

Football

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very fortunate to be down only four points, as the Mountaineers had the ball inside the Deacon 20-yard line numerous times, but, thanks to big plays by the Deacon defense, they were only able to manage 10 points.

In this game it was the Deacons that would come out inspired in the second half, marching through the App. St. defense for two touchdowns to make the score 20-10. Late in the game, it looked as though the Deacs were going to put the game away, as they had moved the ball inside the Mountaineer 20-yard line. But a mishandled snap out of the shotgun and a couple of failed attempts at recovering the ball gave the Mountaineers the ball all the way down inside the Deacon 30-yard line. But again, the defense held strong stopping the Mountaineers on fourth down to again give Williams the task of icing the game,

which he did for the second game in a row. So it is that the Deacons enter this game undefeated. While they have played well, there are still many things that the Deacons need to improve on if they expect to beat Maryland, who Grobe sees as a tough opponent.

"It takes you five seconds when you cut the film on (Maryland) to figure out that this is not only a well-coached football team, but a well-motivated football team," Grobe said.

"This is a team that plays very hard, they make very few mistakes, they've got possibly one of the best teams in college football as far as defense is concerned. I think they're ranked in the top five or 10 in total defense, in scoring defense. They're only giving up about 70 yards a game rushing and I think 77 was in one run.

"They are really a fine football team and their kids play really hard."

The Deacons hope that the kickoff will return things to somewhere near what they were before the tragedy.

Pressbox

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The last Big Game slated for this weekend was Washington at Miami. Last year's game in Seattle proved to be the cornerstone of BCS controversy, as the Huskies handed the Hurricanes their lone loss on the year, paving the way for Florida State to be chosen for the Orange Bowl despite the 'Canes' victory over the 'Noles and second-place standing in both national polls.

Could there be a better storyline for a college game? Would the Huskies have any chance against a Miami team that will surely be seeing red when they think of the National Title shot they lost at Washington last year? Will Miami's momentum and rage have waned at all after having to wait 10 weeks, until Nov. 24, to get their paws on the Huskies?

2. The Ryder Cup

It was announced Sept. 16 that the Ryder Cup would be postponed until 2002 in respect for the victims and also due to many of the American players' fear of traveling.

The biggest loser in this postponement could be American captain Curtis Strange. Strange selected with his two captain's

picks two gritty veterans who have had remarkably successful years in Paul Azinger and Scott Verplank. Verplank, the first ever captain's pick to not have prior Cup experience, had seemed to justify his controversial selection when he won the Canadian Open the weekend before the Sept. 11 disaster.

Now the question is whether these two older warriors will be having the same type of success next season at this time as they are having now. It is not at all out of the ordinary for a over-40 player like Azinger to follow a great year with a horrible one.

And, while Verplank is currently seventh on the money list, he has by no stretch of the imagination been the picture of consistency. After winning a couple of tournaments in the '80's, Verplank struggled mightily in the '90's, going through multiple injuries and falling out of the collective golfing consciousness before winning the Reno-Tahoe Open last year to set up this year's resurgence. No one knows if his new success is the exception or the new rule. If either falls off, Strange could catch some serious heat.

The postponement also switches things around a good deal in the international golf scene. The Ryder Cup will be played on even numbered years from now

on, with the President's Cup, the Ryder's younger international brother, will switch from even numbered to odd numbered years, postponing next year's event to 2003.

3. Barry's run at the record books

With MLB's decision to make up all postponed games, the delays may actually help Barry Bonds in his quest for 71. With a six-day rest to fortify the body, Bonds has less chance of injury.

Also, does anyone think there is a chance that he will get anywhere near as much media scrutiny as he would have before the tragedy? Of course not. No, this postponement has given Bonds an opportunity to be more physically ready to break the record, as well as lifted much of the pressure the media's spotlight would have put on his shoulders.

So, as with everything else in this world, the events of Sept. 11 have radically altered the outlook of this year's sports scene.

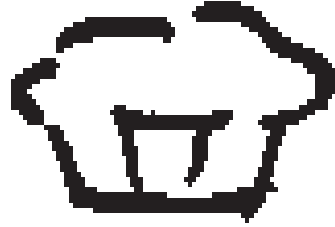
And while at this point, with my mind filled with images of past horrors and future war, no sport seems in any way consequential, I will still go back to watching football on Saturdays, and discussing with friends who I think is going to be in Pasadena come New Year's.

It's my way of breathing.



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