

'Mr. Computer' Calls It Super Close

Maximilian (Bud) Goode, the mad scientist of football, clawed his way out of a Univac and allowed as how Super Bowl XIII will be closer than Sperry and Rand.



"Incredible," he murmured through the telephone from his Los Angeles office. "Simply incredible. On basis of correlative data, it would be impossible for any two teams to be as even as Dallas and Pittsburgh.

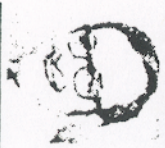
Goode, 55, is a computer analyst who might have been a pro linebacker if he hadn't weighed only 142 pounds. He worked for Groucho Marx and Art Linkletter until the latter advised him, "If you want to be a

success, find something you enjoy working at so much that you would do it for nothing. Then do it so well that people will pay you for it."

They do. He supplies weekly statistical analyses to 15 National Football League teams. Strike the word "mad" but let "scientist" stand. Goode is terrifyingly precise. He also is stuck for a winner between the Steelers and Cowboys. But then he never has pretended to be a forecaster.

"George Allen of the Rams was the first to hire me for this, in 1968. George also was the first to tell me I didn't know anything about football. He said, 'But nobody knows football numbers better than you do. You give us the numbers and let us apply them.'"

Goode does just that. He started with one client, the Rams, and had only them through 1975. He went to three in '76,



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seven in '77, and now has more than half the NFL clubs.

But I am aggressive. That's why I say I'd have been a perfect linebacker if I'd been twice as big. Since I had three heart attacks in 1971, I can only be aggressive with statistical data, and my data indicates no Super Bowl teams ever have been nearly as even as these."

He paused, digesting data. I guess. "Anybody is a fool to try to pick a cigar winner between Dallas and Pittsburgh. My figures

indicate it could be settled by one of those plays that happens only once every few years, like the Vikings blocking a Ram field goal and then scoring on the same play, a white back."

A conversation with Goode may not have quite the flash and dazzle of one with C-3-PO. It's close. He is so far ahead of anyone in his field, what you really need is someone to analyze his analysis.

"I don't pick games," he said. "I correlate data. The personal high point of my career was when Larry Conka came up to me at a Hollywood party and told me he had majored in business administration and would give anything to see my correlation matrix. I was stunned. Here's this alltime great fullback, 245 pounds, telling me, five feet seven inches tall, he wants to see my correlation matrix. Can you believe that?"

Er, Bud, the game?

"Yes," he said sharply. "The game. First,

neither the Steelers nor Cowboys clients. So I've nothing to keep confidential. Besides, the figures are so staggeringly close that they are difficult to evaluate."

Take your best shot, Maximilian. "My categories in order of importance are (1) opponents' rushing plays, (2) points scored, (3) yards per pass and (4) rushing average differential. (5) yards rushing, (6) sack differential and then, well, let's toss in touchdown differential."

Go, Goode. "These figures are for regular only. Dallas allowed opponents an average of 29.8 rushing plays per game. Pittsburgh allowed 32.1. No significant margin! Next case.

"Total points scored, hmmm, Dallas

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