

2-2-2007

Super Bowl excesses

Richard C. Crepeau
University of Central Florida, richard.crepeau@ucf.edu

 Part of the [Cultural History Commons](#), [Journalism Studies Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), [Sports Management Commons](#), and the [Sports Studies Commons](#)
Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety>
University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Commentary is brought to you for free and open access by the Public History at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in On Sport and Society by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Crepeau, Richard C., "Super Bowl excesses" (2007). *On Sport and Society*. 765.
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety/765>

SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR H-ARETE
Super Bowl excesses
FEBRUARY 2, 2007

Over the past week I have revisited several years of Super Bowl columns. After re-reading each of them three questions have haunted me. What are the greatest moments of the absurd and sleaze kind in the history of the Super Bowl? Is it possible for anything associated with the Super Bowl this year to achieve the lofty heights set by previous Super Bowl Experiences? Is it possible for the Super Bowl to continue to grow in scale as it has done every year for the past forty years? These are the pressing questions that cry out for answers on the eve of Super Bowl XLI.

Easily the greatest moment came at Super Bowl XXXIII. Eugene Robinson was arrested the night before the game a few hours after he received The Bart Starr Award for high moral character by Athletes-in-Action, a group promoting Christian values among athletes. The jokes about Robinson starting a new group, Athletes-Looking-for-Action, spread almost as quickly as the news of his bust.

It is hard to imagine that this can be topped, although Hollywood Henderson sniffing coke during Super Bowl XIII from a "Vicks," not Vick's inhaler, certainly should receive Honorable Mention. Miami seems to have been a venue favored by boys in trouble, as Cincinnati Bengal Stanley Wilson was unable to play after he was found in his hotel room in a drug haze the night before Super Bowl XXIII.

True, it is only Friday, but so far no player has been found crawling along South Beach at 4 a.m. or soliciting one of Miami's finest. This Super Bowl does, however, have non-players contending for the sleazy spotlight.

One is a story built on the new technologies and the determination to market everything and anything on the planet. Sarah Spain may be the Queen of Super Bowl XLI. This enterprising young woman, native of Chicago and currently living in California, made the rather interesting move to auction herself off on E-Bay to anyone willing to take her to the Super Bowl. Apparently the offers she was getting in an atmosphere of fierce bidding were of the type that led E-Bay to pull the plug on Sarah's solicitation.

In some circumstances this might be the end of the story, but in the commercial carnival of the Super Bowl, it could only be the beginning of the story. An enterprising marketing team from "Axe," the new body spray that draws young women in heat to the male user like flies to shit, saw an opportunity in Sarah's E-Bay rejection. "Spray More, Get More," is one of Axe's marketing slogans and, if you have seen the television spots, you have to be impressed by its drawing power.

Axe came forward and gave Ms. Spain four tickets to the Super Bowl with the provision that she bring two of her girlfriends (yes, that quaint term is still used) and that she chose one male to accompany them to the game. The male was to be chosen from entries made by e-mail containing a photo and a narrative explaining why he should be the one. Apparently wanting to limit costs and maximize profits, Axe will not be providing transportation for the winning entry, thus adding another layer of cheapness to the entire enterprise. The address to enter was also quite hot at hotsuperbowldate@hotmail.com.

Jennifer Gordon of Chicago is in contention for a Super Bowl XLI low light. In the later stages of pregnancy and wanting two tickets to the game, Jennifer offered her extended belly as an advertising billboard. She had many offers but in the end an on-line Auction company acquired the space for two fifty-yard line seats. Could the media people possibly fail to splash pictures of the now famous belly across the world?

As to the question of the future growth, one only need look at the trends of four decades to venture a guess. What started in Los Angeles as a rather modest event, the AFL-NFL Championship game, was not a sellout, nor a major television hit. However, it didn't take long before the re-named game began to draw sellout crowds with high prices matching an even higher demand. Tickets now go mainly to corporate sponsors and politicians, and ordinary fans must turn to the free market where tickets this year are currently bringing anywhere from \$1500 to \$10,000 dollars each.

The corporate parties, which once were few in number, are now a weeklong staple of the Super Bowl scene. Some of the hot tickets in this category are for the Playboy, Penthouse, and Maxim parties. The Playboy event, held at the American Airlines Arena, is selling for \$2,500 per ticket, roughly the price of an end-zone seat for the game. For those with smaller budgets, the Penthouse Party is a mere \$1000 a ticket. There is also the

NFLPA party, the ESPN party, the CBS party, and countless others.

The commercials keep growing in cost and interest. Many people watch the Super Bowl ONLY for the commercials, while the cost of running one has risen to \$2.6M for a thirty second spot. CBS has little difficulty selling out the time slots. Production costs for most commercials run about \$1M.

Beyond the parties there are any number of ancillary events many of which raise money for charities. Several golf tournaments, a major bowling event, and a business seminar are on offer. Numerous religious groups are descending on Miami either to protest the Super Bowl excesses or to capitalize on them, with more of the later than the former. Beyond Miami there are Super Bowl parties and events in every nook and cranny of the United States, or wherever a group of three or more Americans are gathered anywhere on the globe.

Can it get bigger? Of course. And if it can get bigger it will get bigger. There are only two things that can stop it: a major economic collapse of the United States or a hysterical wave of sanity sweeping across the country. The former is more likely than the latter as XLI years of this game have shown.

As Thorstein Veblen taught us, there is no bottom.

Party on.

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.

Copyright © 2007 by Richard C. Crepeau