

An Interview With:

ROGER GOODELL

ROGER GOODELL: I certainly want to thank the ownership for their confidence. I committed over the last several months that I would do my best to help promote the **National Football League**. I told them that we've had the two greatest sports commissioners in the history of all sports with Paul Tagliabue and Pete Rozelle; I've been fortunate to work for both of them. I can't think them enough for the opportunities they have both given to me.

And I'm thrilled by this challenge. I'm excited. It hasn't hit me yet how big a job it's going to be, I'm sure, but I look forward to the challenge and thank them again for their confidence in my abilities.

So thank you very much. I look forward, and if you've got some questions, I'd be happy to take them.

Q. This goes back to Paul. The first thing Paul said when he was elected commissioner was somebody asked him why he wanted the job and he said because it would be fun. You've worked in the league almost your entire career. Do you think it's going to be fun?

ROGER GOODELL: I wouldn't say that. The Commissioner said that.

No, I think it's a great challenge. I must tell you, I'm very fortunate, and I know that. I've spent my life following my passion, what I always loved to do. And I know that from my standpoint, I can't think of a greater job and a greater league to be associated with, so I'm thrilled.

Q. How did you get the news that you had been selected as the next commissioner?

ROGER GOODELL: The gentleman here to my right came upstairs when I was sitting upstairs. I was not watching the NFL Network. I was doing some work trying to be distracted, and Mr. Rooney came up and knocked on the door and told me. Thankfully I just put my pants on. (Laughter).

Q. Was it a nerve-wracking process, just the wait?

ROGER GOODELL: You mean this afternoon or the entire process?

Q. Both.

ROGER GOODELL: Yes, both were as a matter of fact. It was a very good process. In fact, I've said to people over the past several days, that I think the process has been very good for me personally and very good for the **National Football League**. It was open. I think there were some very strong candidates put forth. As I said, I'm honored they selected me.

It helped me reflect a little bit on what I've done, what I think I can do for the league in the future, and it was very helpful in preparing me for this opportunity.

Q. What do you think the biggest issue facing you is, Roger?

ROGER GOODELL: It's pretty tough to focus on one issue. I think the league is fortunate to have great success. It's also got a great foundation on which to build.

But I think we've got a lot of challenges to face, and the good news is I think we'll face them together with 32 owners that are focused and prepared, because I think the process allowed us to talk about a lot of those issues and what we need to do together to address those.

Q. When does it sound like you are officially taking office?

ROGER GOODELL: That's a good question, Adam. The Commissioner and I have not discussed it other than very briefly downstairs. We will agree to that sometime over the next several days, but I would assume before the regular season starts.

Q. Paul had some pretty big shoes to fill when he started, and now you succeed a very successful commissioner. How daunting is that challenge to you?

ROGER GOODELL: As I said, I think I've had the good fortune of working for the two greatest sports commissioners, and I know how big those shoes are, both literally and figuratively.

He is a gold standard for me. I will do my best, and I'll work hard at it, but I know they are big shoes.

Q. What do you think is the one thing

that you learned from Pete that you can take into this job and the one thing that you learned from Paul that you can take into the job?

ROGER GOODELL: I think it's the same with both of them, Gary. It's the importance of the game. The game of football is the most important thing, and we can't lose focus of that. That's why the fans love the NFL, and we have to keep producing that and giving them that.

Q. Because of the way the process played out, because you knew what the process would be, and the questions, what you might be asked, did it allow you over the last month or so to be not only introspective, but also forward-thinking to maybe crystallize and galvanize some of your own thoughts on how you might operate if you got this job?

ROGER GOODELL: It absolutely does. It forces you to go through that process, and I spent an awful lot of time thinking about it. And I think that this process required you to tell the ownership how you saw the future, what you thought the **National Football League** should be doing to prepare for that future.

Obviously I must have told a pretty good story along the way, because they have given me the opportunity. So I'm grateful for that, and we'll carry out what we talked about over last several days.

Q. Sorry to ask a homer question, but what happens next in southern California?

ROGER GOODELL: Alan, I just got the job ten minutes ago, and you just -- (Laughter).

Q. I'll going to be asked by my editor, so I might as well ask you.

ROGER GOODELL: I know that that's one of the things the ownership wants to focus on, but we haven't given much thought to it the last couple days.

Q. Can you build a bridge between large market owners and the small market owners?

ROGER GOODELL: I think the ownership has gotten a lot more in common than you think. I think they certainly have differences of opinions on certain things, but they I think always do what's in the best interests of the game. I think they will continue to do that.

So I believe that those issues, while they need to get addressed, will get addressed properly and quickly.

Q. What are some things you did talk to the owners about as far as your vision of the future?

ROGER GOODELL: Well, I had a number of things that we talked about and that I focused on. They really came under three simple headings: The game, strengthen our 32 teams and innovation. And I think those are the things that made the NFL great in the past, and I think they will help us keep our focus and make the game great going forward.

Q. What do you mean by innovation, media, international?

ROGER GOODELL: I think we've been very innovative with our media packages, as one example. But I think the league has always tried to find a better way of doing things and be responsive before we need to. And I think that has been a hallmark of our leadership under both Commissioner Rozelle and Commissioner Tagliabue, and I certainly hope to carry that on.