

An Interview With:

ROGER GOODELL

THE MODERATOR: We are ready for what will be the first NFL regular-season game played outside the United States during our 86-year history. I think many of you know we've played international games and they have all been preseason games. This will be the first regular-season game outside the U.S. This is very exciting for us, and I think you can see the interest in it, down here and around the world. There are 218 countries that will be viewing the game around the world and the game will be broadcast nationally in the U.S. by ESPN, ESPN Deportes, and Westwood 1 radio will do an English and Spanish feed.

One point before turning it over to Roger. We've had some questions about the stadium capacity for the game. In 1994 when the Cowboys and the Oilers played here, there were 112,000 fans at the game, and since that game, they have lowered the capacity. First it was the scoreboards and then seating for media brought it down to 105,000. For this game though the capacity will be just north of 85,000 as we have killed the first ten rows for sidelines. We have had to kill several hundred more seats because of the media response and interest in covering the game. So capacity is just north of 85,000.

This is a different culture in terms of ticket sales. This is what I would call a walk-up culture, for lack of a better term. It's not uncommon to have 30,000 fans walk up to a game the day of the event. And because of that, we have probably 20,000 general admission seats available. That's where we stand and we're very comfortable that the stadium will be packed on game day.

For those of you not familiar with Roger, he is the chief operating officer of the National Football League. He has a very full plate that includes relations with our players association to negotiations with our corporate sponsors and licensees, but Roger is no stranger to international. He was instrumental in setting up the American Bowl Games in 1989 in Berlin and in Barcelona and has been very, very involved in this game. He is a very, very strong proponent of our international business, and Roger will have a few opening

comments that will set the stage for the start of the week and then we'll turn it over to questions.

ROGER GOODELL: Thank you all for being on the call. I'm glad to take your questions, but wanted to say that we are all excited in the National Football League, because this is not only a significant weekend with our first regular-season game outside the United States, but also with the fact that we as a league are celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with Football Americano, and we are going to be acknowledging that on each of the players' uniforms with a decal on their helmet.

There are a significant amount of marketing efforts and recognition of our Hispanic heritage in the NFL and our growing popularity in that culture. We are proud of that and excited about that and focused on that. We think that the game will be a great celebration of this. So we look forward to being in Mexico this weekend. We think we have a great matchup and it should be a lot of fun.

Q. Why play a regular-season game? What went into that decision?

ROGER GOODELL: The reason we chose to do a game in Mexico is because we have such great interest. We have a great fan base in Mexico. It's been growing dramatically over the last several years. We have a global audience and there is a great deal of interest in hosting a game. So we are responding to that interest, and we think it's going to be a great opportunity for us to understand more about playing a regular-season game internationally and the impact of doing that. We will learn a great deal. We are excited about the experience and we think that this will be great for our future internationally.

Q. If the Cardinals had not agreed to give up a home game to do this, would you have been able to do this?

ROGER GOODELL: It obviously involves a team giving up a home game. The Cardinals were very enthusiastic. We approached them and they saw this as a great opportunity to expand their market and their ability to market the team on an international basis, and they have a history of that. They played in Japan a couple of decades ago, and they have also played in London a couple of decades ago. So they were very anxious to do this.

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Q. Do you see this as a one-time deal? There's been a lot of talk that maybe London is next, or will we wait and see how this goes and maybe it could be something else we see in the future?

ROGER GOODELL: We want to reserve judgment on that until we have been through the experience once. Obviously we know there is growing interest globally in playing a regular-season game and we have seen the reaction of some of those markets; you mentioned one, and we also have a great deal of interest in Japan, China, Canada and of course Mexico. And I think from our standpoint, we want to see how this works, what the impact is on our business and on our fan base from a team standpoint and then base decisions on that experience.

Q. 65,000 tickets sold, did you expect to see the result today?

ROGER GOODELL: Yes. Working with our partners in producing the game, this is exactly where everyone expected us to be. So we are excited about it. We think it's terrific, and we think that we'll have a great crowd there on Sunday night.

Q. How much is the average ticket price and what will determine what a success is?

ROGER GOODELL: I believe the range in U.S. dollars is from \$25 to \$85.

Q. That's not an average; that's a range.

ROGER GOODELL: I understand that. I don't have an average for you.

Q. So what will determine a success in this thing?

ROGER GOODELL: I think we are going to judge it on a number of factors, not only on the attendance, but the impact in the Mexican market with respect to the popularity of our game and the growing interest in the game. Here in the United States, with a significantly growing population of Hispanic Americans that have a great deal of interest in NFL football, we are anxious to see the impact this game will have on them.

Q. Would you have agreed to play this regular-season game here in Mexico, were you aware of the fact that the situation of the 49ers are going through would not guarantee a sellout?

ROGER GOODELL: There are never any guarantees of a sellout when we play international games. We never go into it expecting that. We think this is an NFL regular-season game and it's the first time we've had a regular-season game outside the United States. We think it's a huge event and one that will be a terrific football game. We think that we have two exciting teams to showcase for our fans in Mexico.

Q. Can you talk about the revenue expectations and that how that will be divvied up? Are the Cardinals going to get more because they are the home team?

ROGER GOODELL: No. Without getting into specifics, we went into it thinking that neither team should be too impacted negatively from a financial standpoint. So our approach to this was that we do something that is good for both clubs in the sense that they are not impacted negatively financially, but also we are clearly going to be making an investment in this as a league because we believe this is an appropriate step.

Q. Can you talk about any number that you expect to get out of this game in revenue?

ROGER GOODELL: We don't get into financials.

Q. Can you give us a size of Mexican market compared, what kind of revenue do you get from merchandising, TV contracts, etc. How has that been growing?

ROGER GOODELL: It's been growing dramatically. Without getting into specifics, which we don't disclose on a market basis or globally, it is one of the most rapidly growing markets. We are on broadcast television cable in Mexico. Almost every one of our games is broadcast in one form or another and has been for many years. Our audience in Mexico has grown dramatically.

Q. Is it the largest in revenue, merchandising and TV contracts?

ROGER GOODELL: I think in a combined basis, but I'll have to check it. If it's not, it's certainly very competitive.

Q. How long has this been in the pipeline and what differentiates a regular-season game from an exhibition game in terms of for the fans in what they see?

ROGER GOODELL: Fans are exposed to so much NFL football in the country both through the regular season and our American Bowl series,

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that they become more and more sophisticated and more and more educated. They are looking to see a regular-season game. They made that clear; our sponsors have made that clear; our licensees have made that clear that this would be an exciting opportunity for the Mexican market. We thought this was the right place to take our first step into this new realm.

Q. How many teams did you approach about this?

ROGER GOODELL: I would say it depends on your perspective. First you had to find a host team, a team that was willing to move one of their regular-season games to an international market, and then you had to go through the decision of which opponent. So we looked at a number of alternatives. We had several conversations, but this was clearly the alternative that we thought was best and we are pleased that we were able to get this outcome.

Q. Did you approach any other team though?

ROGER GOODELL: When you say "approach," we may have had discussions with other people. But I think it was more just to get some understanding of different circumstances they may be going through, how they might feel about it. But this was our No. 1 choice.

Q. You talked about going maybe to London, China, Japan in the future, obviously those are a lot harder travel places, are those places less likely just because of the travel that's involved in the regular season?

ROGER GOODELL: I don't know if I would say less likely. We obviously recognize the geographical challenges when you go to Japan or to someplace in the Far East. On the other hand, teams are becoming better at dealing with those issues. The travel from an East Coast site to London is not that much more significant from an East Coast site to Seattle, quite frankly.

So there are challenges in each market. We have looked at the competitive issues, we have looked at how you can factor in the bye week, other issues that come into play. But we think it's clearly a doable project.

But one of the things we want to determine is the impact on home fans in the United States in each of these markets. Also, what kind of impact we would have in the international market and is this really going to be something that each of the international markets truly find rewarding.

Q. Given that the conditions exist to have a successful game this year, is there a plan to have a steady game or a preseason or regular season in Mexico every year? And also, are franchises asking you for the opportunity to have a regular preseason game in Mexico year after year?

ROGER GOODELL: The first question is with respect to whether we are going to have a game each year in Mexico. The answer is that it is unlikely that we would do that. We have had a history of being there on a regular basis and I think we would continue to do that. But I do not think that we would commit to every year in the regular season or preseason at this point in time, based in large part on the fact that we have a great deal of interest on a global basis.

Q. I was curious, is this game to go to be set up like other NFL games where the home team will take 60 percent of the gate and 40 percent would go into a pool that would be distributed at the end of the year to traveling teams?

ROGER GOODELL: It is the same structure on one level, but the Cardinals are not at risk in that level. We stepped in to make sure that the teams are not at risk on that level; that they would be essentially financially whole as they would be if they were playing a home game.

Q. But if you were going to get, let's say, 75,000 or even 50,000 people in Mexico City, that's 50,000 more than what they are drawing here in Arizona. So would the Cardinals not be better financially by playing this game in Mexico City if they get 60 percent of the gate there when the crowds are twice as large?

ROGER GOODELL: Again, you are presuming a different structure in the deal. We have partners in Mexico in helping us present this game and sponsor this game. So from our standpoint, the Cardinals are not going to be in a risk position; nor are they going to be in a position where it's a tremendous upside to them, and same for the 49ers. We did not feel it was appropriate to put them in that position and they were not. They will not be seeing a significant upside based on what they would in Arizona.

Q. Can you estimate, I know you break down all of these demographics, what do you measure the Hispanic interest in the National Football League and TV and things and

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obviously, will you be conducting a real survey of TV markets and things with this?

ROGER GOODELL: We are already the No. 1 sport among U.S. Hispanics. We have more avid fans and more fans than in any other sport overall, soccer included. We feel that we have a great start with respect to Hispanics here in the United States. We believe we have a very long history in Mexico and a great fan base in Mexico. So we think this is really a launching pad and a focus of our interests both in Mexico and in the United States in the Hispanic audience.

Q. Where do the Cardinals and 49ers rank in popularity among Hispanic fans?

ROGER GOODELL: I don't have that information but both of them have very significant populations in their own markets of Hispanic fans. In discussion with our partners, we felt both of these teams would be very popular.

Q. For Rolando Cantu -- inaudible -- expectations of the game many Mexico?

ROGER GOODELL: We were in Mexico for a press conference, I believe in July to announce this game, and Rolando was with us. The reaction to having him on the team and to having him there for the press conference was outstanding. He's a terrific young man and obviously to see a player come through the football experience at all levels in Mexico and make it in the National Football League is a great story. We could tell by the reaction that it would be a very positive thing to have him at the game and participating in the game, so we are excited about that.

Q. You said that you're interested in seeing whether or not the game will serve as a tool in developing the Hispanic market in the U.S., can you describe exactly how that might work?

ROGER GOODELL: On all of the various media outlets we have in the Hispanic markets, we have significant market research which we do on a regular basis that determines how we stand in various demographics throughout the United States. So we'll continue to eye each of those and see if we notice any type of bump or any type of increase based on our experience.

Q. Up here north of the border, you mean?

ROGER GOODELL: Yes. That was your question, wasn't it?

Q. Yes.

ROGER GOODELL: This game will be shown on ESPN Deportes and we will be getting a great deal of feedback from all of our partners on the impact of this game. So far have gotten very positive feedback.

Q. People who have a tendency of knowing how a show like this is brought to Mexico and who made it possible, without giving any figures of course, would you say that it covers the hotel and expenses of the league? Is it the league itself paying or the promoter of this game?

ROGER GOODELL: Without getting into specifics, we're producing the game in partnership with our partners in Mexico, **Televisa** being the primary television sponsor and the primary promoter. We have structured a financial arrangement that we have made an investment in the game in our promoters, and partners in Mexico believe that they have structured something; that they can succeed in this game from a financial standpoint, also.

The NFL was clearly making an investment in this because we believe it's the right thing to do and we believe it will be a very positive thing for the NFL and our fans.

Q. The hotel investment is by the NFL and transportation?

ROGER GOODELL: Whenever we travel to a game, we have to pay for a hotel, so that's part of playing in the NFL. Wherever we go, we are involved in paying for hotels.

Q. Not the teams?

ROGER GOODELL: That's correct.

Q. After this game, what is going to be the next step of NFL in our country, in the Mexican markets, specifically?

ROGER GOODELL: I think we want to evaluate how we do in this game and what the impact is from this game. We have a great deal of interest from licensees, sponsors, television partners, surrounding this game, and also other events that they would like to bring to Mexico.

From our standpoint, this is our first step, and we think it's going to be a great one and we'll take our next steps following this after we've had a chance to evaluate.

Q. How many tickets do you guys have sold as of today for the game?

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ROGER GOODELL: I think I heard 65,000 as we started this call.

Q. Well, that's why I was asking, because you said you had 65,000 but you said it was not uncommon to have 30,000 walk up and then maybe have 20,000 GA seats. I was kind of confused on that math.

ROGER GOODELL: I think that what he said and I can let him repeat, is that we have 65,000 sold. We had killed a number of seats because they are very low-level seats and the fans could not see from there. So the capacity is reduced off of the high number of what I think used to be about 110,000.

So there's about a capacity now in the neighborhood of 85,000 to 90,000.

Q. I actually called the number for the tickets earlier this morning and I was told there were only 20 GA admission tickets left. Is there -- are we seeing ticket sales, salespeople structuring, giving that kind of information to make sure these tickets get sold?

ROGER GOODELL: I don't know how you could have come up with that information, but I think it's been quite public about the number of tickets that are sold. So I don't think there's any confusion in the marketplace.

Q. Do you have any figure about how many people will come from San Francisco and from Arizona to this game?

ROGER GOODELL: I don't. That is one of the things that we'll be tracking through the clubs. I know that each of the teams are bringing guests and fans, but I do not know the final numbers on that. My assumption is that a number of fans will be traveling down on their own and that we will not be able to quantify. But we do expect a number of fans in each market to be going, yes.

Q. Just wondering, how do you deal with the problem of exporting a sport that's very expensive to play relative to, say, soccer or basketball, and is kind of new to other cultures?

ROGER GOODELL: That's always an issue when you're exporting a game. But you would really be surprised at the number of fans that we have that not only love to play it, but also love to watch it or love to be involved with it for all of the reasons they love the game here in the United States. And we never underestimate the fan reaction we have both to our American Bowl

games, our television audience, or any of the other events that we put on in these markets.

People just love the game, they love the game here in the United States, whether they played the game as kids or not. We have had significant efforts to develop players on all levels and they are starting to produce results. We have eight players on NFL practice squads this year that have an international background. So we are very pleased both with the development of the game from an amateur level to the fact that the NFL's success has been significant in each of these markets.

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