

NFL COMMISSIONER ROGER GOODELL PRESS CONFERENCE

AT LEAGUE MEETING IN SAN FRANCISCO

5-20-15

We had a terrific couple days of meetings here. We advanced a lot of issues, some of which I think you've heard about. I'll highlight a couple of them that I think were the most significant for us.

One was the PAT rule. This is a rule that we have been focused on for quite some time. It's a play that we think is not exciting. It's a play that we think could be improved and we have. The Competition Committee made a recommendation on that to move it back to the 15 to kick the extra point and also to allow the defense to score. We think those changes are terrific. We thought of some other ideas in the context of that, but I think the bottom line is the ownership would like to see us do this in stages so we can see the impact of the changes and evaluate that as we go through the season.

We had an update on the Super Bowl LIII and LIV process. I'm sure you're aware of where we are on that, but we have Atlanta, New Orleans, Miami and Tampa Bay who are our four finalist cities. There is a provision for Super Bowl LIV: if there is a team in Los Angeles, they can be included in the process. That is again a positive update.

We talked about Los Angeles for an extensive time this morning with our membership and had a report from the committee. We had an international update on the tremendous growth we are seeing in our game on a global basis, not just the United Kingdom. It was a great discussion on Mexico, Germany and also into South America so we're very positive about that.

We had a lot of updates on health and safety. As you all know, we made some significant changes in March with the medical timeout. We went through that in great detail to make sure that the clubs understood how we are approaching that; how we were using the ATC spotter; as well as the visiting team physician, who is another resource for us to provide better care for our players and staff when they come in from a visiting city. So if players need additional care – whether it is hospitalization, prescription drugs, anything along those lines – we will have a local physician that will expedite that and try to assist us on that basis.

We also heard a report from the Conduct Committee. The Conduct Committee has met on a regular basis since being formed early this year. Mike Bidwill and his team have done a terrific job on the continuing education, the reporting obligations for our teams when there are incidents – which was very important to us – and, of course, our continuing effort on character and values and how that is going to be implemented in everything we do this coming season and for the future.

One final thing was a very important issue for us which is stadium security, making sure we're doing everything we can to make sure our stadiums are secure from outside threat, but also secure in the sense of when we're in our stadiums and our fans are in our stadiums, that we're having the best experience possible. We want to make sure that they are safe and that when they leave our facilities, they had a positive experience. That's an important initiative which we continue to work on.

I'd be happy to take your questions.

I'm sure you're aware of what Robert Kraft told us yesterday. Did you have any discussions with him over the last couple of days on how he would handle that? And the other question, the NFLPA has asked that you recuse yourself from the (Tom) Brady appeal – will you do that?

Goodell: Two things: The decision Robert made was his decision. I admire and respect Robert as you all know. We've had plenty of discussions over the last couple of weeks and this was his initiative and something that he wanted to do. I certainly admire the step he took. We may disagree on things, but that's not unusual. That happens.

Your second question: I've been focused on the meetings. I'm not up-to-date on that other than I'm aware of it. We obviously when we get back tomorrow will focus on that; give it full due consideration and make sure that we do the appropriate thing.

Will Robert Kraft's decision for the Patriots to accept their penalties in any way affect Tom Brady's appeal and your hearing of it?

Goodell: No.

Would you allow Tom Brady a second chance to show cooperation by say turning over emails and could that help an appeal to you?

Goodell: I'm not going to get into hypotheticals. We have a process here. It's long established. I look forward to hearing directly from Tom. If there is new information or there's information in helping us get this right, I want to hear directly from Tom on that.

How do you address the questions about how can you be fair hearing the appeal after you've already meted out judgment?

Two things: first off, it was an independent investigation. It was done by Ted Wells. He drew a conclusion about whether there is a violation or not. He drew the facts and drew the investigation. I got the chance to read the report just shortly before you did so we've been very transparent on that side of it. The second part is once we had the Wells report, our staff – led by Troy Vincent, who handles these matters on a regular basis and has all spring – immediately began meetings. I participated in some of those meetings so I understood the discussion that they were having. Troy made a recommendation. I authorized him to go ahead and issue that as I do in every other case.

Did the league ask for the suspension of those Patriots staffers?

Goodell: No.

When Ted Wells comes back with his information and report, the Patriots certainly scrutinized the report and had many issues with some of his conclusions. How much did you scrutinize the report or did you accept his finding?

Goodell: Of course, you read the report. You scrutinize it, but that's also why we have a process so if issues are raised, either in the context of an appeal or outside of that, you look at that and what you're trying to do is get it right. I thought his report was very clear and comprehensive, but we're always open if there's new information that can get us to a better place.

Ted Wells' report didn't look inward at the league very much in terms of how it conducted the investigation. Early on and both with some of the media leaks and the demeanor of some of the folks early on, do you feel as if the league has an obligation to be a little more transparent in how it was conducted because the Patriots perceive a level of bias from the outset?

Goodell: Tom, a couple of things on that. I think Ted Wells did address that in his report. I think he addressed it. I asked him specifically when I engaged him to evaluate the league's conduct to determine what we could have done differently. He was very clear in the report so I would disagree on that point.

That is something that whenever we have an incident, we look at it and we see what we could have done differently, how can we improve and we'll continue to do that.

What about the initial leak on the PSIs of the balls that fomented a lot of the controversy?

Goodell: As I say, we've given all that to Ted. Ted's had the opportunity to evaluate that.

Can you elaborate a little bit more on how the Super Bowl provision for Super Bowl 54 would work in the case of an L.A. team? And how far up do you see the relocation window moving up?

On the 54th Super Bowl, later next spring, I think, if there is a team that relocates to Los Angeles, at that point in time they could submit an application to be considered for Super Bowl 54. They would have to obviously qualify for that and it would be included in the bid process. In that case there would be four teams bidding on 54. If that doesn't happen there would be three teams bidding on that. The window is something that, under my authority as commissioner, it's something that I can adapt. We've had a great deal of discussion already about that pluses and minuses and the L.A. alternatives and what's going on in the local markets, more importantly. In some ways we are significantly farther along than we've been on any other potential relocation in the past, so we have the ability to move that date up – I have ability to change that. I've discussed it with the committee, we've discussed that with the membership. We also have the ability shrink it as far as the timeframe of when somebody applies and when the league would vote and make a decision. Those are both things that I'm considering. I don't expect that there will be any decision on that soon. One of the things we will want to balance is what's happening in those local markets and making sure that there is sufficient time for them to, at least within our context, be able to try to make whatever advances, whatever proposals and whatever determinations they can make.

Given the progress in L.A. do you think it's inevitable that the market will have at least one team in the near future?

There has been significant progress, but I don't think it's inevitable. I think there is certainly momentum, there are certainly opportunities. I can't remember the last time we had two facilities that are actually entitled and are being developed. That's a very positive development, and in fact there are actually even two more sites that have been entitled, but the two that we're focusing on are obviously the Carson site and the Inglewood site. I think those are positive developments, but a lot more work has to be done.

What is your comfort level on the financing plan in St. Louis as you know it?

We heard directly from St. Louis a couple of weeks ago. It's one of the things that we're evaluating and we're working on. I don't know if we've come to a conclusion on that to date, but there is tremendous progress going on there. We're going to make sure we give it full evaluation and full consideration and we'll get back directly to them if we feel that there are any issues that need to be addressed.

How does it impact you personally and professionally to have Tom Brady, one of the faces of the NFL, suspended for four games?

Anytime anyone is suspended from a game that they love it's difficult. So any player or coach that we're involved with suspending, that decision comes after a lot of thought, after a great deal of thought, consideration and recognizing that it's a difficult decision. We're very careful with it and we're very thoughtful with it. I have great admiration and respect for Tom Brady, but the rules have to be enforced on a uniform basis and they apply to everybody in the league. They apply to every club, every individual coach, every individual player and that is something where we put the game ahead of everybody.

You say that there is significant progress in L.A. and tremendous progress in St. Louis, how would you characterize what you see in the home markets – San Diego and Oakland?

I know that the San Diego task force came out with some proposal – I believe it was yesterday or in the last 24-48 hours. I don't think our staff -- in part because of the league meetings -- has had a real opportunity to evaluate that fairly so I'm not going to characterize that other than they obviously have

done a great deal of work. We're going to consider that and get back directly to them. Oakland, I have not heard directly from, so I do not have an update on that. We have not seen anything to my knowledge of a specific proposal.

Is it a point of frustration that you have not heard from Oakland?

I don't know if it's a point of frustration, but certainly a point of information.

Was there any discussion with respect to the pregame handling of footballs and the chain of command and perhaps any changes to the rules?

You mean on our protocol?

Yes.

There wasn't at the meetings only because I think our office first has to establish what changes we want to make. Getting the Wells Report now, we want to look at that, we want to evaluate that. What are the appropriate changes to make to our protocol? I do anticipate changes will take place before the 2015 season, but we did not discuss that.

After over one hundred days of Wells' investigation and 243 pages of his report, assuming you remain as the appeals officer, what would you have to hear from Tom Brady in order to either reduce or vacate his suspension?

You know, Gary, this process has been established. It's been long in place. It goes back to Commissioner Rozelle and several labor agreements and it's fundamental to what we do. So, there's a process in place that we want to follow. The key for us is to be able to allow any information that Tom Brady and his representatives have. I look forward to hearing directly from Tom on that and is there any new information or information that could bring more clarity or something that wasn't considered in the Wells Report. I'm not going to get into hypotheticals, but that's the reason for the process. That's why we continue to have an open mind to make sure that we're going to continue to do everything possible to understand all the facts.

Having gone through the Muller report and having the league have the microscope on them with an investigation, giving up the emails, giving up the texts, being open and transparent in that way, did that have any impact on the Patriots and their penalties and how they handled some of their emails and their text messages and private communications?

I'm not sure I'm understanding your question.

When there was an investigation on the league, there was an open book, "Here's our stuff, you can look at it." Now when Brady was asked to provide his stuff, maybe he resisted in giving some of his private communications. Did that have anything to do with the penalties that were imposed and maybe the sanctions that were done?

Well, I think we were very clear in the letter, in Troy's letter, that noncooperation was a factor in the discipline, absolutely. You point out in Director Muller's investigation there was full cooperation, he had access to every text, every email, every bit of communication that I had and that everyone in our office had and there were no restrictions on that whatsoever. So, we do expect to have that in investigations. That's an important part of it and when there isn't full cooperation, that is certainly part of the discipline.

Now that you've had the Muller Report and the Wells Report, do you expect that the league will continue to have independent investigators for many of your investigations? Is that something that we should expect in the future and if so, why?

You know, Barry, I think we're going to do it when we feel it's necessary to do it. We had several other investigations that went on this spring, as you know, that had competitive violations of our rules – our integrity of the game rules – with other clubs. They were done internally, they were not done

independently. Tom raised earlier issues of independence and we felt it was appropriate to do that in the case of the Patriots because we didn't want anyone to believe there was any bias. We let somebody independently do that. The same thing's true with Director Muller. There's no way that I can do an investigation on myself, that would not be appropriate. So, when it's appropriate to do it, to have that independence, we're certainly going to do that, but we also will continue to handle these cases internally if we feel it can be done appropriately and fairly and justly.

Has there been a day that has been determined to have the Brady appeal and initially, when you were asked about the NFLPA's request to have yourself recused from the proceedings – you didn't really answer directly – but you said twice now that you want to hear directly from Tom if there's any new evidence, so that sounds like you're going to handle it.

I think on the specific question that was asked is that I haven't had the chance to understand the request that I believe came in yesterday. I've been focused on our league meeting. I said that when we get back tomorrow, I'll give due consideration, full consideration to that and we'll handle it appropriately. Those are things that I just need to get back to with our staff. I've been focused on the league meeting for two days. I do not know if there's even a date set for the hearing. I've been focused on matters at hand here.

Philosophically, why is it important for you to be the appeals officer for the Brady case as opposed to as what you've done in other situations designated someone else to hear it?

One of the primary responsibilities for the commissioner is to protect the integrity of the game and to do what's right for the game of football. That's my job. I made this clear at Super Bowl. It's our job to determine if there are violations of our rules, of our policies, of our procedures, and to enforce those. It's my job here to make sure we protect the integrity of the game and we are protecting our policies, our procedures. We have a process that's been negotiated with the union that's been in place for decades; and so it's my responsibility. It is something we have had in place for a long time, and we are going to do it that way, unless there is some other factor that I'm not aware of, which we'll deal with. Again, I haven't been able to see any of these issues that the union may have sent in the last 24 hours.

You mentioned some international sites - Mexico and Germany, I believe. Would that be for preseason games, Pro Bowl? Can you go in some details of what you guys discussed?

Some of it was just on media coverage. Particularly in Germany, we know there is some interest in playing a game over there. We know there is a renewed interest in playing a game in Mexico - a regular season game. I think we will evaluate that. There's been some interest in playing a Pro Bowl in Rio. So we are going to evaluate all those. There's a growing passion for our game on a global basis and we want to respond to it. We want to respond to it in the right way, in the right markets we think are a priority for us, so we can continue to grow this great game. We are excited about where we are. We are excited about the passion for our game and taking it to another level.

Regarding the city of Oakland, hearing from them is there a certain timeline where you really need to hear or see something from them, maybe a proposal? And second, Mark Davis said yesterday he really had no interest in sharing Levi's Stadium, which can accommodate both teams. Do you see any sort of future scenario where that might make sense to have the Raiders and 49ers share Levi's?

Ultimately that's going to be a decision Mark is going to have to make. Mark wants a long-term stadium solution, and I think that's what he's always been focused on. He would like to have it be here in the Bay Area, Oakland; and that's what he has been working towards. I think his priorities are pretty clear.

The first part of your question was a deadline on time. We don't have a deadline, but this is not a new issue that we are all dealing with here. The Raiders have been working on a stadium for years. This is something that has been very publicly debated. So we do need to have a proposal from the people here on how they are going to be able to keep the Raiders here in Oakland and do it on a basis that is going to

not only be good for the community but also be good for the team long-term. That proposal is necessary to have soon.

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