

Superhype. — wake me when the game starts

by Tim Enger

"Bark, Bark, Bark, Bark". Hear that sound? That's the pack of dogs, commonly known as the press corps, descending on New Orleans for two weeks of trying to find an interesting angle on the Superbowl by asking every question known to man. This is what is known as Superhype.

Over a thousand of the continent's best sportswriters set out with the good intention of informing the information-starved public about the biggest sporting event of the year. Unfortunately, very few of them realize that there is only so much you can tell the public, while the rest of them keep reporting and reporting until they wind up reporting on what kind of shampoo the equipment manager uses.

To be honest, this Superbowl does have a lot of interest to it. Chicago vs. New England, the team with a mission vs. the team of destiny. But then again the comparisons can go a little far, the team that

only lost one vs. the team that has covered the spread 14 weeks in a row.

The real question to be asked should be "Is all this really necessary?"

Seriously, most reporters who go there usually miss the real story all together, that is two teams playing for the championship of the National Football League (I refuse to say World Championship until the Russians are allowed to play). Some reporters are so busy digging for a story on the punters shoe size that they don't look at the real factors that might determine the outcome of the game. For instance, the fact that New England lives by the run and that nobody has been able to put together a running game against Chicago this year. Hmm, interesting angle, true, but it will be discussed to death by the weekend. Then what do you talk about?

Maybe the problem lies in the fact that there is two weeks between the conference champion-

ships and the Superbowl. I know that if I had to talk about the same subject for two weeks I'd become a bit monotonous myself. All of the good stories will have been covered and rehashed long before you read this article and that leaves the reporter with a week and a half of space to fill, which is by no means easy to do.

There will be those who will tell you that all this hype is necessary, and its not surprising that the United States, a country starving for heroes, would make such a big fuss over a football game. But the truth is it only serves to hurt the game itself and make it very anticlimatic.

Tell me, when was the last time a Superbowl was exciting enough to live up to all its hype? Last year's game between the Dolphins and the 49ers was supposed to be a battle of the gods, the best from both conferences nose to nose 'til the end. But when the game was finally played it was over by halftime, the the 49ers winning a romp, 38-16. The

same thing happend the year before that, Redskins vs. Raiders, good vs. evil, skill vs. brute force. Again, the game was never in doubt as the Raiders (ugh) prevailed in a blow-out. The last Superbowl that was even remotely exciting was Superbowl XV, where the feisty Rams gave the overconfident Steelers all they could handle, but still the Steelers had things well under control by the middle of the fourth quarter.

In fact, there has only been one Superbowl decided in the last minute and that was Superbowl V where Baltimore beat Dallas on a last minute field goal. But that game was so poorly played that critics renamed it the "Blooperbowl."

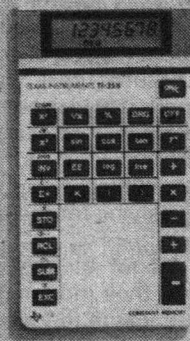
The truth is that there has never been a truly Super bowl, and part of the reason is that the game can never live up to all the hype that precedes it.

CFL commissioner Doug Mitchell is considering having a two-week break between the conference

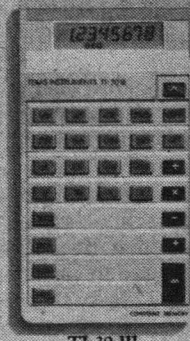
finals and the Grey Cup. Now that he has a dome to play with and doesn't have to worry about the weather, he feels that two-weeks would give the Grey Cup a chance to get some serious hype before it's played. Bad move Doug! He needs only look at the endless string of boring Superbowls so picked apart by hype that they are one of the biggest letdowns every year, and he's sure to reconsider.

So please, take pity on the poor sportswriter who is sentenced to two weeks of looking for stories that aren't there. When you watch the evening news and hear "Tell us Jim, how do you think the pre-game prayer will effect the game?", don't laugh, just turn it off and remain ignorant to all facts pertaining to the game until the kickoff.

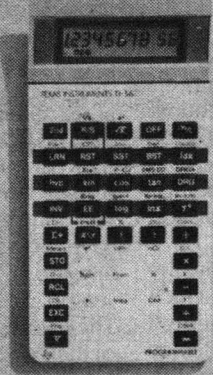
And, oh yeah, don't, I repeat, don't watch the post-game locker room show. There is nothing worse than watching a bunch of grown men cry and Ronald Reagan pronounce the players names wrong.



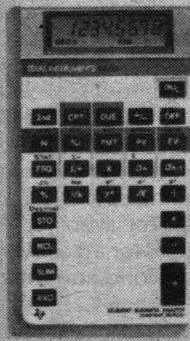
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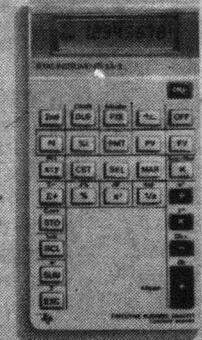
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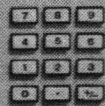
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