

## A DISCOVERY

by Bob Carroll

I figured out something about pro football the other day while I was watching HBO. For those of you who don't live with a television set, I should explain that HBO is one of those pay-TV services by which you can watch movies at home on your own set.

"Listen," my wife explained when she told me we were going to get it during one of our democratic discussions, "it costs us more to go to two movies a month together than to stay home and watch four a month on HBO. Look how much money we'll save!"

"When was the last time we went to a movie?" I asked.

"You saw *Star Wars* last year."

"That was two years ago and you didn't go because you hate war movies. What was the last movie we saw together?"

"What about that one with Pat Boone?"

"The point is," I commanded, "we do not need HBO and we're not going to get it."

So, the other day I was watching a movie on HBO and I figured out something about pro football. It was a kung-fu movie called *Dragon Blood on the Instep* with Jimmy Yang. I'd never seen a kung-fu movie with anyone so I thought I'd save some money and watch it. I could have saved twice as much but my wife was visiting Alice, our neighbor.

After about ten minutes I got tired of watching people get kicked and began wishing for a commercial so I could go to the kitchen for a sandwich.

But HBO doesn't have any commercials. So, ten minutes later, I missed part of the movie. When I got back I didn't know why Jimmy Yang was kicking the Arab. I didn't really know why he'd kicked the couple dozen other guys before I went to the kitchen so it didn't make a whole lot of difference with *Dragon Blood on the Instep*, but I could see where I could have missed something important with another movie. Like if it was a who-done-it, I might not know who didn't even after they told who did it if I missed them doing it. Or I might miss a nude scene!

Well, that reminded me of pro football -- not the nude scene -- missing something. You see, aside from moving my refrigerator, my telephone, and my bathroom all into the living room alongside my TV set, I know I'm going to miss something when I watch HBO or soccer on TV.

And, that is why I don't think we'll ever be watching Monday Nite Soccer. I keep hearing people say that soccer is rally the most popular game in the world, but it's not the most popular in my living room or the rest of America.

I watched a soccer game once on TV. It was between the New York something-or-others and a team from one of those southern cities that I always get mixed up. I'm not a chauvinist, so it didn't bother me that most of the players couldn't speak English; the announcer could, more or less. For the longest time, all these foreigners in shorts kept running up and down the field, kicking a round ball. After a while I realized that they weren't just warming up -- this was the game! When they flashed that there wasn't any score, I decided it was safe to go get a sandwich.

Sure enough, when I came back, it was 1-0.

During the next hour, nature called me to the bathroom and a very nice lady called me on the telephone with this great offer on aluminum siding. The offer was so great that I missed two scores on it.

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That sort of thing just doesn't happen with pro football.

Pro football's greatest boon to the TV fan is the huddle. In between downs all the players come together in a circle so I can go get a sandwich. I've got it down to a science: first down -- butter the bread, second down -- place the bologna, third down -- spread the mustard. I once missed a punt with a ham and cheese, but I picked it up on instant replay. As long as Americans keep eating, soccer will never replace pro football in their hearts!

So, as I said, I figured all of this out by watching HBO.

Just as the movie was ending, my wife came home. "What are you watching, the Rockettes?" she asked.

"It's *Dragon Blood on the Instep* with Jimmy Yang."

"Oh, he's the new Bruce Lee."

"Sit down," I said. "We'll save some more money. Who was the old Bruce Lee?"