

Commissioner Goodell with T.J. Simers & Fred Roggin of AM 950 Los Angeles
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T.J. Simers: On how the NFL turned off all of Los Angeles coming out of the New Orleans owners meeting?

Roger Goodell: We're trying to be direct with our fans, and tell them what our challenges are. You know that I'm a pretty direct person, but from our standpoint, we've been working on the L.A. solution and we're trying to be part of that solution and doing something that's good not only for the NFL, but the community. We are just being direct with what our challenges are.

Fred Roggin: On has the league made it impossible for Los Angeles to have a franchise?

Goodell: Has the league made it impossible? If you re-call back in the late nineties, we gave an expansion franchise to Los Angeles, and we did that on the expectation that we wanted to be there and as long as people felt like there was a solution that worked for us. What happened is a long story, but the bottom line is it was not a solution that worked for the NFL, and we're not going to make a bad deal. I think what everyone has to understand is that the city of Los Angeles is a great city with or without the NFL. The NFL has done very well without the city of Los Angeles. We think that we'd be better together, but it has to be a solution that works for the community and the NFL.

Simers: On can this deal be made without the NFL getting any public money contributions from the city of Los Angeles?

Goodell: We haven't been talking about public money. That is an issue that either the media or politicians raise all the time. Listen, you're talking to an entity that is bringing hundreds of millions of dollars of investment to your community, and trying to solve an issue that you're facing in your community, which is the state of the Coliseum. That is one of the things people have told us here, is that the Coliseum needs significant work done, and that's why they're looking at other alternatives to see what they can do. We are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Simers: On hasn't the league already agreed to providing private funding?

Goodell: We have agreed to put private funding in. We have done that in many markets. As a matter of fact, we're the only league in the world that I know of that puts league money into stadiums around the country. We would do that, but it has to make good business sense.

Simers: On is the main issue the cost of the stadium?

Goodell: The expense is one of the challenges we're facing there. Here in New York, we're trying to get a stadium built for two NFL franchises exceeding a billion dollars. It's a tough nut to crack, and it's a challenge we're going to have to figure out, but we'll figure it out.

Roggin: On it being as simple as if A, B and C to get done, then we'll have a franchise in Los Angeles?

Goodell: I don't think it's that simple. I think the biggest thing we can do is to work with not only the political leaders, but also the business leaders to quietly try to figure out how we can find a win-win solution for the community and the NFL. I don't like the roller coaster either. That's why we've been trying to be very direct. We've had good dialogue with many of the leaders both politically and business wise, and we know there are fans out there who want to see NFL football back, and we want to bring it back. They just want to see the end game, when the team starts and we understand that.

Simers: On David Israel's comments that the NFL and Los Angeles negotiations are dead?

Goodell: Is that a proclamation by Mr. Israel?

Simers: Yes, it was.

Goodell: I just wanted to understand what Mr. Israel was saying.

Simers: On Israel, speaking on the behalf Mayor Villaraigosa and Governor Schwarzenegger, states that the NFL has worn out its welcome in Los Angeles?

Goodell: I have had very good dialogue with the mayor, and I've had numerous conversations recently. I have been very direct with him and I think he's appreciative of that. I know they want results, and we want results too, but I can only be direct on this. I'm not in this as a popularity contest. I'm in this to do what's best for the NFL at the end of the day.

Simers: On what your dad would have said when you became the NFL commissioner?

Goodell: I hope that he would have been very proud. He knew before he passed away that I was pursuing my dream of working for the NFL, and that was a great thing, but I don't think he would have ever imagined me sitting in this chair right now.

Simers: On how you started as an NFL intern in 1982 and how we have a high school kid in our office working with us?

Goodell: I just spoke with Jason, and I told him to choose his role models carefully (laughter). He told me he wanted to be a sportswriter like T.J. Simers (laughter).

Simers: On what's been the biggest surprise since assuming the commissioner post?

Goodell: It's a good question, and I have to tell you it's really how people treat you differently. You're of a different status, and that's difficult for me because I feel like I'm just the same guy that was doing my job three months ago.

Roggin: On what was the process like waiting to find out if you would be the next commissioner, and how would you have felt if you weren't selected?

Goodell: I was prepared for that. When I was sitting in the room I felt like I had done everything possible. That I had represented myself the way I wanted to be represented and put my best foot forward. If they had decided not to select me, I was prepared for that and ready to move on in life.

Tracy Simers: On have you spoken with Commissioner Tagliabue recently about Los Angeles?

Goodell: Yes, I have. I spoke with him in advance of the meeting in New Orleans. I told him where I thought we were and he understood. Again, I think you have to find a solution that works for all parties.

Simers: On how the NFL is going to play a game in Germany before a game in Los Angeles, and does that make any sense?

Goodell: I've heard that line before, and you're using someone else's line T.J., and I'm disappointed in you (laughter).

Simers: On a prediction of what year Los Angeles is going to have a franchise?

Goodell: I've never been on a timetable. I hope we can bring it back successfully and give all those fans something great to cheer about besides great football from USC, UCLA and a lot of high schools that play there. We want to be back in Los Angeles with NFL football.

Simers: On can we be there before 2011?

Goodell: I sure hope so. I'll work at it.

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