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Professional Disagreements: **The NFL and AFL after the** **Kennedy Assassination**

Upon his retirement, National Football League Commissioner Pete Rozelle called his decision to have his league play the weekend after President Kennedy's assassination the worst decision he ever made. This research focuses upon the details which led to Rozelle's decision and the reactions which haunted him so many years later. The relationships between owners, players, fans, and the media were all tested during this time of crisis, and Rozelle was at the center of the controversy. Part of this study details how those 1963 games were adapted to reflect the tragedy, deflect growing criticism for playing games during such a serious situation, and still provide fans with an entertaining spectacle. The position of the NFL was especially targeted for criticism in light of the American Football League's decision to postpone its games after the assassination.

This study is part of a larger investigation into the role of sports during crises in American history. It looks at sport as a social institution with the capacity to influence our understanding of community with both positive and negative results. Other events briefly mentioned in this study are the bombing of Olympic Park at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, World War I, and World War II. Some of the key areas of inquiry to this study are sports public relations, policy making decisions, sport journalism, and political influences on sport.