

**Commissioner Goodell Press Conference**  
Freedom Center – Cincinnati, OH  
September 20, 2006

**Opening Statement**

**RG:** It's a pleasure to be here in Cincinnati. I got in last night, then met with the Bengals people, including Mike Brown and his family and many of the front office people for roughly three hours this morning. Then I had a great opportunity to meet with the players and coaches and football personnel for about 15 minutes this morning before coming over to the Freedom Center.

It's been a real productive morning from that standpoint. It's been a real honor and privilege to be here at the Freedom Center. I've known about this for some time, through John Pepper, who approached us when he approached Mike Brown, and we had some great discussions about how the NFL can get involved, and it's great to see it now in person for the first time. It's a terrific facility.

It's particularly nice to see in person behind me right now the exhibit with Bill Willis and Marian Motley, and to see the significance of the re-integration of the NFL and the role Coach (Paul) Brown played in that whole effort.

**Q: What do you think of the job the Bengals are doing?**

**RG:** They've got a great football team. I know they are focused on the fact that it's a long season. They are focused on continuing to win and represent this community in a positive fashion. And I think it's great to see that because we know there are a lot of great pro football fans in this area. I know Mike and his team have worked hard to bring home a winner.

**Q: Is this a get-acquainted tour or an agenda-setting gig?**

**RG:** After 25 years it's not really a get-acquainted session. There are probably not a lot of people I don't know. But I'm in a different role now. It is agenda-setting in some sense. It's also getting their perspective on the broader issues that are facing the league. This is one of my early visits. I've only been to four teams.

**Q: What about the Bengals' objection to the CBA and where does it fit on your agenda?**

**RG:** It's a very big issue. And they're not alone in their concerns about the labor agreement. It's a view that's shared by a variety of our owners. And it's something we're going to have to address as a league immediately. We are proud of our relationship with the Players Association; it's been productive for both sides. But we have to make sure it continues to be productive for both sides. So that will be a major focus for us, starting now. As a matter of fact, I'm having a meeting with Gene Upshaw tomorrow.

### **More on the CBA...**

**RG:** Any time you have a partnership, you don't wait until it expires to address issues. You have to address them immediately, and that's a sign of a productive partnership. We've been able to do that effectively, whether it is on our drug program or whether it is on a related issue. Good partners make adjustments during contracts so they're productive for both sides.

### **Q: What about the lawsuit between Hamilton County and the Bengals?**

**RG:** You probably know better than I do. We did not spend a lot of time on that this morning. There were other issues we talked about.

### **On stadium pat-downs...**

**RG:** We are doing it in all of our stadiums except Tampa Bay right now, where litigation is ongoing. We want to do everything we can do to protect our fans and assure our fans a safe environment when they come into our stadiums. We will continue to look at ways which we can do that.

### **Q: Television ratings are up, where does the NFL go from here?**

**RG:** Hopefully, we keep going up. We're thrilled by the opening first two weeks of the season. First, the football and the games are terrific. We've had great competition on the field. But second of all, we did reformat our packages with our broadcast partners this year, and they've had a great start. The reception by our fans has been terrific, which is where it counts. At the end of the day, we're trying to create more football for our fans and trying to find new ways of delivering that. Right now we're seeing an up-swing and we hope we're going to find new ways that people can enjoy football.

### **Q: What did you say to the team?**

**RG:** It was primarily about the privilege I've had to be working for the National Football League for 25 years, the privilege they have to be in the National Football League, the responsibility as players that they continue to represent the league, the Bengals and their community in a positive fashion, and a little bit about some of the initiatives we're doing as a league.

### **About being commissioner...**

**RG:** The good news is I knew the job. It was hard getting used to people calling me 'Commissioner' and making sure you're setting the agenda. It's been an adjustment but not one that I didn't anticipate and prepare many years for.

**Q: What about Chris Henry and his two guilty pleas?**

**RG:** We do have a very strict player conduct policy. When the legal process has run its course, then our policy comes into play. It has not been presented to me as of yet. But when it does and I'm expected to rule on it, I will.

**On the rules and standards of the NFL...**

**RG:** I believe in rules and I believe they should be enforced, consistently and fairly, not only among the 32 clubs but among the players. I do believe we need to hold the NFL to a higher standard, and I think we are expected to be at a higher standard, and I think that's the good news and the bad news. I expect to maintain that high standard.

**Q: Given the off-season issues with the team, did you address that with them?**

**RG:** I was very direct with the players about their responsibility in their community and what they represent in their community and how important they are in setting a positive tone. I think they understood the message.

**Q: What about the Fox.com survey says Paul Brown Stadium is unsafe?**

**RG:** I think safety of our fans is critical. I don't put that much credibility into that poll. I'm not sure I have seen it. I'm sure each of our teams is doing what they can to provide a safe and entertaining environment for their fans. We have 32 stadiums so there's going to be different experiences in each one. But making sure our fans enjoy the experience is important.

###