

1-24-1996

The Triple X Super Bowl

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Recommended Citation

Crepeau, Richard C., "The Triple X Super Bowl" (1996). *On Sport and Society*. 477.
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety/477>

SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE
January 24, 1996

It is the mid-winter ritual of American life. It is the premier event on the American Sporting calendar. It is the Super Bowl. And this year it is Super Bowl XXX, the triple-X rated Super Bowl.

This doesn't mean that the Dallas Cowgirls will be doing something obscene at halftime, or that Dieon Sanders will be caught in a compromising position. It means that across America the levels of conspicuous consumption will reach obscene levels at this the thirtieth renewal of the championship of professional football.

The game has become secondary to the event, at which the primary object is to sell something. The American advertising industry will spend more money on this one day of television than on any other single event. One minute of television advertising sells for over a million dollars, and the peddlers of products are stumbling over one another to buy them. At the first three Super Bowls rates were \$85,000 per minute.

This year all of this wild spending for advertising has spilled over into a new arena, cyberspace. Advertisers have found that sponsorship of web sites is the new hot spot to make their pitch, both audio and visual, to the upscale consumer. The cost for promotion of a home-page is running at \$150,000. Advertising space is being sold at the rate of four cents per view. One estimate is that 2.5 million people will visit the official internet site of the Superbowl which has been available since December 27 and will stay active through the 4th of February. It's sponsors are NBC and Microsoft.

What can be found there besides the advertising, are an amazing assortment of information packages, featuring the history of the game, the statistical records of the game, the results of a the previous games, all sorts of directions to the restaurants and hotels in the Phoenix area, the tourists attractions of the region with maps, house and condo rentals complete with photos(my personal choice is an attractive three bedroom-two-bath patio home with pool). One bedroom condos are \$300 per night, while the rent for the home was not listed.

The Funfacts web site offers some interesting and little known bits of information. No president has ever attended a Super Bowl, while two vice-presidents have, Bush and Gore. Only one

game was not a sellout, the first. Only one player has played in Super Bowls in three different decades, Gene Upshaw. Eighteen starting quarterbacks have worn the number 12. Al Hirt played the national anthem at the first game. Crime rates drop significantly during the game, water usage goes up significantly at timeouts and halftime. 750 million people in over 170 countries will see this game on television. You can even find a recipe for Super Bowl dip.

One of the most interesting web sites is to be found at www.gospelcom.net. At this location you will find out why Dr. Norman Vincent Peale said at Super Bowl X: "If Jesus were alive today, he would be at the Super Bowl." At this website he virtually is there.

Here you can order your Super Bowl outreach kit so that you can have a Christian Super Bowl party. The Kit comes with a 12 minute video (ideal for the halftime show) hosted by CNN's Fred Hickman and featuring All-Pros Brent Jones and Steve Wallace of the Super Bowl Champion Forty-Niners. Jones and Wallace discuss their close friendship and mutual faith in Jesus Christ. Other players offer testimonies on such subjects as Racial Harmony and Salvation.

Also included in the kit are ten Sports Spectrum Magazines, and the 16 page More Than Winning Booklet. Both are ideal for doorprizes at your party, and both provide additional testimonies and messages of Salvation delivered with the appropriate sports metaphors.

Last year's Reggie White Video was credited with 30 young people being saved in Melbourne, while a reported 4,200 Reggie White Super Bowl parties led to 2,500 decisions for Christ. Is this why they call it Super Sunday?

But it is a different kind of religion that will see the largest number of worshippers for the Super Bowl. It is estimated that well over \$70M will be laid down legally on this game by those who worship at the altar of lady luck. The line opened with Dallas giving 11 1/2 points and it has moved as high as 13 1/2 during the week. Betting has been intense for two weeks now and will continue up to game time.

Meanwhile scalpers and ticket brokers are getting anywhere from \$1000 to \$4000 per ticket, and praising the Lord with a vigor unmatched at any Reggie White Party.

But for most of us it will be chips and dip and TV sets, and by half-time we'll likely be wondering once again, what all the excitement was about.

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

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