

THE GOONZETTE

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Hot Takes and Stone Cold Facts: Why Your Sports Opinions Are Mid (And Mine Probably Are Too)

Kia ora, whānau! Your boy Tommy coming at you with some real talk about sports hot takes – you know, those spicy opinions that get everyone's feathers ruffled faster than a wet kiwi in a windstorm.

Look, I spent eight years getting my brain scrambled in the NFL, so I've heard every possible take about sports that exists. From "running backs don't matter" (cap, absolute cap) to "defense wins championships" (this one's actually facts, no printer). But here's the thing that gets me twisted – everyone thinks their hot take is the next coming of sports prophecy when really, most of these takes are more mid than a Tuesday afternoon at the local dairy.

****The Anatomy of a Trash Take****

First up, let's break down what makes a hot take hotter than a hangi stone. You've got your nephew-at-the-BBQ takes – these are the ones where someone watched three games and suddenly they're the next Vince Lombardi. "Bro, they should just throw it every play!" Yeah nah, that's not how football works, cuz.

Then you've got your reactionary takes that pop off after one bad game. I've seen people call Pro Bowl players "washed" after throwing one pick. Like, e hoa, this man has been cooking defenses for five seasons straight, and you're ready to send him to the retirement home because he had one rough Sunday? That's some nephew energy right there.

But the worst – and I mean the WORST – are the takes that ignore context completely. "Why didn't they just run it?" Well, Karen, maybe because they were down by 14 with three minutes left and the run game was getting stuffed harder than a Christmas turkey all day. Context is everything, but some people treat it like it's optional DLC.

****The Whakataukī Wisdom****

Our tīpuna had this saying: "He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata" – What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, people, people. But somehow when it comes to sports takes, we forget the human element completely.

Players aren't just stats on a spreadsheet or characters in your fantasy lineup. They're people dealing with injuries, family issues, contract negotiations, and the pressure of performing in front of millions. That "elite" quarterback having a down year? Maybe he's playing through a shoulder injury that would have regular people reaching for the Panadol after opening a jar of pickles.

****When Takes Actually Hit Different****

Now don't get it twisted – not all hot takes are trash. Sometimes someone drops knowledge that makes you go "oh snap, I never thought of it like that." The best takes come from people who actually understand the game beyond surface level.

Like when someone points out that a running back's vision and patience matter more than their 40-time, or that a quarterback's pocket presence is more valuable than arm strength. These takes hit different because they're built on understanding, not just emotion and highlight reels.

I remember when everyone was sleeping on Patrick Mahomes because "he played in a system" at Texas Tech. Meanwhile, the real ones were watching how he could create from nothing and make throws that defied physics. That wasn't a hot take – that was just good evaluation.

****The Internet Made Everything Worse (And Better)****

Social media gave everyone a platform, which is both beautiful and terrifying. On one hand, we get incredible analysis from people who really know ball. On the other hand, we get takes so bad they make you question humanity's collective intelligence.

The algorithm loves controversy, so the most outrageous takes get the most engagement. Meanwhile, the thoughtful, nuanced analysis gets buried under arguments about whether LeBron could play tight end (he couldn't, by the way – different skill sets entirely).

****Ko te mutunga****

Here's my hot take about hot takes: most of them are just people trying to sound smart or get attention. The real wisdom comes from watching games, understanding context, and respecting that sports are complex as hell.

So next time you're about to drop a scorching hot take, maybe ask yourself: "Am I bringing insight, or am I just being loud?" Because as we say in te ao Māori, "Kōrero noa, he kōrero kau" – empty talk is just empty talk.

Stay humble, watch more film, and remember – sports are supposed to be fun, not an excuse to roast strangers on the internet.

Mauri ora! 🏈

Beyond the Gavel: Why Tribal Law Updates Matter More Than Federal Headlines

The legal landscape for tribal nations shifts constantly, but if you're getting your updates from mainstream legal publications, you're missing the real story. Recent developments in tribal law aren't just footnotes in the federal register—they're reshaping the fundamental relationship between Indigenous nations and the colonial legal system that's spent centuries trying to contain us.

Gaming Law: More Than Casino Chips

The National Indian Gaming Commission recently updated its regulations on Class III gaming compacts, and the changes reveal something crucial about tribal sovereignty. These aren't technical adjustments—they're negotiations over power itself. When states push for "revenue sharing" or expanded regulatory oversight, they're essentially arguing that tribal economic success should subsidize state budgets while undermining tribal self-determination.

The Ho-Chunk Nation and other tribes have long understood that gaming revenues aren't just about profits. They're about creating economic independence that funds our own courts, our own schools, our own governance structures. Every dollar that flows through tribal gaming operations is a dollar that doesn't depend on federal appropriations or state goodwill. That's why these regulatory updates matter: they determine whether tribes can maintain that independence or get pulled back into dependency relationships.

Smart tribal attorneys are watching these changes and asking the right questions: How do these regulations affect our ability to negotiate from strength? What precedents are being set for other economic ventures? Because make no mistake—this isn't really about gaming. It's about whether tribal nations can build genuine economic sovereignty.

Environmental Law: Protecting What's Left

The EPA's recent guidance on tribal consultation for environmental assessments sounds progressive until you read the fine print. The agency promises "meaningful consultation" while maintaining final authority

over decisions affecting tribal lands and resources. It's the classic federal two-step: acknowledge tribal sovereignty in the preamble, then structure the actual process to ensure federal control.

But here's where strategic thinking becomes essential. These consultation requirements, however flawed, create procedural rights that skilled tribal advocates can leverage. When mining companies or pipeline developers seek federal permits, these consultation requirements become chokepoints where tribes can assert real influence. The key is approaching these processes not as supplicants seeking federal favor, but as sovereign nations demanding respect for our territorial integrity.

The recent victories by the White Earth Band against Enbridge and the Gila River Indian Community's successful challenge to groundwater pumping show how tribal attorneys can use federal environmental law as a shield while building toward something better: recognition that tribal nations have inherent authority over our ancestral territories, with or without federal permission.

Jurisdictional Battles: The Real Prize

The most significant developments aren't happening in Washington—they're happening in tribal courts across the country. As tribal justice systems expand their reach and sophistication, we're seeing fundamental questions about jurisdiction get resolved in our favor. The recent tribal court decisions asserting jurisdiction over non-Indians in child welfare cases and environmental disputes aren't just legal victories—they're sovereignty in action.

Federal courts are slowly, grudgingly recognizing what we've always known: that tribal law isn't some exotic subspecialty of federal Indian law. It's the legal framework of distinct nations with inherent authority over our territories and citizens. Every time a tribal court asserts jurisdiction and makes it stick, we're writing the real law—not the colonial approximation that federal courts have been peddling for centuries.

Looking Forward: Beyond Reaction

The challenge for tribal attorneys isn't just staying current with legal developments—it's thinking strategically about how to shape those developments. Too often, we find ourselves responding to federal initiatives instead of setting our own agenda. But the strongest tribal nations are already moving beyond reaction toward proactive legal strategies.

This means building tribal legal infrastructure that doesn't depend on federal validation. It means developing intertribal legal frameworks that bypass federal oversight entirely. And it means training the next generation of tribal attorneys to think like citizens of sovereign nations, not minorities seeking accommodation within the American legal system.

The law updates that matter most aren't the ones coming out of Washington. They're the ones being written in tribal communities by Indigenous people who understand that real sovereignty isn't granted by colonial institutions—it's exercised by nations strong enough to enforce their own law.

That's the update that changes everything.

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