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“Championship Title”

by
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I know there are many of my fellow West Virginians here in the Villages and if you're like me you've been getting a great deal of ribbing recently since our football Mountaineers seemingly failed to show up for the game against a 4 touchdown underdog University of Pittsburgh. The Panthers were able to hold the 'Eers' offense, which had averaged over 30 points a game for the season, to one lone, hard earned touchdown, and by so doing removed West Virginia from the National Championship title game.

Even some stalwart Mountaineer faithful have jumped ship saying WVU cannot be trusted to come through when the chips are down. One good friend sent me an e-mail with a subject line reading, "Red Cross making changes." The message said "The American Red Cross has changed its universal sign for choking...." The two pictures attached included one of a man holding his throat with both hands and the second one was a West Virginia football helmet. Man, when your friends go against you what's a guy to do.

But don't fault the Mountaineers... this 2007 collegiate football year was the wackiest I can remember in my short six decade life. Never have so many football "Davids" gone up against so many "Goliaths" and toppled them like weeds, and Lord forbid if your team should ever make it to the #2 spot in the country... it was a sign of sure death.

Folks, we all know that on any given day, any given team can beat any other given team... regardless of its won-loss records at the time; regardless of the supposed "over-whelming talent" on the favored team; and regardless of the sports writers'/announcers' hype about how much of a blow-away the game should be. Given the shape of the football, the energy generated by all those young testosterone filled athletic bodies on the field, and the physical mayhem that results from the interaction between those bodies... no one pundit can accurately predict the outcome or the winner of the game.

What's the big deal about a National Championship anyhow? (*In case you don't recognize what I'm doing now... it's called rationalizing.*) I mean just because the title means, ostensibly, that you are the absolute best football team coming out of close to 900 Division I, II, and III College football programs throughout the United States... so??? I know... the higher your school is rated the more potential recruits will come to it to learn about the important things in life, i.e., splitting the atom or maybe, even more important, how to latch on to a great agent, leave school in your sophomore year and be picked in the 1st round of the NFL draft. Now you're an instant millionaire

and you have a chance to have an entourage wherever you may go, like Las Vegas where you can carouse and get into a few nightclub brawls and shootings and be suspended for an entire year... or better yet be kicked out of the NFL and no college education to fall back on. But I digress.

No folks... West Virginia was better off losing the opportunity to play in the National Championship game. The larger and more popular schools deserve the chance to add another National Championship to their record books. Ten years from now who will remember who won the National Title in 2008... no one... but 20 years from now football announcers everywhere will still remember us when they ask the Aflac Trivia Question... “What University holds the record of most wins without ever winning a National Champion?” Yea Mounties!

Seriously folks, our players had a great season and have nothing to be ashamed of or to hang their head about. The West Virginia Mountaineers ended the season with a 10-2 record and won the Big East Conference Championship. And for those who constantly tell us what a weak conference the Big East is... you should know that 5 of its 8 members received and accepted Bowl invitations, including WV's trip to the BCS Fiesta Bowl in Arizona, which carries a cumulative payout for the participating conferences of \$17 Million dollars. Not a bad payday for anyone, especially we Appalachian Americans from the great state of West Virginia. That game is against Oklahoma University, by the way, and will be played on the Fox Sports Channel, 8 pm, January 2nd, 2008.

Go 'Eers!

See you next week.