

In observance of the upcoming holidays,
all offices will be closed on:

Labor Day Monday, September 2nd **Columbus Day** Monday, October 14th **Veterans Day** Monday, November 11th

Thanksgiving Day
Thursday, November 28th
All offices will close at noon on Friday, November 29th

Congratulations to the winners of the Quarterly Stars & Stripes Drawing!

Tricia McClung of Paulina
Devin Battaglia of Thibodaux
Sheri Tramonte of Morgan City

Thank you for reading this publication of Stars & Stripes!

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Please return by October 31, 2019 to be eligible for this drawing.
Winners will be announced in the next quarterly publication of Stars and Stripes.



September 2019

On Deck with Jim Henderson

As I write this, the NFL pre-season is in full swing. And with it comes exhuming an annual debate: should the pre-season schedule of exhibition games be shortened from four to two...or five to three for the two teams who must also play in the hall of fame game? The usual proposal has two games added to the regular season schedule, making for an 18 game regular season slate.

The owners generally are in favor of the change. The players are not.

I can confidently state that another segment would be unanimously ecstatic to see such a change -- the radio play-by-play broadcasters for each team of whom I was one for the Saints for over 30 years.

Pre-season is as close to hard labor as any of us ever wanted to get.

The reasons are many. To begin with just the sheer roster size. 90 for the first two games of pre-season, nearly twice the size of those once the regular season begins. Filling out the depth charts for each team correspondingly takes twice as long. Trying to have information on every player, especially the skill position players, many of whom had lackluster college careers or are professional journeymen with little chance to make the opening day rosters requires hours searching Wikipedia.

With regulars seeing little action in pre-season and potential reserves the most, the players you have the most info on play the least and those you have the least info on play the most. And with the final score of little consequence and the games often one-sided and ---well ---boring, trying to make the games exciting, especially the last game of pre-season, can be tedious



continued on page 2

At best. Watching paint dry can be faster and more thrilling.

What to "fill" with? Last year's regular season stats quickly become meaningless. This year's pre-season stats don't take that long to become so.

You try to be prepared for everything with your pre-season preparation. In pre-season that's usually impossible with the challenges often something you never encounter in a game that counts.

I remember one pre-season game Hokie Gajan and I were doing as the Saints hosted the Chiefs. Because Kansas City had retired so many uniform numbers in recognition of so many star players they had in their storied history, they didn't have enough numbers to go around with a 90-man roster, particularly at the running back and defensive back positions.

It wasn't until late in the first half that I realized the Chiefs had both a running back and a defensive back wearing the same number. My problem in figuring out who was who was that they were of similar stature and one of them returned kicks. With both of them usually in profile to me, I never got a chance to see their names above the identical numbers on their jerseys.

Figuring as you would, the running back had to be the kick returner. No, it was the defensive back. I failed to correctly identify on approximately five returns, calling him the running back who was watching from the sideline.

But experience taught me to be far-less-demanding of myself in pre-season. Mistakes would happen and inevitably did. The idea was not to make too many and not the same one repeatedly while hoping the listening audience was smaller and less attentive than who would be out there once the games were played for real.

Eventually I adopted the philosophy to absolve myself of pre-season fumbles: calling a pre-season game was like landing an airplane. Any one you could walk away from afterward was a successful one.

God Bless,

Jim Henderson

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