Untouchable Tom needs to toughen up

CHAD KLASSEN

The惬 (CUP)

A

ow we’re playing football or what? Well, apparently when Tom Brady’s the quarterback, the NFL turns into a flag football league. In fact, according to Terrell Suggs’ muddle on the Patriots’ prior a couple of weeks ago, flag football might actually allow for more contact on quarterbacksc than the NFL. A year after Brady missed the entire season from an setback in his knee by Bernard Pollard, the pocket around him is now an apparent “hot” zone.

The league has gone to the extreme in making sure nobody comes in contact with Brady’s knee. Suggs, a linebacker for the Baltimore Ravens who was trying to make a play in a tackle battle in 2009, was flagged 15 yards on a roughing the passer call after “bumping” into the three-time Super Bowl champion who’s being chased like it. Baltimore’s sideline was up in arms with the call — and for good reason; it extended a Patriot drive and resulted in a touchdown.

It’s actually surprising the referees didn’t call back Suggs’ sack and strip in the third quarter, when he Ward-and Brady and forced a fumble for a Ravens touchdown.

Now consider, the landing zone with Suggs now in this football is designed to be a physical contact sport. Athletes know exactly what they’re getting into when they sign up, with the excessive pouncing and physicality that defines what the sport all about.

Suffice it to say, when you see Brady tapped on the knie and referee Ron Williams throws a flag after Brady’s knee sell-job, it’s pretty embarrassing. Just ask Ray Lewis.

A great quarterback, while indeed being a rare commodity, has to be able to stand up and take a hit, even if it’s a low one. What does Brady expect? To be able to stand in the pocket for five seconds without fear of being touched? It’s ridiculous, and we’re starting to see, if we haven’t already before, the kind of prima donna Brady really is.

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Rodney Harrison, an NBC analyst and a former teammate of Brady’s, said it best on Sunday Night Football: “Terrible call. You can’t make this call. And Tom Brady, if you’re listening, toughen up.”

It comes down to the integrity of the game; the call had a direct impact to the outcome of a critical early season AFC battle, which New England took 27-21 at home.

Suggs’ penalty wasn’t the lone bad call. The Pats were also the beneficiaries of another ridiculous roughing the passer penalty in the first half — both turning into touchdowns.

It would be one thing if unsportsmanlike penalties by the Ravens’ defense, or unconvincingly barely gave Brady second and third opportunities to score. But the Pats were given a free pass to march downfield and put up touchdowns.

It’s clear that the league has taken Pollard’s hit and gone too far in trying to protect its quarterbacks.

Certainly, it’s important for any league to protect its start players, and quarterbacks are football’s lifeline. Pro Bowl players like Brady bring notoriety and attention, attracting season ticket holders and adoration viewers, who generate massive revenue for the networks that pay big dollars to air NFL games.

However, there’s been a big difference between implementing rules aimed to keep quarterbacks healthy and stretching the rules to the point where guys like Suggs are penalized for merely trying to do their jobs.

As it stands now, defensive players are pretty well deunted out of the play if they’re driven into the ground by an effective lineman and trying to take downs the quarterback from their knees. And the baffling part of it all is, the fact Suggs made his best effort to dodge Brady, merely muddling his knee as he tried to avoid contact.

The NFL seriously has to re-eval- uate its approach towards protecting its quarterbacks. The integrity of the game is undoubtedly more important than any Pro Bowl quarterback’s chance passed through the league. Brady is not above the NFL, or the game of football. We can live without him.

Chad Klassen

The Pats (CUP)

SPORTS

Sports_shorts

Compiled by Matt Pretty

Bears Football

The football Bears (3-0) will play their last road game of the confer- ence schedule when they head east to Saskatchewan this weekend. Alberta will take on the number-five ranked University of Saskatchewan Huskies (5-0), who handled Minnesota 38-11 last Saturday. The Huskies have a number of the league’s best players, including a 27-7 decision at Foote Field last month.

Kickoff goes Friday night at 7 p.m.

Panda Hockey

It’s a battle of the underdogs in the Saskatchewan this weekend as the number-three ranked puck Pandas (4-0) take on the number-one ranked Saskatchewan Huskies (6-0), leading the way for the Pandas are Tim Podolski and Jace Copeland, who are tied atop the Canada West scoring list. Faceoff on Friday and Saturday night is at 8 p.m.

Pandas Soccer

Panda soccer (3-2-0) will head to the coast this weekend for a very tough pair of matches. They'll face number-three ranked Trinity Western (9-1-0) on Friday night at 6 p.m. The Spartans are on top of the conference standings and will be looking to clinch first place this weekend. On Saturday, the Pandas play a critical game at USC, as the T-Birds (4-0-2) are chasing Alberta in the standings. USC has 16 points, while Alberta has 20 points and will need to gain at least a point to hold the T-Birds off for this weekend. Kickoff for Saturday’s game is at 6 p.m.

Bears Soccer

The eight-ranked soccer Bears play at the same two schools as the Pandas this weekend, needing points to have any hope of finishing first and hosting the Canada West Final Four. Luckily, their opponents are the two teams that they’re chasing in the standings. Trinity Western (6-0-3) is also ranked third nationally on the merits side, while USC (7-5-0) is ranked seventh. Both teams have 31 points, two ahead of the Bears. Alberta took a 1-0 victory over USC, and a 1-1 draw with TWU from the opening weekend at home, so these two matches should be close. Kickoff goes Friday and Saturday night at 8:15 p.m.

Bears Basketball

Bears basketball continue their pre- session with the Guy Viste Memorial Tournament in Victoria. On Thursday night, they play the host VIkis at 9 p.m., before facing the defending national champion Carleton Ravens on Friday at 6 p.m. Alberta will wrap up the tournament with a game against the Trinity Valley Cardinals on Saturday at 6 p.m.

Pandas Basketball

After ending its season with two home losses, the basketball Pandas will look to get back on track in the Memo tëple tour- nament in Okotoks. Hosted by Carleton, Alberta will start off against the Guelph Gryphons on Friday at 4 p.m., followed by a matchup with the Concordia Sirens on Saturday afternoon at 4 p.m. The Pandas- card game will be against the host Okotoks on Sunday at 7 p.m.

Wrestling

New head wrestling coach Owen Daniels will take his team to their first event of the 2009-10 season as they travel to Grey Cup for the OUA Institute.

The action will start at 11 a.m. Saturday morning.

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