

11-9-1994

George Foreman - The Breeder's Cup - Lou Holtz and Notre Dame Poor Winners

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Recommended Citation

Crepeau, Richard C., "George Foreman - The Breeder's Cup - Lou Holtz and Notre Dame Poor Winners" (1994). *On Sport and Society*. 418.
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety/418>

SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR H-ARETE
November 9, 1994

Cheeseburgers. Ben Gay. Maalox. The George Foreman Trinity. On Saturday Night November 5, 1994, George Foreman at age 45 won the Heavyweight Championship of the World. Was it a blow against ageism? Or was it just one more indication that the world of heavyweight boxing was heading down the road to the World Wrestling Federation?

Before you run out to one of the local watering holes and challenge someone nineteen years your junior by whipping them with your AARP card, get control of your euphoria. Let's face it, it was reassuring to see someone at this age and shape, George was a less than svelte 250 lbs., cold konk even a stiff. But the fact of the matter is that Foreman was getting pounded and losing this fight badly before Michael Moorer blundered into the knockout punch.

Nonetheless it was a remarkable achievement for someone to come back to win the title twenty years after losing it to Muhammed Ali in the rumble in the jungle. It was also three decades since George Foreman waved the American Flag after winning the gold medal at Mexico City. And although this was a remarkable achievement it must be remembered that Nolan Ryan pitched his seventh no-hitter at age 44, Jack Nicklaus won the Master's at 46, and most remarkable of all Gordie Howe was still playing hockey at age 51.

Saturday was also the day for what has become one of the greatest events in all of sport, the world series of horse racing, the Breeder's Cup. It was the 11th running of this magnificent event, and for the third time it took place at Churchill Downs. Coming at the end of the racing season the Breeder's Cup has become the determiner of most of the Eclipse Awards over the past several years, and with the tremendous prize money and prestige at stake it now attracts the best horses from around the world.

There are seven races, five carrying purses of \$1M each. The Turf, a mile and a half for three year olds and up, carries a purse of \$2M, and the Classic run over the mile and a quarter dirt track carries a purse of \$3M. It is the richest day in racing in prize money, the richest day in gambling with the worldwide handle estimated at \$85M, and it is the only day when nearly all the best horses in the world are gathered in one place.

This year as always there were long shot winners in a couple of races while four of the seven races ended neck and neck. Horses were there from France, England, Ireland, Canada and all across the United States. Owned by Arabian Sheiks and an ex-high school basketball coach these were the best horses in the world for the best day of racing in the season. The Breeders Cup is now one of the premier events on the yearly sports calendar.

Those of you who have heard these commentaries before know that I end each week by saying something about not having to be a good sport to be a bad loser. Well you also don't have to be a good sport to be a bad winner, and one of my favorite people in all of sports proved that once again two Saturdays ago. Lou Holtz was busy demonstrating that he still owns one of the worst acts in all of sport.

Notre Dame, once an honored and respected name in intercollegiate athletics, was pounding Navy by thirty points in one of those timeless mismatches that have become a part of almost everyone's schedule. With less than two minutes remaining the Flighty Irish went back to punt. It was a fake. An easy first down. Salt in the wound. But then with time running out the Notre Dame quarterback did the honorable thing. He took the snap and went down to his knee. He then did it again. There was no point in humiliating the Navy and running up the score. Let the clock run out. But then came another snap, and this time while everyone expected the quarterback to go to his knee, he suddenly popped up and threw a pass to a wide open receiver beyond the disbelieving Navy defense. A Lou Holtz special.

This is the kind of thing that we have come to expect from the truly classless, low-rent, pathetic creatures who call themselves educators and builders of character, and masquerade as sportsmen. Lou Holtz is a disgrace to coaching, intercollegiate athletics, the University of Notre Dame, the game of football, and anything at all that is decent and honorable in sport.

It is a great pleasure to welcome Lou to Orlando and it will be a even greater pleasure if Florida State beats Lou by something over 75 points and kicks a field goal as the clock runs out with a contingent from the Naval Training Center looking on. As Bill Conlin noted this past week on ESPN the new slogan at Navy is "Damn the Torpedoes, Lou Holtz ahead! He's the good sport who fired a cruise missile at a sinking rowboat."

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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