

John Pinkman
Collegiate Baseball
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Super Bowl “2000 and Foul” Commentary

We interrupt the regular schedule of this column for an important message...

I'm writing this column on Tuesday morning, February 3, 2004, some 40 hours after the Super Bowl. It's taken me that long to settle into writing from a sustained period of anger. (It took me the next seven days to finish it.)

I need to tell you that someone else is as angry as you are. I'm sure we both feel helpless at times like this to transform our anger, as well as our belief system, into action. Most of us are in professional sports. We are full time athletic professionals managing and mentoring young people. We care about our country and its youth. We are stewards of integrity, values and direction. Our vehicle is sport.

The “Super Bowl of Smut,” as one writer put it, was not only about a few misfit singers with waning careers trying to literally “grab” the spotlight. No, it was the whole carnival act.

Tasteless commercials of flaming flatulence, charring a women's face and a promiscuous chimpanzee coming on to a woman, set the entire off-field disgusting theme of the evening. I wish I could boycott those products but the sad business truth is I can't begin to remember what products the commercials were selling!

I do remember Mike Ditka's attack on baseball. He and Levitra (a Viagra-type drug) pounded away at baseball being dull and in need of some artificial and temporary “excitement”. It seems we in baseball are not hip hop enough compared to football. You see, bad taste is in style.... *it sells!?*

Football doesn't need male enhancing drugs. Football has its own built-in stimulants – trash cans appropriately stationed for players to vomit into during 2 days in August, and vicarious men screaming at the top of their lungs to motivate 8 and 9 year olds to hit harder and conjure up the intense emotions of a predatory carnivore. Motivational techniques that call into question your manhood by leveraging fear, pain and embarrassment. After all as we are reminded it's not a game - it's WAR.

Sell that to the squad walking the streets in Iraq. Let's not forget to mention that the only attention CBS & the NFL paid to service members of a country officially at war was my boyhood pal from Teaneck NJ, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Peter Pace, escorting the singer of the national anthem. Boy was he ambushed!

But football needs the excitement generated by a half time show because of a tradition of boring mis-matched Super Bowl games. My good friend Paul Attner, the well respected NFL journalist with Sporting News who is hotter than a branding iron on this issue too, had these thoughts... The NFL has a real problem if the Super Bowl half time show has to hold the audience to sustain legitimacy for its second half commercial revenue. Truth is, nobody cares what it is. It could be MTV or a Disney Show; nobody cares what's on during the half.

Back to me. Let's not forget the NFL fans either. Halloween and re-runs of Let's Make A Deal have nothing on NFL fans. Oh, I could go on.

No other sporting event, except a routine NBA circus, has (de-)volved to the point where the sideline activity is more anticipated than the main event. Ironically this year's game stood on its own. What is really unsettling is the continual "stik it in yo face" assault by the shock generation - or should I say the **"Whatevah...." Generation**.

The NFL has embraced the politically baseless, meaningless and intellectually vacant **"Whatevah...." Generation**, promoting a fictitious and dramatically bizarre reality that is shared by a scant few wannabe thugs (but there is really not enough money in street crime), producers and entertainers promoting "I'll do anything for money, sex and attention." It is amazing to many of us that so many main stream young people identify with such a violent degrading lifestyle. They literally buy a value system that is so remote from own their experience.

The rap culture has crystallized every negative stereotype that so many have worked decades to dispel. Rap is an orchestrated and systematic language, clothing style and body language that I'm certain will train and provide jobs with a career opportunity for all its angry devotees. I'm not sure where, though.

Former Georgetown basketball coach John Thompson says there is no one in a position of corporate power who shows up to work in baggy pants to the waist, bold costume jewelry, with a crooked ball hat, holes in various parts of their body and signs needled into other body parts. You can't complain about not getting a good job opportunity when you show up like that.

All of this abuse of the human character is aimed at sheer profit. What is astonishing is that the educated members of the **"Whatevah...." Generation**, buy into it, support it and fund it. But then again, they have help from mainstream sports establishment – NFL and NBA.

As Lisa de Morales wrote in the Washington Post, "Did anyone believe in the NFL that turning over the entire half time show to MTV was a wholesome decision?"

Sally Jenkins wrote in the Washington Post: "In search of revenues and ratings, CBS attempted to lure back the 13-20 year old audience from cable. CBS and the NFL are disingenuous to be suddenly shocked and indignant at a bunch of MTV entertainers it

hired...Exactly what did the league expect when it rented the MTV culture?... For years NFL marketers have preyed on the sensibility of the nation to sell their sponsors' products. They have appropriated sex, patriotism, war and even Sept 11 as a commercial vehicle and used them all to peddle more Coors and cars."

MTV president Judy McGrath was quoted as saying she was horrified that "their entertaining, exciting, great half time show ended so badly in five seconds none of us knew anything about". As Donald Trump said on his so-called reality show... "Judy you're fired". Not because you thought the rest of the show was appropriate, but because at that very moment, MTV's web site already posted "Janet Gets Nasty!" "Jaws across the country hit the carpet at exactly the same time." And because your publicist warned the media prior to the incident that something big was about to happen.

But let's ignore the impact that the celebration of ripping clothes off of women has on professional sports. After all, it's just temporary shock value, right? Right, Kobe. Right, Daryl. Right, Alan. There is no perceived problem after all you told us that being a role model wasn't in your contract.

It certainly doesn't happen in college. Then again, on a New Year's Eve Bowl Game the Kansas quarterback had a rape complaint against him. But...that didn't really count. No, he wasn't arrested, charges filed or court date was set... as of game time. It just dominated the pre-game news, TV commentary and embarrassed the school for the entire game.

I'm sure that many of you are angry. Like me, at game time many of you feel powerless to change anything. You're wrong. You DO have the opportunity. ***You do have a strong voice.*** Coaches affect many people every year. And, quite frankly, there are even more parents who wish you would. And I have faith that you know exactly what to do. It can begin by simply listening to the words of the songs that you play prior to games. Take it from there.

...We return you now to your regularly scheduled baseball commentary.