

JEFF PASH INTERVIEW WITH BOB LEY

ESPN's *Outside the Lines*

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Ley: Let's say good morning now to the executive vice president of the National Football League, Jeff Pash. Good morning, Jeff.

JP: Good morning, Bob.

Ley: If you think of the popularity of the NFL as a pie chart in front of you, how big a slice of the popularity of this league is because folks can bet on it?

JP: Very, very small, Bob. People like the NFL, and our popularity is a result of the great players, the coaches, the close and exciting action, and the physical nature of the game. It doesn't have anything to do with gambling or point spreads for the vast, vast majority of people who follow the NFL.

Ley: Even though those in the gaming world point out that Super Bowl Sunday is the biggest day of the year? And point out that fall Sundays like this are, by far, the high blips in revenue handle?

JP: It might be the high blip in a revenue handle, but it's a small, small slice of the overall pie. Keep in mind, people who point to that are people that have an interest in promoting gambling and an interest in using the NFL as a vehicle for their own operation.

Ley: What's the league's position? Do you want online gambling on the NFL prohibited?

JP: Absolutely. It is prohibited. That's our position. We think that law today, both federal and state law, stops this and the legislation that Congressman (Jim) Leach, Congressman (Bob) Goodlatte, Senator (Jon) Kyl and others are supporting would give law enforcement additional enforcement tools. But the question of whether it's legal or not, that's been answered a long time ago.

Ley: (It's illegal) to take bets, but folks at home, according to experts now, can legally make a bet.

JP: You have to have someone to take the bet and complete the transaction.

Ley: Two to tango?

JP: Exactly.

Ley: What does the league gain by prohibiting it?

JP: We've always said there needs to be a clear-cut separation between gambling and the NFL. It's an "integrity of the game" issue. It's a "perception" issue. One of the things that gives us the popularity that we have, Bob, is people believe our games are honest. People believe there is that separation and they respect it. You can look at other sports where that separation hasn't been quite so clear and their popularity has, rather sharply, declined. That's not the case with the NFL.

Ley: You heard the US Attorney that is prosecuting this case talk about the money leaving the country untaxed and unregulated. If it was taxed and it was regulated and there was piece of the pie to be derived to the leagues involved here, what would your league's position be?

JP: We could take money today. We could take advertising from casinos and the like. We don't do that now. We're not looking for money. It's not a money issue to us.

Ley: Jeff Pash, the NFL executive vice president. We appreciate you taking the time this morning, Jeff.

JP: My pleasure, Bob.

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