

## **COMMISSIONER GOODELL ON CBS "FACE THE NATION"**

**February 4, 2007**

**Dolphin Stadium**

**Bob Schieffer:** Good morning again. We are at Dolphin Stadium. We had hoped to be out on the field this morning, but of all things it rained. So we are inside and we are in the Colts cheerleader dressing room. Unfortunately, they will not arrive for another seven or eight hours. But here we are, and with us the NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. Mr. Commissioner, thank you for being here. Joining in the questioning, my old buddy and colleague from CBS Sports, Jim Nantz.

Mr. Commissioner, I thank you for bringing along the Super Bowl trophy. This is the real trophy. Face The Nation has won the Super Bowl, at least for the next twenty minutes or so.

Let's talk about that astonishing statistic I just cited in the opening: the Super Bowl is the most valuable event in all of sports. What struck me, and this is Forbes magazine that has made this comparison, they say it is twice as valuable or has twice the economic impact of the second most valuable day in sports, and that is the Summer Olympics. Can you put a dollar mark on this? How much of an economic impact does the Super Bowl have on America?

**Roger Goodell:** We have never looked at it beyond just America. We have only looked at it in the community where we play the Super Bowl. So, for South Florida we expect it will have some kind of an economic impact in excess of \$300 million this year. But we really do not look at it so much as the economic impact, but it's the impact we are having on America by getting people together, getting them around the television set, and making sure they get a chance to enjoy football with us.

**BS:** It has become a day unlike any in sports. The World Series is played over a series of days, as it were, the basketball championships, Final Four and all of that. One game, one day.

**RG:** Yes, winner-go-home is the way we look at it and that is true all the way through our playoffs. That is what brings so much drama to the NFL, because they know when they come to the Super Bowl the stakes are high. Teams have been working all season to try to get to this point, and it is do-or-die today.

**Jim Nantz:** Good to be with you sir. This trophy here today will be in the hands for the first time ever of an African-American coach who will hoist the Lombardi Trophy: Lovie Smith or Tony Dungy. For the league, it is really a wonderful time to tell the story of what has happened since the early eighties, isn't it Commissioner?

**RG:** Jim, it really is, because it is obviously the greatest trophy in the world from our standpoint to see that kind of collective achievement that these coaches are going to have today. But to see somebody hold that up that has worked so hard and it means so much

to our sport and to America to see an African-American coach hold that up and show that he has achieved the best in the world. We are proud of that. It is going to be a great day today.

**JN:** In visiting with Tony Dungy this week, he made the point that when he first retired as a player, there were 14 African-American assistant coaches in the league, and now the number approaches 200. How has the league gotten to this point?

**RG:** It has been a series of changes that we made in the league that have allowed our coaches to get greater experience, get in a position where they can have the experience to make sure they are capable of going on to be great head coaches, and then giving them the opportunity. What I think you are seeing here is that these are not just great black coaches, these are great football coaches.

**BS:** I want to talk to you about some of the 'dark side' of football. This is a great success story that the NFL has had, and yet off-the-field there were 35 players, I think, in the last count that were arrested over the course of the season. Obviously this is a problem. I noticed even the head of the players union says he worries about it and he sees it as a problem. What are you going to do about it, Mr. Commissioner?

**RG:** The first thing is that any time we have an incident like that we understand our responsibility: it is not good for the sport, it is not good for our players, and we want to try to eliminate that. We have a number of programs that we put in place that make sure the players understand their responsibility. We have tried to educate them, that they are in a position of great focus and they have to conduct themselves appropriately. Obviously when you are dealing with this many people, sometimes you are going to get some people that stray. When they do, we will deal with that by our enforcement procedures.

**BS:** I think that is a good point you make. How many football players are there in the league? 1,600? So 35 arrests would be a very small percentage.

**RG:** Well, one is too many for me Bob, as far as I am concerned. We have to try to eliminate this. We have to try to do whatever we can to put our players in a position where they understand their responsibility.

**BS:** I noticed in your news conference on Friday, you said that you planned to hold some meetings with the players during the offseason. It is going to take more than just talk. What will the league do? Are you prepared to really crack down? Will you talk about suspending people?

**RG:** We have. We have increased our suspensions and our discipline this past year. I expect to continue that. We also want to talk to our coaches and our players to understand what is going on, so that we can make the right adjustments to our very aggressive programs and policies that we do have in place right now.

**JN:** By the way, this is the first time for you as Commissioner to be at a Super Bowl and hand out the trophy, so congratulations for that. Since you took over on September 1 for the great Paul Tagliabue, what do you feel now that you have gone through a whole season, going into your second season, what is the issue that you really want to tackle above all?

**RG:** I think the most important thing for us is to keep a focus on the game. As long as the game is strong, as long as it is exciting for our fans, that is the most important thing for us. But we need to continue to make sure that the fans recognize that we are doing what we can to make sure we are presenting football in the best possible light. That includes player conduct, that includes making sure that we deliver more football to more fans through new technology and new platforms.

**JN:** A story that came out this week on Ted Johnson, a former Patriot linebacker, saying he's suffering from post-concussion syndrome, basically a series of concussions during his playing career, and now accusing the Patriots of maybe not giving that the full attention that it deserved and he is paying for it after his career. What will the league do with this story?

**RG:** Medical care is extremely important to us for our players. As for player safety: we have rule changes, we have a concussion study that has been going on for approximately ten years, and they have made great modifications to equipment and to playing rules to make it safer for our players. We did not know about the Ted Johnson issue until last week, or early this week. We want to look into that and we want to make sure we understand the circumstances, what may have contributed to that, and see what we can do to make it safer for our players.

**BS:** While we are on these kinds of subjects, let's talk about steroid policy. Are you going to have to do more than you are doing now on this? I know you are going to start trying to find a way to test for Human Growth Hormone. In general, I noticed one of your star players tested positive for steroids, he was suspended for four games, but now he is going to the Pro Bowl. Should they be allowed to get these postseason honors when they have been found testing positive for steroids?

**RG:** As you know, we just made further changes in our steroid policy just last week and we think they are great improvements. We think we are the leaders in this area, we have a great program and we know our responsibility in this program. There is no test for HGH, no reliable test. We are working and we are funding to try to develop that, and so we want to find an answer to that also. As it relates to the Pro Bowl, I have had good conversations with Gene about that, I believe we will be able to make some changes in the offseason and that players that violate our steroid policy will not be permitted to play in the Pro Bowl.

**BS:** So this would be retroactive if you penalize this particular player. But what you are saying is that you do not want this to happen again in this way?

**RG:** I think we will be able to make some changes in our policies so that players will not be able to make the Pro Bowl roster going forward. They won't be able to do that because we will not permit them to be eligible.

**BS:** Where do you go from here Commissioner? You are going to play an exhibition game in China this summer, you are going to play a season game, a real game, in London. Are you looking to a day when the NFL will have franchises in other countries?

**RG:** We have tremendous interest internationally and we are trying to reach our fans internationally. Playing the regular season games will give us a chance to play over there in front of our fans. Also with the new technology that is developing, the world is getting smaller and there are more opportunities for us to be able to get more football to more fans, and we are doing that through all of our new technologies.

**BS:** What about today? How do you see the game?

**RG:** I hope it is a great game. I am not much on making any predictions on who wins, but we've got two great football teams and an exciting matchup so we are looking for a great day and I know that CBS Sports will present it in a great way for us.

**BS:** Thank you for coming. Fascinating discussion.

**RG:** Thank you. I really appreciate it, Bob.

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**BS:** Finally today, news can be broken into two parts: what people need to know and what they may want to know. We usually concentrate on the news we believe you need to know. The Super Bowl, on the other hand, is big news that millions upon millions of Americans want to know. Since someone had to do it, we volunteered to help tell the story. Now how is that for a high-minded excuse for being here?

For sure, the Super Bowl has become an institution as much a part of American life as the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, even a factor in the national economy. But for all of that, for all the hype, whatever happens here doesn't really matter and to me that's the best part. We worry, we bet the office pool, we cheer, we analyze and agonize. But in the end, nations will neither rise nor fall because of what happens here, soldiers will not die, disease will neither spread nor be cured.

Some years back a weird Dallas Cowboys running back named Duane Thomas put it in some perspective when he said, "If this is the ultimate game, why are they playing it again next year?" Yet, for a few hours today, millions here and even some of our soldiers overseas will put aside what does matter and enjoy something that doesn't. Not many things in American life have the power to do that, and that is a good thing and the great value of sports.

Have a great time today -- that is certainly my plan. And we will see you next week, from Washington.

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