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**Pete Rozelle and the Modern National
Football League**

Lead: For 21st Century fans his name is a distant memory, but if you like NFL football, you can thank Pete Rozelle.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: When Rozelle became NFL Commissioner in 1960, his part of professional football was a chaotic mess. It consisted of 12 teams owned by 12 megalomaniacs with the new American Football League threatening them all with competition and doom.

Most of Rozelle's accomplishments grew out of his native diplomatic skills with his owners and tough bargaining tactics with his opponents. He created the modern game of football by persuading the owners that it was in their best interest to operate as a unit not as individuals. In short, he created a cartel.

To achieve such a feat he had to convince Congress that it should grant American football two exemptions to the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. With the first he merged the two leagues into a single entity, the National Football League. In the second, he enabled the League to negotiate a single TV contract

covering all teams.

What followed made the owners fabulously wealthy. It also confirmed Rozelle as one of the most successful leaders of twentieth-century business. All that followed, the Super Bowl, *Monday Night Football*, billion dollar TV contracts, were logical steps in his vision of a great League and an America passionate about football.

In Richmond, Virginia this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Abrams, Roger I. *Sports Justice: The Law and the Business of Sports*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2010.

Lewis, Michael. "Pete Rozelle, High Commissioner," *Time Magazine*. December 7, 1998.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/topic/sports/pete-rozelle-PESPT006367.topic>

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pete_Rozelle

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