P.S. to the NEWS
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A TELEVISION WIDOW

The first days of fall not only bring bountiful harvests and beautifully-colored leaves, but they also bring televised football and televised pennant and world series baseball.

On all fall and winter weekends, I am a sports widow. My husband and four sons spend Saturday, Sundays, and now Monday nights watching football and baseball on television. While the games are going on, I am not permitted to talk to them, or even to enter the television room except to silently bring them food. No social engagements, dinners, weddings or funerals are allowed to be scheduled on football or baseball weekends.

Bob Hope is our top television humorist. Yet, few if any would sit through instant replays of his funny one-liner jokes. An instant replay of a Presidential speech or even of the Watergate Hearings would bring zero Neilsen ratings. Shakespeare is the world's greatest dramatist; but an instant replay of Hamlet's famous soliloquy would lose its audience. No one would watch three times in a single day even such unique and spectacular events as the astronauts walking on the moon.

Yet, the men in my family eagerly watch the identical sports play on television as many as five times. First, they watch it in the game as it is played, then two instant replays from two different camera angles. Then, at the half, or end, of the game, they watch the game's highlights and see the same play again, both in regular motion and in slow motion.

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Up to now, my only relief from being a television sports widow has come when a nationally telecast game is played in our area and blacked out locally. But woe unto us TV widows because of the new law making it illegal for a team to black out local television coverage when its stadium is sold out.

For a few days this month, Congress and the White House displayed amazing speed and cooperation. Hearings were speeded up, committee reports dispensed with, and usual calendar delays bypassed. A bill sped through the Senate and House and was signed into law by the President in record time.

Did this legislation concern critical fuel shortages, the highest interest rates in all history, Red China's drug drive against our youth, or the Soviet missile-firing submarines stationed off our coasts? No. This legislation only concerned lifting the TV blackout of football games. I suggest that the eagle on our inflated dollars be replaced by an inflated football.

My last hope is Football Commissioner Pete Rozelle. In 1966, he dramatically proved his power by having the anti-trust laws set aside so he could control the Superbowl games. Last year, he proved himself a friend of wives and mothers by banning professional football on Christmas Day. I pray he will find some way to give us the company of the men in our families on at least one Sunday a month during the football season.

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