

Talking Football— And Purple Drank

Written by By Gregory Kane
Thursday, 29 November 2012 20:13

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1. Congratulations to Baltimore City College's football team for winning the City-Poly game the first Saturday in November.

The Black Knights beat the Engineers 20-14. (Yes, I know Poly's official mascot is a parrot; City's is the Black Knight. I call Poly's athletic teams "the Engineers" because I want to spare them the embarrassment of calling them "the Parrots." Look, I'm trying to give 'em a break here.)

City's victory ended a four-year Poly win streak in the series, the oldest high-school rivalry in the nation. The City-Poly football game is even older than some of the classic college tiffs: Army-Navy, Michigan-Ohio State, and Alabama-Auburn.

A plea to City football coach George Petrides and his future teams: please, allow no more Poly win streaks. They make me nervous, and take me back to the days when Poly won 17 straight City-Poly games.

That was from 1970 through 1986, when Tech's teams were strong and City was on a downward spiral both athletically and academically. City ended this nightmare in 1987, winning 34-22 when quarterback Chris Smith and running back Paul Williams combined for the game-winning touchdown on what has been called The Play.

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2. After the Baltimore Ravens Sunday, November 25, 2012, victory over the San Diego Chargers we now have The Play, Part II. The Play, Part I involved Smith taking the snap and handing the ball off to Williams, who started to run and then tossed the ball back in a lateral to Smith.

The quarterback took off toward the Poly end zone in a twisting, exciting run that ended with his crossing the goal line for a touchdown. However, The Play, Part I, doesn't even come close to The Play, Part II.

Anyone who saw the game knows what happened. And, if you're like me, you are still wondering HOW it happened— even over a week later.

The Ravens trailed 13-10 and faced a fourth and 29. The game should have been over.

Then, Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco took the snap and passed the ball to running back Ray Rice, a measly ONE YARD beyond the line of scrimmage. Rice ran through the Chargers' defense for 29 more yards and the first down.

"OK," I said after Rice got the first down. "There's something fundamentally wrong with what I just saw." The Ravens tied the game and then won it 16-13 in overtime.

I've been watching National Football League games for nearly 50 years. I can't remember any team converting on fourth down and 29. Might have happened, but I sure as heck don't remember it.

Any defensive unit worthy of being called a defensive unit is supposed to stop a team facing a fourth down and 29 situation. But the Chargers' defensive unit didn't.

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Here's the kicker: earlier in the fourth quarter, the Chargers stopped the Ravens on a fourth down and INCHES play. What can you say about a team that can't convert a fourth down and inches, and then converts a fourth down and 29 to tie the game and then eventually win it?

The Ravens are out to drive their fans bat guano crazy. Ditto for the Chargers, who as of the end of the game on Sunday, November 25 have lost seven of 11-games. Their fans have to be wondering how the Chargers won four games.

Colts fans saw their team go up 24-0 on the Denver Broncos, only to lose the game. Now the Chargers have once again snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. What's the problem?

I'm blaming "Purple Drank." Never heard of Purple Drank? I hadn't either, until a few weeks ago.

Purple Drank is a concoction, of either Sprite or Seven-Up, codeine syrup and Jolly Ranchers candy. The dangerous combination is said to be popular among rappers. Lil' Wayne's name has been mentioned as one of those people who imbibe Purple Drank on a regular basis.

That might explain some of Lil' Wayne's more bizarre raps; it may or may not explain why he has the most annoying voice of any rapper that's ever lived.

In addition to rappers, Purple Drank is said to be gaining in popularity among some NFL players. Former Oakland Raiders quarterback JaMarcus Russell was a number-one draft pick whose career went nowhere.

He was arrested in 2010 for possession of codeine syrup and then rumors started to fly that Russell was a Purple Drank connoisseur. Russell denied the allegation in a 2011 interview with *Sports Illustrated*.

Former Green Bay Packers player Johnny Jolly was found with codeine syrup and nailed with

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a six-year suspension for violating his probation.

Did one or more of the Chargers have too much Purple Drank the night before they faced the Ravens? They sure played like it.