

NFL awash in gambling contradictions

By Ken Belson, New York Times

Los Angeles Rams guard Jamon Brown (68) competed against Tampa Bay Buccaneers defensive end Howard Jones in an arm wrestling event at the MGM Hotel and Casino on the Vegas Strip in April. Credit Heidi Fang/Las Vegas Review-Journal

When N.F.L. owners voted overwhelmingly last month to move the Raiders to Las Vegas, some of them went out of their way to say the city was no longer the corrupting influence they believed it once was and now very capable of supporting a franchise.

The Dallas Cowboys' owner, Jerry Jones, a prime backer of the move, said the city most closely associated with gambling "is not your father's Las Vegas." Even the NFL's commissioner, Roger Goodell, who continues to oppose legalized sports gambling, admitted that Las Vegas was "not the same city it was 10 or 20 years ago."

But the decision to leave Oakland and embrace Las Vegas presents conflicts for a league that has long stood vehemently against gambling.

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