

# PROS

Here we are, again facing a new year. Fortunately most professional sporting events are annual affairs and we can again look to them for all the usual action and excitement. First comes the championship of American professional football. Aply named "the Super Bowl", it often meets the expectations implied in its title. This year's event, featuring the Dallas Cowboys and the Denver Broncos, should be no exception.

The Super Bowl is amazingly parallel to Canada's Grey Cup. Both titles, for instance, are decided by a single match. The games each climax professional football seasons while highlighting the sporting year of their respective countries.

They do, however, vary significantly. While the Grey Cup is ignored outside of Canada, all of North America focuses on the Super Bowl. Evidence of this prestige is everywhere. Zenon Andrusyshyn, for example, has given up a successful career with the Toronto Argonauts to try his fortune to the south. Even more convincing is Marv Levy's immediate departure after winning the Grey Cup in Montreal. He compiled a record of 50-34-4 in Canada, but has opted for the Kansas City Chiefs who last year were a mere 2-12. Thus the American championship is the one that truly decides football's world title.

In watching the race to the Super Bowl, it was hard not to question its fairness. Each team is in either the American or the National Conference, each of which is further divided into three divisions. The divisional champions enter the play-offs along with two wild card squads. These final selections are determined on the basis of won-lost records.

The whole structure seems fine on paper, but in reality it leaves something to be desired. As in hockey, the most deserving teams aren't always rewarded. In this regard the season just past was typical. Baltimore's Colts and the Rams from Los Angeles entered post-season action

with 10-4 records. The Minnesota Vikings and Chicago Bears were also in at 9-5. The Miami Dolphins had ten wins while the New England Patriots and Washington Redskins earned nine each, yet they were all eliminated. An examination of team scoring only heightens the inconsistency. Play-off bound Minnesota and Chicago were 231-227 and 255-253 respectively. Miami, though, stood at 313-197 while New England was 278-217. Such statistics leave little doubt as to which were the better teams.

The N.F.L.'s structure obviously has its flaws, but it is undoubtedly just as democratic and justified as that of any other sport. The only better alternative would be to create a single division with the top eight teams in the play-offs. The problem then, however, would be to devise a fair and balanced league schedule.

Regardless of fairness, the set-up of the N.F.L. has, this year at least, done its job. It has created what should be an interesting and exciting Super Bowl. Dallas and Denver have been the best teams all season long. Both led their respective conferences with 12-2 marks, and easily dealt with their play-off opponents. The stage has been set. Only one of them can emerge as world champions.

From all indication it will be the classic confrontation of a powerful offense against a superb defense. The Cowboys compiled 345 points during the year. That is 24.6 per game compared to only 19.6 (274 in all) for Denver. On defense, however, it is a different story. The stingy Broncos yielded an average of only 10.7 while Dallas allowed 15.1. We are faced with the same old question. Can a great offense beat a great defense?

A glance at the line-ups further reveals the strength of the Dallas offense. The Cowboys can score in an almost unlimited number of ways. The newest and possibly the most threatening part of the act wears number 33. He is fleet-footed Tony Dorsett who has gained 1008 yards in his first pro season. Also in the backfield is the effective Robert Newhouse. In talented, versatile and experienced Roger Stauback, the team probably has the world's best quarterback. Billy Joe Du Pree is a big name at tight end and Efren Herrera is a good field goal kicker.

The Dallas defense also has some outstanding performers. The best one is Harvey Martin (the sack man) who this season nabbed quarterbacks twenty-three times. Dallas then, is an extremely talented team.

The Broncos, on the other hand, are the league's biggest surprise. They stormed to an unexpected first place finish over defending champion Oakland, and then thumped the Raiders again in the play-offs.

Now the upstarts are looking to win their first Super Bowl. Quarterback Craig Morton runs an offense that is conservative, but good. The aggressive defense is continually forcing turnovers and almost always holding its ground. The only thing more certain than the team's defense is its fan support. All season Denver residents have been fanatically enthusiastic about the Broncos' performance. They will remain so, at least until after the Super Bowl.

The January 15th game at the Superdome in New Orleans will be one worth watching. (Isn't it fitting to play the Super Bowl in the Superdome?) The Broncos are football's "Cinderella" team and as such they'll be tough to beat. Dallas, however, is more talented, and since A.F.C. has dominated recently, the law of averages will favor the N.F.C.'s Cowboys. Dallas should win by five points.

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