



FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared." ~ Merlin Olsen

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Spectator Sports

There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men. ~ Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*, 1849

Tis the season of peak spectator sports: college and pro football and basketball, pro baseball and hockey, etc. It's easy to get sucked into it, as it's on a lot of TV channels, it's in the news, and people are going to games and talking about it. It can be pretty exciting (especially if you attended the university whose team is playing): rivalries, the buildup before a game, very close games, amazing plays and athletic feats, etc. There are lots of data and statistics to keep track of in addition to recruiting and drafts, the Transfer Portal and coaching changes. Today there are numerous sports channels, podcasts, fantasy leagues and online sports betting. It could easily consume much of your life.

When I was a young teenager, I devoured the sports section of the morning newspaper, even for sports that I had little interest in. Then I began to notice stories on the front page of the paper that seemed more important, and I began spending more time reading those and less time on sports, which eventually led to a bachelor's degree in political science.

By the time I graduated from high school, I had pretty much stopped following spectator

sports. It probably helped that of the three universities I earned a degree from, none of them had a football team at the time. For decades after that, I had no idea what was happening in the world of spectator sports (not even who was playing in the Super Bowl) unless I happened to hear about it from the popular media. I might see one college football game while I was home for Thanksgiving, but that was it. This practice served me very well, as it freed up a ton of scarce time and energy that I could use to pursue my goals. I don't feel like I missed anything so have no regrets about it.

In recent years, I've been persuaded to watch most of the football games of one college team, and began to take an interest again in the games of another team (Auburn) that I rooted for as a young teenager. For some reason, some of these games would kind of stress me out even though I didn't seem to have anything at stake. Often the games would go late into the night, disrupting my [sleep](#) schedule (which should be one of your most important priorities).

A few weeks ago, I watched the Auburn-Georgia football game, which happened to be the 130th time they played--the second oldest rivalry in the country. It was easily the worst officiated game I'd ever seen, and the last two minutes of the first half took 38 minutes to play in real time. Social media erupted with outrage and condemnation--and not just from Auburn fans. [The SEC permanently suspended the lead referee](#) after it validated nine of the eleven complaints lodged against the officiating crew. The financial fraud sleuth in me began to suspect that one or more of the officials had thrown the game for Georgia, similar to the recent [sports betting scandal in the NBA](#). This came after [SEC officiating issued an apology to Auburn for missing an illegal play](#) that cost them their game against Oklahoma.

The bad officiating combined with the unethical and unprofessional behavior of the Georgia and Oklahoma head coaches left me extremely upset. I took a step back and realized that spectator sports was turning me into someone I did not want to be, and I began to reassess my relationship with them. Just before the next game, I asked the (very small) crew that I texted with during games to reiterate the benefits that would accrue to me for watching the game, but they came up empty. I knew deep down that spectator sports were a massive time suck that didn't help me reach my goals, but I wanted to read a persuasive case for ignoring them, which I recommend you read [here](#).

Someone I know has long described football as “large men running into each other”; I admire the independent thought and clarity of that observation. I never understood why colleges would go to so much trouble and expense to field a good football team and have an impressive stadium and then spend about a third of their season playing teams (after *paying them* about \$1 million to play) that would get destroyed (examples from this season: Penn State vs. Nevada, Florida vs. Long Island). Then I realized they do it to game the system, as apparently a win carries a lot more weight than the strength of that opponent.

The obscene amount of money that colleges spend on luring head coaches (sometimes after paying many millions of dollars to buy them out of their current contract) and then paying them to go away after they fail to win a championship within a few years is jaw-

dropping. And the Transfer Portal has turned student-athletes into *de facto* minor league journeymen who change teams every year. Game tickets and TV sports packages are pricey, and sports betting has quietly become a significant scourge that is financially gutting a large swath of society. I decided that I no longer wished to participate in this spectacle.

Spectator sports have no impact on your life (other than wasting your time and making you more sedentary and thus unhealthy). You have no influence over the outcome, and watching them won't help you reach your goals. There are much better ways to spend your precious time and energy, such as learning about how and why [there are a number of large and powerful groups who would love to see you dead \(or at least subjugated\)](#), and preparing for that eventuality. EBT cards and spectator sports are the modern *panem et circenses*. Tyrants love spectator sports (and thus subsidize their stadiums) because they keep the population distracted from what they're doing.

In conclusion, I just came across an essay by Alan Watts that I think describes what your life would be like after you start ignoring spectator sports. Some excerpts: "He no longer fills his time with distractions just to avoid being alone with himself. He no longer seeks out constant company to escape discomfort. He's learned to sit in silence without needing it to end....He has faced the silence most people run from and discovered it wasn't silence at all. It was peace....He no longer entertains conversations that avoid substance....This shift is...the result of a change in what he's willing to invest his energy in." You can read the entire essay [here](#). If you can spend three hours watching a football game, you can spend ten minutes taking the sports equivalent of the Red Pill.

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