



THE BIG GAME DEMANDS BIGGER PREPARATIONS

Local eateries and watering holes bulk up for Super Bowl Sunday



ALEX HORVATH / THE CALIFORNIAN

RJ's Bar & Grill bartender Pearl Morales starts the task of stocking the shelves of the bar after extra supplies of alcohol were delivered Friday to handle business on Super Bowl Sunday.

BY THE NUMBERS SUPER BOWL GRUB & GROG

10,000

Approximate number of chicken wings a local Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant expects to sell Super Bowl Sunday.

150

Number of appetizer trays Caesar's Italian Deli expects to sell on Super Bowl Sunday — a 50 percent increase over last year.

16

Number of beer kegs RJ's Bar & Grill ordered in preparation for Super Bowl Sunday.

27

Number of RJ's employees scheduled to work Super Bowl Sunday (that's the restaurant's entire payroll).

BY JOHN COX
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Many's the football fan who enjoys appetizers and beer during the Super Bowl — but close to 10,000 chicken wings flying out of a single restaurant? And 16 kegs of beer flowing pint by pint at another?

Believe it. It's not quite as big a deal as Christmas, but for sheer calorie consumption, New Year's Eve's got nothing on the biggest day of the year in American spectator sports.

Don't think it'll be easy for local restaurants, bars and caterers, some of which have been preparing for weeks to make sure customers get what they came for.

Based on last year's cheery holiday sales totals, some places are expecting a bump of as much as 50 percent over last year's receipts.

Their employees will be feeling it, too. Nobody on the payroll gets the day off, first of all. Even places that don't normally open on Sundays feel obli-

SUPER BOWL LIII HOW TO WATCH & MORE INFO

Who: Los Angeles Rams vs. New England Patriots

Where: Atlanta

When: 3:30 p.m.

TV: CBS

Inside: Turn to Sports, Page B1, for more game-day coverage.

gated to staff up, if only for a few hours. And in case you're expecting servers to remain impartial throughout the game, well, forget about it.

"My employees are all looking forward just to watch the game themselves," said Teresa Scott-Valdez, general manager at RJ's Bar & Grill on Hageman Road in northwest Bakersfield, where customers go through 75 heaping orders of "trash can" nachos on a typical

Please see SUPER BOWL | A3

Super Bowl experience has something even for the folks indifferent to football

By now, most people are at least vaguely aware that something culturally monumental is happening today that will compel Americans to gather around television sets.

It's nothing important; just a football game. However, watching the Super Bowl does give viewers the chance to participate in several specific, unique human interactions usually not possible at the same time. Depriving yourself of the Super Bowl experience because of, say, a distaste for violence or an aversion to French onion sour cream dip also deprives you of these byproduct interactions.

Good thing I'm here to share with all of you football haters and agnostics a rundown of some of those experiences, and explain how you might replicate

them without subjecting yourself to today's Neanderthal spectacle pitting a collection of Boston-area millionaire athletes against another group from Los Angeles.

Here are 10 examples of what nonfans might miss by skipping the Super Bowl and how they might compensate.

1. TRIBAL IDENTIFICATION

Football fans: Something makes people want to align themselves with sports teams

they have no real connection with — unless you count the team-licensed merchandise they're wearing. Yet, fans feel such a sense of belonging that many refer to their chosen team as "we."



ROBERT PRICE
THE CALIFORNIAN

Please see PRICE | A3

Experts recommend open talks between parents and children about allegations of educator abuse, inappropriate behavior

BY JASON KOTOWSKI
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This past week has seen no less than three reports of alleged misconduct — legal and otherwise — on the part of either current or former school personnel in Kern County.

How prevalent are these types of issues? It's hard to say exactly, but nationwide there does appear to be an increase.

In 2017, the Children's Center for Psychiatry, Psychology & Related Services published an article exploring just how many children are victims of inappropriate contact with educators.

Citing statistics compiled by an organization called Stop Educator Sexual Abuse Misconduct & Exploitation, it said 3.5 million students in eighth through 11th grades surveyed nationwide reported having physical sexual contact from an adult, most often a teacher or coach.

The contact ranged from unwanted touching to sexual intercourse, according to the survey.

GENERAL SIGNS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE

There are possible warning signs of sexual abuse that parents should be on the lookout for in children and adolescents, including the following:

- Has nightmares or other sleep problems without an explanation.
- Seems distracted or distant at odd times.
- Has a sudden change in eating habits.
- Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, insecurity or withdrawal.
- Leaves "clues" that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues.
- Develops new or unusual fear of certain people or places.
- Writes, draws, plays, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Thinks of self or body as repulsive, dirty or bad.
- Exhibits adultlike sexual behaviors, language and knowledge.
- Talks about a new older friend.

Source: Stop It Now!

That number rose to 4.5 million children when including other types of sexual misconduct, such as being shown pornography or hearing sexually explicit language, according to the survey.

The apparent increase of sexual contact between educators and students is in part due to the proliferation of cell-phones and social media, wrote Terry

Abbott, former chief of staff at the U.S. Department of Education, in a 2015 article for The Washington Post.

"Nearly 80 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 own a cellphone, and 94 percent now have a Facebook account," Abbott wrote. "Classroom sexual predators

Please see COMMUNICATION | A3



PETE TITTL VISITS
LUIGI'S
DINING OUT | C1

WEATHER

Powerful storm slams into SoCal, flooding highways
PAGE A11

CSUB HOOPS

'Runners falter in 2nd half in loss to Grand Canyon
PAGE B1



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62/49
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LOCAL

COMMUNICATION

Continued from PAGE A1

have been exploiting these new, unsupervised modes of communication to develop improper relationships with students out of sight of parents and principals.”

Janelle Goh, a Bakersfield therapist in private practice, said social media is where a lot of contact first occurs between teachers and students.

She said it's important to talk with your children at a young age about what's appropriate contact both in person or online. Children and teens should feel comfortable talking to their parents if something happens at school that makes them uncomfortable, she said.

Goh added it's important for parents to monitor their children's social media.

“We want to trust our kids but we can't trust everybody else,” she said.

Some of the recent incidents can serve as a perfect entryway for a discussion on inappropriate behavior, Goh said. And it's important to reiterate those points and have follow-up conversations.

Children who have been abused will defi-

nately show some changes in behavior, said Courtney Rayne, a local licensed clinical social worker.

Different eating habits, overwhelming feelings of anger or sadness, and a marked difference in sleeping patterns are a few things that can indicate a problem.

If a parent notices some of these factors, they should approach their child in a gentle manner and ask if there is anything they'd like to talk about.

“Just having an open, kind and loving dialogue with them will really help,” Rayne said.

And parents, even though they're likely experiencing strong emotions wondering if someone acted inappropriately with their child, are advised to keep a calm exterior. It will help put the child at ease.

Some people recommend teachers have no social media or after-school contact whatsoever with their students.

Matthew C. Clark, an attorney at Chain Cohn Stiles, said every year he speaks to local high school coaches regarding liability in athletics. He advises them to never give out their cellphone numbers to students or interact with them on social media.

And every year, he said, people ignore that

advice. He's had multiple cases come across his desk regarding teachers or coaches engaging in alleged inappropriate conduct with students, often starting online or through texts.

Clark said if a coach or teacher goes against his advice and does text a student or contact them online, the message shouldn't contain anything they wouldn't be embarrassed for their mother to see.

Any sexual contact, he said, “is clearly illegal.”

RECENT CASES

A lawsuit filed last week alleges a former assistant principal at Highland High School sexually abused a 16-year-old in 2009 who was part of a school-sponsored homeless assistance program.

The lawsuit alleges Mark Weir invited the student to participate in the program and began sexually abusing him, the abuse lasting until the victim left the school in 2011.

Local defense attorney Kyle Humphrey, who is representing Weir, has said the allegations are false and that this is just an attempt to get money from the Kern High School District.

On Wednesday, another lawsuit came to an end with a Kern County jury awarding \$10

million to a girl who was allegedly molested by a computer lab technician who worked for the Lamont Elementary School District.

The suit alleged Jonathan Avalos molested the girl beginning when she was 7 years old in 2011. It ended in 2014, when she reported the alleged abuse to school officials.

And in a case that involves no apparent crime but may result in a firing, a Frontier High science teacher allegedly appeared in sexually explicit videos posted on pornography websites. The videos quickly made the rounds locally upon their discovery, and teacher Emily Salazar has been placed on paid administrative leave.

While some local school districts made news for the wrong reasons last week, Rayne said it's important to support and not excoriate them over the behavior of certain people who acted horribly.

“I feel compelled to say we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater in terms of an entire school district or an entire school,” she said.

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SUPER BOWL

Continued from PAGE A1

Sunday. She expects to sell twice that many today.

STOCKING UP

With 14 televisions and not one seat without a good view of at least one of them, RJ's is expecting an exceptionally busy day. It stocked up on 16 kegs, most of them the house favorites: Michelob Ultra, Bud Light and Coors Light. The entire duration of today's game has been declared happy hour, with \$3 draft beers and \$5 appetizers.

“They're going to be eating a ton of appetizers,” Scott-Valdez said. “Appetizers are going to fly out my, out my window.”

Even Mexicali on 18th Street — a restaurant that doesn't usually see a lot of business during the Super Bowl and expects to close today between 3 and 4 p.m. — expects to sell 30 taquito, cheese roll and chips platters in advance of the game. Controller Michael Guerra said Christmas is the only day of the year people buy more platters.

WINGS AND MORE WINGS

But let's not kid ourselves: Chicken wings are where it's at for a lot of Super Bowl fans. One local Buffalo Wild Wings location is anticipating \$10,000 in sales today, which is really something considering it does between \$3,500 to \$4,500 most Sundays.

A supervisor there, one who insisted his name not be published because he's not authorized to speak with the news media and worried he'd be fired, said his location will put out nearly 10,000 chicken wings today. To that add mini corn dogs, nachos, fried pickles, onion rings and, of course, french fries. “You can only imagine the amount of fries a place like this will go through,” he said.

No one on staff will have the day off, he said, adding the restaurant expects to have employees taking orders by phone all day long. And



ALEX HORVATH / THE CALIFORNIAN

RJ's Bar & Grill's most popular menu item is its “trash can” nachos.

as a result of preparations that began about a month ago, every customer will get a “goodie bag” filled with coupons and other promotions.

A SPECIAL EXCEPTION

Caesar's Italian Deli on Brimhall Road got a rush of orders midweek after having very few on file Monday. Owner Anthony Belluomini said the restaurant doesn't open Sundays but he's making a small exception to accommodate what is for him the second-busiest catering day of the year after Christmas but before No. 3, which is New Year's Eve.

Anticipating 150 Super Bowl orders — a 50 percent increase over last year based on strong holiday business — he was expecting to spend all day Saturday with staff and family members preparing a variety of trays filled with meat and cheese, veggies or fruit. But once they're all out the door, it'll be time to head home.

“We close at noon,” he said, “so that way we can get ready for our own party.”

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RJ's Bar & Grill's second-most popular menu item is its plate of eight bone-in buffalo chicken wings.

POPULAR PROP BETS

It happens every year during Super Bowl Sunday — proposition betting or prop bets. In other words, a bet made regarding the occurrence or nonoccurrence during a game not directly affecting the game's final outcome. Here are some of the more popular prop bets entering kickoff:

Heads or tails during the Super Bowl coin toss?

- How long will the national anthem take?
 - Over one minute, 50 seconds
 - Under one minute, 50 seconds

What color of Gatorade will be thrown on the winning coach?

- Orange
- Red
- Blue
- Green
- Yellow
- Clear or water
- No Gatorade/liquid

Total tweets from Trump on Super Bowl Sunday

- Over 9.5
- Under 9.5

Will there be a safety in the game?

- Will performer Travis Scott take a knee in protest during

the halftime show?

Who will be the first person the winning quarterback thanks?

- God
- Wife/family
- Teammates
- Coach
- Fans
- Any other

Which player will score the first touchdown?

How many times will Tom Brady be called GOAT (greatest of all time)?

- Over 0.5
- Under 0.5

Will a play Tony Romo predicts result in a touchdown?

Will a SpongeBob costume or inflatable be used during the halftime show?

PRICE

Continued from PAGE A1

Thirty of the National Football League's 32 teams are not playing in this game, but fans of the noncombatants typically make do and align themselves with one of the two participants, just for this occasion. In effect, they rent a tribe.

Indifferent others: Nonfans will, of course, have no interest in any of this cheering-for-your-team business, but many embrace some other sort of tribal affiliation in real life. Maybe it's a church, maybe it's an alma mater, maybe it's the Cactus and Succulent Society — each of which will surely have known better than to schedule a meeting on this particular Sunday afternoon. But that doesn't mean nonfans can't celebrate their non-football tribes with other nonfans. You tell me about the local chapter of HO-Gauge Train Buffs of America and I'll tell you about the Kern County Republican/Democratic Central Committee.

Or maybe we shouldn't go there today.

2. OPPORTUNITIES TO DEBATE

Football fans: What's more important to success? A high-motor edge rusher or an immovable nose tackle? Athleticism or game savvy? Bulk or speed? Football fans can and do argue about anything and everything pertaining to football in general and this game specifically. That's why sports talk radio exists.

Indifferent others:

Nonfans can debate a much broader range of topics than football fans will be inclined to bother with. Does Robert Mueller really have anything substantive on President Trump? Could Scandinavian-style health care work here effectively? Is olive oil a suitable replacement for butter in red velvet cake? The possibilities are endless.

3. RAMPANT SPECULATION

Football fans: A close cousin to debate, speculation can involve anything from predicting the type of play Tom Brady will run next to forecasting the likelihood he will still be playing pro football at age 45. Nonfans couldn't care less how much longer Tom Brady plays or what he might choose to do on this third-and-4 from the Rams' 28-yard-line, but for real fans that kind of discussion puts the fun in the group football-watching experience.

Indifferent others: Nonfans might prefer to speculate on the possible consequences of another interest rate hike, the strength of the U.S. dollar internationally, the ramifications of unchecked climate change or the ingredients in Debbie's chicken enchiladas.

4. GLUTTONY

Football fans: Super Bowl Sunday gives Americans license to stuff themselves to the point of discomfort, chew a couple of antacids before bed, and wake up full of gas and regret. And many will.

Indifferent others:

Nonfans have the option of overeating with better food in more civilized settings. Instead of jalapeño poppers and those cold-cut-and-cream-cheese roll-up things self-served on paper plates and balanced on laps, nonfans might want to enjoy a nice, rich lobster Alfredo somewhere with white tablecloths. Followed the next day by gas and regret.

5. EXERCISE

Football fans: For those who still have functioning hamstrings and don't care about Maroon 5 or Big Boi, touch football in the street at halftime is a great tradition. Just have ice and antiseptic on hand in case someone hits the asphalt. Someone usually does.

Indifferent others: Nonfans might rather swim (heated) laps, walk the dog or yoga some chaturangas. Prefer doubles tennis? You should have your pick of the courts today. Any of those pursuits should help you burn off that lobster Alfredo.

6. CONSUMERISM

Football fans: The Super Bowl of football is also the Super Bowl of advertising. At some point a 2019 Dodge Ram will come rumbling across the screen like an M4 Sherman tank taking back North Africa, and some of us will imagine ourselves in the driver's seat. Do not undervalue this experience: Some years the ads are more entertaining than the game.

Indifferent others: Nonfans, untethered by rooting

interests or gambling investments, are free to hit stores for actual consuming. Some retail stores may be offering Super Bowl specials — but then someone is having a sale every weekend, aren't they? If the big game weren't today, we'd be hearing about a Groundhog Day weekend sale somewhere.

7. ART APPRECIATION

Football fans: The art in this case is filmmaking within a 30-second framework. At some point, fans will informally nominate candidates for the title of best Super Bowl TV commercial. And since this is art, in a broad sense, the opinion of the guy in the wrinkled Vince Ferragamo jersey slumped near the keg is as valid as yours.

Indifferent others: How about some real art? The Bakersfield Museum of Art is closed Sundays, but the Kern County Museum is open till 4 and, for those a tad more adventurous, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is open until 7. While everyone back at the party is scoring car-insurance commercials for artistic merit, nonfans can be admiring the LACMA's ongoing exhibit, “West of Modernism: California Graphic Design, 1975-1995.”

8. GAMBLING

Football fans: People who gamble once a year, and once only, gamble on this day. The most popular game is “squares,” in which players purchase unlabeled spaces drawn on a sheet of paper; later those spaces are assigned numbers that corre-

spond to points scored in the actual football game. Brainless, inexpensive and 100 percent luck. Then there's the real gambling, which is a whole nother ballgame.

Indifferent others: Nonfans can go one of two ways here. They can cite principled opposition to wagering on coarse exhibitions of brutality and opt instead for a gambling-lite diversion like gin rummy. Or they can embrace the spirit of the day and participate in peripheral, non-football propositions along with everyone else: How long will it take Gladys Knight to sing the national anthem? What color Gatorade will players dump on the winning coach? How many times will Gisele Bündchen (Mrs. Tom Brady) appear in her luxury box during the broadcast?

9. ANATOMY

Football fans: Whether casual fan or armchair general manager, we mortals are always fascinated with the girth of the front-line combatants. Wide shots that show the entire field of play don't really tell the story. It's when New England offensive tackle Trent Brown (6-foot-8, 380 pounds) is standing on the sideline next to a 160-pound news photographer that the reality sinks in: These are not normal men.

Indifferent others: Nonfans with no interest in gawking at 25-year-old behemoths covered in sweat, blood and yard-line chalk but still appreciative of the extremes of mammalian diversity might prefer this

option: The California Living Museum on Alfred Harrell Highway. Visit CALM to see Cinnamon and Louie, the zoo's black bears — a species that can check in at upward of 550 pounds in the wild. Or visit the Fresno Chaffee Zoo, whose juvenile giraffe, Tsavo, is said to be adorable — and nearly 10 feet tall. Both zoos are open today till 4.

10. LIBATIONS

Football fans: Beer is the beverage of choice for fans who are so inclined, case closed. The Super Bowl might inspire some to ratchet things up a notch with a boutique microbrew, but beer-drinkers' brand loyalty is strong. Plus, who doesn't love that new Bud Light ad campaign?

Indifferent others:

Nonfans, I'll claim without evidence, are less likely to be beer drinkers than wine drinkers. February is more a red-wine month than a white-wine month, but, as that flyover of Air Force Thunderbirds should remind us, this is America, so choose your own grape. Find a quiet spot far from the yelling and grunting to properly savor it.

Imbibing fans and nonfans alike will want to make sure they have that ride-for-hire app on their phones or, better yet, a reliable designated driver.

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