

SPORTS

Blackout denies fans viewing privileges

Commentary by Chris La Furia
staff writer

The Buffalo Bills started the season in slow fashion. Injuries and insufficient play has kept the team from performing their best. Even though the team has struggled through the year, many fans have still managed to maintain a level of support for their local favorite.

Tickets for a game at Ralph Wilson Stadium range anywhere in price from \$30 to \$50. Due to this lofty price, the Bills have failed to reach an audience over 73,000 people.

In 1973, Congress passed a law, which today is called the NFL Blackout Policy. The blackout affects not only the NFL and the teams involved, but also the people who wish to view the games on television.

The rule states that, in the event that a home team fails to sell out the stadium prior to 72 hours before kickoff, the game is not shown within a 75-mile radius of the field and an alternate game is displayed.

If you are a die-hard Buffalo Bills fan, your thumb must be numb from channel surfing to find a Bills home game on television. With the seating capacity of Ralph Wilson stadium reaching beyond 80,000 seats, Buffalo has found extreme difficulty in selling out games. As a consequence, the exposure that the Bills may have had from the regular schedule is now taken over by other games in its place.

Local fans have created uproar because of the Blackout Policy. One of the fine-tuned, most anticipated matchups in NFL history involves the Pittsburgh Steelers, who are off to one of the best starts in team history, and the struggling, but improving, Cleveland Browns.

The week-five matchup saw the Steelers overcoming the Browns, 34-23. However, the only people to witness every single play of the game were the 63,609 fans who showed up to the stadium, leaving many fans of the Pittsburgh/Cleveland area exasperated at such a scheduling flaw.

Val Pinchbeck, the NFL's longtime chief broadcaster and creator of NFL schedules since the 70s, attempted to explain the reasoning behind the Blackout rule.

Pinchbeck stated, "It is essential from a business standpoint because you can't give away what you are trying to sell."

This is the very evident and problematic scheme that has every NFL team owner under its inescapable spell.

Once again, it is about money, which is, unmistakably, the driving force to all major sports. The vision of NFL owners, and the entire slough of corporate bamboozlers agree that in order to maintain the schedule of games on television, crowds must attend the games.

Just this past week, ESPN's Sunday Night Football Game featured the San Francisco 49ers and the Chicago Bears. The ABC Monday Night Football game included the first place New York Jets and the dismal Miami Dolphins, a game

that has a history of magic with remarkable comebacks.

The Bears edged out the 49ers in a close matchup, to bring their record to a paltry 2-5. The New York Jets, the only one of the four teams with a record even remotely close to .500, slaughtered the Dolphins 41-14. Even though each game had no significance whatsoever, they were both shown to audiences around the world.

The NFL has been formed into a microcosm with its own successful economy. With each team representing an entire business, it is difficult to keep up with the demands of each customer, in this case each fan.

People need to purchase goods in order to keep the economy thriving. In this scenario, people need to buy tickets to the games in order to maintain balance. If fans fail to support the business, there are consequences, in this case, the Blackout Policy.

It may be difficult to build a schedule during the off-season and hope that they will be worthy matchups.

NFL executives have no intention of depriving television viewers of seeing the games that they want. Therefore, some sort of meeting should be held midseason to develop an altered schedule to forecast the games with some sort of playoff implication or historical rivalry.

If this is possible, fans get what they want which will lead to higher tickets sales, and the elimination of the Blackout Policy.

Senior Spotlight

Tim Schultheis Jennifer Baker



Men's Cross Country

BB: What are your plans for after graduation?

TS: I am interviewing with a few engineering companies now, but down the road I would like to get my masters and possibly coach and teach at the college level.

BB: What is your favorite memory?

TS: I will never forget all my teammates and friends I made; our results I would have to say, although they were great, are secondary. Also attending the NCAA leadership conference for a week in Walt Disney World, that was amazing.

BB: What is the funniest moment?

TS: The new funniest moment is always changing. You put 13 men in a van for nine or ten straight hours and when you are done your stomach hurts from laughing so much.

BB: What will you miss the most?

TS: I will miss all the people, especially in athletics. I had the best four years of my life and the opportunities were endless. If I had the chance to do it all again, I would be back here in a heartbeat.

*** AMCC Tournament *** Women's soccer

Nov. 6 @ Frostburg

Lady Lion's take on Frostburg in AMCC Championship finals at 2:00 p.m.

If the Lion's win they will receive an automatic bid into NCAA tournament play.

Women's Soccer

BB: What are your plans for after graduation?

JB: I plan to continue my military career and switch from the army reserves to active duty.

BB: What is your favorite memory?

JB: The best memory I will ever have playing soccer with these girls is the trip to Ireland over the summer. We all went out and celebrated Mitch's birthday four nights in a row. That was probably the most fun I have ever had.

BB: What will you miss the most?

JB: I will miss my friends and the crazy times we get to have together.

Women's volleyball wins first AMCC semifinal match Move on to championships this weekend

By Alyssa Peconi
staff writer

The women's volleyball team has been waiting for this week to come since the beginning of the season. As they finally arrive at the week of the AMCC championships, their hearts yearn for the title and their minds continue to stay focused on winning the games that lie ahead.

In the past three games, the ladies have built up a winning streak that they hope to continue throughout the week. Phil Pisano, head coach of the women's volleyball team, feels that the team's chances of winning this weekend depends on how they perform as a team and less on what their opponents do.

"Overall we have been playing our best in the last three weeks, have won our last three matches, and will need to be focused and energetic to have success this weekend," Pisano said.

A conference game versus Medaille last Wednesday began the Lady Lions' victorious run as they swept their opponent in three games.

After that, the team traveled to Mount Aloysius on Oct. 30 and again swept the opposition in three games. These wins improved the ladies' season record to 15-14 and an impressive 7-2 record in the conference.

Following last weekend's win, Behrend went into their first AMCC semifinal match with high spirits (ranked third in the conference) and played very well to win on Tuesday night against Medaille, who were ranked sixth in the conference.

The lions' again swept the team in three games and improved their overall record to 16-14, where they now stand.

On Friday night, the ladies will continue their conference battle when they travel to Frostburg to play Penn State Altoona for another AMCC semifinal match. This semifinal match with Altoona will be a rematch from earlier this season when they defeated Behrend in four games (1-3) at Altoona on Oct. 2. Pisano said, "We know that we are a much better team than we were a month ago, and feel that if we play to our po-

tential, we will be moving on to the conference finals."

If the Lions win that match, they will go on to play in the finals on Saturday at 1 p.m. If the Lions reach the finals, they expect to play Frostburg (who will face Pitt-Bradford in the semifinals).

The Lady Lions are the only conference opponent to take a single game off of Frostburg this season, when they defeated Behrend 1-3 on Oct. 23, so they would really enjoy the chance to take on Frostburg to compete for the championship.

However, right now, the ladies main focus is on their upcoming match against Penn State Altoona. To prepare themselves, they have been working harder each day in practice and focusing on details, which have helped them improve throughout the season.

"Now we have to believe in ourselves and show Altoona how much better we are," Pisano said.

Pisano is confident that the Lions will give this weekend their very best effort with contributions from every player to succeed as a team.

Sports trivia quiz

Knight Ridder/Tribune News Service
(KRT)

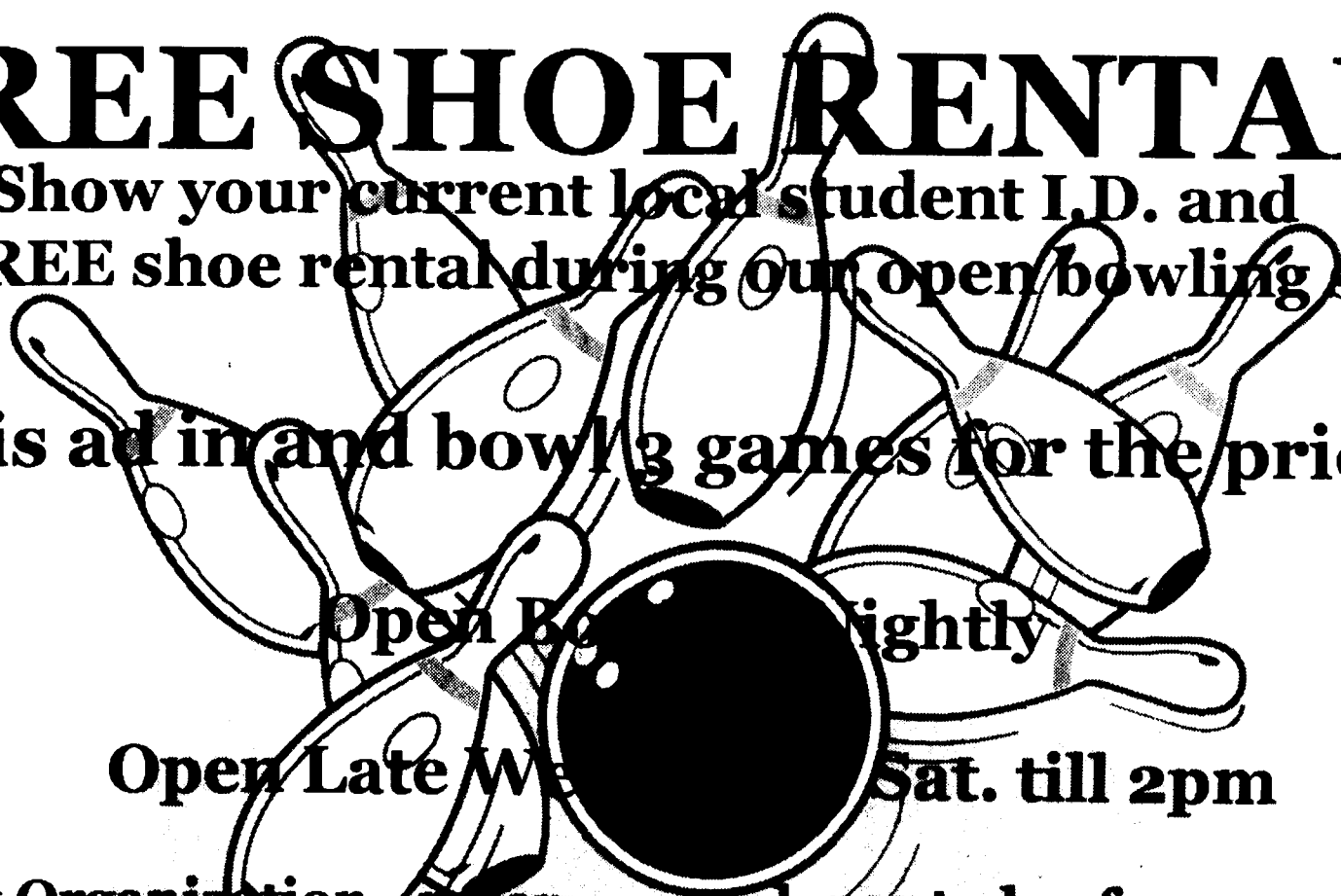
QUESTIONS:

- 1.) Name the first coach to lead two different franchises to the Super Bowl?
 - 2.) Who were the teams to play in the first "Monday Night Football" game?
 - 3.) He was the first British golfer to win the Masters. Was it Nick Faldo or Sandy Lyle?
 - 4.) Which team became the Baltimore Orioles in 1954?
 - 5.) He was the first golfer to use a female caddie while playing in the Masters. Was it George Archer or Jesper Parnevik?
- ANSWERS:**
- 1.) Don Shula led the Baltimore Colts and Miami Dolphins to Super Bowls.
 - 2.) The Cleveland Browns defeated the New York Jets, 31-21, on Sept. 21, 1970.
 - 3.) Sandy Lyle, 1988.
 - 4.) The St. Louis Browns.
 - 5.) George Archer's daughter, Elizabeth, was the first female caddie at The Masters, in 1983. She is now a Presbyterian minister.

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