

SPORTS

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a
Glance

Colts take the Bears 29-17

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So last night, I get asked by our wonderful editor to do an opinion article on Penn State Football. Of course I accepted this offer because I may not get another chance to express how I feel about the upcoming Nittany Lions season.

After the ending of last season, by beating a decent Tennessee team in the Outback Bowl I really felt it was a coming out party for the young Lions. Anthony Morelli finally shut up the critics and proved he could manage the offense and lead the Nittany Lions in the upcoming season. Meanwhile, Tony Hunt and Paul Posluszny had dominating final games in the Outback Bowl and Senior Bowl for the Lions as they both prepare themselves for the NFL Draft this coming April.

Now everyone is probably wondering how the Nittany Lions Defense is going to do without #31 to lead the way. Well, safety Anthony Scirrotto and linebackers Shaun Lee and Dan Conner will take over the leadership roles and lead the Nittany Lions into the upcoming 2007 season. Returning all but two starters on defense will make the Nittany Lions a very tough team to run or throw on this year.

Offensively, Anthony Morelli is rejuvenated after his outburst on the media prior to the Outback Bowl. He came out and showed not only the Penn State coaching staff, but the entire nation that he is a true quarterback and deserves the starting role. Losing Tony Hunt will be a tough loss but after red-shirting Austin Scott for the year, he will be ready to step up as the lead ball carrier for the Blue and White. Of course who can forget about our amazing wide receivers, Deon Butler (coming off one of the best seasons for a wide receiver in school history), Derrick Williams, Jordan Norwood, and Terrell Golden will be looking for the ball and ready to lead the high flying Penn State offense.

The biggest problem for Penn State in 2006 was winning the big games. Losses to Notre Dame, Ohio State, Michigan, and Wisconsin, which the Nittany Lions will face all four of them again this year, has to be in the back of everyone's minds. Three of those four losses came away from Beaver Stadium, however the tables are turned this year for Penn State.

Ohio State, Notre Dame, and Wisconsin are all home games this year for the Blue and White so I know the crowds are going to be rocking. Unfortunately they have to travel to Michigan on September 22 (their opening game in the Big Ten) and hopefully Lloyd Carr doesn't whine about having one second put back on the clock. If Penn State can go into Michigan and come out of there with a victory, it is going to be a glorious season for our Nittany Lions. Beating Notre Dame and Ohio State shouldn't be too much of a problem, due to the talent loss both of those teams will suffer. Penn State is also reintroduced to Iowa and Indiana and doesn't have to worry about Northwestern or Minnesota, even though I don't believe those teams are that great.

After taking careful consideration of the season schedule and the returning starters, Penn State could be looking ahead to a date with destiny. If they do manage to get a loss this season, hope its early so they can fight their way back through the standings. Could it be possible that Penn State has another one loss season, meaning two of the last three seasons, only suffering one loss? Could they do the unthinkable and go undefeated and play for a National Championship? Only time will tell. So get ready; buy your season tickets early my fellow classmates. This year could be a year that we will never forget. WE ARE.....PENN STATE!!!!

MIAMI (AP) - Wet and wild and the perfect winning conditions for Peyton Manning and the Indianapolis Colts in the Super Bowl.

A team built for indoors found its footing on a rain-soaked track and outplayed the Chicago Bears to win the NFL title 29-17 Sunday night. The Colts were far less sloppy, particularly their star quarterback, who proved he can indeed win the big game the biggest game.

That's what it was for Tony Dungy, too. He became the first black coach to win the championship, beating good friend and protege Lovie Smith in a game that featured the first two black coaches in the Super Bowl.

"It's hard to put into words," said Manning, the game's MVP after hitting 25 of 38 passes for 247 yards with one touchdown and one interception. "I'm proud to be part of this team. We stuck together, won this game for our leader, Tony Dungy."

It was a game of firsts: the first rainy Super Bowl and the first time an opening kickoff was run back for a touchdown when sensational Bears rookie Devin Hester sped downfield for 92 yards.

And not since the Buffalo Bills self-destructed with nine turnovers in losing to Dallas 14 years ago had there been so much messiness. The first half was marred by six turnovers, three for each team. Even football's most clutch kicker, Adam Vinatieri, missed a chip-shot field goal, and an extra point attempt was botched, too.

The second half wasn't quite so ugly, but when much-maligned Bears quarterback Rex Grossman's wobbler was picked off and returned 56 yards for a touchdown by Kelvin Hayden with 11:44 remaining, it was over.

"I'm so proud of our guys," Dungy said. "We took the hit early with Devin Hester. We talked about it; it's going to be a storm. Sometimes you have to work for it. Our guys played

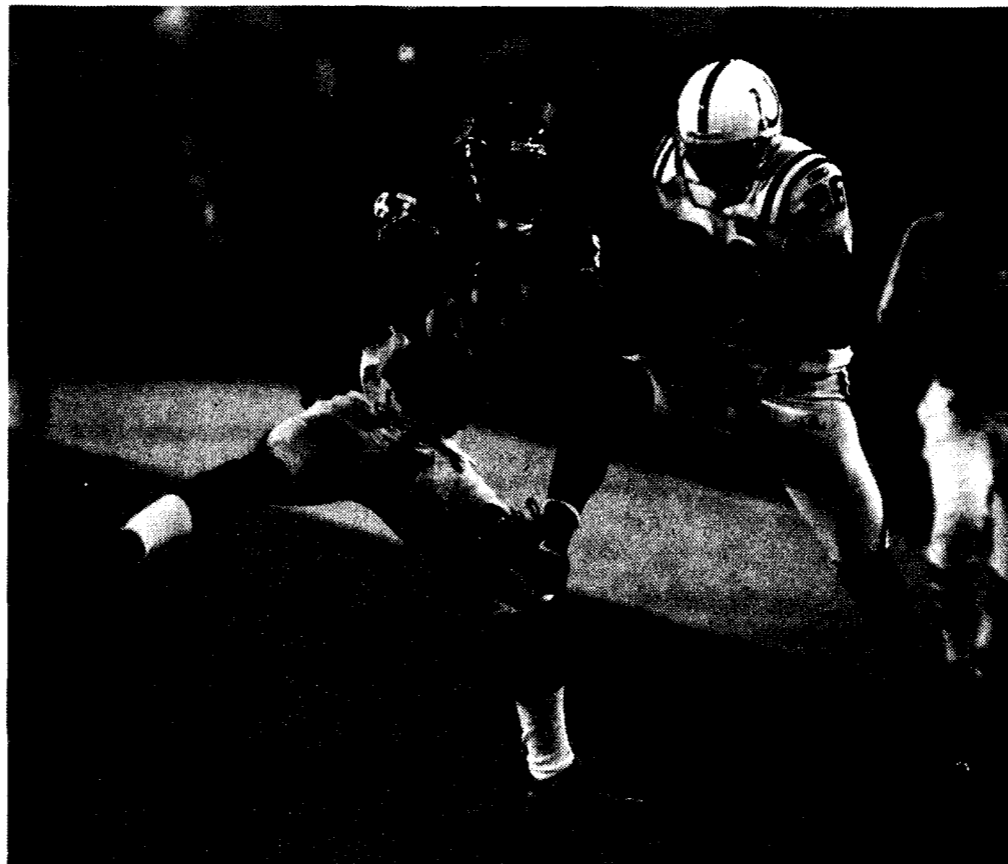
so hard and I can't tell you how proud I am of our group, our organization and our city."

Chicago (15-4), which led the league in takeaways this season, finished with five turnovers, including two interceptions by Grossman.

The Colts (16-4) will take it. It's their first title since the 1970 season,

Super Bowl under Jon Gruden.

The Colts hoisted their coach on their shoulders and he switched his blue Colts cap for a white one that read "NFL champions." Dungy was carried from the sideline, then was lowered so he could share a long embrace and a handshake with Smith.



Indianapolis Colts cornerback Kelvin Hayden(26) intercepts a pass in front of Chicago Bears wide receiver Muhsin Muhammad(87) during the fourth quarter of Super Bowl XLI in Miami.

when they played in Baltimore.

It was confirmation of Manning's brilliance, even if he didn't need to be dynamic. The son of a quarterback who never got to the playoffs, Manning has been a star throughout his college career at Tennessee and his nine pro seasons with the Colts.

Now he is a champion.

It also was a validation of Dungy's leadership. He helped build Tampa Bay, one of the NFL's worst franchises, into a contender before being fired after the 2001 season. The next year, the Bucs won the

"I'm proud to be representing the African-American coaches and the first African-American coach to win this," Dungy said.

Then he waded through the mob to find his quarterback, giving him a big hug.

The Colts reached the pinnacle by winning four postseason games with a defense that made a complete turnaround in the playoffs.

And with a running game that perfectly complemented Manning, thanks to Joseph Addai and Dominic Rhodes, who combined for 190 yards

113 on 21 carries by Rhodes and 77 on 10 carries by Addai, who also had 66 yards receiving.

Chicago was denied its first Super Bowl title since the powerhouse 1985 team. These Bears could have used Da Coach, Sweetness and their buddies.

It rained from start to finish; there was even "Purple Rain" during halftime when Prince sang some of his signature songs. And though Vinatieri twice was a victim of the slop, he kicked three field goals.

Hester's spectacular return provided a stunning beginning and a severe jolt to the Colts. The local product and only rookie All-Pro this season pumped his arms to excite the crowd before the kickoff, then lifted the fans from their seats with an electrifying run on which he never was touched.

He barely touched the ball again as Indy went to squibbing kickoffs.

Leading 16-14 at halftime, the Colts spent half the third quarter with a march to Vinatieri's 24-yard field goal. Twice on the drive, Manning fell to the ground while throwing. But he completed them.

Grossman had it even worse on Chicago's initial possession of the second half, twice in a row slipping and getting sacked. Maybe he would have done better on icy turf.

Thomas Jones, forced to carry the Bears' entire rushing load when Cedric Benson was hurt in the first half, was Chicago's best player.

But with Grossman ineffective, even inept, all the Bears managed in the second half was Robbie Gould's 44-yard field goal late in the third period.

After Hester's opening dagger, Manning tried to force a pass to Marvin Harrison in double coverage and was picked off by Chris Harris to spoil Indy's first possession, but the Colts struck back on their next series, converting three third-downs. The final one was the most important as Manning got everything on a long pass to the uncovered Reggie Wayne even though Tank Johnson had his hands on the quarterback. Wayne trotted into the end zone for a 47-yard score.

Then the rain ruined three straight plays.

Holder Hunter Smith dropped the snap on the extra point and Vinatieri couldn't get off a kick. Then Vinatieri, well aware of who was lurking deep, squibbed the kickoff to tight end Gabe Reid, who fumbled at his 35, with Tyjuan Hagler recovering for the Colts.

But Manning and Addai botched the handoff on the next snap and Chicago's Mark Anderson recovered, the third turnover in the first 8 1/2 minutes.

Couldn't anybody play this game?

Jones certainly could. He used a sharp cutback to break a 52-yard run, the longest of his career, to the Colts' 5, and Grossman found Muhammad in the front of the end zone for a 14-6 lead.

Jones finished with 100 yards rushing.

A fourth giveaway in the opening quarter, by Benson on his first carry before injuring his knee, didn't damage Chicago.

Vinatieri, who made two Super Bowl-winning kicks for New England, nailed a 29-yard field goal early in the second period but was wide left from 32 yards at the end of the half.

Vinatieri still set a record with 49 postseason points.

PSH bball gets ready to rumble in Harrisburg

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On Saturday, January 20 the Penn State Harrisburg men's basketball team began the Spring semester portion of their season when they hosted the Lions from Penn State McKeesport. Heading into the game, the men's team was coming off of a month-long winter break hiatus, following some disappointing games in the first half of their season. It is needless to say that PSH players, coaches, and fans alike were hoping that the team would see some better results with the start of a new year. With an outstanding 43-point performance by junior Abe Hitz; good rebounding; the addition of some new energy and skilled ball-handling on the court in the form of new sophomore player Jason Grimes; and great teamwork in general the PSH Lions were able to play their way to an exciting 75-68 victory.

McKeesport took an early lead which they maintained throughout much of the first half. It wasn't until close to halftime that the PSH Lions took the lead and never looked back. At the half, the score was PSH 33, McKeesport 30. Within the first minute of the second half, junior Steve Molek was fouled while shooting a three-pointer, made the shot, and made the free throw to bring the score to PSH 37, McKeesport 30. Molek continued to play well, finishing the game with a solid 10 points. Senior

Nealy Rawlings chipped in 7 points of his own in addition to grabbing numerous offensive and defensive rebounds.

As of press time, the men's and women's basketball teams had just traveled to Penn State York for a double-header on Wednesday, January 24. Both teams returned home as victors, the men with a score of 74-51 and the women with a score of 83-38. These wins bring the men's overall record to 3-12, their PSUAC record to 3-5, the women's overall record to 7-6 and their PSUAC record to 4-1.

By the time this issue comes to print, the men's team will have traveled to away games at Penn State Fayette on January 26, Penn State Beaver on January 27 and an away double-header at Penn State Delaware County on February 3, with a home double-header versus Penn State Mt. Alto on February 1 in-between. The women's team will have participated only in the above-mentioned double-headers.

Both teams return to home play with a double-header the evening of Monday, February 5. The women's game begins at 6 p.m., with the men following around 8 p.m. The last regular-season home games for the teams will be on Thursday evening, February 15 versus Penn State Delaware County. The women will start at 6 p.m. and the men will follow around 8 p.m. Please come out and support your PSH Lions as they finish up their seasons!

Better deal urged for NFL retirees

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
The Associated Press

They limp through life, often too proud to ask for handouts but desperately in need of help. They are the aging NFL retirees and, as a rule, the older they are, the less they receive from the league's pension and disability funds.

"An embarrassment," is what famed former player and coach Mike Ditka called it.

"Twenty percent of nothing is nothing," former Bills offensive lineman Joe DeLamielleure said.

Ditka, DeLamielleure and another Hall of Famer, Lem Barney, joined one-time Packers star Jerry Kramer on Thursday to promote Kramer's endeavor to auction championship rings and other valuable memorabilia to raise money for their fellow retirees.

Ditka described the situation as "shameful," saying he received a \$100,000 donation from an owner of a sport other than football. When he sent letters to the 32 NFL owners asking for the same donation some time ago, he said he received one check for \$5,000 and another for \$10,000.

He said he sent those checks back. "It's a problem that should have been remedied and it's going to get remedied," Ditka said. "If they don't, a lot of people are going to be embarrassed."

Ditka brought up a number of players, John Mackey, the late Ernie Stautner, Doug Atkins and others less famous, who are aging and hurting. Perhaps the worst case was the late Mike Webster, the Hall of Fame Steelers center who suffered from mental illness that was widely attributed to head injuries.

He died homeless in 2002.

"I can't tell you today if Mike Webster would've been alive today," Ditka said. "I don't know. But I do know he wouldn't have been a damn street person. I know his family wouldn't have had to sue to get his benefits. It's not right. It's just not."

While Ditka wouldn't say precisely who's to blame, DeLamielleure wasn't shy about it. He blamed former commissioner Paul Tagliabue and players' union head Gene Upshaw for the growing discrepancy in the amount of money recent retirees and old-timers get in pension and health care.

"They have been in power for 20 years and have done nothing about it," said DeLamielleure, the former Bills lineman who is auctioning off a gold bracelet he received from O.J. Simpson.

But Upshaw, speaking later at a separate news conference, said: "For anyone to say that the NFLPA does not care about retired players is not responsible. They don't know the record, they don't know the body of work."

The league says \$126 million a year goes into pension and post-career disability benefits for retired players and their families. The accounts pay out \$60 million a year to those players, \$20 million of it for disability payments.

In the most recent collective bargaining agreement, payments from the pension fund were raised by 25 percent for players who retired before 1982 and 10 percent for those who retired after 1982.

But retired football players often have difficulty getting health insurance because of injuries suffered on the field, and the old-timers have long endured a health-care gap.

More work will be done, Upshaw

promised, though he conceded many retirees will probably never be completely happy.

"It's impossible, economics-wise," he said.

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello declined comment, saying commissioner Roger Goodell would address the subject Friday at his news conference.

Upshaw pointed out, however, that it's a reality of corporate America that those who work in later eras and make more money do better on their post-retirement plans than those who came before them.

Some see the NFL as a special exception. Those who played in the '50s, '60s and '70s laid the groundwork for the popularity of the league. They did it without the same level of medical care.

Yet today they hurt every bit as much, often more, as the players who retired much later.

Upshaw acknowledged Ditka's complaint, and said that too much red tape exists. Union president Troy Vincent said he wished retired players would talk about other issues, too.

"Every conversation with retired players is strictly about economics," he said. "You get tired of talking about it. Let's develop a relationship first. You're a Hall of Famer. What can I do to improve my game? It's not just all about economics."

To many, it is.

An idea hit Kramer when he saw the Super Bowl ring he lost in an airplane 25 years ago being auctioned online.

He tracked down the seller, yelled at him a while, and when things calmed down, they agreed to this: There would be an auction, but the proceeds would go to retirees in need.