

DAILY TAKE

The NFL Is "Socialist" on Purpose, and It Exposes Republican Economic Stupidity

The NFL proves that rules, referees, and "redistribution" are the only way any game, including the American economy, actually works...



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Last night's NFL Super Bowl game was great. The guys wearing blue beat the guys wearing red, and Bad Bunny and Lady Gaga made MAGA snowflakes cry.

But the NFL can also teach Americans a huge lesson about economics, “socialism and the differences between Republican “free market” nuts and FDR’s re-regulation of the American economy that created the largest middle class in history and the first in the world to include more than half of a nation’s citizens.

Most Americans would be highly offended, for example, if the NFL took big bucks from Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg or somebody like these monopolists change the rules so whichever team gave the League the most money could have an extra three players on the field at all times.

But that’s pretty much exactly what Reaganomics and deregulation have brought us our marketplaces; it’s the staggering difficulty that every small business in America faces today in the form of massive corporations like Walmart, Facebook, X, Google, and Amazon.

For capitalism to work in a way that doesn’t produce oligarchs and monopolies, it must be regulated. Capitalism, after all, is just a game that people play using mutually agreed-upon rules. Just like football.

The NFL heavily regulates football in the United States, at least the football played by its teams. Those regulations include how many players are on the field at any time, exactly what constitutes a down or a touchdown, and rules about how players may physically contact each other, and under what circumstances.

The NFL’s super-socialist regulations also decide which team gets first pick of new players: they decided that the *worst*-performing teams should have *first* choice of newly available players, giving every team an opportunity to rise up through the ranks in the following season.

It’s much like progressive income taxation and the estate tax, giving the little guy a chance while slightly restraining those already at the top. These regulations guaran

the safety and stability of the game itself, and also guarantee that fans of football have a consistent experience, because everybody understands and follows the rules.

That's not meritocracy; it's planned redistribution of future resources to maintain league balance. If American public policy worked this way, the millionaire opinions at billionaire-owned Fox "News" would spontaneously combust.

The league also pools its television and licensing revenue and divides it *equally* among all teams: No owner gets richer just because they're in a bigger market. In a pure "free market," the Cowboys and Giants would drown everyone else in cash. The NFL says: "Nope, everybody eats." That's redistribution by design.

And they impose a hard salary cap so rich owners can't simply buy championships, they require owners to spend what is effectively a minimum wage on players rather than hoarding profits. Teams that overspend are punished: that's collective control of capital to prevent oligarchy, the exact thing conservatives scream about.

NFL teams are also required to spend a minimum percentage of shared revenue on their players. Owners can't just hoard money; they must reinvest in labor. That's closer to social democracy than laissez-faire capitalism.

And let's not forget that 100% of their players are protected by a union!

The NFL figured out something America forgot after Reagan: markets only work with rules prevent the powerful from rigging the game.

In other words, the NFL is a regulated market with enforced rules that prevent monopolies, protect labor, and preserve competition. And because of that, small-market teams can win, dynasties don't last forever, and fans get a fair game.

If the American economy were run more like the NFL, we'd have fewer oligarchs, more competition, and a much healthier middle class.

But imagine if Milton Friedman, Robert Bork, or the other idiots like them who advised the Reagan administration and now have guided Republicans ever since were to have taken over the NFL.

The teams with the wealthiest owners would always get the best players, and thus would win every game. They might even decide that the team that gave the NFL the most money could have an extra player or three on the field at various times.

They'd assure us that the teams that didn't perform as well just have to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." Perhaps their problem is just that their players "lazy," these people would tell us, and the solution is to cut their salaries and reduce the amount of protective equipment they can wear so that they will have a "incentive to play harder and increase their performance.

Then the richest teams would begin buying the poorer teams, until all the teams are owned by three or four billionaires. Sounds like every industry in today's America. But conservatives would try to convince you it would create a football paradise, right?

Of course it wouldn't be a paradise: Fans would stop watching, kids would stop dreaming of playing, and the game itself would collapse under the weight of rigging and unfairness. Not to mention that if the socialist NFL ever actually tried some crazy "free market" stupidity like that, Congress would be holding hearings within a week and the public outrage would be deafening.

But when the same thing happens in our economy, we're told by Republicans that it's just "the free market." We're told that "monopolies are natural," that "billionaires are geniuses," and that working people who can't get ahead in a rigged system somehow "deserve their fate."

We're told by these fools that any attempt to re-write the rules so the American economy is fair again and our middle class can recover from the [massive \\$50+](#)

trillion hit it’s taken from 45 years of Reaganomics is “socialism,” even though FI system is exactly how every successful capitalist system in history has worked.

Franklin Roosevelt understood this. He knew markets don’t self-police any more than football does. Without referees, rules, and consequences, the biggest and most ruthless players take over, the game stops being a game, and democracy itself is put at risk. And when the morbidly rich write the rules, they inevitably only benefit themselves everybody else gets screwed.

The NFL doesn’t regulate football because it hates competition: it regulates football and “redistributes” wealth and opportunity so competition can exist at all. America once did the same thing with capitalism, and the result was the greatest middle class the world had ever seen.

Two-thirds of us were in the middle class when Reagan came into office, and could live there with a single paycheck thanks to FDR’s and LBJ’s “socialist” New Deal and Great Society policies. Today it’s only roughly 45% of us, and requires two paychecks. All because of 45 years of Reaganomics.

The choice in front of us is simple. We can keep pretending that letting billionaires write the political and economic rules and own the media is “freedom,” or we can remember that a fair game is what freedom actually looks like.

Because when the rules only work for the owners, the rest of us aren’t players anymore. We’re just there to watch, pay, and lose what little we have so the billionaires can buy another super-yacht.

Louise’s Daily Song: “The Economy Needs Rules”

