



BIG GAME

Enjoy all the Super Bowl hype, then get on with life

The big game is tomorrow and the pregame hype is in full swing. Stories about the teams, the players, the coaches, the cities and, of course, the commercials are saturating all types of media.

For some people, it's much ado about nothing, a child's game played by muscle-bound millionaires. For people in the host community, the New York metropolitan area this year, it's either a chance to cash in on the hordes of fans descending on the bars, restaurants, stores and hotels, or a giant headache in an already hectic city.

Whether you feel love, hate or indifference to the spectacle that is the Super Bowl, it will be hard to avoid this weekend. For true fans of the game that's good news, since tomorrow is the apogee of the professional football season.

So for those who can't get enough information about the game (and all of the hoopla that surrounds it) from the major television networks, newspapers and magazines, here are a couple websites that look a little more in depth at it all.

SBNation.com

The SB in this website's name doesn't stand for Super Bowl, but rather for Sports Blog. This site isn't dedicated to just football; it covers all sorts of sports. Naturally, at this time of year, it's full of NFL coverage.

SBNation describes itself as a grassroots, fan-centric sports site. It uses a host of Web-native writers who specialize in different sports and regions. They aim to serve the communities of a wide variety of sports with in-depth coverage.

The content targets 18-to-34-year-old affluent men because they are the most avid sports fans, and they are an appealing but difficult-to-reach advertising target. The articles are written with language, sometimes coarse, designed to appeal to this demographic.

In addition to the Super Bowl-related stories sprinkled among all of the other sports news, the site features a special Super Bowl section. An attractive and innovative presentation, it covers all of the basic, plus a lot of interesting little feature stories. There are plenty of photos and videos as well.

In addition to covering the sports aspect of the game, there also are features on things to do around New York City, the commercials, gambling, the weather and more.

BleacherReport.com

This site has a lot in common with SBNation. It covers a wide variety of sports and caters to the same demographic of young, male sports fans. The writing has a little more attitude than SBNation, with an almost pulp fiction style at times. Four lifelong sports fans who wanted to create a more engaging online platform for other sports fans started BleacherReport.

And just like SBNation, this time of year it features a ton of Super Bowl coverage. The dedicated Super Bowl section is harder to find on this site, and the presentation is not as visually engaging. There's also a lot of coverage of the big game in the regular NFL section.

Like the competition, the coverage extends beyond the game to explore the peripheral activity of commercials, fantasy leagues, personalities and much more. Plenty of photos and videos help make the presentation more entertaining.

Enjoy the day

Is the big game over-hyped and made into something bigger than it really is? Of course. Do the sports writers on these sites write about the game as if it is a matter of life and death and the players as if they are performing acts of true heroism? Absolutely.

But so what? That's what sports does. It represents the ultimate drama of good (your team) versus evil (the opposing team) in an epic battle with a clear winner at the end of the game. It taps into our tribal instincts and takes us on a roller coaster ride of raw emotions — the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Then we go to work on Monday.

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