

STAR GAZERS
SG 1803 - 5M
JANUARY 15-21, 2018

“THE WINTER FOOTBALL”

DEAN:
HEY THERE STAR GAZERS. I'M DEAN REGAS,
ASTRONOMER FOR THE CINCINNATI
OBSERVATORY.

JAMES:
AND I'M JAMES ALBURY, DIRECTOR OF THE
KIKI SILVA PLA PLANETARIUM IN GAINESVILLE,
FLORIDA. WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU FIND
YOUR WAY AROUND THE WINTER SKY.
THIS IS PERFECT STAR-GAZING WEATHER...

DEAN:
...AND PERFECT FOOTBALL WEATHER.

JAMES:
THE MOST DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF THE
WINTER SKY IS A STAR PATTERN CALLED THE
WINTER HEXAGON.
IT COVERS ALMOST HALF THE SKY,
INCORPORATES SIX CONSTELLATIONS AND
EIGHT OF THE TWENTY BRIGHTEST STARS

VISIBLE FROM EARTH.
THE WINTER HEXAGON DEFINITELY PUTS ITS
STAMP ON THE SEASON.

DEAN:
BUT IN HONOR OF THE NFL PLAYOFFS AND
THE UPCOMING BIG GAME,
I RECOMMEND CHANGING ITS NAME TO THE
WINTER FOOTBALL.
WHEN YOU STEP OUTSIDE AND SEE THE
CLEAR WINTER SKY, YOU'LL KNOW WHAT I'M
TALKING ABOUT. LET'S SHOW YOU...

(STOP & DROP)

JAMES:
OKAY, WE HAVE OUR SKIES SET FOR 9 P.M
LOOKING SOUTH-EAST. LOOK AT ALL THOSE
BRIGHT STARS!
IF YOU CAN BRAVE THE COLD, A RING OF
SPARKLING, MULTICOLORED JEWELS WILL
SHINE DOWN ON YOU.

DEAN:
SOME CALL THIS THE WINTER CIRCLE OR
WINTER HEXAGON,
BUT I THINK THESE STARS LOOK LIKE A GIANT
FOOTBALL FLYING THROUGH THE AIR,

POINTY ON TWO ENDS, ROUNDED IN THE MIDDLES.

AND WINTER IS THE SEASON FOR FOOTBALL.

JAMES:

EXACTLY!

AND THE MAIN PLAYER INSIDE THE WINTER FOOTBALL IS ORION THE HUNTER.

EASILY RECOGNIZED BY THE THREE STARS THAT MAKE HIS SNAZZY BELT, ORION STANDS ABOUT HALFWAY UP IN THE SOUTHEASTERN SKY, LIKE A HULKING LINEBACKER ABOUT TO MAKE A TACKLE.

(STOP) (in space)

DEAN:

NOW LET'S TAKE A TOUR AROUND THE WINTER FOOTBALL.

BEGIN WITH THE BRIGHTEST STAR IN THE SKY. THIS IS THE DOG STAR, NAMED SIRIUS.

IF YOU CONNECT THE DOTS OF ORION'S BELT STARS AND CONTINUE THAT LINE TO THE LEFT, YOU CAN'T MISS IT.

SIRIUS IS A BRILLIANT WHITE STAR AND ONE

OF OUR CLOSEST STELLAR NEIGHBORS.
FOLLOWING OUR FOOTBALL THEME,
SIRIUS MARKS THE NOSE OF ONE OF OUR
TWO TEAM MASCOTS, THE BIG DOG, OR CANIS
MAJOR.

IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY, CANIS MAJOR WAS
ONE
OF ORION'S GREAT HUNTING DOGS.

JAMES:

ORION'S OTHER HUNTING DOG, AND OUR
OTHER TEAM MASCOT, CAN BE FOUND UP AND
TO THE LEFT OF SIRIUS - AROUND THE BRIGHT
STAR PROCYON.

PROCYON IS A YELLOW-WHITE STAR IN THE
CONSTELLATION CANIS MINOR, THE LITTLE
DOG.

DEAN:

KEEP GOING UP AND TO THE LEFT, AND
YOU'LL FIND TWO STARS OF SIMILAR
BRIGHTNESS.

THESE ARE THE TWO HEADS OF THE GEMINI
TWINS, POLLUX AND CASTOR.

BOTH TWINS WERE INCREDIBLY ATHLETIC AND
WOULD MAKE A GREAT QUARTERBACK AND
WIDE RECEIVER COMBO.

JAMES:

NOW LET'S GO ALONG

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WINTER FOOTBALL.
THE BRIGHT STAR NEAREST THE ZENITH, AND
AT THE TIP OF THE FOOTBALL IS CALLED
CAPELLA.

CAPELLA IS THE BRIGHTEST STAR IN THE
CONSTELLATION AURIGA, THE CHARIOTEER.
AURIGA COULD SERVE AS COACH AND
CHAUFFEUR TO THE FOOTBALL TEAM. GREEK
MYTHS DESCRIBED HIM AS THE INVENTOR OF
THE CHARIOT.

BUT HE WAS ALSO GOOD AT GIVING ADVICE
AND CAN LOOK OVER THE FIELD FROM HIS
POSITION HIGH IN THE SKY.

DEAN:

MOVING DOWN AND TO THE RIGHT WE'LL
COME TO A BRIGHT, ORANGE STAR. THIS IS
ALDEBARAN, THE GLOWING EYE OF TAURUS
THE BULL.

NOW I REALIZE THERE IS NO PRO FOOTBALL
TEAM CALLED THE BULLS.

JAMES:

BUT HOW ABOUT THE BUFFALO BILLS?

DEAN:
YEAH...CLOSE ENOUGH.

JAMES:
THE LAST STAR IN THE FOOTBALL IS THE
BRIGHT BLUE STAR, RIGEL.
THIS MARKS THE LEFT FOOT OF OUR BUDDY
ORION AND IS ONE OF THE TRULY AMAZING
STARS IN OUR GALAXY.
IT'S AROUND 800 LIGHT YEARS AWAY FROM US
AND IS STILL ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST
STARS...IT MUST BE HUMONGOUS!

DEAN:
FINALLY, YOU'RE BACK AROUND TO SIRIUS.
CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE TRACED THE
WINTER FOOTBALL
IN THE SKY.
LOOK FOR IT AFTER DARK FOR THE NEXT FEW
MONTHS.

(STOP)

DEAN:
BUT WHAT'S THAT BRIGHT STAR IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE FOOTBALL?

JAMES:

THAT'S THE INFAMOUS BETELGEUSE, A RED SUPERGIANT STAR THAT MAKES EVEN RIGEL LOOK PUNY.
LET'S COMPARE RIGEL TO OUR SUN.
IN SIZE...THEY'RE NOT EVEN CLOSE.
NOW LET'S COMPARE BETELGEUSE TO RIGEL.

DEAN:
YIKES! BETELGEUSE IS EVEN LARGER THAN THE EARTH'S ORBIT.

JAMES:
THAT MEANS THAT IF BETELGEUSE WAS OUR SUN, WE'D BE ORBITING INSIDE OF IT.

DEAN:
GOOD THING WE'RE FAR, FAR AWAY FROM IT!

(STOP - CLOSE UP ENDING)

JAMES:
SO TONIGHT, TAKE A BREAK FROM THE NFL AND GO OUT TO SEE THE BIG GAME IN THE SKY.
LOOK FOR THE BRIGHT STARS IN THE WINTER FOOTBALL - SIRIUS, PROCYON, POLLUX AND CASTOR ON ONE SIDE...

DEAN:
AND CAPELLA, ALDEBARAN AND RIGEL ON THE
OTHER SIDE.
THE WINTER FOOTBALL HAS MORE BIG STARS
THAN ANY PRO TEAM.
AND THEY'RE AVAILABLE TO YOU EVERY
NIGHT UNTIL BASEBALL SEASON WHEN YOU...

BOTH: KEEP LOOKING UP!
