

Next stop, Jacksonville: Super Bowl XXXIX

In less than three weeks, Jacksonville, Florida's Alltel Stadium, home of the National Football League's Jaguars will be packed with more than 76,000 football fans, mostly from out-of-town, who have gathered to witness the playing of Super Bowl XXXIX. Millions more will be watching on television around the world. The game's winners are always heralded the "World Champions" although playing with an elliptical-type football is limited to the teams in North America, where the Super Bowl is not only the big final game of the season, but is big business, too.

The Super Bowl will be televised to 220 countries with live broadcast in 27 different languages with reporters speaking Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Chinese. A 30-second ad on the Super Bowl game costs more than \$2.5 million this year—about \$400,000 more than last year. In 1967, the same airtime only cost \$42,000.

The Super Bowl originated in Los Angeles in 1967 following a contest between two football leagues that

reached an agreement in 1966. The media barely filled the press box for that first game at the Los Angeles Coliseum where the Green Bay Packers met the Kansas City Chiefs. In contrast, the league, issued 3,200 media credentials for Super Bowl XXXVIII (2004).

Aside from growing global popularity, the Super Bowl has a corporate bottom-line: an estimated \$250 million local economic impact, is certain to be felt by the host city.

Each year the super game is moved around to different cities with a few being the hosts more than once. New Orleans has hosted the Super Bowl nine times; Miami, eight; Los Angeles area, including at the Rose Bowl, seven times; and Tampa, three. Next year's Super Bowl will be in Detroit, Michigan at the Detroit Lions new Ford Field which was built in 2002.

No Super Bowl has ever been played in the home field of a participant, but two teams, the 1979 Los Angeles Rams and the 1984 San Francisco 49ers, played in the game in their home area.

This will be the first time the World Championship will



SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

be played in Jacksonville. Alltel Stadium was built and opened in 1995, one year after the Jaguars, members of the American Football Conference South Division, were granted a NFL franchise. When asked why the championship game doesn't have a permanent home like the New Orleans Super Dome, NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue said:

"Taking the Super Bowl to more cities represents a couple of things. Number one, the recognition of the game is a tremendous asset to the community, and the impact of the game goes beyond football and can be a positive for the entire tourism and travel economy of many, many different cities. Secondly, it reflects the fact that so many cities have invested public monies, either in total or in part to build new stadiums, and in those circumstances, our ownership has felt it is important to support those

investments with a Super Bowl."

"For a \$3.6 million investment to put on a game, a metropolitan area stands to net tremendous returns over a substantial period of time," said Charles Scurr, president of the South Florida Host Committee (Game XXIX).

General admission tickets cost about \$12 in 1967. Face value this year is \$500. (There are a few who will probably pay more than face value). The competing teams each get 17.5 percent of the tickets to sell; while the NFL office gets 25.2 percent for fan distribution to fan lottery, NFLPA, media and other NFL associates. The other 29 league teams get 34.8 percent, and five percent goes to the host team(s).

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Depending on the outcome of this weekend's pre-Super Bowl playoffs, there is a strong possibility that two teams from Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh Steelers and the

Philadelphia Eagles, might meet in Jacksonville on February 6, 2005.

Philadelphia last appeared in Super Bowl XV losing to the Oakland Raiders in New Orleans, 27-10. The Steelers, winner of four championships in a six year period from 1975 to 1980, also appeared in 1996 losing to Dallas in Tempe, Arizona, 27-17.

The Eagles are hoping this fourth consecutive appearance in the NFL Championship game will finally be the one that takes them to a Super Bowl victory after a 24-year hiatus. Of course, the fourth time isn't a charm based on the four consecutive appearances of the Buffalo Bills from 1991 to 1994 who lost in Super Bowls XXV, XXVI, XXVII and XXVIII.

Philadelphia's opponents this weekend, the Atlanta Falcons (12-5), are going to be a very tough opponent for the Eagles (14-3), with Falcons quarterback Michael Vick and tight end Alge Crumpler to deal with on the field.

Vick has revolutionized the lead position with his speed and agility, keeping the opposition off guard because of his ability to scramble and gain yardage. Crumpler, who

made his position on the Falcons a secondary menace, will also play a large part in the team's offensive endeavors.

In the other conference playoff, the New England Patriots (15-2) haven't forgotten the name of the team that ended their consecutive win streak — the Pittsburgh Steelers (16-1). Payback and a trip back to the Super Bowl are all the incentive Patriots coach Bill Belichick's team needs to be ready this weekend. Also, after the defensive beating the Patriots administered to the highflying Indianapolis Colts last weekend, the Steelers are already listed as the underdogs to the defending Super Bowl champs.

Historically, the Roman numerals used to designate the Super Bowls began with V (5) when the Baltimore Colts won over the Dallas Cowboys 16-13. The Roman numerals were adopted to clarify any confusion that may occur because of the NFL Championship games and the Super Bowls. Numerals I and IV were added to the first four Super Bowls.

This year's Super Bowl is game number XXXIV (39), and likely to be as big a game as ever.

Confirmation

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to elevate Rice to the nation's top diplomatic job.

At her hearing Wednesday, Rice acknowledged "there were some bad decisions" by the administration on Iraq, as Democrats pressed her on whether the reasons for going to war were misleading.

Rice insisted that Saddam Hussein was a dictator who refused to account for weapons of mass destruction. And it was impossible to change the nature of a terror threat in the Middle East with him leading Iraq, she testified.

Accused by Boxer of "rigidness," Rice responded that as national security adviser she had "no difficulty telling the president what I think."

But she also told the committee not to expect her to reveal any differences with Bush as secretary of state. "I want to be clearly understood — we are one administration, with the president in the lead," she said.

At the same time, though, Rice told the committee "I will tell you what I think, that is a promise I make to you today."

Biden suggested Rice also advise the president "to read a little bit of history" and to inform him that in Iraq "it isn't going that well."

Boxer would not be shaken off, even after Rice acknowledged to the Senate committee that "there were some bad decisions" taken by the administration on Iraq.

She accused Rice of "an unwillingness to give Americans the full story because selling the war was so important to Dr. Rice. That was her job."

And now, Boxer said, the toll of American dead and wounded is the "direct result" of Bush administration "rigidness" and mis-

statements.

Biden challenged Rice to acknowledge administration mistakes on Iraq and said he would vote for her confirmation, but only with "some frustration and reservation."

The Delaware senator, zeroing in on U.S. policy in Iraq as he had during Tuesday's initial hearing, accused the administration of giving shifting reasons to justify the war to oust Saddam.

Rice had steadfastly refused Tuesday to say when U.S. forces might be withdrawn from Iraq. And on Wednesday, Biden cited various rationales for the war, saying "you danced around it, stuck to the party line."

He told Rice that acknowledging mistakes — such as the claim that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction and was poised to use them — should not be considered "a sign of weakness."

Sen. Lincoln Chafee, R-R.I., meanwhile, urged Rice to consider reconciliation with Iran, which he said was about as repressive as China was when the Nixon administration approached Beijing for better relations.

But Rice said, "It is really hard to find common ground with a government that thinks Israel should be extinguished," supports terror groups and is undercutting U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East.

More than 1,365 members of the U.S. military have died since U.S. troops led an invasion of Iraq in March 2003. But Rice has declined to estimate when even some of the 150,000 U.S. troops may return home.

"I am really reluctant to try to put a timetable on that, because I think the goal is to get the mission accomplished," she had said Tuesday, "and that means that the Iraqis have to be capable of some things before we lessen our own responsibility," she said.



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