

Pigskin PR:

Now that the Super Bowl is done and the season is over it's time to take a quiet, thoughtful look at the NFL.

We all know that Football has a problem, a problem with Bad Boys. You know them. They are the late night offenders, the drug test losers, tough guys who like to hit women, the stars who behave on national TV as if they are certifiably insane (e.g. end-zone dances).

The worst ones move from franchise to franchise until the team can't take it any more. But mostly they stay put and their teams make do. There always seems to be another chance given. Another chance to mess up. Another chance to embarrass almost everyone. I understand the Teams' problem. These guys are expensive talent and they win football games. Teams make money when they win football games. So what's the League to do?

Here's what the NFL should do. The League needs to establish a Prison Team! Take all the Bad Boys, assist in their prosecution and, if convicted, send them to a franchise created just for them. Assemble them into a team made up exclusively of criminals. Maybe we call them the Cons. Their home field would be a forty thousand-seat prison yard. They'd play in a rectangular stadium because rectangles are easier to fence (thanks George Carlin) and lock down, in case something bad happens. I think it should be located in Oklahoma because Oklahoma is not yet interesting.

When the Cons play a road game they would have to wear those release bracelets that are given to guys in home detention. That way you could keep track of and retrieve any of the players who might be tempted to behave exactly as they have always behaved.

I was having trouble designing a uniform for them until I remembered that the game officials have vertical stripes. The Cons would have horizontal stripes. Black and white for home games, pink and white for road games. The pink and white is a little cruel but hey, they could just as easily be in a real prison.

Now, you have to understand that the Cons would still be making the astronomical salaries that they were making "on the outside". They are entitled to that. They are the best in the world at what they do. They are phenomenally gifted athletes. To be as big as they are and as

strong as they are and still be as *fast* as they are is truly mind-boggling. They are the human equivalent of water buffalo. Unbelievable! There is no reason why the Bad Boys shouldn't make what movie stars and singers make. They are entertainers in an equally profitable industry and they are the best at what they do. They just happen to be thugs.

And let's have none of this stuff about keeping them out of the Hall of Fame or rescinding awards for their achievements. You should get into a Hall of Fame because you play the game better than everyone else, not because you'd make a great dad. Or any kind of a dad, for that matter.

There's a lot to like for the League in all of this. The merchandising alone is to kill for (oops). There's so much to be done with the stripe motif. Children all over America would be wearing the Cons Colors. The players' distinctive names would be emblazoned across the pajama backs of countless youngsters. Charming names like Dime Bag and D.O.A.

"*Cribs of the NFL*" would dedicate dozens of episodes to the Cons' lavishly appointed prison cells. Satin sheets, gilded toilets and cellmates too-good-looking to be true. There would be "Cell" phones with speed dial direct to your bail-bondsman and your bookie. Western Union and Greyhound would die (oops) for a piece of this market. You'll always need to wire money to that ne'er do well in your family. And what other transportation company wouldn't fight for (oops) service to Sandstone, Joliet, Marion and Leavenworth? An advertiser's dreams come true.

Before you get on your high horse about this NFL Cons idea corrupting America's youth by glamorizing poor role models, remember that the League would earmark a significant portion of its profits for anti-drug, anti-smoking and anti-alcohol programs. There shouldn't be any problem with promoting one set of values (violence, ego and stupidity) on Game Day Sunday and mouthing a completely different set of values (family, school and service) in their public relations pitch the rest of the week.

The League and the Networks have been doing it for years and it hasn't bothered us yet.