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## NFL and Notable Holdouts -Olympics Awarded to Beijing

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE  
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The National Football League is heading into its fourth week and I haven't mentioned it yet. This is because Pete Roselle is no longer the Commissioner, and as a result the League has lost some of its majesty. Roselle always had the appearance and bearing of a deity, and this radiated to the League itself. With Pete gone, the NFL looks like just another bunch of mortals making big bucks off the boredom of the populace and the sweat of gladiators. The piety is no longer there.

So with three weeks gone a few observations seem in order. First free agency has not killed the league. Nor has it particularly enriched the players. Some teams have clearly helped themselves, others will probably always struggle.

It's a toss-up on which is the bigger story: Joe Montana in Kansas City or Emmitt Smith AWOL in Dallas. Montana, a free agent pickup for the Chiefs has played two of the three Kansas City games, and the Chiefs are a corresponding two wins and one loss. Whether Joe will take the Chiefs to the Promised Land remains to be seen, but note two things. It has been a while since a Marty Shottenhiemer team has beaten a John Elway team. On the other hand in that same game Montana couldn't get the Chiefs into the end zone.

This brings up another oddity of the young season. Nick Lowery's five field goals leading Kansas City to victory Monday night, made that game the fourth already this season in which the winning team did not score a touchdown. In all of last season this freak of football happened only five times. This is not a bad argument for changing the point value of the field goal, perhaps pro-rating it from one to three points according to distance.

Meanwhile in Dallas the Cowboys were on a rather rough ride. Emmitt Smith's holdout, or was it Jerry Jones' miscalculation, kept the nation breathless for nearly three weeks. The defending Super Bowl champions have spotted the league two games and now must play even better than normal the rest of the way. This ill-conceived attempt by Jerry Jones to prove some point or another, simply didn't work, and although Emmitt dropped his price he still won the battle. Jones could have had the identical settlement well before the season began, but he was too intent on proving his power and determination to the league and the players. But Jones proved nothing except his bad judgement, and

he may have disrupted the Cowboys enough to have ruined the season. If so, I certainly wouldn't mind.

Over in Tampa a similar scenario is being played out with Paul Gruber. Whether this means anything to the Bucs seems doubtful. The Bucs are still the Bucs, and Sam Wyche had better lay in a big supply of Peptol Bismol because it looks as though it's going to be another gut wrenching season by the Bay. And in the growing annals of Buc's disasters and missteps falling under the category of the "Curse of Doug Williams," did everyone duly note that Vinny Testeverde, yes its the same Vinny, led the Cleveland Browns come from behind victory against the Al Davis Raiders last Sunday?

The surprising Browns are 3-0, along with the Giants, New Orleans, and Philadelphia. As for the Eagles will this be the year in which Randall Cunningham puts it all together, stays healthy, and leads Philadelphia to the Super Bowl? It certainly is much too early to talk about anything like that, but he has been outstanding and already a miracle worker two weeks in a row.

Two other quick notes. Beijing has been chosen as the venue for the Olympic games in the year 2000. This selection process has produced some intense rhetoric from inside China and from around the world. U.S. Senators and Representatives passed resolutions condemning China as an Olympic site, while human rights groups urged rejection of the Chinese bid. For their part the Chinese have lashed back suggesting that a failure to choose China as the site could lead to a boycott of the '96 games in Atlanta. All of this of course points out once again what a tremendous force the Olympic movement is in promoting human understanding, a sense of fairness and sportsmanship, and world peace. I have always felt that the Olympic movement is second only to the Miss Universe Pageant in this respect.

And finally this first great hockey quote of the year. After the first game ever for the Florida Panthers, a member of the victorious Tampa Bay Lightning team was interviewed. In analyzing the game he said, "The thing about playing the Panthers is that you have to be ready to play, because the Panthers play hard every night."

Think about it.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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