

NFL Unveils Plans To Mark League's 50th Super Bowl

BY BOB BAUM
AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — The Super Bowl turns 50 this year and the NFL is planning a golden yearlong celebration.

The league unveiled plans that include sending a gold-colored football to the high school of every player or head coach who played in the big game.

The football will have the player's name and the name of the high school. In some cases, the player will go to the school to present the ball in person.

As part of its 'On the Fifty' celebration, the league will make the number 50 on the 50-yard line in gold for all games and teams will

host Super Bowl reunions.

In addition to the Vince Lombardi Trophy, which is still silver, there are big, Tiffany-crafted numbers 5-0 that will go to the Super Bowl winner. The numbers are cast in bronze, plated in 18-karat gold and weigh nearly 33 pounds.

"There's going to be gold infused to everything this year," NFL Network analyst and former Super Bowl MVP Kurt Warner said. "... Nothing says NFL better than the Super Bowl, so this year is going to really commemorate the last 49 leading up to No. 50."

The game will be played Feb. 5 at Levi's Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers in Santa Clara, California.

There will be 19 games between

past Super Bowl opponents, beginning with the Hall of Fame Game when the Minnesota Vikings play the Pittsburgh Steelers in a rematch of Super Bowl IX.

And for one year only, the league has thrown out the Roman numerals. The next one will be Super Bowl 50, plain and simple. The NFL didn't like the looks of the Roman numeral alternative of Super Bowl L.

The most interesting aspect of the celebration might be that every player and coach who participated in any of the 49 Super Bowls will have their name on a gold-colored football to be presented to high schools.

Warner's football will go to his school in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

"It will really be a keepsake for

that high school to really say 'This is where it all starts,'" Warner said.

The Thursday night game telecasts will feature some of these homecomings.

"You think about having the dream of playing in the Super Bowl," Warner said. "How many guys are in those situations where somebody's telling them 'There's no way you're going to come from here and go to the Super Bowl. You're never going to have that opportunity. You might as well give up that dream right now.' And they go to their high schools and they go 'Hey, somebody just like me, somebody that was in my shoes, that had the same challenges, that had the same dream, they got a chance to play in the Super Bowl.'"

Teams that have played in the Super Bowl will be honored in reunions at games in their home cities.

The 43 Super Bowl MVPs will be featured in events through the season and will be recognized at the game.

At the draft in Chicago April 30-May 2, draftees will walk on a gold carpet. A gold shield will be added to the back of the team caps they don once they are selected. A Super Bowl museum is planned in conjunction with the draft.

There will be gold-themed uniforms for those participating in the Pro Bowl in Hawaii, which kicks off Super Bowl week.

And, of course, the NFL has apparel and other merchandise for sale with the golden 50-year theme.

Track & Field | Dan Lennon Class B

Flyers Return To Form

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — The last time Cailey Roth had put on the maroon and white track uniform, she was anchoring Freeman High School to a top-5 finish at the state meet.

Not much has changed in 10 months.

Roth, now a senior, emphatically — she pumped her fists at the finish line — carried the Flyers to a dramatic relay win in their season opener Tuesday at the Dan Lennon Class B Invitational at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

Just the way Freeman wanted to kick off the 2015 campaign, after coming up just short of the Class B combined team title at last year's state meet — and yes, Roth said, that's motivation for this spring.

"It's fun to see that the team could do well," she said. "As a senior, that's all you want, to go out with a bang."

Following the legs of Josie Fuhrmann (eighth-grader), Dana Roth (8th) and Shelby Jensen (Sr.), Roth took the baton and crossed the finish line in first place in the sprint medley relay with a winning time of 4:31.50.

She pumped her fists, let loose a wide smile and hugged her teammates. All a reaction of the race, Cailey Roth said.

"I think it showed them how much fun this can be," said Roth, who would later take third in the 800-meter run. "Yeah it's track, it's tough, but look what you can do in a big meet."

Not only big, but a record for most athletes.

With nearly 1,900 athletes from Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota competing Tuesday, not only was the competition level raised, but athletes in multiple events were certainly busy navigating the crowds.

Ethan-Parkston standout Wes Dvorak knew that all too well.

The senior won the boys' long jump (21-8.75) and took second in both the 60-meter dash and 60-meter hurdles.

"I don't think I could've handled a fourth (event)," he said.

Dvorak, second in last year's Class A long jump at state, naturally needed a little time to get back in the track groove on Tuesday.

"I didn't even have my steps down. I just winged it," he said.

The gap between sports was even smaller for Elk Point-Jefferson junior Josie Heeren.

She was on the Huskies'

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Area Athletes Shine At Lennon

ABOVE: Freeman's Cailey Roth, center, celebrates with her Flyers teammates after anchoring the first-place sprint medley relay at Tuesday's Dan Lennon Class B Invitational at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

LEFT: Ethan-Parkston's Wes Dvorak competes in the boys' long jump at Tuesday's Dan Lennon Class B Invitational at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. Dvorak won the event.

JEREMY HOECK/P&D

500 Days Away: Rio 2016 Head Says Olympics Will Transform City

BY JENNY BARCHFIELD
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — With 500 days to go until the start of the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, the head of the local organizing committee pledged Tuesday that the games would be the motor of the biggest urban transformation of any Olympic city.

Carlos Nuzman's comments came a day after Rio's mayor added his voice to the chorus of public officials who've expressed doubts about the completion of a promised cleanup of the city's sewage- and trash-filled waterways, which has been touted as an enduring legacy of the games.

Speaking at a news conference, Nuzman brushed aside repeated questions about the stalled cleanup of Rio's blighted Guanabara Bay, where the Olympic sailing events are to be held, insisting that routes would be up to snuff for the competition. In their bid, Brazilian officials had pledged to slash the amount of raw

sewage flowing into the bay, which is so polluted it stinks and its once-crystalline beaches are off-limits for swimming.

Nuzman hailed Rio's urban mobility projects, as well as the ongoing renovation of the city's derelict port region, saying they would help forge a Rio before the games and a Rio after the games. He also insisted the Olympic infrastructure projects were on schedule and under budget.

Rio's Olympic project has come under fire from activists of all ilk, from environmentalists furious about the failed water cleanup and the construction of the Olympic golf course inside a nature preserve, to others angry about the forced evictions of slum dwellers to make way for new expressways and residential towers. Some critics contend aspects of Rio's Olympic project are aimed more at enriching real estate developers than promoting the public good in a city beset by violence, snarled traffic and social inequality.

Nuzman countered the criticism

by saying that Rio would emerge from the games more changed even than Barcelona, the 1992 host city, or 1964 host city Tokyo.

"Rio will be the Olympic city with the greatest transformation," he said, adding that the people "are the ones who will get the most out of" the games.

Asked how this urban transformation would be measured and compared with that of prior host cities, Nuzman responded that it was self-evident.

"It's very clear, and it's the opinion of many people," he said. "Rio's a completely new city, completely different."

He insisted that the waters of Guanabara Bay would be safe for the athletes, who have been sounding alarm bells about possible health and safety hazards. Many sailors have voiced concerns about possibly falling ill from the spray of the fetid waters or potentially catastrophic crashes with floating garbage.

"They (the state government) are

doing it, giving their best, making the effort" to clean up the bay, Nuzman said.

That contrasted with comments Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes made a day earlier in an interview with SporTV, where he said it was a "shame" the Olympic cleanup promise wouldn't be met.

"It is indeed a wasted opportunity," Paes added.

Without a well-developed sewage collection and treatment system or reliable garbage collection in the sprawling urban area that rings the bay, tons of garbage and raw sewage flow into the bay, as well as other area waterways — including Rio's world famous beaches.

In Rio's Olympic bid, authorities promised a massive cleanup. But as the Olympics have drawn nearer with little evidence of progress, the fetid bay has become a hot-button issue ahead of the Rio Olympics.

"Our expectations and trust are that we will have the bay and its waters ready to host the athletes from

the entire world," Nuzman said.

Boston Olympic Group Urges Referendum On 2024 Bid

BOSTON (AP) — The group behind Boston's bid to host the 2024 Summer Olympics said Tuesday that it wants the residents of Massachusetts to decide whether the effort to bring the games to the city should go forward.

John Fish, chairman of Boston 2024, told a gathering of business leaders that the privately funded organization would help gather signatures to put a referendum on the November 2016 state ballot.

If the referendum were defeated, Fish promised that the group would end its bid and not submit a final proposal to the International Olympic Committee. He went further, saying that even if the Olympic effort were endorsed by voters statewide but rejected within the city of Boston, the organization would still pull the plug.

The IOC is expected to choose a host for the 2024 games in 2017. Boston, selected by the United States Olympic Committee as the U.S. bid city, is expected to face competition from several world cities, including Rome and Hamburg, Germany.