Busy time for sporting world

By Larry Pritchett
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The sporting world is busy this time of year. College and professional football and basketball are going with a ton of games on TV and this week you can throw in the high school winter seasons and you have lots of games to watch either at home or on the road. It is a sport junkie's heaven.

There have been a ton of college basketball classics being played and some pretty big match-ups with powerhouse teams right off the season start. Lots of upsets if you can call some of them that, because right at this time you really don't know what team is going to rise to the top by next March.

Some games, however, didn't appear to be strong match-ups and the biggest one there would be the Maui tournament where Chaminade, which is a Division II team upset Texas.

Chaminade is famous for that if you think a big upset every 20 or 30 years can make you famous and this tournament has been a showcase for the Silverswords. Thirty years ago, the basketball world got the first big upset when Chaminade defeated power house Virginia, who had 7 footer Ralph Sampson, an All-American and future Hall of Fame player. They still couldn't win and I think Chaminade was NAIA at that time.

Chaminade has gotten some really big wins but only seven total vs 76 losses since the tournament was started. But when a Division II team beats a big basketball school like Virginia or Texas, everyone forgets the 76 losses.

The Texas game was close the first half, but then Chaminade turned the game into a blowout, leading by 20 late in the second half. That isn't bad for a Catholic school of 1200 students with an athletic program a fraction of the size of the bigger names in the tournament.

That is why you play the game. I would bet that Texas will have a lot better focus when they take the floor for the next game.

Professional football has a problem. Nobody wants the game to be one where player injuries compromise them after they retire. I think you have to agree that there are some inherent dangers in playing a game where the object is to dislodge people of size continually as they run, jump, dive, kick, scratch, sometimes bite and whatever else goes on during the game.

Pro football is attempting to change. The theory is good but implementing the changes might be difficult. When a defensive player attempts a tackle and the offensive player is allowed to change his pad level (lower his head and shoulders) and it all takes place in split second, I don't think you will completely eliminate "Helmet to Helmet," hits.

I can understand when the defensive player launches himself and leads with the top of his helmet, he should be penalized, but to put all the responsibility on the defensive player to change I think is impossible.

Ed Reed, Baltimore Ravens safety had what looked like to me a picture perfect tackle but it ended up helmet to helmet after the offense player ducked a little. The football commissioner (because Reed had a helmet to helmet hit in the 2010 season and one last year and now this one), has declared that Reed must miss one game and game pay which for Reed is reported to be $400,000 because he is a “repeat” offender.

I realize that $400,000 is a lot of money, about what I get for this column, but money really isn’t the issue. I get the safety concern, repeated concussions ended my football playing in college, but to suspend a player for a hit he made two seasons ago is a stretch in my mind.

Just to clear up the repeated concussion statement, I had three in football but the worst one was in an auto accident, and no, I have not been a subject in any tests to see why some people are strange acting after repeated concussions! No remarks need to be made!

Anyway there are problems but I don’t think this is the solution. We will have to see what happens in this case and how the players react to the penalty imposed.

This case was appealed and the ruling was changed to no game suspension and a $50,000 fine, probably way more in line with the offense.

Way to go to the Huskers in getting to the Big 10 Championship game. Now if they can defeat Wisconsin, it will be on to the Rose Bowl and an opponent to be named later.

Also congratulations to the Creighton Blue Jays as they picked up a tournament win in Las Vegas over the Thanksgiving holiday. The last two wins were over Wisconsin in the semi-finals and Arizona State in the finals. Both of those teams are pretty good basketball teams.

The Jays are a Mid-Major team in name only. They play hard and they play well. They have some depth, they have a little size and they have one of the best players in the nation in Doug McDermott, the coach’s son.

McDermott was a first team All-American last year, and appears to be on the same path this year. If you have a chance to watch them on TV, it is worth it or if you can get a ticket it is a great place to watch a basketball game at the old Quest Center which is now Century Link.

Basketball and wrestling open this week. Plan to support the Plainsmen. Good luck to all the teams as they start play.