

Come out of hiding, Commissioner Goodell

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Three days after referees blew a blatant pass interference call and robbed the New Orleans Saints of a return trip to the Super Bowl, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell has said nothing publicly.

A league official admitted to Coach Sean Payton almost immediately Sunday night that the officiating crew blew the call on the goal line that would have set the Saints up to run down the clock and make a winning score.

At his post-game press conference, Coach Payton said NFL senior vice president of officiating Alberto Riveron called to admit the costly error at the end of regulation in the NFC Championship against the Rams. "Just getting off the phone with the league office, they blew the call," Coach Payton said.

Every Saints fan already knew that, but it was important for the NFL to acknowledge it. There's been nothing since, though.

Come out of hiding, Mr. Goodell.

We don't need you to tell us what we all saw. We need you to tell us what you're going to do about it. If you're not going to invoke Rule 17 to undo the damage, and you clearly are not, we need to know why.



Section 2, Article 1, of Rule 17 seems made for this situation: "The Commissioner has the sole authority to investigate and take appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective measures if any club action, non-participant interference, or calamity occurs in an NFL game which the Commissioner deems so extraordinarily unfair or outside the accepted tactics encountered in professional football that such action has a major effect on the result of the game."

If this isn't "extraordinarily unfair," what is?

Will this officiating crew be disciplined? These refs are responsible for possibly the worst no-call in NFL history. They have decided who is in the Super Bowl. How can they continue to call games? How can any team feel comfortable with them?

And what about Rams cornerback Nickell Robey-Coleman? He admits the whole thing.

"Oh, hell yeah, that was PI," he told The Washington Post. "I just know I got there before the ball got there. And I whacked his ass." He actually seems proud of himself.

Why should he get to play in the Super Bowl after essentially admitting he targeted Saints receiver Tommylee Lewis? What about the NFL's claims to be concerned about reducing head injuries?

What about the future? What is the NFL going to do to make sure no other team is the victim of such egregious referee ineptitude?

And what about the ramifications beyond the game itself? That no-call cost Saints' players tens of thousands of dollars they would have earned in the Super Bowl. It cost New Orleans businesses the money giddy fans would have spent after the game Sunday night and beyond.

Saints fans long ago gave up on Roger Goodell being fair, so our expectations aren't high. Mr. Goodell was self-righteous when he handed down severe punishments for the Saints' bounty scandal in 2012, including suspending Sean Payton for a full season.

"We are all accountable and responsible for player health and safety and the integrity of the game," Mr. Goodell said in a statement then.

"We will not tolerate conduct or a culture that undermines those priorities. No one is above the game or the rules that govern it. Respect for the game and the people who participate in it will not be compromised."

What about now, Mr. Goodell? What about the integrity of the NFC Championship and the Super Bowl? We're waiting to hear from you.

