

Editorial

Avid college fans might not mourn pro football strike

What to do on a Sunday afternoon.

Well, you can strike watching pro football off your list.

Yes, another pro sport has decided to pack it in and go on strike. So, just as the major-league baseball players turned their backs on the diamond last summer, this year pro football players are giving up the gridiron. (At least temporarily.)

But just how sorely is professional football going to be missed?

Here's one writer that believes that if some major colleges switch to Sunday game dates, most fans may never care whether they find out which dark horse (such as San Francisco or Cincinnati last year) makes it to Super Bowl paydirt in '82.

Why? Because frankly friends, college football is a better deal.

Baseball players made a deep impression when they walked out. After all, in the midst of a lazy summer, baseball is just the tonic for sports fans who don't have much else to cling to.

But pro football players may find that many fans don't even miss them.

Thus, the football strike may provide an answer to a question many have long pondered: Which is more popular with the fans, pro or college football?

Here's one vote for the non-paid variety.

Maybe college football's biggest boost is that players don't have any monetary incentive. (Let's pretend to forget all the NCAA violations for a few minutes. At least college players aren't picking up million dollar-plus contracts as the pros are.)

Also, college football seems more down-to-earth. The players make more mistakes, and those are the things that perk up viewer interest in a game. The level of aptitude in the pro ranks is almost too steep. (In college, a 200-yard passing game is considered a good effort, not a routine day's work like it is in the pro ranks.)

And don't forget about the alma mater ties that students and alums feel for college teams.

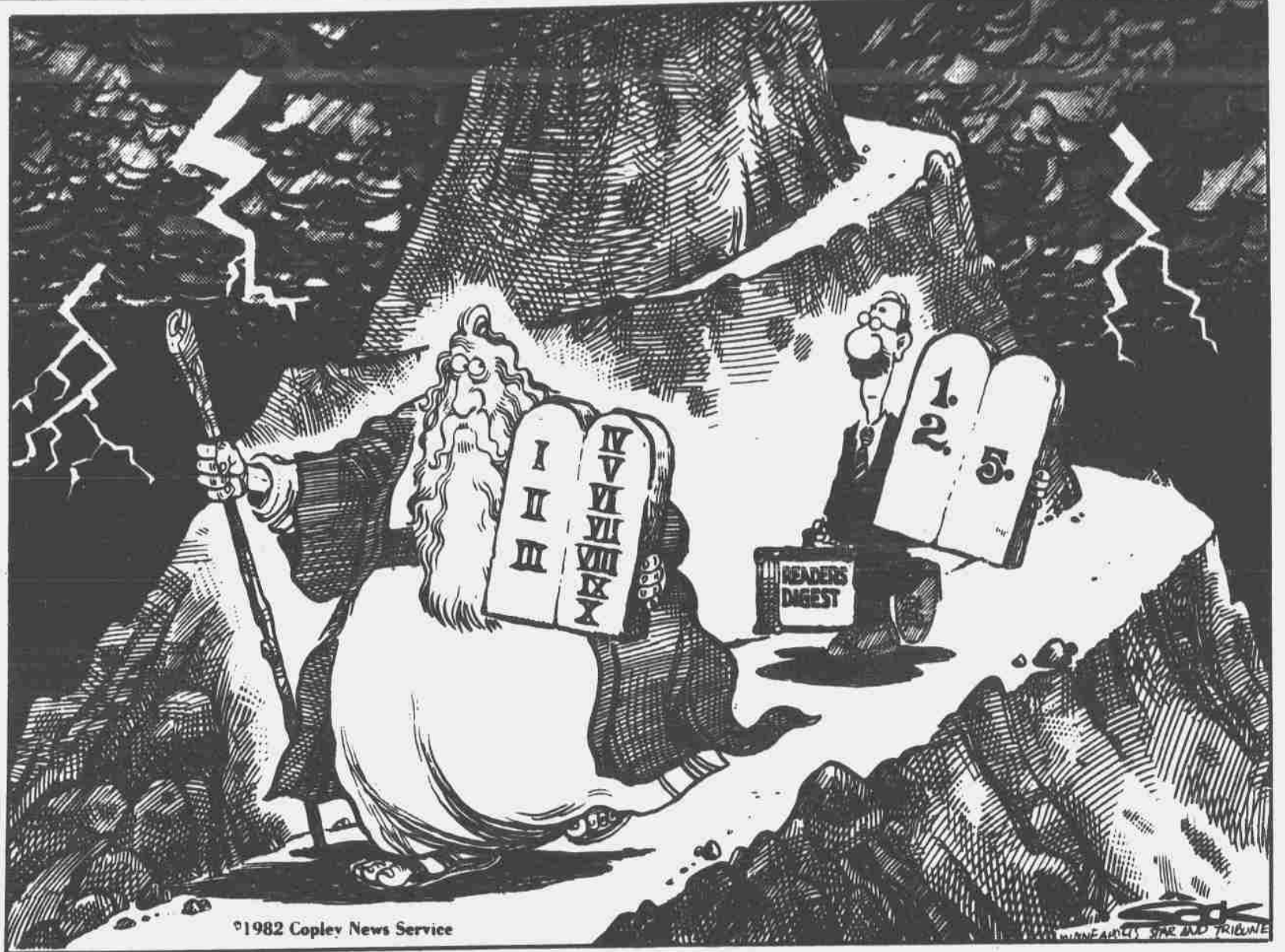
Back to the National Football League strike. Unless things happen fast between players and owner negotiators, it looks like fans will be in for their third weekend of pro no-shows.

But if television networks move even faster and persuade some major college powers to play on Sunday, the pro football letdown may never be felt. And pro football players may find that they won't be as badly missed as they thought.

That hinges on network programming schemes. Neither Canadian football nor Division III college football chills and spills will hold a Sunday audience captive.

But major-college football can hold an audience, and if those games pop up on Sundays that, more than any "negotiation," will herd pro stars back to the huddles.

Betsy Miller



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Voters 'stealing' representation

"Currently, the state constitution allows state senators to be paid a \$400 monthly salary and their expenses for the round trip from their home to Lincoln during legislative sessions.

"The proposed amendment would expand that to pay for their actual reasonable necessary expenses when



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the Legislature is in session. If the election were held today, would you vote for or against the amendment?"

Recently Research Associates of Lincoln polled Nebraska voters for their response to the above question and found that 52 percent of the respondents favored reimbursement of the actual expenses incurred by state legislators, while 41 percent opposed such an amendment and 7 percent of the respondents were undecided.

It would appear that roughly 48 percent of the sampled voters of Nebraska either don't recognize a good bargain when they see one, or they would rather "steal" their state governmental representation rather than to pay a fair price for it.

"Stealing" legislative representation is by no means new to the citizens of this state. Not since 1968 have Nebraska voters extended further financial remuneration to their representatives for the tedious and generally

thankless task of interpreting, changing and adopting sound public policy.

Nebraskans' callous attitude toward raising legislative compensation can be rationalized to a certain extent by examining Midwestern ethics. For example, the element of volunteerism in state government has always been held in the highest regard by rural Midwesterners. The expectation that individuals would be willing and able to serve in public office for nominal compensation is emphasized as a primary belief held by many rural individuals as time after time Nebraska's rural citizens vote to oppose salary increases or expense allowances for their legislative representatives.

It is unfortunate, however, that a majority of Nebraskans fail to understand that the price for inadequate compensation far outweighs the cost of their fair compensation.

Indeed, the highest price any state pays when it obliges legislators to vacate office for financial reasons is the loss of the continuity and judgment which only senior legislators can bring to government.

Every time an experienced legislator resigns from office, the state bears an immeasurable cost in the loss of his or her leadership. If ever there were a time when leadership and experience were needed, it is now. President Reagan has designated individual state governments to carry out numerous omnibus federal programs and along with them the rules and regulations governing their administration.

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Israelis still hope that good will come from evil

Sometime during the immense protest rally in Tel Aviv last week, an elderly Polish-born Israeli expressed his pain to a Western reporter. "I came to Israel and worked for it to be a sign for the whole world," he said, "Now I'm ashamed for what we've done."

This theme of personal disillusionment has run like a minor chord through two weeks of self-doubt in Israel. If



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it is hard to be a sign for the world, it is even harder to see the letters in that sign tarnished.

For every Israeli who argues now that the country's behavior is being held up to some higher standard of morality, there is another who anguishes because the country hasn't lived up to that standard.

This is not the first time we've seen a community founded on ideals foundering in its own eyes.

We have witnessed so many crises of conscience in societies created with the pledge of justice that it seems numbly predictable. We have seen the moral dilemma of slavery in America, the murder of the Kulaks in the Soviet Union. Each time a community or country faces its weaknesses, even its sins, we wonder again whether every

"good" society is dissolved or distorted by human weakness.

In Israel's history the stakes have been higher. This was territory carved out by the Western world's guilt. As a nation of survivors, the Israelis carried a burden of proof. Much of the world invested in this small country the profound hope that something good could come out of evil.

The world wrested the League of Nations from World War I, the United Nations from World War II. The Jews wrested Israel out of the Holocaust. Good out of evil.

Those who created Israel and grew up in it, fertilizing the desert with their own labor, understood that they had a deeper job, the task of creating a society better than the ones they'd left.

It's no wonder that the existence of Israel — even its military history until recently — has been tied up with its righteousness. It's no wonder that many of these survivors are horrified to believe that some of their own leaders behaved like the "good Germans," and didn't "know" about the Beirut massacre.

Bernard Malamud raises the same questions about the possibility of a just society in his new book, "God's Grace," a fable published with eerie timing during this crisis. His simple, evocative tale opens after the ultimate holocaust — a nuclear war followed by a second flood. Once again, there is a survivor, a single Jew, Calvin Cohn, who escapes destruction through a "minuscule error" of God's.

Malamud's character also attempts to create a decent community out of a tiny remnant of living creatures: chimps, a gorilla, baboons. His commandments, stories and preachings to the members all come down to one lesson: "If we expect to go on living we have to be kind to each other."

Yet even there, in the imminent shadow of holocaust, with less than a dozen creatures left on earth, the community doesn't hold. It's torn apart by anger, hatred, jealousy, suspicion, aggression.

The 20th century track record of moral societies is not much to prompt optimism in Malamud. Nor, I suppose, in the rest of us. We wrested the League of Nations from World War I and lost it. We wrested the United Nations from World War II and watched it sink. We wrested Israel from the Holocaust and then are shocked when members of its government become accomplices to a massacre.

Yet if there's a tool that any community can use to wedge against moral decline, it's the measuring stick of right and wrong. This is the stick Israelis have always used to measure their different-ness. This is the stick that 350,000 Israelis, one out of every 10, held on to at the Tel Aviv anti-Begin rally.

Now they are using the same tool in protest, prayer and politics. It yet may be a "sign" for the world, a battered sign for a more cynical world still trying to believe that good can yet come out of evil.

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