

An interview with:

GREG AIELLO **RICH McKAY**

GREG AIELLO: Good afternoon from **New York**. I'm here with **Joe Browne**. Before we get to **Rich McKay**, who is in **Maui**, and your questions, here is some background information on the meeting.

Most attendees will be arriving in **Maui** on Friday and Saturday. Here are a couple of telephone numbers that you will probably want to have. The **Ritz Carlton Hotel** where the meeting is taking place is 808-669-6200. The **NFL** office there at the **Ritz Carlton** is 808-669-2100. Your media workroom will be 669-2114. The media workroom is the Nui Room (ph), don't ask me to spell that, on the main level. It opens at noon on Sunday.

We'll have credential pickup desk that will be manned or handled rather by **Carlie Slavinsky** (ph), she'll be stationed in a desk at the main lobby Saturday 11 to 7, on Sunday from 8 to 7, and on Monday from 7:30 to 2. That's where you should pick up your credentials. If you have not registered for credentials, please do so on NFLmedia.com or contact **Leslie Hammond** here in our office.

The competition committee meet in **Indianapolis** at the **Combine** last month and is in the middle of a couple weeks now of meetings in **Maui**. The committee will reconvene again late Saturday afternoon at the **Ritz Carlton**. There will be other committee meetings on Sunday and more on Monday or Tuesday during breaks in the regular meeting.

On Sunday, we're having a welcome luncheon at 12:30 p.m. in the Plantation ballroom. The luncheon will feature as a keynote speaker **Michael MacCambridge**, the author of the recent book on the modern **NFL** called **America's Game**. The media is invited to attend. Please join us. If you're interested, please wear your credential.

The league meeting officially opens on Monday morning at 9 a.m. with the

Commissioner's annual report to the clubs on the state of the league, which is something required in our constitution and bylaws. The meeting is scheduled to conclude early Wednesday afternoon. The Commissioner will hold an initial press conference on Monday at the lunch break. Later that afternoon we plan to make the competition committee co-chairs **Rich McKay** and **Jeff Fisher** available to you to discuss competition committee matters.

We will have our coaches breakfast. Once again, the **AFC** coaches media breakfast will be 7:30 a.m. Tuesday at the **Banyon Tree Restaurant**, which I'm told is next to the pool at the **Ritz Carlton**. The **NFC** coaches will be the following day, Wednesday, at 7:15 a.m. at the same place. Please remember the earlier start time on Wednesday, which is due to the coaches annual meeting with the owners and Commissioner that starts at 8:15 that morning.

At this time we're expecting 29 of 32 head coaches to be at this year's meeting. Not planning to attend are **Mike Martz**, **Brian Billick** and **Bill Parcells**. One other note, **Herman Edwards** will not be in **Maui** on Tuesday, but he will be available at the Wednesday **NFC** coaches breakfast, **Herman Edwards** of the **Jets**.

Also on Tuesday at a time to be determined, we will probably in the afternoon, **Mike Pereira** and **Larry Upson** will conduct their annual session for you on rules and points of emphasis for 2005, similar to the presentations they will give the head coaches at next week's meeting.

You are invited to join us on Monday evening at our **NFL** reception from 6:30 to 10:30 at the **Beach Front** at the hotel, and at reception that will be hosted by the **State of Hawaii** on Wednesday evening if you're still there from 6 to 7 p.m. on the **Plantation** lawn. Your families are welcome to join. Dress is casual.

As for the agenda, the competition committee report will be distributed on Monday morning, but there will be no voting on that agenda until Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday morning as stipulated under our meeting procedures. Key competition committee related proposals and issues on the agenda next week involve low-blocking rules, a possible modification to the replay system, and several other proposals. **Rich McKay** will go into that in a minute.

In addition to the competition committee,

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other items on the agenda include a continuation of the discussion at the March 2 special league meeting in **Atlanta** on the status of the Collective Bargaining negotiations with the **Players Association**, and all aspects of internal league economics as they relate to the **CBA**.

A report from the broadcast committee on the status of negotiations for our prime time television packages. A report from the finance committee on the proposed sale of the **Minnesota Vikings**, but there will be no vote at this meeting. A report from the stadium committee and the **Los Angeles** working group on the proposed stadium projects in the **Los Angeles** area and other stadium projects. Consideration of conditional awards of **Super Bowl** games to **New York** for 2010 and for **Kansas City** between 2012 and 2002. Those are resolutions on the agenda. There will be -- 2022, rather. There will be several other committee reports.

Before we turn it over to **Rich McKay**, here are the members of the competition committee in case you do not have the list, along with co-chairs **McKay** and **Fisher**, the committee includes **Charlie Casserly** of **Houston**, **Mike Holmgren** of **Seattle**, **John Mara** of the **Giants**, **Ozzie Newsome** of **Baltimore**, **Bill Polian** of **Indianapolis**, **Mark Richardson** of **Carolina**.

One other note. At 3 p.m. eastern time today we will be releasing the national pre-season TV schedule, and the week-by-week pre-season match-ups for all teams. You might be on the lookout for that.

Now **Rich McKay** will make a few comments on the overall state of the game on the field and then we'll take your questions.

RICH MCKAY: Thanks, **Greg**.

I guess I'll start with 2004. We came out of the committee with some points of emphasis which I think drew a little attention. That was on illegal contact and defensive holding. Our concerns mainly being in the passing game with where the yards were going, with where the points were going, and with what the tape was showing.

I think the results of that point of emphasis has been very successful. I think that bears out in the surveys to the clubs which were more than favorable with respect to the enforcement of the rules and with the numbers themselves.

In the '04 season, we were going to end up at 43 points a game, which for us is the sixth highest in the last 37 years. We end up with 654 yards a game, which is only the ninth time ever we've gonna above 650 yards a game. Touchdowns were 4.95 per game, which is the

second highest since '87. And also, which we thought was a by-product, we thought we might get, rushing yards were actually up per game, in fact it's the second highest since 1987.

So the points of emphasis in our opinion worked well, and they will, as traditionally has been the case with points of emphasis, be reemphasized again for second year. Our feeling has always been that you need to reemphasize points for at least two years to make sure people understand what conduct is allowed and what isn't allowed and to try to create more consistency with respect to the officiating of the rules themselves.

From an on-field competitive standpoint, we're looking at our third year now of being eight divisions of four teams. That format has served the league very well I think from leveling the playing field. This year at the end of the year we see that 22 of the 32 teams in those three years now have qualified for the playoffs at least once. In that same period of time, 16 different teams have won division titles, which we view again as a positive.

As far as rule proposals on the books, there are five that are on the books from clubs themselves. One involves the college defensive pass interference rules, been discussed numerous times in the league, and will obviously be brought up again. That was submitted by **Kansas City**. There's another one involving the changing of the illegal contact rule to not result in an automatic first down, but rather just a five-yard penalty.

There is a couple other ones that are minor rule changes. One involves camera positions and instant replay. One involves extending the half in the event of an offensive foul. One involves a touch-back option if there's an illegal touching of a punt inside the five yard line. Those are the club proposals.

As far as our committee, our focus this off-season has been on player safety. It really comes out of a meeting with the players in **Indianapolis**. We always try to use the surveys and that meeting to kind of set our agenda as to what we're going to meet and talk about. In that meeting it was clear from the players' perspective that we needed again to focus on player safety. It's something we try to do every year, but this year we've kind of reemphasized, if you will.

We watched a lot of tapes. We watched a lot of tapes of low blocks. This year there was a high-profile play in a Monday night game that caused everybody to say, we need to go back and revisit all low blocks. So we really kind of did that with the players themselves, with the coaches. We

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brought in extra -- the Commissioner invited extra coaches and GMs into our session in **Indianapolis**. We went through kind of an A to Z on all low blocks and really came to the conclusion that low blocking within the tackle box - in other words, the run area, the tackle box being defined as the outside edge of the tackles, three yards on either side - we're not having a lot of problems within that area, and the players themselves are not feeling there are a lot of problems within that area.

What we're having problems with is fouls that occur on plays that we think we need to get out of the game. Based on our rule book right now, the way unnecessary roughness is written, we just feel like the language is too narrow. So our proposal to the membership will be to broaden that language. I don't know that that necessarily means you'll get more on-field calls, but I think we will give the league office a chance to fine those with a little more leeway, and hopefully with the players and the tape we can show them at training camp we will get certain hits out of the game. That is our hope.

I can't sit here and give you the exact language because the difference today than -- typically when we do this conference call, we would have already finished our meeting and we would be in a dead week and written everything. We really haven't finished writing exactly the language, but that is one thing we will propose, which is an expansion of the unnecessary roughness penalty.

We'll also propose that there be a specific provision that prohibits a certain type of - this is a term of art - peel-back blocks. These are low blocks that are occurring on certain plays, screen plays principally, where in essence the defender has no way to know somebody is coming from behind him and blocking him. These blocks are occurring on the side. But we don't feel like the defender has an actual opportunity to defend himself, so we're going to try to protect him in that instance.

We're going to propose that there be extra protection given to some kickers and punters on certain plays where quite frankly they're not involved in the play at all and they get absolutely wiped out. We're trying to protect them somewhat.

That's really it with respect to player safety. I think we will have a pretty in-depth discussion of it in our summary for the clubs as to what we reviewed and talked about, and we'll also give them the summary of the history of low blocks and all the changes we've made over the years.

Instant replay, as **Greg** said, I believe we will propose for discussion we expand the reviewable plays. Right now down by contact is not reviewable. That is the play in which an official rules on the field that the player was down, but the ball has come out. Then following that, the ball coming out, in the immediate action following that, somebody recovers it. I think we will propose that that be reviewable. That will obviously merit a lot of discussion within the membership.

As you may remember, last year instant replay was passed for a period of five years. We're in year two of that now. This does not affect instant replay itself. The purpose of passing the rule for five years last year was so that we could recommend certain improvements and see if the membership was interested in changes to the system itself, which is what we will propose this year.

What else do we have? We've got a bunch of cleanup rules that we'll propose that are all directed at timing and all directed at potentially avoiding re-kicks. Something we did last year on the kickoff and something we will suggest again this year, no major changes, you know, suggesting just minor changes to try to, again, hurry up the pace of play and avoid re-kicks.

Also we'll talk about some internal rules to the league concerning final cutdown and a possible modification of that so that we can try to get our teams formed quicker, if you will, prior to the first game.

That's basically our agenda. That's all I have.

GREG AIELLO: Thanks, **Rich**.

We're ready to go to questions.

Q. Greg, what's the extent of the -- what is the LA committee going to present to the owners?

GREG AIELLO: There will be a status update by the league staff working with the committee on possible deals, including deal frameworks negotiated with each of the four potential stadium sites, which you know are the **Rose Bowl, Coliseum, Carson** and **Anaheim**. All are moving forward. We've been making progress with each site at different rates. The groups we're told it's not necessary to be there, but that's what will take place at this meeting.

Q. Are you anticipating there being any term sheets presented?

GREG AIELLO: No. We're anticipating that we're on track to have preliminary term sheets

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negotiated for consideration by the clubs at the May meeting, and a possible decision at that time. Where we are right now is that we have developed preliminary site plans and stadium designs and deal frameworks for each of the sites. But that will be presented to the membership for discussion, to keep them updated.

Q. Rich, how do you think the instant replay system fared during the 2004 season? Can you elaborate on the adjustments to be discussed in Hawaii?

RICH McKAY: I think the survey said that, in typical fashion, instant replay overall performed well, however, teams that had negative experiences did not feel as positively as others.

It's not a perfect system, and we realize that. But I think overall the system did work and worked effectively.

Let's go back to the changes. One of the things we will propose and recommend is the elimination of the buzzer system. We found this year that there were some stoppages that should not have occurred based on malfunction, based on potentially a coach hitting the buzzer and then changing his mind. For many reasons, we're just not comfortable that the buzzer system is serving any purpose, and we'll recommend that that be eliminated and we go simply to the flags.

The reason also for the flags is that, we would then tell the coach after he's used his challenges that he does not have the right to throw the flag. If he did, there would be a penalty. That way we can get rid of these stoppages that occur for the "inadvertent flag," if you will, or buzzer. That's just one little minor thing.

Number two, we talked about down by contact. That's a big deal obviously because that would be a major change. It would allow for the review of a lot of plays that in our opinion are totally misunderstood sometimes by the media as far as the announcers, because it looks so obvious that the fumble occurred, there was a recovery, but yet we cannot judge the recovery because the official has pointed and ruled down by contact. We're trying to write the language now that would allow for that play to be reviewable and we will submit that.

Also a simple one that we'll add to reviewable plays, if it should pass, would be a confirmation of ejection numbers. We want to make sure that, you know, we've had some instances where players have been ejected from games, there's been a fight, there's been whatever. We do want to give the official the opportunity, if

the team would like, to make sure that the right player was ejected. The same thing we've kind of done with the ability for a team to challenge whether there were too many men on the field.

Those are the changes in instant replay.

Q. Rich, does the committee have a recommendation on the two Kansas City rules proposals?

RICH McKAY: We really don't. We try to hold off on making any -- our positions known until we get to the voting stage. I think both of them have been -- well, one of them has not been submitted before. The college defensive pass interference rule has been submitted before and talked about before among the membership, and to me it will be very interesting to see where that discussion goes this year. Typically the league has stayed the course with our rule being a spot foul. But I'll be interested to see the discussion this year. I wouldn't say we're in a position yet to tell you what our position would be.

Q. Do you have any numbers on how much -- where down-field contact penalties were this year from the previous year?

RICH McKAY: Yes. As far as -- if you're talking about illegal contact, I do have those numbers. I've got a book the size of *Texas*. You'll have to let me figure out if I can find that.

Illegal contact numbers went from 79 calls in '03 to 191 calls in '04. Basically what happened, so you know, is illegal contact calls went way up, obviously as that number shows. Defensive holding went up, as that number will show, too. And defensive pass interference went down substantially. So there was a reaction. What it appears to be is that the techniques of the defenses obviously were modified somewhat and there was more space created on deeper passes, so less DPI, defensive pass interference.

GREG AIELLO: So everyone has it, what are the two *Kansas City* rules proposals?

RICH McKAY: The one *Kansas City* rule proposal is that we adopt the college defensive pass interference rule, which would be a 15-yard penalty, or if the spot is inside of 15 yards, it would be at that spot. *Kansas City* also adds the provision that colleges do not have, which is a flagrant foul provision, which would say if the official deemed the pass interference to be flagrant, then it could be a spot foul at the point of the pass interference.

Q. Without respect to these particular

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proposals, did the pendulum swing too far the other way last year with the emphasis on the down-field contact rules?

RICH McKAY: We don't feel it did, but we do hope that the conduct, meaning the actual illegal contact, we clearly want to see that come down.

The feeling was, when you watch the tape, as the year went on, people got more comfortable as to how it was going to be called, that they adjusted their play. Our hope is that this year that adjustment continues when we reemphasize it and show it on tape to all the players and all the coaches. I thought the coaches did an outstanding job of understanding, as the year went on, what the foul was. I just hope now that we're, again, able to modify the conduct so the number of fouls comes down. That's a lot of fouls that obviously -- we'd like that number to come down want.

If you look back when this was reemphasized in '94, we had a similar spike, then it came down. Our hope is it comes down based on conduct not based on us officiating it differently this year.

Q. Greg, what are the years for the Super Bowl discussion about Kansas City?

GREG AIELLO: *Kansas City* submitted a resolution to award a *Super Bowl* no sooner than 2012 and no later than 2022, contingent on the construction of a new retractable-roof stadium in *Kansas City*. That's the resolution that's on the agenda.

Q. What possible action would be taken on that next week?

GREG AIELLO: It could be voted on, yea or nay, or it could be tabled.

Q. Rich, you mentioned briefly at the Combine, you and Jeff Fisher, about injuries being up around the league this past year. Can you talk a little more about that, and what areas. Was it confined mainly to the leg area where the increase was?

RICH McKAY: You know, I really can't give you more information than I gave you there in the sense that I think *Dr. Pellman* is more appropriate to discuss it than I am. But there's no question that when the presentation was made to us at the *Combine*, that overall injuries were up. Now, of course, I don't want to overreact because injuries, you know, can either be up or down in any one year, but they were up, and up enough where

we need to monitor it and make sure we don't have a trend here.

One of the things I would just tell you this week we've done is we watch tapes usually in the morning. Two mornings ago I think we watched every single lower-leg injury tape, which was a number of injuries, and it really is startling how many of them are non-contact events that just are not preventable.

But I think that *Dr. Pellman* would be more appropriate to give you the numbers and the trends and so forth. But our feeling is, watching the tapes, there's no tactic, or we don't see anything else in the game that's causing those injuries. I think there might be another source, but we don't seem to see that source on the field with tactics or the way people are playing.

Q. The horse-collar-tackling technique, is that something that will be discussed or talked about over the course of the next week?

RICH McKAY: Yes. It was brought up to us. The horse-collar tackling is really where a defender from behind reaches out and grabs a runner behind his neck or inside of his neck and pulls back on the shoulder pad. There were a number -- obviously, there were one or two real high profile plays with *Terrell Owens*. There were a number this year.

Today, in fact, is our day. We're going to today watch some tape on that and tomorrow watch some tape on that. Very difficult to figure out if we'll recommend something or not. There is a concern that that tactic could lead to injury. Traditionally that has been done by players that, you know, are trailing, and as a last-ditch effort to get a player down have jumped and tried to tackle.

We've been very hesitant as a league for a long time to take away means of tackling a runner because so hard as it is, except when the tactic is dangerous and causes injury. So we are definitely going to look at it. What comes out of that, I'm not sure yet.

Q. Rich, you mentioned that part of the safety first you looked at was getting rid -- I think you pointed out the hit in the Monday night game. Was that the Cincinnati-Denver game?

RICH McKAY: Yes, it was.

Q. The other high profile was Warren Sapp's hit on Clifton, which I guess previously was legal but unnecessary, and now that's going to be subject to penalty and a fine type of

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thing?

RICH McKAY: It's a good way to look at it. But both acts that you referred to there are both, under the rules, absolutely legal and ruled as such. What we're trying to do is expand the definition of unnecessary roughness. Before the language used to contemplate that the player had to be "obviously out of the play." We're going to try to broaden that standard and even add another standard to it and try to show players that these are types of plays that we'd like to not have in the game and don't have any place in the game.

Quite frankly, it was the players themselves when we met with the players union and the representatives that really emphasized the point to us.

So, yes, those are the types of plays that if we were to modify this rule would then now be deemed unnecessary. They were not at the time, so we don't want to go back and point at those players and say that what they did was wrong, because under the rules it wasn't. But if the rules are modified, there are certain types of hits, and we've got a tape of those that we would show to the players in training camp to say these are the types of hits that we don't think have a place in the game.

Q. Like last year where you had points of emphasis on existing rules, this is different in that these will be acts that are illegal?

RICH McKAY: That's correct. That is correct. We would actually recommend to the membership that we change the language on unnecessary roughness to broaden the definition.

Q. Can you mention some of the players who you talked with in *Indy* or not?

RICH McKAY: No. I sure can. I don't have my report in front of me, so I'm going to go from memory. I think it was **Kevin Hardy**, **Michael Strahan**, it was **Dawkins** from **Philadelphia**, it was **Daunte Culpepper**, and I'm going to be bad in the sense that I'm not going to give them all to you so the players are going to be mad at me. There were probably a total of about seven or eight.

We meet with them every year. **John Lynch** was there. Sometimes they alternate. The union determines what players come to the meeting. It's a very good meeting for us. It's usually a four- or five-hour event with the Commissioner present. We kind of go through whatever rules and issues they may have, then we

usually watch some tape together, too, to see what input they have with respect to our rule changes.

Q. Greg, we're talking about a *New York Super Bowl* obviously contingent on a dome stadium. At one point *New York* and *Washington* were being talked about in the same breath. Is it fair to say at this point that a *Washington Super Bowl* is no longer being considered or an option unless, of course, *Snyder* puts a bubble over *FedEx Field*?

GREG AIELLO: It's not being considered at this meeting. It's not on the agenda for this meeting. **Washington** has not been ruled out as a potential **Super Bowl** city going forward.

Q. Rich, about the new alignment going into its third year, talk a little bit about two 8-8 teams making the playoffs, winning a wildcard round, and ending up being two wins away from going to *Jacksonville*. Is that concerning? What's been the discussion on two 8-8 teams?

RICH McKAY: Not a lot of discussion because going into this format we knew that when you -- as a league we knew, the membership, we discussed it openly in the membership, when you go to divisions of four, the chances of having a down division or two every year increases. You know, obviously when you had five, you had less of a chance. We knew that this was a possibility.

We don't think it will be more than, you know, one division a year. In this case there were two. I don't envision that in the future. We're a league that takes pride in the fact that only 12 teams qualify, and it's very tough to qualify. But I don't think there's any movement within the league to change the playoff structure or to change the divisional structure just because that occurred this year.

Q. Rich, talk a little more, I thought I heard you mention something about illegal contact possibly removing the automatic first down stipulation.

RICH McKAY: That's a **Kansas City** proposal.

Q. What's the pros and cons on that?

RICH McKAY: Well, the pros and cons on it are simply that it is -- for the pro, from **Kansas City's** perspective, it is an extremely difficult penalty in the sense it's an automatic first down. Let's assume that the down and distance was third and 15 or third and 20, you know, it can be in their

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mind draconian as far as the effect. The con, if you were to change it, is that you then let people run the risk or play more aggressively, if you will, in those instances, realizing their only downside at that point is five yards.

If you look at the majority of defensive penalties, they end up being automatic first downs. Very few of them are not, and the reason being, that you're not trying to in any way encourage the conduct.

Q. Rich, many of the league's trainers have felt for some time that the lighter, less-rigid shoes that Nike and Reebok are making have contributed to the increase in foot injuries in the league. Have you discussed that in your meetings? Did you discuss it with Gene when you met with him in Indy? Is that a concern right now with you guys?

RICH McKAY: Yup, that's a good question. And the answer is yes. It was discussed in *Indianapolis*. It was discussed with **Dr. Pellman** and the league medical people. And I think what we're trying to do -- and discussed also with the **NFL** people that came in and gave us the equipment demonstrations on gloves and shoes and everything that we get every year. It is a concern.

I think what we've got to do and what we're going to do as a league in working with **Dr. Pellman** and the others in the league office is make sure we have and can gather as much data with respect to injuries, the types of injuries, the type of surfaces, the types of shoes that are involved, and then work with the shoe companies with respect to standards and make sure that we all know what the effects of some of these shoes are.

It would be way premature for anybody to say that this particular shoe is causing this type of injury. But there is something to the fact that we're getting a lot of foot injuries, a lot of lower-leg injuries that may be affected by the fact that we've changed the field turf and maybe the shoes haven't caught up to that new surface.

I think I like the communication that I hear is going on between the league office and the shoe manufacturers, **Reebok**, **Nike**, **adidas** and those people. I do think that we need to continue to pay attention to the issue and, as I say, try to gather as much data as we can to support those manufacturers in trying to make sure their designs match up to our fields.

Q. Getting back a little bit to the low block issue or cut block, if you will. In particular the block that George Foster threw in that Monday night game that put out the Bengals player. I know it's legal now, but was that particular play looked at as something that in the future could be deemed unnecessary roughness or is that still in that kind of gray area?

RICH McKAY: We would take the position with the new language that that would be deemed unnecessary roughness. But it remains, from the standpoint of cut blocking, which is a term of art, that is not necessarily looked at the same by all people, that is a legal block in the sense that he does make contact, and we've watched it too many times, he made contact on the side, and that is a legal block.

I don't want to make anybody focus on that individual player because what he did within the confines of the rule was legal. But that type of play and others is what we would try to capture in the definition of unnecessary roughness for the purposes of trying to show players these are the types of plays we don't want to occur into the future.

Q. In other words, a play that really is unnecessary?

RICH McKAY: That is correct. That is correct. That is correct. When the players themselves at the meeting, when we talked through this and looked at cut blocking on run plays, I mean, everything is pretty clean, but there are plays that include acts that are unnecessary, just as you described it. That's the type we're trying to get out of the game.

Q. Greg, could you clarify with the Vikings sale, is there necessarily going to be a recommendation within that finance committee report? Where would that stand?

GREG AIELLO: Not at this meeting. There will be a report, a brief report, on the status of the pending sale of the **Vikings**, but no vote at this meeting.

Q. What day will that report be out?

GREG AIELLO: The process is continuing to move forward toward a decision at the May 24, 25 meeting in **Washington**. It would be at that point that the finance committee would be expected to come in with a recommendation.

Q. Greg, could you elaborate on the

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2010 Super Bowl? When will the membership vote? Is that vote contingent strictly on if the *Jets* get the bid? Will the *Jets* make a presentation, as well?

GREG AIELLO: Yes. The *Jets* submitted the resolution to award the **2010 Super Bowl** to *New York* contingent on the west side stadium being built and being ready for that **Super Bowl**.

What will happen is the **Super Bowl** advisory committee will meet in *Maui*, discuss the proposal prior to bringing it to the floor at the meeting. At that point we would expect **Woody Johnson** and **Jay Cross** of the *Jets* to make a presentation to the clubs on the merits of the proposal and then a vote is possible.

Right now it's scheduled for -- a **Super Bowl** discussion for Tuesday afternoon.

Q. You mentioned the new stadium. When will that discussion come up and will **Tom Benson** be expected to address the state negotiations, as well as *Indianapolis*, will they have a report as well?

GREG AIELLO: I'm not sure I understood the question. The what stadium?

Q. You mentioned earlier there would be some new stadium discussion, unresolved stadium situations, like the one we have here in *New Orleans*. Will that be addressed at any point? Will **Tom Benson** make a presentation in regard to that, as well as like *Indianapolis*, which has an unresolved situation?

GREG AIELLO: That's up to the stadium committee as to what specifics they get into. There's some possible proposals for stadium funding for *Dallas*, *Indianapolis*. I'm not aware of the *New Orleans* situation. I don't know if **Mr. Benson** plans to address that.

Q. Rich, earlier you mentioned how the illegal contact penalties are way up, the defensive holding and pass interference calls have changed, too. Do you have those changed, too?

RICH McKAY: Yeah, I do. Defensive pass interference went from 238 down to 202. Defensive holding went up from 188 to 201. But remember on defensive holding, that that can involve a lot of things. That can involve run plays, interior plays. That's hard to connect that to the passing game only, but it is up.

Q. Can I ask you to put on your other hat. The first week of free agency, are you

surprised by anything that's happened? Do you think the number of players off the market a little bit quicker than normal? Just seems like there are very few starter-type players left on the market after just one week.

RICH McKAY: Yeah, but I would still say to you that I think overall, if you looked at the actual number of signings, I'm not sure it's much different from years past. I just get the impression that fewer of those let's call them starter-quality players hit free agency. I think more teams probably retained those players. But I am -- you know, I'm like you in the sense that there were a lot of players that changed hands. But I'm not sure the actual numbers are that much different than years past.

Q. Greg, baseball obviously is in the spotlight right now with the steroids. Has anybody from Congress contacted you to be involved in the current investigation?

GREG AIELLO: We had a member of our management council staff, **Adolfo Birch**, who oversees the administration of the steroid policy, he testified last week in front of a **Congressional** committee. Congressman Stern's committee, I believe it was, subcommittee. But not this week.

Q. Two quick *Viking* questions. The **Mike Tice** investigation, is the league going to discuss the distribution and potential scalping of **Super Bowl** tickets?

GREG AIELLO: Not at this meeting. It's not expected to be discussed at this meeting. It's not on the agenda, and no plans to bring it up. We will continue to study the best ways to get tickets directly into the hands of the fans who attend the game. That's the goal. It's an ongoing issue. It's one that's faced by any organization that has an event like the **Super Bowl** where tickets are in high demand. So it's an annual review. It could be discussed at a meeting later this year. We do have the luxury of some time here since there's no **Super Bowl** tickets available to be sold until late January.

Q. Is **Reggie Fowler** expected to attend these meetings?

GREG AIELLO: No, he's not.

Q. Could you update us on the labor situation. Where do we stand on a possible extension of the contract, the **CBA**?

GREG AIELLO: There will be a continuation of the discussion that occurred at the

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March 2 meeting in **Atlanta**, as I mentioned earlier. There's no meeting with the **Players Association** this week. The **Players Association** is in **Hawaii** this week at their annual meeting. The next meeting with the **PA** is not yet scheduled.

Where we are is that the union has adopted a very aggressive economic position. We have moved towards one of the union's key structural demands, which is that the player share be based on total football revenue as opposed to designated gross revenue. However, we're far apart on what that player share would be, the percentage of total football revenue.

On making the economic deal, we're not optimistic, we're not pessimistic, but we know there's a long way to go before there's a consensus. To date, progress has been slow.

Q. Are they actually going to vote for minor changes on cutbacks? If so, when will it be implemented?

GREG AIELLO: I'm sorry, I didn't understand. What's the issue?

RICH McKAY: It's the roster reduction. I did.

Yes, it will be something that will be presented. It's a minor change. Right now we have our final cut on Sunday afternoons at 4 p.m. eastern. All we're talking about doing is moving that cut up to 12 p.m. eastern just to give teams a better chance to set their rosters for Monday for practice. Nothing that should concern any of you.

Q. The instant replay, you're going to expand the reviewable amount of plays?

RICH McKAY: Yes.

Q. Now, will that also be implemented immediately in the upcoming season or that is for the future?

RICH McKAY: First of all, it's a long ways from being a rule. It would be voted upon. If approved, it would be implemented for the '05 season.

Q. Greg, a historical context. In terms of the Jets vote taking place in Maui, the May meeting for the 2009 game, do you remember, is this unusual to award a future game before the one that's up at hand?

GREG AIELLO: Well, we normally go in chronological order. We never like to be held too much to the status quo. For historical background, you may remember that **Super Bowl XXXVII** was awarded to **San Francisco** in '94 on a conditional

basis, with a condition on a new stadium being built, which it wasn't built. A few years later in '99, the game was awarded to **San Diego**.

Q. We're still on track for the May meeting for the 2009 game, right?

GREG AIELLO: Right. The 2009 **Super Bowl** is scheduled to be awarded at that May 24, 25 meeting in **Washington** to either **Houston**, **Atlanta**, **Tampa** or **Miami**.

Q. With respect to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, after everything that's gone on with hockey, do you think that will create a sense of urgency on both sides to try to expedite matters and get something done?

GREG AIELLO: It could. But it's something that the owners are discussing and taking very seriously. This is not business as usual. This is a tougher negotiation, the toughest we've had since '92. But everyone understands what's at stake. We hope to reach our goal, which is to continue the labor piece we've had for quite a few years now.

Q. Rich, has a specific team proposed abolishment of horse-collar tackles?

RICH McKAY: No. On the surveys from the clubs, it was raised by probably two or three different clubs. That's the source of us looking into it, but there's been no rule proposal.

Q. Rich, on the down by contact thing you were talking about before, how would the whistle factor into that?

RICH McKAY: The whistle would factor into it in that the whistle would not be deemed to have killed the play for purposes of the recovery, if the recovery were in the immediate action following the whistle. In other words, that's where the language has got to be worked on. It's similar to what the **USFL** had in their replay system, which is if the official can look and see the fumble coming out and actually everybody's action recovering the fumble, there being no break in the action, then he can award the football. No advancement would be awarded.

So you understand, let's just take the play where the runningback runs to the right side, he gets hit, he fumbles. The officials rule is down by contact, but it's picked up by the corner. If the corner picks it up and runs for a touchdown, he does not get the touchdown. He's deemed to be down right where he recovered the football, and the play would be killed at that point.

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GREG AIELLO: Thanks, very much. We look forward to seeing you in **Maui**.

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