

Election 2020: Considering the Value of Instant Replay

In 1995, I was dispatched by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) to meet with Malcolm Glazer, the owner of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the funding of a new television show engaging the public in conversation with small business owners nationwide. The conference was to take place at Malcolm's mansion in West Palm Beach, Florida.

On the flight down from Washington, D.C., it dawned on me that I knew very little about the football team he owned. I inquired of passengers around me as to who was the starting quarterback. No one knew. Intrigued, the flight attendants got involved.

The pilots rotated back and joined the discussion. Finally, one of the pilots radioed other pilots in nearby airplanes. Collectively, we settled on a name. I was confident that I had adequate information not to embarrass myself as to who the quarterback was.

Upon arrival at Malcolm's home, I was met at the front door by a professional butler. He entertained me by showing me around the estate.

The house had a medium-size ballroom. The butler sat a single chair in the middle of the room and asked me to wait.

After a while, Malcolm came downstairs. He carried a single chair and sat down in front of me knee-to-knee. He started out by asking a question. He said, "Marc, I know why you're here. I am interested in sponsoring NFIB programs. But before we start, I need you to answer one question."

Having no idea where this was going, I said okay. He then

asked, "Is instant replay good for the NFL?" This question was not on my preparatory list. I immediately realized that this was not going to be the normal interview.

As I learned throughout a delightful evening, Malcolm had quite a sense of humor. I thought to myself, this is a yes or no question. I have a 50-50 chance of getting this answer right. So, I guessed by saying, "No." He then asked, "Why?" I immediately responded, "You said one question." He laughed and said, "You're right. That's a good answer."

Malcolm's theory was that instant replay was bad for the NFL. He explained that when the issue is settled on the field, fans drink less beer and eat less food complaining about the referee's call. He would lose money on concession sales. Further, with less controversy, people are less angry and evoke less intensity looking for a rematch.

As long as there are unresolved controversial decisions, the rivalry drives emotions.

Instant Replay for Elections

This same logic on instant replay can be applied to elections in reverse. When all issues of controversy in relation to the election process are settled, then there is less anger, less anxiety and less emotional tension. This is the value of the instant replay in elections.

Malcolm's opinion on instant replay is, of course, subject to debate as seen through the eyes of the beholder. In elections, instant replay is the review of the election process.

We recount elections closer than 1% difference. Human error alone in counting ballots can account for reversal of such a small margin. All irregularities are subject to review to determine whether the action in question actually happened and further impacted the election enough to reverse the outcome.

Proper review of elections settles the matter “on the field.”

This past presidential election was one of the most emotionally and bitterly fought in the history of the United States. It is clear that the American public is evenly divided on core values and vision for the future. This has less to do with political parties than pure political, ideological philosophy.

Citizens' divisions in America are somewhat like a football rivalry. Your team may lose, but you're still for your team. In college sports, the support of your team is part of who you are in your personal identity.

For the same reason that Malcolm thought instant replay was bad for the NFL, it is good for the integrity of the election process. Election recounts, election reviews and election court challenges help settle rumors, allegations and the sense of fair play. President Trump has every right to request a recount where appropriate and the review and determination of any irregularities that could have changed the outcome of the election. An election challenge is no less respectful of an opponent than a football coach is to an opposing coach when he throws out the flag of challenge questioning a referee's decision.

The ultimate judges as to the conclusion of a replay are the replay officials in the replay booth. The ultimate judges of an election challenge are the justices of the United States Supreme Court.

Upon all parties in this election cycle exhausting their replay challenges, hopefully all citizens will accept the decision of the judicial review process as fair and final, even if it goes against their candidate.

Democracy depends upon people of differing points of view living to do political battle another day with respect for the rules of the game. The next scheduled game is never more than

two years away in the next general election.

The world is watching as America deals with its divisions through its democratic process. Can we play the game, win or lose, without the stands emptying onto the field and rioting in fisticuffs with each other?

Living with each other in peace, regardless of our differences, in anticipation of and participation in the next election, is the recipe and formula for progress through democracy. {eo}

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