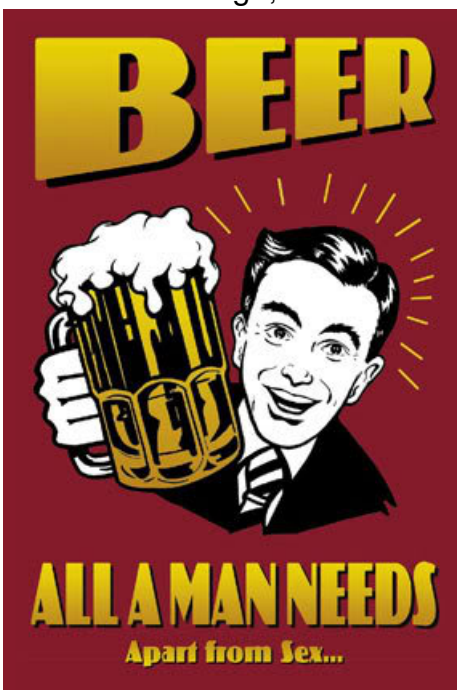
You gotta love football season. Especially weekends like this. Notre Dame - Michigan, Auburn - LSU, Florida - Tennessee, USC - Nebraska, Miami Fla - Louisville, Oklahoma - Oregon, the Buckeyes hosting the Bearcats. And a great slate of NFL games featuring 11 divisional matchups, many of them loaded with significant early season implications. Load the fridge, lock the doors, and order enough take out for two days. It's lockdown time.



You gotta love football season, especially weekends like this one.

Starting at 12 noon on Saturday, the entire weekend is jam packed with excellent football games. Amazingly, there are seven different college games this weekend that feature two members of the AP Top 25 facing off against each other. That's right, fourteen of the top twenty five teams in the nation go heads up on what is truly a Showdown Saturday. And in the NFL? The Browns - Bengals game is one of eleven matchups between division rivals, and several of those contests have huge early season implications.

This is one of those weekends where you bribe the wife, lock the doors, turn on the caller ID, fill the fridge with your favorite adult beverages, and order enough take out food Saturday afternoon to last you through the whole weekend.

The slate of games on Saturday is amazing. The Buckeyes host Cincinnati at noon to get the day started. During commercials? There are three other noon games on the tube. Iowa St - Iowa (which is always a great game), BYU at #23 Boston College, and Syracuse at Illinois in a battle of great basketball schools with struggling football programs. And for any Kent State or Miami OH grads, the Golden Flashes play at the Red Hawks in a game shown at 2 PM ET by FSN Ohio.

Then, at 3:30, things really start to get fun. There are three monster matchups, all televised by the networks.

On WOIO, #3 Auburn hosts #6 LSU in a game that could theoretically decide the SEC West, SEC, and national championships once it's all said and done. These are two of the best teams

in the country, and played one of the best games of the season last year ... with Auburn winning 20-17 in OT.

On NBC, #11 Michigan travels to South Bend to play #2 Notre Dame. Michigan has lost three of their last four to the Domers, and have improbably lost their last six road openers under LLLLoyd Carr (at least 4 L's a year). Needless to say, this is a huge game for Carr and the Wolverines, and one of the last really tough tests on the Notre Dame schedule before they finish the season at USC.

On ABC, #17 Miami of Florida and their stout defense plays at #12 Louisville and their high powered offense. For the Cardinals, this is a chance to put their program on the map, and garner some respect for the Big East Conference after Miami and others left them in the dust for a move to the ACC.

Things crank right back up in the evening on Saturday as well.

At 7 PM on TBS, #22 Arizona State plays at Colorado. At 7:45 on ESPN, Clemson is at #9 Florida State. At 8 PM on ABC, #4 USC hosts #19 Nebraska. And also on at 8 PM on WOIO is another mega-matchup in the SEC, as #7 Florida travels to Neyland Stadium to play the 13th ranked Tennessee Volunteers.

The slate for Saturday is so loaded that there are two games between Top 25 teams that won't even be televised here in the Cleveland area. #15 Oklahoma plays at #18 Oregon at 3:30 PM, and #20 TCU hosts #24 Texas Tech at 5:30.

Then on Sunday, the NFL slate is absolutely loaded with huge divisional matchups. Eleven of the weeks sixteen games feature divisional foes facing one another.

The Browns are at the Bengals. Eli Manning and the Giants go on the road to Philly in what is a big game for the G Men. Lose this week, and they are two back of Philly just two games into the season. Kansas City, sans Trent Green, is at Denver in what is always a great game. Tampa Bay, looking to shake off a opening week whitewash at home at the hands of the Ravens, travels to Atlanta to play the Falcons ... who looked scary good in throttling the highly regarded Panthers in week one. Arizona is at Seattle, looking to make a statement to the Seahawks that they are a contender this season in the NFC West. The Bears host the Lions in a game that got a little more interesting after Lions reciever Roy Williams guaranteed a win. And on Sunday night, the Cowboys host the Redskins in a big game for both teams, as both dropped opening day games they were expected to win.

Other divisional games this week include Buffalo at Miami and the Patriots at the Jets in AFC East play. Also, the Colts host the Texans, and the Rams travel to San Fran to play the Niners. In interdivisional games of note, the Panthers are at Minnesota, and the Jaguars host the Steelers on Monday night.