

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A GAME DESIGNER

PART II

by

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In the previous installment of my memoirs, I described my background and impressions of life as a game designer. I related the factors that guided me towards producing tabletop games. All the games I created were discussed, along with games that I considered creating but didn't. For this article, I thought it might be interesting to provide some fantasy tournaments that my baseball partner, Angelo Louisa, or I have done from time to time, as well as other competitions. Several surprises will also be presented.

However, before doing that, I'd like to single out the two books that contributed to my love of sports dream matches. The first was *The People's Almanac* by David Wallechinsky and Irving Wallace, published in 1975. This book may be a unique work; it contains all sorts of interesting articles ranging across a full spectrum of topics, including boxing and horse racing fantasy competitions. I'll recap the horse racing results below. The boxing tournaments were the product of promoter Murray Woroner's efforts in the late 1960s. Woroner came up with a novel idea: rate the greatest heavyweight boxers of all time and then use a computer, National Cash Register (NCR) 315, to stage fantasy fights. This could be the very first computerized sports simulation ever conceived. The tournament, which consisted of 16 participants, was broadcast to approximately 380 radio stations, with more than 16 million people listening. Rocky

Marciano knocked out Jack Dempsey in the 13th round of the championship match. The noted ring announcer Guy LeBow called every round of every bout. It was a big success (radio advertising receipts were estimated to be over three million dollars) and, in the following year, Woroner did the same thing for the best middleweights. This time, Ford Motor Company sponsored the event, which was broadcast to about 500 radio stations, and Sugar Ray Robinson won in a decision over Stanley Ketchel.

Although the book is not just a purveyor of sports fantasy competitions in that it provides many, many articles on many, many topics, the sports items covered really piqued my interest, encouraging me not only to search for others but also to create my own.

In addition, a piece of Americana resulted from the Woroner heavyweight boxing tournament. Shortly after the contests were concluded, Muhammad Ali sued Woroner for a million dollars claiming his loss to Jim Jeffries had defamed him. The suit was settled in court for \$1. However, Woroner had another money-making idea: produce a computerized fight between two undefeated heavyweight champions and show it on closed-circuit television. Rocky Marciano had retired unbeaten and, at this point in his career, Ali had not lost a fight. Woroner approached Marciano and Ali; they both were interested (of course, Woroner would pay them). Marciano even dropped 50 lbs. and wore a toupee for filming the event. The NCR 315 computer was once again used to determine the nuances of the fight as well as the winner. The two boxers sparred for what would have been 70 rounds and Woroner recorded everything at a secret location. All possible outcomes of the fight were staged and no one knew the results except Woroner.

The Super Fight was televised in January of 1970; an estimated million people in the United States (US) paid \$5 each and roughly 15 million people watched outside of the country. Marciano knocked out Ali in the 13th round after a brutal battle. Ali was not happy, but he didn't sue. Marciano never learned of the results because he had died in a plane accident before the fight was televised.

The other book that influenced me was *Computer Sports Matchups (CSM)*, published in 1981 by Dr. Julian E. Compton with Bruce M. Nash. This book presented computer-based playoffs for all the major team and individual sports. But since the book was printed over 40 years ago, the greats of the past four decades are obviously missing. Competitions for various team and individual sports were included. Some of these were sports for which Angelo Louisa or I had tournaments using the tabletop games that I or we had created; I'll cover these results later. Here are brief recaps of the others:

Stanley Cup Hockey. Twenty-three teams participated and 1977 Montreal defeated 1944 Montreal, six games to three, in the finale.

World Cup Men's Soccer. Four teams were selected, and after playing one round robin, 1958 Brazil was the champion and 1966 England finished second.

Heavyweight Boxing. Twenty-four boxers entered the ring; Muhammad Ali decisioned Jack Dempsey for the championship.

Men's Bowling. Eleven men each bowled three games; Don Carter won and Lindy Faragalli was the runner-up.

Men's Golf. Ten golfers teed off for four rounds at 18 of the best holes in history, with par being 280. Jack Nicklaus scored 264 to win; Walter Hagen and Bobby Jones tied for second at 265.

Men's 100-Meter Freestyle Swimming. Seven men were in the pool and Jon Henricks finished first over Don Schollander.

Men's Tennis. Eight players competed, with Bjorn Borg downing Bill Tilden, three sets to two, in the final round.

Women's Tennis. (This is the only sport in the book where women were involved.) Eight players took part and Suzanne Lenglen beat Helen Wills Moody, two sets to one, in the ultimate match.

Men's 100-Meter Dash. Fifteen speedsters lined up. Jesse Owens came in first ahead of Eddie Tolan.

Men's Mile Run. Nine runners were involved, with Jim Ryun winning and Herb Elliott being the runner-up.

Men's Decathlon. Eight athletes participated; Jim Thorpe and Bob Mathias finished one and two, respectively.

In 2007, I wrote a review of this book in more detail than given here. Also, I provided a number of suggestions for further competitions involving different sports and athletes, along with a new means of determining winners.

Besides contributing to the Avalon Hill sports game journal, *All-Star Replay*, I wrote articles for other sports game journals. *Table Top Sports* (published by Jerry Faulk, the editor, and Larry Davenport of Gamecraft Company), *Game World* (published and edited by Bob Valvano of Valgames), *The Sports Game Journal* (edited by Stephen Davis and published by Jamie Marshall), *The College Football Historian* (edited and published by Gary "Tex" Noel), and *Sports Heritage: The Journal of Our Sporting Past* were the most recent ones in which the overwhelming majority of my articles appear. Here are the abridged results of certain dream tournaments which were presented in these journals. I conducted many of these tournaments, but Angelo Louisa conducted several of them, and sometimes each of us had assistance.

1. College Basketball – Men and Women

CSM: 16 men's teams from the 1960s and 1970s competed in a single-elimination tournament. 1973 UCLA beat 1968 UCLA, 85-75.

There have been tournaments for which results have been misplaced or lost. For one of those, one that I played with my College Brief 'n' Brisk Basketball Game (CBBB), I remember the winner. I selected 64 or maybe 128 teams, consisting of the top men's college basketball teams throughout history as well as some of the foremost men's noncollege amateur teams from the early 1900s, primarily because they mainly scheduled college opponents. I used a double-elimination format and I recall that the Buffalo Germans, not sure which year, won over UCLA, again, not sure which year, in two very close games.

Recently, Angelo and his wife, Pam, played two single-elimination tournaments involving CBBB. The first was a combination of 58 of the all-time best teams and eight personal choices (two play-in games were used to cut the field to 64); 1968 UCLA defeated 1973 UCLA, 81-78, to clinch the championship. The other tournament had 34 of the strongest teams from 1900 through 2019 (again, two play-in games were used); 1968 UCLA won that one, too, squeaking by 1976 Indiana, 73-72.

In 2000, I conducted a tournament of the women's college basketball tournament winners beginning with the 1969 Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) and including all the national champions for the CIAW, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). In retrospect, I wish I had added the early Women's National Invitational Tournament (WNIT) champs. However, by not dealing with the WNIT, I had

exactly 32 teams—an ideal number for a tournament. I seeded these teams and set up a single-elimination competition. In the final four, 1998 Tennessee defeated 1986 Texas, 81-78, while 1995 Connecticut barely survived 1981 Louisiana Tech, 76-75. Then, Tennessee (39-0 in real life) edged Connecticut (35-0), 81-79.

A few years later, I tackled women's college basketball again. This time, I went back to the 1940s and considered the Amateur Athletic Union tournament champions. By doing so, I was able to select such teams as the Nashville Business College, which once was victorious in 96 games in a row, and Wayland Baptist, the winner of 103 games straight. I chose 16 teams, and I also set up tournaments of eight teams each for the lower divisions: NCAA/AIAW Division II and Division III along with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Division I and Division II, with some teams from Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS, now known as U Sports) added to the last level. Here are the winners with their real-life won-lost records:

NCAA Division I	2008-2009	Connecticut	39-0
NCAA Division II	1994-1995	North Dakota State	32-0
NCAA Division III	2007-2008	Howard Payne	33-0
NAIA Division I	1993-1994	Southern Nazarene	34-0
NAIA Division II and CIS	2008-2009	Morningside	38-0

2. Surprise #1

The following tournament is the only one that did not involve any of my games, but I'm including it for my Gramma Perry, who loved pro wrestling. I bought Lance Haffner's Rampage Pro Wrestling Computer Game a number of years ago. Bob and Alex Williams were the creators, but John Dewey, a fan and historian of pro wrestling, provided many wrestlers for it. He covered multiple countries and some of the outstanding wrestlers from the very early days. In fact, Abe Lincoln was included.

Dewey wrote a wonderful booklet titled *John J. Dewey's Wrestling Biographical Dictionary* which had all the wrestlers in the game—more than 5,000 participants—and was well over 200 pages. He wrote about men, women, and midgets (men and women) and supplied information on tag teams for men and women. (Dewey died unexpectedly a few years before I penned this article and I was devastated; he had become a good friend.)

In this competition, I let the computer make all the decisions, with no count outs or disqualifications. All falls would be submissions or pins. The early rounds were three falls out of five, whereas the final rounds of eight participants were four out of seven.

There were eight lady midgets in this tourney with Diamond Lil (Katie Glass) defeating Little Darling Dagmar (Kathy Carlton), four falls to three, for the championship. The men midgets began with 16 participants; Sky Low Low (Marcel Gauthier) won handily over Mascrita Sagrada (his real name isn't known), a Mexican superstar, four to one.

The women's tag team event began with 32 teams; the Dallas Cowgirls (Wendi Richter and Joyce Grable) won a tough match, four to three, over the Jumping Bomb Angels (Noriyo Tateno and Itsuki Yamazaki) from Japan. The men's tag team tournament started with 128 teams; the Road Warriors/Legion of Doom (Hawk/Michael Hegstrand and Animal/Joseph Laurinaitis) had an easy time defeating the Steiner Brothers (Robert "Rick" Rechsteiner and Scott Rechsteiner), four to one, in the final.

The women's singles matches began with 64 competitors; Princess Aiyaaruk had a real battle with the Fabulous Moolah (Mary Lillian Ellison). After coasting through the early rounds, the princess finally beat the stubborn Moolah, four to three. Interestingly,

Aiyaruk, a Tartar who lived in Turkestan around 1280 when Marco Polo met her, was 7'2" and weighed about 275 lbs. She refused to marry any man who could not defeat her in a wrestling match, and apparently she won over 100 matches with men and never lost.

The princess said she wanted to take on the men's champion and show the world she was the best wrestler ever. One hundred twenty participants entered the men's singles tournament, with the favorite being the Great Gama (Ghulam Mohammad Baksh Butt), an Indo-Pakistani stylist who was active from the late 1800s until 1952. He was 5'8" and weighed 280 lbs., and many historians consider him the preeminent wrestler of all time.

The Gama made it to the final match. His opponent was Big Van Vader (Leon Allen White) who stunned Hulk Hogan (Terry Eugene Bollea) to also advance to the finals. The Gama stormed to a three to one lead and the match looked like it was all over, but Vader was not done and won the next three falls to pull off a shocking upset. The crowd went wild. As Vader was celebrating his victory, Princess Aiyaruk leapt into the ring and demanded a one-fall match. Vader finally agreed, and he seemed to toy with the princess before pinning her. She was livid, screaming that she deserved two out of three. Although Vader was hesitant, he consented and quickly pinned her again. The princess was furious, but Vader left the ring to the cheers of the crowd. (No, she didn't marry Vader.)

3. Major League Baseball

CSM. Only eight teams were chosen, with the championship round involving five out of nine games to establish the winner. The 1927 New York Yankees defeated the 1976 Cincinnati Reds in six.

Also, an all-time all-star game was conducted by Compton and Nash. It consisted of American League players versus National Leaguers, with the Nationals winning, 8-4.

In the early 1990s, Angelo Louisa staged two Major League Brief 'n' Brisk Baseball Game (MLBBB) tournaments with what he determined to be the 32 greatest teams in baseball history. The ground rules for both were similar: a five-round competition consisting of 31 25-game series with the team winning the most games in each series advancing to the next round. The first tourney used one of the options in our game—the Period Normalization Factor (PNF)—for each contest, with the 1986 New York Mets defeating the 1954 Cleveland Indians, 14 games to 11, in the final round. The second tourney did not apply the PNF except for 19th-century teams, and the championship results saw the 1909 Pittsburgh Pirates winning over the 1906 Chicago Cubs, 15-10.

Approximately a decade later, Angelo used MLBBB minus the PNF to play a tournament with his selections for the 16 strongest World Series champions of the 20th century. This time, each round was a best-of-seven series, and the 1939 New York Yankees came out on top, having successively downed the 1986 New York Mets (four games to one), the 1905 New York Giants (4-0), the 1929 Philadelphia Athletics (4-2), and the 1998 New York Yankees (4-3).

4. Women's Professional Basketball

For the women's professional basketball tournament, I should have begun in 1978 with the Women's Basketball League, but I decided to include the All American Red Heads team which started in 1936 and was the first women's professional team. Even though it did not participate in a league, its players were unquestionably the elite women's players of the day. The other leagues that I took teams from were the Women's American Basketball Association, the Women's Basketball Association, the American Basketball League, and the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). In addition to the Red Heads, I picked 15 champions from the leagues. The winner of the tournament was the 2000 WNBA Houston Comets who had a real-life regular season record of 27-5 and went 6-0 in the playoffs.

5. Men's Professional Basketball

CSM. Eight teams from the 1960s and 1970s were chosen. All series were best of seven. The championship saw the 1971-1972 Los Angeles Lakers defeat the 1970-1971 Milwaukee Bucks, four games to three.

In 2009, I selected men's pro basketball for a tournament. I broke the bracket into premodern (1896 through 1954) and modern (1955 through 2009); there were 16 teams in each bracket. The bracket winners were the 1923-1924 Original Celtics (New York) for the premodern era and the 1971-1972 Los Angeles Lakers for the modern teams. The Lakers pulled away late to capture the overall championship game to be theoretically the best team in pro basketball history. During the regular season, they were 69-13, with a playoff record of 12-3.

6. Surprise #2

A good friend of mine, Bob Young, used my Fast-Action Horse Racing game (FAHR) to stage races for Standardbreds/harness horses. In 2004, Mike Johnson, a harness horse fan and friend, and I collaborated in writing an article for *Hoof Beats*, the premiere harness racing magazine in the country. This article featured our selections for the top 10 harness horses in history by gait, age, gender, and some other factors. Bob read the article and decided to run races for all the divisions. He determined that the winner of each division had to win two heats, with three different heat winners requiring a three-horse fourth heat. And here are the results:

Trotters

Category	Win	How	Place	Show
Two-year-old colts	Nevele Pride	Two straight heats	Mack Lobell	Scott Frost
Two-year-old fillies	Peace Corps	Two of three heats	CR Kay Suzie	Continental Victory
Three-year-old colts	Nevele Pride	Two of three heats	Green Speed	Mack Lobell
Three-year-old fillies	CR Kay Suzie	Two of three heats	Peace Corps	Ambro Flight
Aged (four years old and up) males	Mack Lobell	Two of three heats	Scott Frost	Nevele Pride
Aged mares	Moni Maker	Two straight heats	Peace Corps	Fresh Yankee
Premodern (pre-World War II) males	Greyhound	In a race-off over Peter Manning after splitting in the first two heats and tying in the third	Peter Manning	Volo Song
Premodern mares	Goldsmith Maid	Two of three heats	Maud S.	Flora Temple
Foreign (European, Australian, or New Zealander) males	Varenne (Italian)	A three-horse race-off	Maori's Idol (Australian)	Idéal du Gazeau (French)
Foreign mares	Roquepine (French)	A three-horse race-off	Uranie (French)	Frances Bulwark (Swedish)

Pacers

Category	Win	How	Place	Show
Two-year-old colts	Bret Hanover	Two of three heats	Albatross	Niatross
Two-year-old fillies	Miss Easy	A three-horse race-off	Handle With Care	Three Diamonds
Three-year-old colts	Niatross	Two of three heats	Nihilator	Albatross
Three-year-old fillies	Fan Hanover	Two straight heats	Miss Easy	Silk Stockings
Aged males	Albatross	Two of three heats	Cam Fella	Adios Butler
Aged mares	Fan Hanover	Two straight heats	Handle With Care	She's A Great Lady
Premodern males	Dan Patch	A three-horse race-off	Billy Direct	Single G
Premodern mares	Pocahontas	Two of three heats	Citation	Margaret Dillon
Foreign males	Popular Alm (Australian)	Two straight heats	Preux Chevalier (New Zealander)	Pure Steel (Australian)
Foreign mares	Blossom Lady (New Zealander)	Two of three heats	Delightful Lady (New Zealander)	Under Cover Lover (New Zealander)

The divisional winners came back for the championships, and the trotters went first, with Italy's powerful Varenne winning two straight over Greyhound and Mack Lobell each time. For the pacers, Niatross defeated Bret Hanover and Dan Patch in a tight photo finish of a three-horse race-off.

7. College Football

CSM. No schools before the 1950s participated in this eight-team single-elimination tournament. 1973 Notre Dame won the championship game, 44-28, over 1973 Penn State.

There were a few college football tournaments that I conducted. One of the first involved the Rose Bowl ("The granddaddy of them all!"—according to Keith Jackson) winners through 2009. When I established the ground rules, I realized that three Rose Bowls—1922, 1924, and 1927—had ended in ties, so I would have to replay those games in order for there to be one winner for those years. Incidentally, the Rose Bowl year pertains to the January date and not the previous season. After that, I staged

chronological games; for example, the 1902 (1901 season) winner would play the 1916 winner (yes, there was a 14-year gap between the first two Rose Bowls). Then, all the winners would continue playing in chronological order until the ultimate champion was crowned. To show every game would take too much space, so I'll present only the finals, though before doing that, here are the results of the tie-breaking games: 1922 California defeated Washington & Jefferson, 24-10; 1924 Washington prevailed over Navy, 24-17; and 1927 Stanford dominated Alabama, 28-14. For the finals, due to the odd number of years, six teams made it to the end. 1902 Michigan had no trouble with 1940 USC, winning 21-3. 1969 Ohio State edged 1956 Michigan State, 31-28. 1998 Michigan pounded 1987 Arizona State, 27-7. The three winners then played in a round robin. 1902 Michigan won a high-scoring game over 1969 Ohio State, 35-21. 1998 Michigan shocked 1902 Michigan, 14-10. And 1969 Ohio State could not hold off 1998 Michigan, losing 21-10. Thus, 1998 Michigan is the Rose Bowl all-time champion. (I wish I had conducted similar tournaments with three other major bowls—then there could have been a final four of the bowls.)

In December of 2006, ESPN Classic presented the "All-Time Greatest College Football Playoff" with results being determined by popular vote. I thought it would be interesting to play the tournament with my game. There were 32 teams, for which I'll provide the final four results. 2001 Miami, FL, lost to 1995 Nebraska by a score of 34-26. 1945 Army had a close win over 1971 Nebraska, 28-24. Then, in the final, '95 Nebraska won a shootout over '45 Army, 35-31. In comparison, the ESPN results were 1995 Nebraska over 2001 Miami and 1971 Nebraska defeating 2005 Texas, with the

vote showing the '95 Cornhuskers beating their '71 counterparts in the championship game.

Shortly thereafter, I decided to take a broader look at college football. That is, I wanted to include all divisions of the sport and come up with the best of the best in each division. My friend Tex Noel, a college football historian and the editor of the *1st-N-Goal* newsletter, had ranked all the divisions and allowed me to use his ratings. I did make a modification, though: each team would be represented by only one contender, the most notable in its history.

However, before undertaking this challenge, I held a tournament proposed in the late 1990s by Bob Kirlin, another college football historian and the former editor of the College Football Researchers Association newsletter. Kirlin put together a list of the “forgotten teams” of college football and wondered how a tournament among them would turn out. I selected 16 of these teams—no more than one per school—which listed chronologically are:

Year	School	Record
1899	Sewanee	12-0-0
1905	Chicago	11-0-0
1911	Carlisle	11-1-0
1919	Centre	9-0-0
1921	Washington & Jefferson	10-0-1
1926	Lafayette	9-0-0
1927	Centenary	10-0-0
1928	Detroit	9-0-0
1929	Saint Mary's, CA	8-0-1
1932	Colgate	9-0-0
1937	Fordham	7-0-1
1937	Santa Clara	9-0-0
1941	Duquesne	8-0-0
1946	Hardin-Simmons	11-0-0
1949	Pacific	11-0-0
1951	San Francisco	9-0-0

There was only one loss and three ties among these marvelous teams. I seeded them and set up a single-elimination tournament bracket. In the final four, Chicago defeated St. Mary's, 27-12, whereas Washington & Jefferson beat Santa Clara, 34-22. In the championship, Washington & Jefferson upset stubborn Chicago, 21-18.

All the following college football lower division tournaments were also single-elimination, with the participants being national champions since those divisions have conducted national tournaments for many years. I'll present the final four results.

NCAA Division III had a 16-team bracket. 1980 Dayton lost to 1997 Mount Union, 22-12, while 1977 Widener surprised 1986 Augustana, IL, 19-16. In the championship game, Widener played its heart out and scored 17 points, but Mount Union was just too strong as it scored 44 points to dominate play and lay claim to being the greatest NCAA Division III team of all time.

NCAA Division II sent 16 teams to challenge for the title. 1993 North Alabama stunned the number one seed, 2002 Grand Valley State, 44-34. 1973 Louisiana Tech was stopped by 1998 Northwest Missouri State, 25-19. Then, Northwest Missouri State won a tough game over North Alabama, 41-39.

NAIA Division II, 1970-1996—the NAIA had two divisions during this time—also had a 16-team field. 1993 Pacific Lutheran went all out to defeat 1972 Missouri Southern, 28-21. On the other hand, 1974 Texas Lutheran had a relatively easy time with 1989 Westminster, PA, 34-21. Finally, in the battle of the two Lutheran schools, Texas Lutheran rallied for a late touchdown and won 31-28 over Pacific Lutheran.

For NAIA Division I, 1970-1996, eight teams participated, but NAIA Division I, 1956-1969 and 1997-2007, had a 16-team bracket, with the respective winners meeting

to determine the all-time NAIA Division I champion. 1976 Texas A&I dominated 1973 Abilene Christian, 52-30, to take the first tourney. 1960 Lenoir-Rhyne, won a very close game over 1961 Pittsburg State, 38-36, to claim the second. The overall championship went to Texas A&I, which won handily over Lenoir-Rhyne, 41-26.

Before moving on to NCAA Division I-AA, I'll digress for two special presentations. One was a tournament to determine the top team for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) for 1956 through 2007 in a 16-team bracket. Once again, each school had only one representative. Prior to the finals, this division saw a lot of points being scored—and it would continue. 1961 Florida A&M stopped 1966 Tennessee A&I, 43-35. Even more scoring took place in the second game as 2005 Grambling rallied to beat 1962 Jackson State, 51-47. In the final, Grambling couldn't handle Florida A&M, losing 49-26.

The second divergence will involve the College Division, which operated from 1958 through 1974. 1969 North Dakota State had little trouble with 1961 Pittsburg State, winning 42-28. 1971 Delaware got a late touchdown to tie 1964 Cal State Los Angeles, 51-51; in overtime, Cal State got the ball first, then fumbled it away to Delaware, which capitalized on the turnover to win, 57-51. The championship game was a brawl. North Dakota State pushed across a touchdown towards the end of regulation play, but Delaware blocked the extra point to send the contest into overtime (again for Delaware!), 34-34. Although neither team scored in the first OT, Delaware got a field goal to take the lead in the second OT before North Dakota State made a touchdown to emerge victorious, 40-37.

A 16-team playoff was organized for NCAA Division I-AA, 1978-2007. 1996 Marshall, the highest seed, defeated 2006 Appalachian State, 45-35. 1978 Florida A&M was no match for 1982 Eastern Kentucky, losing 32-24. Marshall then ran all over Eastern Kentucky, 42-27, to capture the title.

Moving on to major college football from 1883 through 2007, I had a 32-team tournament. And as in the other tournaments, I used Tex Noel's ratings, but he requested that I break this tourney into two brackets: 1883-1936 and 1937-2007. The final four for the early years saw 1895 Penn defeat the number one seed, 1886 Yale, 10-7, and 1917 Georgia Tech upset the number two seed, 1880 Princeton, 24-10. Then, Penn came back late in the championship game to win over Georgia Tech, 32-28. In the second group, 1944 Army lost to 2005 Texas, 31-24, while 1995 Nebraska beat 2001 Miami, FL, 27-19. Nebraska followed this victory by downing Texas, 47-30. So, the two bracket champions—100 years apart—met to determine the overall champion. This was done in a deceptively tough contest, with Nebraska prevailing against Penn, 33-18.

To recap, here are the winners for the various college football divisions:

Division	Year	School
NCAA Division III	1997	Mount Union
NCAA Division II	1998	Northwest Missouri State
NAIA Division II	1974	Texas Lutheran
NAIA Division I	1976	Texas A&I
HBCU	1961	Florida A&M
College Division	1969	North Dakota State
NCAA Division I-AA	1996	Marshall
Major College Football	1995	Nebraska

8. Professional Football

CSM. There were eight teams and none prior to the 1950s. All contests were one and done, and the championship game consisted of the 1962 Green Bay Packers winning over the 1973 Miami Dolphins, 31-24.

In 2016, CBS Sports conducted an “Ultimate 50” tournament with the first 49 Super Bowl Champions using the *Strat-O-Matic® Pro Football* board game. The final four resulted in the 1985 Chicago Bears vanquishing the 1992 Dallas Cowboys, 24-13, while the 1996 Green Bay Packers defeated the 1984 San Francisco 49ers, 38-27. The championship game saw Green Bay falling to Chicago, 17-10.

As I was preparing this article, I was surprised that no tournament of the best pro football teams in history had been staged by either Angelo or me. Therefore, I decided to hold three pro football tournaments: the Arena Football League (AFL), the Canadian Football League (CFL), and the National Football League (NFL). In each case, I selected the teams and set up tournaments in chronological order, but I didn’t use the PNF.

Arena Football League. The Arena Football League began in 1987, operated through 2008, cancelled its 2009 season, was revived in 2010, and continued through 2019. I chose 16 teams, and here are the results of the final four: The 1989 Detroit Drive had an impressive victory over the 1996 Tampa Bay Storm, 55-36 (this league was very high scoring). The 2015 San Jose SaberCats subdued the 2002 SaberCats, 46-40. In the championship game, Detroit lost a squeaker to San Jose, 42-39.

There was also a second Arena Football League (AF2) from 2000 to 2009, so I picked four teams from this league and staged a minitourney. The 2000 Quad City

Steamrollers blasted the 2002 Peoria Pirates, 67-44. The second game saw the 2007 Tulsa Talons lose to the 2009 Spokane Shock, 50-43. The championship was no contest as Quad City handily defeated Spokane 52-38.

I then had the AFL winner play the AF2 winner (AF2 merged with the AFL in 2010). The 2000 Quad City Steamrollers continued their high scoring ways and pounded the 2015 San Jose SaberCats, 56-36.

Canadian Football League. Pro football in Canada started in 1861, but it was rugby style. In 1880 the game changed to football, though meaningful stats were not compiled until 1883—which is where my game begins. The Canadian Rugby Football Union (CRFU) began in 1884 (no idea why “Rugby” was in the title since that style was long gone) and lasted until 1891 when the Canadian Rugby Union (there’s that word “Rugby” again) replaced the CRFU. Finally, in 1958, the league became known as the Canadian Football League.

I selected 32 teams from 1883 to 2019, and I’ll recap the semifinal and final games. In the first semifinal, the 1928 Hamilton Tigers edged the 1931 Montreal AAA Winged Wheelers, 27-24. In the second, which featured two Edmonton Eskimo teams, the 1981 edition topped the 1989 edition, 37-33. And the championship game was a humdinger. Edmonton scored a touchdown late in the fourth quarter to take a two-point lead, 37-35, but Hamilton got a field goal with only a few minutes to go, regaining the lead, 38-37. The Eskimos, however, were not to be denied as they marched down the field and kicked a field goal to win the game, 40-38, as time ran out.

National Football League. The American Professional Football Association was the predecessor of the NFL in 1920; in 1922 the NFL was born. I chose 32 teams

from 1920 through 2019, and as I did with Arena Football and the CFL, I'll recap the final four results. In the semifinals, the 1962 Green Bay Packers defeated the 1934 Chicago Bears in a high-scoring game, 35-28, and the 2007 New England Patriots were unsuccessful in a desperate comeback attempt against the 1984 San Francisco 49ers, losing 28-24. Of course, the Patriots almost didn't make it into the semifinals. In the elite eight round, 1991 Washington made a last-minute touchdown to force overtime against New England, which was the only overtime game in the three tournaments. After Washington failed to put any points on the board, New England booted a field goal to win the game, 42-39, and become the last final four team. But with Chicago and New England eliminated, the stage was now set for two other one-loss teams: a contest in which the 49ers narrowly fell to the Packers, 20-19.

9. Horse Racing

The People's Almanac. Since this race was staged in 1968, the last five decades of Thoroughbreds are not included. Miami radio station WIOD decided to have 12 of the greatest US Thoroughbreds of all time run in the "Race of the Century." This is BS (oops, sorry—Before Secretariat), which means, for a change, "Big Red" won't be winning this race. Wait, Man o' War was also known as "Big Red" and he's one of the heavy favorites, so I may have spoken too quickly. A computer at the University of Liverpool in England was used to simulate the race. Citation came in first, with Man o' War second, Buckpasser third, and the rest of the steeds in this order: Exterminator, Kelso, Swaps, Nashua, Tom Fool, War Admiral, Native Dancer, Equipoise, and Count Fleet.

CSM. Eleven of the premier Thoroughbred race horses in the US were selected to run a 1¼ mile race on dirt at Hollywood Park in California. Secretariat won over Man o' War, followed by Buckpasser, Dr. Fager, Citation and Swaps (a dead heat), Damascus, Round Table and Forego (another dead heat), Nashua, and Kelso.

Most of my horse racing simulations were done with FAHR, but there were a few that were staged with my first game, *They're Off! (TO!)*. I'll start with them.

Classic: The Magazine About Horses & Sport was a high quality publication—beautiful full-color photos, glossy pages, and excellent articles—that existed for nearly five years in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Whitney Tower, who had previously spent 22 years with *Sports Illustrated* as its horse racing editor, was the Turf Editor of *Classic*. During the magazine's reign, three horse racing experts presented articles discussing the 10 best race horses in the history of their breed: Tower covered Thoroughbreds while Stan Bergstein wrote about Standardbreds and Walt Wiggins examined Quarter Horses. I decided to use TO! to simulate races for the three lists. The complete results are found in three articles for the *Table Top Sports* gaming journal, but here's a synopsis:

Thoroughbreds. Citation was the winner over Kelso, Sysonby, Man o' War, Colin, Forego, Firenze, Shuvee, Exterminator, and Kingston.

Standardbreds. Dan Patch defeated Albatross followed by Bret Hanover, Greyhound, Nevele Pride, Good Time, Cardigan Bay, Single G, Fresh Yankee, and Goldsmith Maid.

Quarter Horses. Jet Deck won over Dash For Cash, Easy Date, Maddon's Bright Eyes, Go Man Go, Easy Jet, Kaweah Bar, Charger Bar, Woven Web, and Monita.

The last race or races using TO! involved a lengthy tournament. In the 1980s I selected the 100 greatest Thoroughbreds (males and females) in the history of the sport. Next, I placed them, in chronological order, into 10 races of 10 horses each.

Every race was conducted at the distance of 1¼ miles, and afterwards, I published what happened in a series of articles in *Sports Heritage* magazine. Then, the 10 winners ran in the Dream Derby at Dreamland Park, again at 1¼ miles. The results were Secretariat by a whisker over Citation, followed by Man o' War, Colin, Affirmed, Buckpasser, Count Fleet, Hamburg, Hindoo, and Seabiscuit.

Shortly after I had finished this project, I saw an ad where a gentleman named Nathan "Nat" Allbright would prepare an audio tape for any fictional sport contest. I contacted him about "announcing" this fantasy race and he said he would be glad to do it. His fee was more than reasonable. I sent him the "script" and he sent back a wonderful audio tape (about 20 minutes long) which contained all the bells and whistles, such as crowd noise. I eventually converted the audio tape to a CD, and I still listen to it from time to time. (Mr. Allbright passed away in 2011.)

The following horse races were simulated with FAHR. The Breeders' Cup (BC) World Championship races began in 1984 in an effort to have the best Thoroughbreds in the world compete in a series of championship events late in the year (also in 1984, Standardbreds began the Breeders Crown races). No one knew whether they would succeed or not. Would the best horses stay in training that late in the year? Would the top horses of Europe come to the US to compete? Well, after 38 years, the answer to both questions is a resounding "YES!" Only Australia and Japan have not been as enthralled with sending their horses, but some have competed. Of course, the BC officials provided very tempting purse money for the various races.

When I conducted these dream races, it was 2004; many more outstanding horses have competed since then, but that's a dream race for another time. For the

uninitiated, Thoroughbreds race on both dirt and turf (i.e., grass). Two-year-old horses compete only among themselves; fillies and mares usually compete only among themselves. And even Steeplechasers once raced in the BC programs.

The computerized version of my game was still available, so I ran each race 100 times in order to come up with true consensus winners. However, as a prelude to the BC races, I held a dream race of the Dubai World Cup, which began in 1996; the purse for the inaugural race was \$4 million, but in 2020 it was \$12 million. This race is usually run on dirt in March in the United Arab Emirates at Nad Al Sheba Racecourse and it's 1¼ miles in length. The results of the dream race had the magnificent Cigar winning, followed by Dubai Millennium and Silver Charm.

My approach in presenting the following BC fantasy races was, first of all, to split each race into two competitions—the initial period, 1984-1993, and the second period, 1994-2004—which would have the actual winners of the races in each of those years. The first five finishers in each period dream race would advance to the final race in their category. Then, those horses who finished second and third in the real-life races had their own fantasy race with the winner qualifying to join the 10 finishers from the period dream races. But note that even though FAHR has thousands of horses rated, not all second and third finishers for every BC race are found in the game.

I'll simply provide the first three finishers of the final dream race for each BC named race. All races are on dirt except as noted. Here are the results:

Race	Win	Place	Show
Juvenile (two-year-old) colts	Favorite Trick	Arazi	Johannesburg
Juvenile fillies	Countess Diana	Halfbridled	Storm Flag Flying
Steeplechase	Lonesome Glory	McDynamo	All Gong
Sprint	Kona Gold	Dayjur	Orientate

Race	Win	Place	Show
Turf mile	Miesque	Rock of Gibraltar	Lure
Filly and mare turf	Ouija Board	Soaring Softly	Perfect Sting
Distaff (fillies and mares only)	Personal Ensign	Azeri	Dance Smartly
Turf	Manila	Theatrical	Daylami
Classic	Cigar	Ghostzapper	Sunday Silence

The steeplechase is no longer a BC race, but the rest of these races are a constant feature. Over the years, new races have been added, with some dropped later, but others seem permanent.

One tournament that I conducted in 2005 using the FAHR game determined the best racehorse of all time, regardless of breed. This was possible because FAHR has an option where a player can race the best of all breeds against one another in a fantasy pound-for-pound competition at the distance of one mile. In 1985, I had written an article for *Horse Digest* titled “The 100 Greatest Racehorses of All Time.” The subtitle for that article (provided by the editor of the magazine) was “The best and the brightest: regardless of breed, the ones throughout history with the most class, courage, and consistency.” While some might argue that comparing racing breeds is like mixing apples and oranges, there’s one very good reason for making such comparisons: the compelling factor that racehorses have in common is that they’re filled with the all-consuming desire to run their hearts out in a courageous effort to reach the finish line first.

My 1985 list consisted of both males (colts, horses, and geldings) and females (fillies and mares); in 2005, I decided to have a top 100 for each gender. Thus, I had two competitions, but I used the same system for each. My lists were chronological, so I had 10 races of 10 horses, with the 10 winners running in a 10-horse final. Next, I

made a slight modification. I took the top 10 fourth-place finishers and ran a race with the winner advancing to a race with the top 10 third-place finishers. That winner then ran in a race with the top 10 second-place finishers, from which the winner advanced to the final that now had 11 horses. However, in the female second-place race, there was a dead heat for the win between Ruffian and Kincsem (this exceptional horse won 54 races and never lost!). Therefore, the filly final had 12 horses. Listed below are the results, with the date shown being the year the horse was foaled:

Male Racehorses

1. Eclipse – English Thoroughbred Heat Racer, 1764
2. Ormonde – English Thoroughbred Flat Racer, 1883
3. Ribot – Italian Thoroughbred Flat Racer, 1952
4. Greyhound – American Standardbred Trotter, 1932
5. Man o' War – American Thoroughbred Flat Racer, 1917
6. Niatross – American Standardbred Pacer, 1977
7. Europejczyk – Polish Arabian Flat Racer, 1982
8. Secretariat – American Thoroughbred Flat Racer, 1970
9. Dr. Fager – American Thoroughbred Flat Racer, 1964
10. Arkle – Irish Thoroughbred Steeplechaser, 1957
11. Varenne – Italian Standardbred Trotter, 1995

Female Racehorses

1. Victorias Secret – American Arabian Flat Racer, 1989
2. Ruffian – American Thoroughbred Flat Racer, 1972
3. We Go Easy – American Appaloosa Distance Flat Racer, 1973

4. Pretty Polly – Irish/English Thoroughbred Flat Racer, 1901
5. Kincsem – Hungarian Thoroughbred Flat Racer, 1874
6. Moni Maker – American Standardbred Trotter, 1993
7. Fashion – American Thoroughbred Heat Racer, 1837
8. Fan Hanover – American Standardbred Pacer, 1978
9. Miss Princess – American Quarter Horse Sprinter, 1943
10. Fair Look – American Paint Horse Sprinter, 1979
11. Rainbow Blue – American Standardbred Pacer, 2001
12. Roquepine – French Standardbred Trotter, 1961

The average person would probably not recognize most of the names of these horses, but they're representative of the cream of the crop in the history of horse racing.

As a bonus, the following is the latest replay I've done—and I did it specifically for this article. The Kentucky Derby is usually run on the first Saturday in May, but in 2020 the coronavirus caused the Derby to be postponed until the first Saturday in September. As a result, on May 2, 2020, NBC decided to conduct a virtual running of all 13 Triple Crown winners in a special Kentucky Derby:

Affirmed
American Pharoah
Assault
Citation
Count Fleet
Gallant Fox
Justify

Omaha
Seattle Slew
Secretariat
Sir Barton
War Admiral
Whirlaway

What followed was a thrilling visual presentation, which can be viewed on YouTube.

I decided I should stage this race using FAHR, and based on my dice rolls, here's my description of its running. Sir Barton and Whirlaway had a bad day and did

not compete at the level of which they were capable. A few more horses were flat and did not bring their "A" game: Justify, Affirmed, Gallant Fox, and Assault put in poor performances for them. Six horses—Omaha, Seattle Slew, Citation, War Admiral, Secretariat, and Count Fleet—did perform quite well, and they really needed to for this race. Unfortunately for some steeds, "quite well" was not good enough. American Pharoah ran the race of his life, but against this crowd, he fell a little short, as he was fourth by a neck to Count Fleet. These two along with Secretariat and Citation were too close to call down the stretch. A photo was needed to give the victory to Secretariat by a nose over Citation. All in all, the race was very exciting and the results of some of the other competitors also had to be determined by the photo finish chart. Here's the complete order of finish:

1. Secretariat
2. Citation
3. Count Fleet
4. American Pharoah
5. Seattle Slew
6. War Admiral
7. Affirmed
8. Gallant Fox
9. Justify
10. Assault
11. Whirlaway
12. Omaha

13. Sir Barton

10. Surprise #3

As I mentioned in the previous installment of my memoirs, my Grampa Premo took me to the Franklin County Fair in Malone, New York, when I was about 15 years old. This was my first exposure to horse racing, specifically harness horse racing, and I was hooked for life. I began to visit the Massena Public Library and found the most wonderful series of books pertaining to Thoroughbred racing: Walter Farley's fabulous Black Stallion stories. Farley (1915-1989) had written his earliest volume about the Black Stallion in 1941 and by 1957 he had written 12 more. He also penned a second series about the Island Stallion. Farley ended up authoring 21 books about the Black Stallion and the Island Stallion (and a few others about horse racing), which I continued to read even as I grew out of my teens. He wrote until he died, producing his final Black Stallion volume with his son, Steve, in 1989. (Steve continued to write a number of Black Stallion books on his own.)

Alec Ramsay, the protagonist of the Black Stallion series, was a lad of 15 or so when a ship he and a magnificent black stallion were on sunk during a storm; he and the Black were stranded on a small deserted island for weeks before being rescued. Alec took the horse back to his home and many adventures followed. The Black was a valuable Arabian named Shetan who was owned by a rich Arabian man and Alec lost him for a couple years. On the other hand, Steve Duncan, the protagonist of the Island Stallion series, was a young man doing archeological work on a Caribbean island when he encountered a wild stallion that he named Flame. Farley even wrote a couple books that featured both horses, and the sparks flew!

When I designed FAHR, I added the fictional Walter Farley race horses to the game. I still had all the books at that time and I went through them with a fine-tooth comb, examining each horse's racing history; using this information, I compiled enough data to rate all the horses. I also rated other fictional horses.

As a tribute to the great Walter Farley, I ran a race among 12 of his best horses, just for this article. Below are the horses I selected, listed in alphabetical order:

Bismarck	Eclipse
Black Minx (daughter of the Black)	Flame
Black Stallion	Night Wind
Casey	Sagr
Chang	Satan (son of the Black)
Cyclone	Sun Raider

Based on the dice rolls, here's my impression of the 1¼ mile race on dirt at Churchill Downs. Cyclone, Chang, and Sagr vied for the early lead with the Black close. Flame was in trouble from the start and his inexperienced and rash jockey, Steve Duncan, didn't know what to do. Bismarck was a turf racer from Germany and was not taking to the Churchill Downs dirt track. Black Minx didn't seem to have it today. The others were fighting for position with Satan trying to make a move. Sagr from Arabia boldly advanced to take the lead and Chang went all out to keep up. Cyclone was fading as Alec Ramsay urged the Black to get closer. Eclipse and Sun Raider were going wide. Satan and Flame were blocked and attempted to free themselves. Night Wind was falling back. Casey was far behind but starting to gain ground. Coming out of the far turn into the top of the stretch, the Black made a quick move to go by Chang and started to challenge Sagr. Flame suddenly found a hole and Duncan was pumping like crazy as the big red horse responded with ground-closing strides. Sun Raider made a brief bid that could not be sustained. Eclipse and Casey were moving quickly,

though they were no match for the furious rally of Flame. Sagr was not quitting and found another gear, but the Black had ridden up alongside him—they were neck and neck down the stretch. Although Flame was really flying, he had been too far back. Satan finally found an opening and was closing on Eclipse. Chang was still not done. Casey had too much ground to make up. As the finish wire approached, the Black moved smoothly by Sagr to win. Flame surged but could not catch Sagr. Satan's stretch drive nipped Eclipse by a nose. The determined Chang edged ahead of Casey for sixth. The rest of the field ended up in this order: Sun Raider, Cyclone, Night Wind, Black Minx, and Bismarck. What an exciting race! And one which I'm sure Mr. Farley could have described in much better terms. I think the top three finishers would always be tough to catch, though Satan has the ability to do so. The others would more than likely be fighting among themselves for minor spoils.

11. Surprise #4

This section involves a memorable race that I'm narrating just for this article. It centers around the steeds of famous cowboys of the Wild West, which are found in FAHR. There once was a race among these gallant horses that took place near Dodge City in the 1870s. It has a special place in my heart because my great-great-uncle, Wild Bill Premo, lived in Dodge at that time and passed on this tale of lore to his descendants. The mayor of Dodge City wanted to attract people to his town, so he called a meeting of the civic leaders, including the marshal, Matt Dillon, Doc Adams, the local doctor, and Miss Kitty Russell, the owner of the Long Branch Saloon. They decided to invite the most famous cowboys of the day and stage a race of about a half mile. The race would not be down the narrow streets of Dodge, but rather on the wide-

open plains on the outskirts of the town. It would be a carnival day; the mayor and his staff hoped word would spread and that people would descend in droves to watch the race—and spend a lot of money in the process. Marshall Dillon thought about entering but then realized that because he was a large man, his mount, Buck, though a good horse, would have a tall task carrying him. So, Dillon decided instead to be a judge at the finish line. Many invitations were sent and the following 30 horses and riders of yore accepted, as seen listed alphabetically below:

Amigo – Bobby Benson	Midnight – Rowdy Yates
Black Diamond – Al “Lash” LaRue	Pardner/Partner – Monte Hale
Black Jack – Allan “Rocky” Lane	Raider – The Durango Kid/Bill Lowry
Buckshot – Wild Bill Hickok	Ranger – Broncho Billy Anderson
Cactus – Sunset Carson	Rawhide – Range Rider
Champion – Gene Autry	Ringo – Josh Randall
Cochise – Little Joe Cartwright	Silver – The Lone Ranger
Diablo – The Cisco Kid	Stardust – Randolph Scott
Domino – Bill Longley	Starlight – Hoot Gibson
El Loaner – Bret Maverick	Thunder – Red Ryder
Fritz – William S. Hart	Tony – Tom Mix
Fury – Straight Arrow/Steve Adams	Topper – Hopalong Cassidy
Goldie – Wyatt Earp	Tornado – Zorro/Don Diego de la Vega
Jubilee – Jim Hardie	Trigger – Roy Rogers
Koko – Rex Allen	White Flash – Tex Ritter

As word spread that the race would actually take place, preparations began. The organizers decided to build some seating along each side of the raceway. Miss Kitty had a makeshift Long Branch Saloon erected near the track; that way, Sam the bartender could serve sarsaparilla and lemonade, among other beverages. Matt Dillon called in Bat Masterson to help him judge the race; Bat arrived a couple days early on his horse StarDust. The Bonanza men also came, but only Little Joe on Cochise was entered, though patriarch Ben on his horse Buck would be the race starter. Adam on Sport and Hoss on Chub would be spectators. Dale Evans on Buttermilk came with

Roy Rogers; however, she declined to participate since she was going to support Roy. Paladin rode in on Frisco, intending to gamble, not compete. Annie Oakley showed up with Target, but could not participate in the race because her mount had hurt his ankle a week before. The legendary Frank Hopkins came with Hidalgo, a horse that was a marathoner rather than a sprinter, which made Frank decide to just enjoy the day. Cheyenne Bodie arrived on Brandy, but like Matt Dillon, he thought it would be asking too much of his horse to carry his big frame at full speed for over a half mile. Lucas McCain riding Razor felt the same as Cheyenne did, so he was going to watch. Many of the sidekicks of these heroes also showed up: Tonto on Scout, Pancho on Loco, Gabby Hayes on Calico, Jingles on Joker, Little Beaver on Papoose, and Andy Clyde on Johnny, to name a few.

How Wild Bill Premo remembered all these facts is amazing; of course, at a certain point someone wrote the information down, probably after Wild Bill returned to French Canada where he was born and raised. Grampa Premo once told me that his dad said he had heard that Wild Bill responded to a question about how he recalled everything with this retort: “I sure do have a good mem’ry; in fact, I have one of them thar’ fotografymem’ries—I don’t forget nuthin’.” (I’m glad a person recorded the story because I don’t know of any other Premos who have a “fotografymem’ry”!)

Preparations continued. A large, fairly level open expanse of land outside of Dodge was selected as the place to run the race. There were two big trees, one on either side of the raceway, which would serve as the finish line. Stands were erected by each tree so the judges would have a clear view of the horses when they thundered past the line. Seating on each side of the raceway was nearly done and the Long

Branch Saloon area was in good shape. The contestants had arrived, and a couple days before the race, they, along with other guests and town folks, decided to walk the course, making sure there were no prairie dog holes, downed tree branches, and/or troublesome shrubs. Hazards of various kinds were removed or repaired. These people also walked about a hundred yards past the finish line since that's where the horses would be pulled up and milling around. Once the improvements had been made, the course was as level as it could be. Dillon's deputies, Chester Goode and Festus Haggan, drove some buckboards carrying supplies and then refreshments on the day of the event.

There was a lot of betting. Little Bobby Benson on Amigo was one of the favorites because he weighed less than the other cowboys and his horse had a stellar reputation. Silver had been a wild stallion and could probably run all day, but he only had to go a short distance as fast as he could. William S. Hart said his red pinto, Fritz, was fit and ready to go. The horses of Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, Tom Mix, and Gene Autry were also thought of very highly.

The big day had finally arrived. Wild Bill got to the race site early, riding his horse Lightnin' (some said "Slowpoke" would have been a better name), and climbed one of the trees near the finish line, assuring himself of a good view. It was a beautiful spring day with the race scheduled to commence at about 11 a.m. After the race, everyone would be able to have lunch, do a little gambling, and even participate in some games that had been set up for adults as well as for children. And, of course, the Long Branch had been prepared for gambling. Marshall Dillon and Bat Masterson were each on a judge's stand. Ben Cartwright was near the starting line, preparing to fire his

gun when the horses looked ready. The horses were milling about, their riders trying to relax them and get them pointed in the right direction once Cartwright's gun went off. There was a large crowd and everyone seemed eager for the race to begin. Many had placed their bets at the saloon.

Bang! The race was on and the horses were off in a cloud of dust. The roar of the crowd was deafening. I sat back and let my imagination run wild as these heroes of yesteryear hollered and hooted, urging their mounts across the wild plains in a thunder of hooves, each horse straining to win, with an occasional cowboy hat flying off its owner's head! Fritz, Cochise, and Midnight were dropping back a little. Amigo and Silver appeared to be in the lead, but Topper, Trigger, and Champion were right there. Silver suddenly took a bad step and fell behind, though seemed to recover. Raider quickly burst out of the pack and drew even with the front group. Fury unexpectedly appeared from nowhere. The race was nearing its conclusion. Too bad only one horse could win. Topper, Raider, and Champion were neck and neck! And the spectators had a hard time seeing which horse managed to stick his nose ahead as the group flashed across the finish line. The crowd was screaming and no one—except Wild Bill—was sure of the outcome. The judges conferred and the winner was Champion by a nose over Topper with Raider third; Fury captured fourth just ahead of Amigo. The bad step that Silver suffered certainly prevented him from running as well as expected; Tonto said it had cost him the race. There was no doubt that Fritz had finished last behind Cochise, Midnight, and Cactus. The rest were a blur. Only later did Wild Bill provide a complete list of how each horse finished, giving his photograph memory the credit. After that, just about everyone had a fun day, but Marshall Dillon, Bat

Masterson, and Dillon's deputies did have to arrest a few people, mostly for disorderly conduct. What a race and what a day, at least according to Wild Bill Premo (and the roll of the dice!).

Here's a list of the horses in the order that they finished, with comments on some of them (thanks to Wild Bill's photographymem'ry):

1. Champion (by a nose)
2. Topper (by a nose)
3. Raider (by a half-length)
4. Fury (by a neck)
5. Amigo (by a head)
6. Buckshot (by a nose)
7. Silver (by a neck)
8. Trigger (by a nose)
9. Rawhide (by a head)
10. Thunder (by a nose)
11. Tony
12. Diablo
13. Tornado
14. Ringo and White Flash (a dead heat)
16. Starlight
17. Domino
18. Ranger
19. Lightning

20. Jubilee
21. Koko
22. Black Jack
23. Black Diamond
24. Steel
25. Goldie
26. El Loaner
27. Cactus
28. Midnight
29. Cochise
30. Fritz

William S. Hart confirmed that Fritz had cut himself at the fractious start, which hampered his running; Hart was eager to do this again next year. Time will tell.

Postscript

This is another story from Wild Bill Premo and, even though it has nothing to do with horse racing or dream sports contests, I thought readers might enjoy it. Shortly after Wild Bill had moved from the Montreal region of French Canada to the Dodge City area and a few years before the events of the above described race, this tale took place.

Wild Bill was on his way into town to buy his weekly supplies; he was riding his trusty horse, old slow-but-sure himself, Lightnin', when he noticed what looked like smoke coming from Dodge City. Wild Bill was alarmed until he realized that it was dust that he was seeing. Then some town folks came rushing by him, hollering, "Don't go to

town!” or “Turn back!” Some were riding horses and others were driving buckboards with their children and supplies in the back. Wild Bill yelled, asking what was happening, but they just kept on going. As he got closer to Dodge, he could see that people were leaving town in all directions. By the time he pulled up in front of the Dodge City Saloon (it was to become the Long Branch once Kitty Russell arrived), the place was like a ghost town, with most of the dust settling down. Sam the bartender was outside the saloon and hollered for Wild Bill to come in for a drink. Wild Bill tied Lightnin’ to the hitching post and followed Sam into the saloon. Sam poured a cold drink of sarsaparilla for Wild Bill and had one for himself, saying, “All this dust has made me thirsty—and yours is on the house.” Wild Bill nodded, thanking him.

Wild Bill asked Sam, “What in tarnation is going on? Why did everyone leave town in such a hurry?” Sam said, “Well, the rumor is that a real mean hombre known as Big Bad John is coming to town, so everyone took off.” Wild Bill then asked Sam why he had not left. Sam replied he thought Big Bad John would like a drink when he arrived and he wanted to be here to accommodate him. He hoped Big Bad John would have only a drink or two and then move on. Finally, Wild Bill asked, “Should I vamoose to be safe?” Sam said that if Wild Bill just left Big Bad John alone and minded his own business, he should be fine. Wild Bill was about to respond when they heard some noise outside and rushed through the swinging doors to the street.

The noise was coming from their left; Wild Bill and Sam looked to see a cloud of dust approaching the town. As the dust got closer to them, they saw that it was a huge man, dressed in black, riding a monstrous buffalo. The man’s hat was also black, and he had bushy black hair sticking out from the hat; the hair matched his black bristling

beard. Running alongside the buffalo was a giant grey wolf. The big man reined in the buffalo at the front of the saloon and turned to the wolf and barked, "Sit!" The wolf stopped immediately and sat down. The man dismounted, threw the buffalo's reins over the hitching post and said, "Stay!" The buffalo froze in place. Then the man headed for the saloon. Wild Bill and Sam rushed inside in front of him.

The awe-inspiring giant dressed in black had to duck to enter the saloon; he then stomped towards the bar, reached into his pocket, and slapped some money on the bar. He said to Sam, "Get me a keg of beer!" Sam looked a little shocked, but he went to the back, took out a keg, tapped it, and put it on the bar in front of the man. The man lifted the keg, turned it upside down, and let the contents flow into his mouth. He was drinking in huge gulps and soon the keg was empty. Wild Bill's eyes were bugging out of his head as he stuttered, "Y-Y-You must have b-b-been thirsty!" The large man replied, "I sure was, and that hit the spot!" Sam stammered, "W-W-Would you l-l-like another one?"

The man responded, "Heck, no, I gotta' get goin'! Haven't you heard? Big Bad John is comin' to town!"

Well, as Jimmy Durante said many times after his radio and TV shows ended, "Goodnight, Mrs. Calabash, wherever you are."

[Webmaster's Note: Patrick M. Premo, sports game designer extraordinaire, died on July 15, 2021. So, goodnight, Mr. Premo, wherever you are.]