

© 2010, CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.
PLEASE CREDIT ANY QUOTES OR EXCERPTS FROM THIS CBS
TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "CBS NEWS' FACE THE NATION."



February 7, 2010 Transcript

GUESTS: ROGER GOODELL
NFL Commissioner

SHANNON SHARPE
CBS Sports

PHIL SIMMS
CBS Sports

JIM NANTZ
CBS Sports

MODERATOR/
HOST: Mr. BOB SCHIEFFER
CBS News

This is a rush transcript provided
for the information and convenience of
the press. Accuracy is not guaranteed.
In case of doubt, please check with
FACE THE NATION - CBS NEWS
(202) 457-4481

TRANSCRIPT

BOB SCHIEFFER: Today on FACE THE NATION, from Sun Life Stadium in Miami, the Super Bowl, and the game that's become more than a game.

CROWD (in unison): Who dat? Who dat?

BOB SCHIEFFER: We'll ask the NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell about the state of the game and the new concerns about safety--has football become too dangerous for its own good? And what can be done about it?

For a roundtable on that and today's game, we'll bring in CBS play-by-play man Jim Nantz and CBS analyst Phil Simms and Shannon Sharpe.

But first, Roger Goodell on FACE THE NATION at the Super Bowl.

ANNOUNCER: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer, and now from Miami, the site of Super Bowl XLIV, Bob Schieffer.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And good morning, again.

The commissioner of the NFL Roger Goodell is not our only guest, also on the set today the Super Bowl Trophy--the Vince Lombardi Trophy, literally, put there with kid gloves. We may make some history as well today. If all goes as expected this will be our first FACE THE NATION broadcast, commissioner, that includes a blimp shot.

BOB SCHIEFFER: So we'll all be-- we'll all be looking for that.

Let's-- let's just start with the state of the game right now. You've had-- I can't remember when the NFL had a better season than they had--great teams, great stories, climaxing in this story--this Cinderella team from New Orleans playing against maybe the best player in the game today, Peyton Manning. But you got some tough days coming up because the contract between the owners and the players is about to run out. If you don't sign a contract, I take it, by March, this will be the first season in a long time when you had no salary caps. In other words you can sign a player for as much as you want to or as little as that person is willing to play for. Is that-- what would be the impact of that?

ROGER GOODELL (NFL Commissioner): Well, first of all, Bob, we are very fortunate. We've got a great game and today will be a great day for the NFL and I think for the country. It will be a chance to really celebrate and come together and-- and get away from our everyday troubles. But, you know, as it relates to our challenges going forward, we will have challenges going forward. I think that we're having dialogue with our players' association. And we want to get a deal, we want to get a fair deal. That we see that the players should fit-- paid fairly. And we will get a deal. It's just a matter of when. And as far as what it will do if we go into an uncapped season, I think it will not affect the quality of our game because we have collectively bargained a number of restrictions in our-- in our way where players can move with free agency and other terms, and I think it will continue to be a high quality product which is what we're focused on.

BOB SCHIEFFER: What the players are afraid of right now and what they're predicting is-- is a lockout for the 2011 season. They don't that. But DeMaurice Smith, the head of the players

union, said the other day on a scale of one to ten he thinks the chances of law-- owners locking out the players is-- is a fourteen. What do you think? You think--

ROGER GOODELL: Well, I—

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): --you agree with that?

ROGER GOODELL: I don't agree with that. I think the issue for us is to get an agreement, and we've got to work hard to get that agreement and a fair agreement. And I think that's what the ownership is-- is focused on. The owners don't win by having a lockout. Shutting down your business is not good for anybody and it's certainly not good for the players, it's certainly not good for the fans. And that's most important to us. We want to structure something that that really is going to lead us into the next decade in a-- in a way that's constructive. So the players benefit, the teams benefit, and most of all the game.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You split up the revenue now what? Players get fifty-four percent; the owners get forty-six percent? A lot of people say the owners just want to-- want to flip that.

ROGER GOODELL: Well, it's actually-- they get fifty-nine percent and-- and what's happened since we signed this new deal in 2006 is that they've actually gotten seventy-five percent of all incremental revenue since 2006.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You're talking about the players?

ROGER GOODELL: The players.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Umm-hmm.

ROGER GOODELL: We've generated about 3.6 billion dollars in incremental revenue since 2006, 2.6 of that went to the players. And the-- the owners are actually two hundred million dollars worse off. So there is a way to structure this where the players continue to benefit and the owners have the opportunity to invest back in the game and grow the game so that there are new-- more opportunities for our players.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, Commissioner, are you saying the players are going to have to take a reduction? They're going to have to be willing to get less revenue than they're getting now?

ROGER GOODELL: Well, what we're asking them to do is to recognize the incredible cost which they have already acknowledged that are required to grow revenue. You have to invest in these stadiums that we are in today. You need to find new ways of creating revenues, whether it's international or otherwise, and that takes investment. And we need to make sure that the owners have the capital to be able to do that. And then the pie grows and everyone benefits. And so I think the players will continue to see grow-- growing revenue-- growing salaries, but their salaries have doubled over the last decade.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Are-- are-- are the owners on the same page on this?

ROGER GOODELL: Yes. One of the things that's very important is to make sure that there's transparency in the process, not only with the players but with our owners and with our fans. And we want to make sure that that's there, so everyone understands the issues and we can address them reasonably.

BOB SCHIEFFER: This would be just kind of a layman's question I suppose but is there anything, is there any concession that either side could make that we get these negotiations going and-- and get it off the dime where it seems to be really stuck right now?

ROGER GOODELL: Well, I don't think so. I don't agree necessarily that it's stuck. I think where we are is trying to understand each other's position, understand the economics, we need to make sure we are on the same page from that stand point. And recognize the-- the-- the tremendous investment that's required to continue to grow the game. I think the players understand that and we have to continue to find creative ways to address it so the players benefit and the game can benefit.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Thought I'd ask you about the concussion question.

ROBERT GOODELL: Umm-hmm.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Was the NFL a little late to recognize how serious this-- this business of the possibility of brain damage is? I know now you're on the case and you're trying to do something about it. But it seems to me like it's taken a while for you to get to where you are.

ROGER GOODELL: I don't agree with that, Bob. We have been on this since the mid nineties. We've had a medical committee studying the affects of concussions--what we can do to minimize those concussions, what we can do with equipment to make sure the players are wearing the best possible equipment. But medical science is still trying to determine what are the long term effects of concussions--what-- how do we treat this? And I think what's great about what the NFL's done is the awareness that's been brought to this issue in the last several years. And we've had medical conferences, we've had congressional testimony. All of that has brought an awareness to the public sector of the serious--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Well, you got a-- you've got a lot of criticism from the Congress when you--

ROGER GOODELL (overlapping): Sure we do.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --you've talked of it. Let me just--

ROGER GOODELL (overlapping): But that was our study too, Bob.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, that's-- that's just what I-- I-- I was going to talk about here. The study that you conducted says that something like--NFL players are-- are five times more likely to have some sort of an injury--brain injury or-- or-- or memory-related illness than the-- than the public at large, and in-- in the age group of thirty to forty-nine, maybe nineteen times as likely. So this really is a serious problem.

ROGER GOODELL: Well, again, this was-- this was a phone survey, so this wasn't a medical survey. But what it's done has caused us to say, let's go back and see if there is something here that we need to understand better. We understand our responsibility to the general republic, to our players. And we are-- we will continue to be responsible and bring awareness to this so that people treat these injuries seriously and get the proper medical care.

For many years the culture had been quite different that concussions weren't serious injuries. I think we have changed that culture and made sure that people understand they are serious and they can have serious consequences if they're not treated properly, especially, if they're not treated properly.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I guess the co-chairman of the Atlanta Fa-- Falcons' president, co-chairman of the competition committee, said everything is on the table--everything from the thought of possibly changing the rules to changing the equipment. Where are you on that? I mean, football is a rough game. Can it be the same game, if like, some people are saying, maybe we ought to do away with the three-point stance for the lineman? I mean--

ROGER GOODELL: Well, we have changed the game and we've changed the culture and I think the rules-- changes that we've made over the last several years have made the game safer for our players. We need to continue to find new ways. There are techniques that are in the game that we think can lead to more serious injuries whether they're head injuries--the high hits to the head, we've done a lot of changes to defenseless receivers to make sure that players are in that position are not subject to-- to hits that can cause serious injuries.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I mean, can you ever foresee a time when lineman would not get down in a three-point stance in the NFL?

ROGER GOODELL: Well, it's possible. A lot of times, as you'll see, tonight, you-- you'll see a lot of players that never get down to three-point stance. So, it's possible that would happen.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I want to just talk a little bit about this game today, and this whole incredible story of New Orleans. And here you've got the Manning family that were kind of the heart and the soul of New Orleans--Archie was a quarterback for the Saint and all of that, and now his son, Peyton, going against New Orleans--this city that's come back from Katrina. What does that mean to you, Commissioner, into the game here?

ROGER GOODELL: Well, it means a great deal to the people of the Gulf Coast and that's-- that's important for all of us because we're a big part of that community. And we stood strong with them when the hurricane hit and their tragedy struck and it was something that we wanted to be a part of--helping rebuild that community. And I think the te-- the Saints became a symbol of hope. Not only did we physically help rebuild the city, particularly the Dome, but we've now since extended our lease and we've actually awarded a Super Bowl of the future to New Orleans.

So I think all of that has helped the people have a better sense of optimism and strength, and they've inspired a country with their courage and I think that the NFL has been a big part of that. We're proud of that. But it's the-- the people of the Gulf Coast that make it special.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You are, as far as I know, the first commissioner of any professional sports that started out as an intern in the commissioner's office. I mean, you really did.

ROGER GOODELL: Yes.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Where along the way did you one day say, you know, I think I'd like to be the commissioner?

ROGER GOODELL: You know, I really didn't focus on that, Bob. I was so fortunate to be a part of the NFL--to-- to have the opportunities that I had and great mentors along the way. And I just feel like the luckiest guy in the world to have this job. I was fortunate just to be a part of the NFL and that's all-- that was my career ambition. So the-- the commissioner was just sort of a-- it's a huge responsibility, something I take very seriously.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Commissioner, it's a pleasure to have you with us today and we're looking forward to a great ball.

ROGER GOODELL: Well, it's great to have you, Bob. It's just going to be a special day for the entire nation.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we'll be back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we're back here at the Super Bowl in Miami. Right next to me, my man, Shannon Sharpe; Phil Simms that great New York Giants quarterback; and right over there, of course, Jim Nantz. These two guys will be doing the play by play. You'll be telling us how it's all going to come out.

SHANNON SHARPE (CBS Sports): Bob, let me start by saying this, never in my wildest imaginations that I ever think I'd be on FACE THE NATION. My grandmother, my sister is watching back home and all my friends, and I'm on FACE THE NATION. Thanks for having me.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, I've-- I tell you I never in my wildest dreams thought we'd had blimp shot on FACE THE NATION. But they tell me we're going to have one. So when we-- when we see it we'll all wave.

SHANNON SHARPE: Exactly.

BOB SCHIEFFER: We'll all-- Shannon, I just want to start with you because the commissioner was talking about this whole idea of concussions and--

SHANNON SHARPE (overlapping): Umm-hmm.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --and injuries and that the game has got pretty dangerous. Everybody is trying to figure out what to do about it. Can you have football if it is not rough? I mean, I think that seems to be the question that everybody is grappling with.

SHANNON SHARPE: I don't think you can. I-- I think the guys have gotten bigger. They've gotten faster. But the dimensions of the field have stayed the same. I think the thing is now the NFL is doing as good a job as they possibly can with the diagnosis of concus-- of concussions. When I first got into the League they didn't know any better. Now they know better, they do better--they diagnose it-- they diagnose it properly. They get the guys off the field. They're doing everything they possibly can. I think they're taking steps in the right direction. But I think there's more that can be done.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, what about you, Phil? I mean, some people say the game's got too dangerous for its own good. I mean, they're going to have to do something here. And I don't

think there's any question people now see there's connection between concussions and brain damage that they didn't see before.

PHIL SIMMS (CBS Sports): Bob, I think they're making a lot of great changes in the NFL. I think the rule changes that we see--that's the one thing I love about the League, it's not like the other sports, they're not afraid to change it whether it helps TV, helps the enjoyment of for the fans and the safety of the players. So every whe-- every year we see rule changes. And the biggest thing is right now too they're going to-- the equipments is going to get better. The helmet is going to-- they-- they're going to revolutionize it, I think, in the next couple of years and that will help all these head injuries and-- and they're going to in the right direction.

JIM NANTZ (CBS Sports): You know the media has a role in this too. We have celebrated and over-celebrated and replayed the big collisions. We've had them sponsored in the highlights-- the hit of the week--and other various names that really promote players to go out there and viciously lay someone out. And, you know what's happened, Bob, is that the players are faster and they're stronger. So--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): And they're big.

JIM NANTZ: --the collisions, they're bigger. So the collisions, of course, create more damage.

SHANNON SHARPE: And football is based on the premise of imposing your will on someone. And what you try to do is hit someone as physically, as hard as you possibly can, legally, to impose your will to let him know you're the toughest, you're the physical-- the most physical team of that day and that's the way a lot of teams win football games.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, they're-- they're talking, some people, as you all know, are talking about may be doing away with the three-point stance for the-- for the lineman and in-- except when you got down close to the goal.

PHIL SIMMS (overlapping): That's-- that's one rule change they're not going to get away with.

SHANNON SHARPE: I know.

PHIL SIMMS: That won't happen. And like I said the-- the changes, what's really changed a lot in football is now-- it used be everybody was close together and you just kind of ran into each other. Now, with the passing offence, they spread the field from sideline to sideline. So that just gives guys more space, more time, and more speed. So, but like I said, I-- I really have a lot of faith. I think they're making some good--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): But I bet what you want, Phil, is that they say you can't tackle the quarterback, Phil?

PHIL SIMMS: No, you're wrong, completely wrong. No. I want them-- well, I don't want to say that. I was just saying, I want them to go back to the rules that we played under, but they got to be careful there too. You got to give the defense some chance.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Right.

PHIL SIMMS: We can't do every single thing in football for the offense.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I want to ask you guys about-- let's just talk about this game. I mean, my heaven, I mean, I-- I probably know more about baseball than I do about football. But I think one thing I do know about is a good story. And I can't think of a better story in a long, long time than Peyton Manning--coming from New Orleans, the whole Manning family growing up and down there, and now he's going against New Orleans' Cinderella team. I mean, how-- it didn't get any better than this, Jim?

JIM NANTZ: No, really it's a feel-good Super Bowl. There's not a villain here, Bob. There's not like a-- a-- a group that, you know, anyone has any reason to say I don't like that team. I don't like the way they play football. They're class organization, you know, Peyton is in the midst of building a-- a career that might be one of the biggest, if not the biggest of all time, today will be another step in that direction.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Is he the best player in the League?

JIM NANTZ: Well, I think there's no question. He's right now. He's won the MVP for the fourth time. That's an all-time record. Then you got the same story which I believe if they win here today this is going to be the feel-good story of all feel-good stories in the history of the Super Bowl. I can't imagine anything to match. The whole country will celebrate with them--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): And everybody--

JIM NANTZ: --except for Indianapolis.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --talks about-- about him, but what about Drew Brees? I mean, you know, I just wrote down some notes here. Here's a kid that-- he took his team two undefeated seasons in high school. Won the state championship in Texas, which is a pretty good prize good to win. He took his team Purdue to the Rose Bowl for the first time in thirty-four years. And now he takes New Orleans to the Super Bowl. I mean, this guy didn't do anything but win.

PHIL SIMMS: Well, I must say this is about Drew Brees. I'm down in the New Orleans practice and they all go, hey, don't forget about our quarterback. And I go nobody is forgetting about him, just remember, Peyton Manning's been doing it for twelve years. So he's built on to this to all of his success. Drew Brees, his fourth year under Sean Payton, I say, let him do this for eight more years. He'll be the only story when he comes to the Super Bowl.

JIM NANTZ: And he said that to Drew the other day, when he met with him on Thursday morning, and he says, "He's been playing for eight years longer than you have." Because Drew really gets it. He's one of these compulsive personalities, perfectionists. I think it was time how he realizes this game can put him in that upper echelons with the Mannings and the Bradys. Roethlisberger won a couple of Super Bowls. He knows his career, if it's going to be a hall-of-fame career, rest on days like today.

SHANNON SHARPE: And that's what happens because as great as Drew Brees has played, you look at Peyton Manning. I think a lot of quarterbacks get overlooked because Peyton Manning plays so well. And I would-- I've made the-- I was talking on radio the other day, I say when you really look Peyton Manning if you just take his career he's going to throw-- he's going to win between twelve and fourteen games every year. He'll throw between four and forty-five hundred yards with thirty touchdowns. Unless somebody has a Tom Brady season of 2007, who else do you give the MVP to? Who?

PHIL SIMMS: I know.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, now that I've seen the blind side, I've become an expert on blocking and the left tackles and all that, there are a couple of other guys out on the field today besides Peyton Manning and Drew Brees. Who-- who would-- who-- who-- who should we keep our eye on, Shannon?

SHANNON SHARPE: Well, I-- I think biggest storyline is the-- is the-- the-- the Dwight Freeney's health, because you don't know if he's going to play or how much he's going to play and if he does play, how effective will he be? He's the best defensive player that was going to take the field provided he's healthy. And that greatly increases New Orleans' chances of winning this ballgame if he can't get constant pressure on Drew Brees.

PHIL SIMMS: I would say this, you know, as we talk up here today and all week long it's been about what? Passing the football.

SHANNON SHARPE: Yep.

PHIL SIMMS: And so the defense is we got to stop the pass. Well, if you're putting everybody back there to stop the pass who's going to stop the run? So it would not surprise me at all if one of the running backs for either team today has a special day and can be the MVP of the-- MVP of the game when it's over.

SHANNON SHARPE: Do you really believe Indy can run the football? They average (INDISTINCT) 9.5 a game.

PHIL SIMMS: I really believe there's a chance they could run the ball well today.

JIM NANTZ: I believe there's a good chance we're going to have a punt return for a touchdown today--Reggie Bush. There has never been a punt return in the history of the Super Bowl. Now, he has played in four play-off games in his Saint's career. He's scored five touchdowns. He's scored in every single play-off game. He's a game changer, game breaker. I would say the X-factor--Reggie Bush and Reggie Wayne on the Colts' side.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You think it'd be a high-scoring game or low-scoring game?

JIM NANTZ: I'm going high-scoring. Tonight, it's going to be perfect. These little breezes we're feeling right now, they're going to settle down. It's going to be ideal weather for the quarterbacks to be able to throw the football the way they want to throw it.

PHIL SIMMS: Now if both teams score in the twenties, is that high scoring? So that's what I think--both teams will be in the twenties. I think it will be close.

SHANNON SHARPE: I think one team will be in the thirties. I don't really see, with Dwight Freeney being out of the ballgame, guys, I just don't see how they get constant pressure on him. Another thing, the field goal kicker--Garrett Hartley is in his second year, Matt Stover is in his twentieth year.

JIM NANTZ: I see it this way, Bob. Temperature is going to be in the fifties. The winner is going to be in the forties and the loser is going to be in thirties. Tune in. Okay.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Wow. That sounds good. Guys, it's great to talk to you.

SHANNON SHARPE: Thanks for having me on.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Really appreciate. Be back with a final thought in just a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally today, several people asked me this week--with all that's going on how can you leave Washington and politics behind and broadcast from a football game? The answer is easy enough: We went to the airport and got a direct flight. And I don't even follow pro football that closely. My interest in the game starts and stops with my college team--the TCU Horned Frogs who, in case you missed it, had a pretty fair team last year.

But here is the deal. On Super Bowl Sunday, it's hard to get a conversation going about anything but the Super Bowl. Want to talk politics inside the beltway maneuvering, good luck. But on this one day, I don't think so. The truth is the Super Bowl long ago became more than just a football game. It's part of our culture like turkey at Thanksgiving and lights at Christmas, and like those holidays beyond their meaning, a factor in our economy. Even people who don't like football tune in to watch the commercials. You can't say that about many things.

So you could argue we're here because the Super Bowl is big news. I won't. I believe it's more important than that. I think it's one of those breaks when we can put aside the things that really matter and for a few hours just gather with our friends and family and enjoy something that makes absolutely no difference in the course of human events. We need that every once in a while, maybe lately more than ever. I feel lucky to be a part of it.

Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And that's it for us. Tune in to our CBS Sports coverage of Super Bowl XLIV starting at noon Eastern. Katie Couric will interview President Barack Obama during the pre-game show at 4:30. We'll be back in Washington next Sunday.