

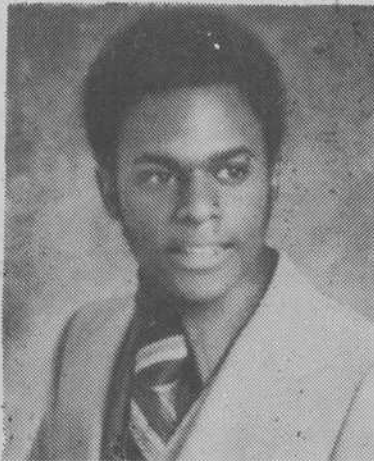
SPORTS BOARD

SPORTS, GAMING, HORSERACING

DECEMBER 27, 1984



KEN'S COMMENTS



By Ken Wilson

Success and failure in the upcoming drive toward the 1984-85 Super Bowl XIX can only be measured by a trophy in addition to huge diamond rings that are the rewards awaiting the team members of the lone survivor in the annual National Football League Tournament.

With a Jan. 20th trip to Stanford, Calif., and a possible NFL title at

stake, the American and National Conference wildcard teams kicked-off the festivities this past weekend with the victors advancing to the next round.

Already the country is assured the right to crown a new king as the defending champs were dethroned in the initial playoff game Saturday, with Seattle's Seahawks beating the Los Angeles

Raiders 13-7 in the AFC wildcard contest.

Seattle coach Chuck Knox took a rather conservative approach in defeating Los Angeles by a running attack, while keeping out of situations that could involve the defense, the strength of the Raider club.

The win now pits the Seahawks against the AFC East champion Dolphins, a rematch of a game in which Seattle upset Miami last year.

In much the same fashion as the preceding day, coaching and strategy played a key role as the upstart New York Giants edged the Los Angeles Rams 16-13 in the NFC wildcard encounter.

New York coach Bill Parcells used an early season thrashing by Los Angeles as motivation while the offense played error-free football, recording no turn-overs, and coming up with the key plays.

However, ultimately

the Giant defense was the consensus hero as star linebacker Lawrence Taylor and Co. put the clamps on the Ram offense, while not letting super-back Eric Dickerson run totally out of control.

This weekend the Giants face the NFL's hottest team, the San Francisco 49ers, a club that humiliated New York on a Monday night nationally televised game.

Observers have already tabbed favorites in the Super Bowl derby, with the frontrunners being the San Francisco 49ers, owners of the best record, and the Miami Dolphins, the runner-up.

Clearly, in the National Conference the favorite is San Francisco, which tallied a 15-1 mark, and comes at opponents with a dangerous offense and a stiff defense.

Niner coach Bill Walsh designed a control pass offense operated by quarterback Joe Montana, and an improved running game featuring Wendell Tyler and Roger Craig. Other weapons include Dwight Clark and Freddie Solomon.

Other conference semifinals include: Chicago at Washington in the NFC, and Pittsburgh traveling to Denver in the AFC.

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