected in Scotland.

Because England’s population is 10 times larger, Scots often don’t get the government or the policies they want

So if the Yes campaign wins it will have a strong impact on the rest of the United Kingdom. England, Wales and Northern Ireland may never elect another Labour government without Scottish voters to tip them over the top.

That mismatch between English and Scottish voters has stoked the nationalist cause. But there is more, much more. And it’s rooted in history. Scotland and England united in 1707, but only because Scottish King James VI inherited the throne of England from Elizabeth I.

James moved the entire court south to London. Some Scots feel that was his biggest mistake.

A sore point for Scots is that wealth in the UK is now concentrated in London and Southeast England. According to the 2014 Wealth Report, London is home to more of the world’s wealthiest multimillionaires than New York. Scottish nationalists feel Scotland should have benefited more from its oil fields.

And the entire nation grits its teeth when London-based media say England when they mean the UK, and claim Scots tennis star Andy Murray as one of their own, but only when he wins. When it comes to sports, plenty of Scots

as Scots might resent English cultural dominance at times, many also feel British. We all grew up watching the same television shows, and listening to the same music.

Anyone 16 and older who lives in Scotland can register and vote in this election. Nobody who lives outside of Scotland can vote. That means a fair number of people will be voting who are not Scottish by heritage and have little attachment to its history and culture.

As much as Scottish politics lean left, the Scottish character leans conservative. Change for change’s sake is frowned upon.

Scots have had plenty of advice during this campaign. Some of it has come in the form of threats. If they vote for independence: they will have to kiss the pound goodbye; reapply for NATO and European Union membership; pay more for goods and services; lose the Royal Bank of Scotland to London; and see their economy tank.

UK Prime Minister David Cameron pleaded this week for voters to keep the UK family together. He also said a Yes vote would trigger a very messy divorce.

But nationalists say that a “No” vote will mean missing a once-in-a-lifetime chance to establish Scotland as an independent nation with its own voice. careers have led up to this vote.

We should know the result of the election by this Friday or Saturday. Till then you’ll find me taking a wee dram of whisky and whistling Scotland the Brave.

will support any old team against England.

So what about the Nos? Why would Scots not want independence? Like many modern relationships, it’s complicated. England may be the “auld enemy” but English people are also our neighbors, business partners, family members and our closest friends. Many Scots went to school in England, and around a million live there, including my own brother and his—English—family.

Yes, there are cultural differences, but the nations also share a lot of tradition, culture and history. For two centuries their soldiers have fought side-by-side. As much

NFL Domestic Abusers Get Tap on Wrist

The NFL – which has been referred to as everything from the National Felons League to, in the cases of players, Not For Long – has imposed a lifetime ban on Ray Rice yet rarely disciplines other brazen offenders. And when a team takes the rare action of disciplining a player for striking a woman, it usually results in a tap on the wrist.

The National Football League initially imposed a two-game suspension of Rice after it was disclosed that he had abused his then-fiancée, Janay Palmer, in an Atlantic City, N.J. casino hotel elevator. But after the celebrity website TMZ aired the full video showing Rice knocking out his future wife with a strong blow to the face, rendering her unconscious, the Baltimore Ravens voided Rice’s contract and the NFL banned him from pro football for life.

Commissioner Roger Goodell, who is in charge of protecting the nation’s most popular sport’s \$10 billion in annual revenue, acknowledged that the NFL “got it wrong” when it imposed only a two-game suspension on Rice.

But what Goodell, who earns \$44 million a year, didn’t admit was the NFL continues to get it wrong while serving as a high-profile enabler for other domestic abusers in the league. For exam-



THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry

ple:
Rice’s teammate, All-Pro Linebacker Terrell Suggs, continued playing after Candace Williams, the mother of his three children and his future wife, filed for two

onto a couch filled with assault rifles and shotguns. Hardy was found guilty of misdemeanor charges and sentenced to a 60-day suspended sentence and 18 months of probation. He is appealing the verdict. Hardy was deactivated for last Sunday’s game against the Detroit Lions.

San Francisco 49ers defensive end Ray McDonald was allowed to play in last Sunday’s game, despite being arrested and charged with felony domestic violence connected with allegedly striking his pregnant fiancée. A hearing scheduled for Monday

domestic disputes had charges dismissed after they were placed in a diversion program for first-time offenders, completed anger management counseling or performed community service. In many cases, the abused woman refused to file charges. Only 10 players were released by their team and three of those landed on other squads.

Overall, arrest rates among NFL players are lower than the national average for men in their age range. Among NFL teams, according to the New York Times, the Minnesota Vikings had the most players arrested since 2000, with 44, followed closely by the Cincinnati Bengals and the Denver Broncos. The Arizona Cardinals and the St. Louis Rams, with 11 each, tied for the lowest mark. Baltimore had 22 players arrested over that period, mirroring the league average.

Though the most common offense was driving while drunk, domestic violence has taken center stage.

The domestic cases are chronicled by Sidepin. The website stated, “Goodell is perceived as being tough on players. He’s an authoritarian, the likes of which the league has never seen!! But there’s one thing Goodell will tolerate, and that’s NFL players abusing women.”

The NFL continues to get it wrong while serving as a high-profile enabler for other domestic abusers in the league

protective orders against him in the last five years. Carolina Panthers All-Pro Defensive End Greg Hardy was convicted last summer of assaulting and threatening to kill his former girlfriend, Nicole Holder, but no action was taken against him until the Ray Rice story exploded on the national scene. In her request for a protective order, Holder said Hardy threw her into a tile tub, pulled her from the tub by her hair, choked her with both hands and picked her up over his head and threw her

was postponed, pending further investigation.

These are not isolated cases. A database maintained by USA Today shows that there have been 713 arrests of NFL players since 2000 – 85 for domestic violence. The database covers only incidents reported by the media.

Of the 56 known domestic violence cases that occurred on Goodell’s watch, players were suspended only a combined total 13 games, excluding Ray Rice. Typically, players involved in