PRO BOWL SNUBS: 10 DESERVING PLAYERS NOT VOTED TO HAWAII

Pro Football WEEKLY

January 6, 2013

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ADRIAN PETERSON'S ENORMOUS EFFORT LIFTED THE VIKINGS INTO THE POSTSEASON

WILD-CARD WEEKEND

GAME ONE
BENGALS AT TEXANS

GAME TWO
VIKINGS AT PACKERS

GAME THREE
COLTS AT RAVENS

GAME FOUR
SEAHAWKS AT REDSKINS

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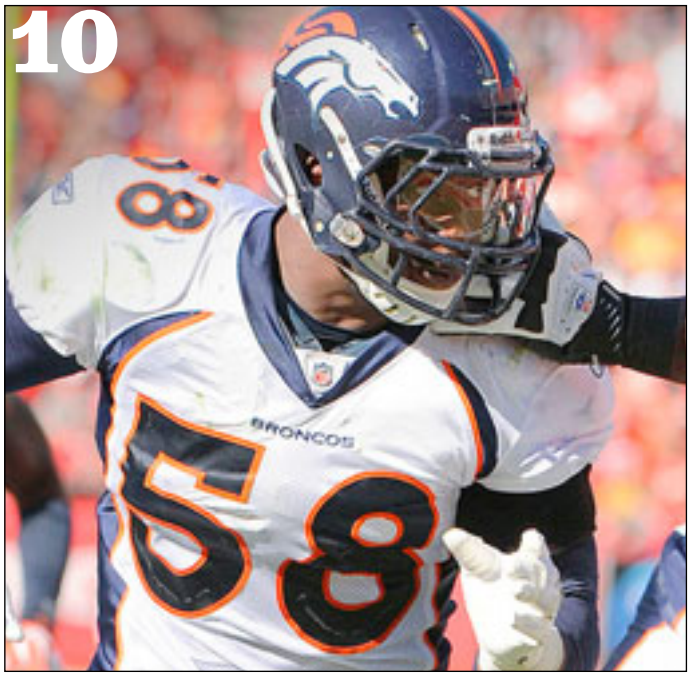

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The Broncos and Von Miller rank No. 1 among playoff teams.

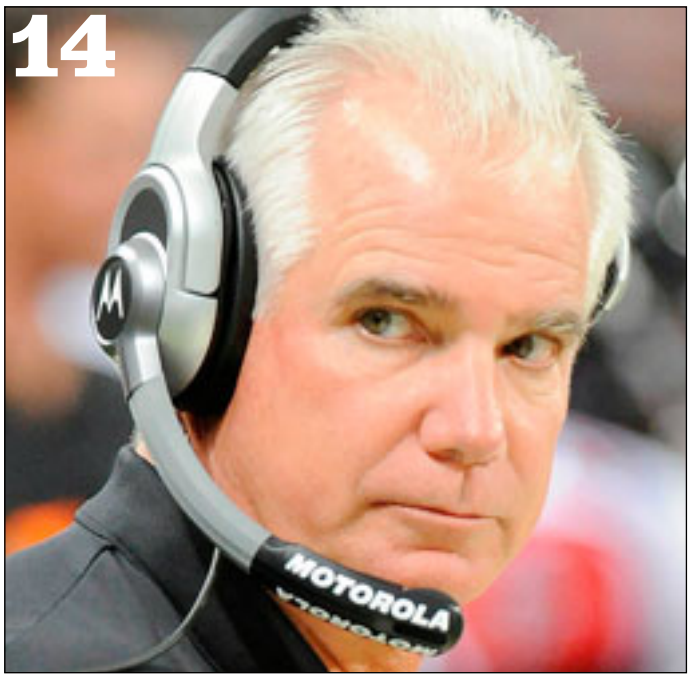

PHOTO CREDIT

Falcons head coach Mike Smith got the top grade in 2012.

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DAILY VIDEO Don't set your postseason fantasy lineup without a visit to the PFW video player, where we feature start or sit advice. Don't make your weekly picks without checking out PFW's Best Bets video. Don't move onto the next week until you've checked out all five of our game-day analysis videos. In fact, don't watch any games until you're prepared — PFW videos bring you weekly game previews, too.

MVP METER Find out who takes the top spot in PFW's ranking of the top 10 candidates for the league's most valuable player honor.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR METER PFW ranks the top 10 candidates for the NFL's top rookie honor — did Wilson catch RG3 for the top spot?

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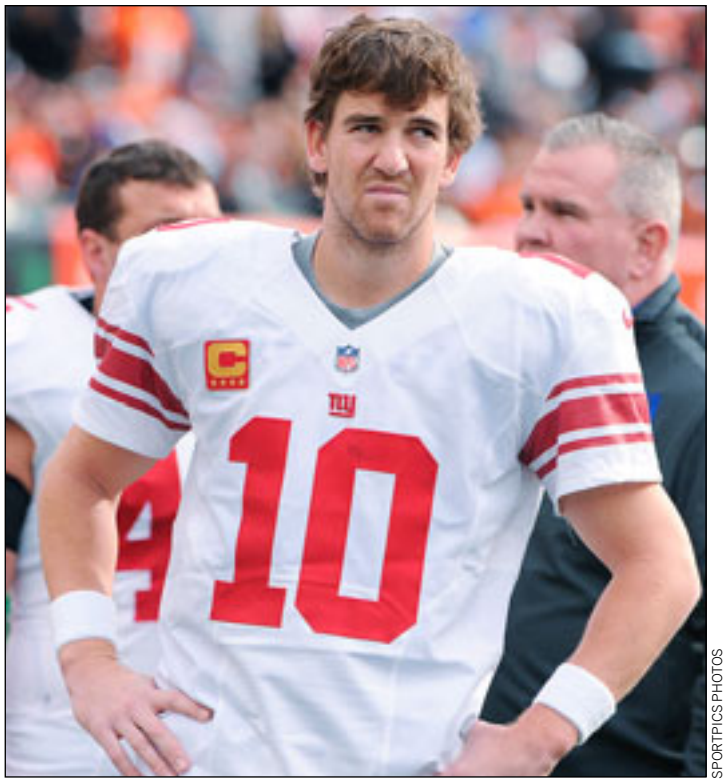
THE WAY WE SEE IT

Our weekly take on the hottest topics from around the NFL.

FORGET THE M-E-S-S



SPORTPICS PHOTOS

Everyone focused on Mark Sanchez (left) and the Jets' losing, but the Giants and Eli Manning (right) were as disappointing.

Giants — not Jets — bigger NYC disappointment

Sometimes you forget who the better team is and has been all along. With the excessive coverage of the Jets, you'd think they were the one that had just won a Super Bowl. But the Jets were a middling 8-8 in 2011 and they didn't get better personnel.

So when they added a divisive force (Tim Tebow) to their muddled QB situation and lost CB Darrelle Revis and WR Santonio Holmes, their best playmakers on either side of the ball, what did you think was going to happen?

Oh, sure, the Giants suffered their share of injuries, too. But that happened in both of their championship seasons — and they returned the core of a championship defense and a QB, Eli Manning, in his prime. So, why aren't the Giants getting the same treatment the Jets are for missing the playoffs?

To be fair, the Giants actually turned in the same record (9-7) as a year ago. But while everyone was asking "what's going on?" while they struggled down the stretch, losing five of their final eight games, it became clear: This was a team that was satisfied with resting on last year's laurels.

Blame the Jets. Seriously. With all the attention across town at the silliness they were invoking, the Giants got a free pass. They were the quietest defending-champion team and the least-scrutinized New York (non-NHL) team in recent memory. Now that we've gotten the Jets out of our systems, the focus should go back on the Giants' failures. — *Eric Edholm*

REASON TO HOPE

Next Panthers GM will inherit key building blocks

The Panthers can begin asking for permission to interview general manager candidates employed by other teams now that the regular season is over, so the next phase of that search is beginning. Owner Jerry Richardson should not have any trouble recruiting highly qualified candidates for the job — with Cam Newton and Luke Kuechly on board, the next Panthers GM inherits the enviable situation of having a young star to build around on each side of the ball. There will be some tough decisions to make and some bad contracts to restructure or terminate to make the Panthers salary-cap compliant before the start of the next league year, but the future looks promising for a team that won its final four games. — *Dan Parr*

IMPORTANT BYE

Extra week key to give Pats time to get healthy

Andrew Luck and the Colts did the Patriots a big favor on Sunday by beating the Texans, allowing the Patriots to get a bye. In terms of the route to New Orleans, it allows New England to avoid a trip to Denver until a potential AFC title game, but it also gives the Patriots extra time to get healthy. TE Rob Gronkowski (forearm) returned to action in the season finale, and he makes a difference on offense as a receiver and run blocker. However, we saw in last year's Super Bowl loss what can happen when he has to play hurt. On defense, the bye week should benefit CBs Alfonzo Dennard (knee) and Aqib Talib (hip), neither of whom played in Week 17 because of nagging injuries. Talib is crucial to the "D" because he can stick with top receivers. — *Kevin Fishbain*

A CRYING SHAME

Lions waste Johnson's spectacular season

At midseason, the Lions were .500 and had five home games left. It would have taken some heavy lifting, but they could have shoved their way into playoff contention. Instead, they finished the season with an eight-game losing streak. We can point to a series of close losses as coin-flip games that easily could have gone differently. We also can point to the Lions' injury woes as a cause for their steady fade. Both are viable excuses. But let's be real — the Lions should have been better than they were. It's difficult to believe a pass-happy team could get a record-breaking season from Calvin Johnson but fail to win any games since early November. I've seen less talented 4-12 teams, but few have been as befuddling. What a waste. — *Mike Wilkening*

POWER RANKINGS

RANK	THE SKINNY
1	**Denver Broncos** "D" makes them complete package: held K.C. to 119 yards of offense.
2	**New England Patriots** Ridley fifth Pats rusher with 1,200 yards; first since 2004.
3	**Atlanta Falcons** Injuries to Robinson, Abraham not what Atlanta wanted in Week 17.
4	**San Francisco 49ers** Akers' shakiness a big concern heading into postseason.
5	**Seattle Seahawks** Went 8-0 at home, but won't be playing in Seattle in playoffs.
6	**Green Bay Packers** Needed a bye badly; a scary team when everyone is healthy.
7	**Houston Texans** Stumbling into playoffs, but match up well with Bengals.
8	**Washington Redskins** The other rookie, Alfred Morris, put on a show on Sunday.
9	**Cincinnati Bengals** Dalton will need better game than last year vs. Houston (three INTs).
10	**Baltimore Ravens** Jim Caldwell's offense may need big production vs. his former team.
11	**Indianapolis Colts** Quite the welcome back for Pagano to knock Texans from top seed.
12	**Minnesota Vikings** For all the flak, Ponder made some big throws in final two wins.
13	**Chicago Bears** Another year goes by and plenty of questions still loom on offense.
14	**New York Giants** Too little, too late. Going 3-3 in division certainly hurt cause this season.
15	**Dallas Cowboys** Another year, another turnover-filled crucial game for Tony Romo.
16	**Pittsburgh Steelers** First season that Mike Tomlin failed to finish above .500 mark.
17	**New Orleans Saints** Set dubious record for most yards allowed in a season (7,042).
18	**St. Louis Rams** Showed promise in 7-8-1 season; Bradford needs more help, though.
19	**Carolina Panthers** If only Carolina ran the ball like this to start the season ...
20	**San Diego Chargers** Philip Rivers rallied with nine TDs, one INT in final six games.
21	**Miami Dolphins** Tannehill, Dolphins end season with a thud in shutout loss.
22	**Tampa Bay Buccaneers** Freeman set club single-season record for TD passes (27).
23	**Buffalo Bills** Stevie Johnson's third 1,000-yard season in a row one of few bright spots.
24	**New York Jets** Ugly season ends with two more Mark Sanchez turnovers (26 in 2012).
25	**Cleveland Browns** Rookie leaders at skill positions will give new staff plenty to work with.
26	**Tennessee Titans** Scored 28 unanswered points without having offensive possession.
27	**Detroit Lions** From 10-6 to 4-12, and Detroit went winless in the NFC North.
28	**Arizona Cardinals** Arizona had most starting QBs in league with four.
29	**Philadelphia Eagles** Sad to see Philly show little fight in Andy Reid's last game.
30	**Oakland Raiders** Glass half-full: Streater adds to intriguing group of young WRs.
31	**Jacksonville Jaguars** Blackmon's final four games: 25 catches, 308 yards, two TDs.
32	**Kansas City Chiefs** Doesn't appear to be a good year to have the No. 1 pick.

THE WAY WE HEAR IT

Seahawks CB Richard Sherman is one of several deserving players who should have earned Pro Bowl recognition in 2012.

THE LEAD

Seahawks CB Sherman tops PFW's list of Pro Bowl snubs

After catching a rare break with his surprisingly successful appeal of a four-game suspension for allegedly testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs, Seahawks second-year CB Richard Sherman isn't about to complain over not being selected to one of the Pro Bowl squads that were officially unveiled the day after Christmas.

But the way the leaguewide observers that Pro Football Weekly polled see it, Sherman was by far the most wrongful omission by the Pro Bowl voters this year.

"I mean, the guy's been playing out of his head!" one Seahawks daily observer said of Sherman, whose prolonged appeal process was cited as the most likely reason he lost out in the balloting to the likes of Bears CB Tim Jennings, who started off red-hot but has been battling injuries recently, and Cardinals CB Patrick Peterson, who has an impressive seven interceptions but got absolutely torched on a national stage by 49ers WR Michael Crabtree in Arizona's humbling 24-3 loss to San Francisco in Week Eight.

"Not only is Sherman (the league leader) in passes defensed and among the league leaders in interceptions (eight), he's making really big plays on a regular basis for a Seattle defense that has allowed the fewest points in the league," the Seahawks observer said.

A host of other players in addition to Sherman will be sprawled out on their living-room couches on Jan. 27, no doubt grimacing at the sight of undeserving players in Honolulu such as Packers C Jeff Saturday, who was recently benched in favor of former undrafted rookie Evan Dietrich-Smith, Patriots OG Logan Mankins, a Pro Bowl starter despite missing six games with injuries, and the three Chiefs defenders (SS Eric Berry, OLB Tamba Hali and ILB Derrick Johnson) representing a unit ranked in the bottom quarter of the league in both points allowed and rushing yards allowed.

What follows are nine other players who received particularly raw deals, according to PFW's discerning board of Pro Bowl analysts:

2. Broncos WR Demaryius Thomas Beaten out by starters A.J. Green (Bengals) and Andre Johnson (Texans) and reserves Reggie Wayne (Colts) and Wes Welker (Patriots) — Picking up where he left off last season in a breakout playoff performance in the upset victory over the Steelers, Thomas has developed into the primary aerial weapon for Peyton Manning. While Welker has more catches than Thomas (118-94), Thomas has more receiving yards (1,435-1,354), touchdowns (10-6) and yards per catch (15.3-11.5).

3. Steelers ILB Lawrence Timmons Beaten out by starter Jerod Mayo (Patriots) and reserve Derrick Johnson (Chiefs) — That nobody was selected from the league's top-ranked defense is a crime. At the very least, Timmons, whose interception in overtime was a huge play in Pittsburgh's Week 10 win over the Chiefs, should have made the squad. "He's been outstanding," one pollster said.

4. Vikings C John Sullivan — Beaten out by starter Max Unger (Seahawks) and reserve Jeff Saturday (Packers) — While Unger is actually a very deserving starter, Saturday's selection is perhaps more inexcusable than Sherman's omission. "It's a classic case of a guy making the team purely on reputation," said one Packers source who has watched Saturday struggle mightily all season, especially vs. the run. Sullivan, meanwhile, has been doing an unsung job all season clearing paths for league MVP candidate Adrian Peterson. "Sullivan over Saturday is a no-brainer," one Vikings source said. "He and rookie (OLT) Matt Kalil have been terrific all season."

5. Cowboys WR Dez Bryant Beaten out by starters Calvin Johnson (Lions) and Brandon Marshall (Bears) and reserves Julio Jones (Falcons) and Victor Cruz (Giants) — The hottest receiver in league (10 TDs in his last eight games) despite a broken finger, Bryant has zooomed past Jones and Cruz in the NFC receiving rankings and definitely deserved a Pro Bowl berth.

6. Dolphins C Mike Pouncey Beaten out by starter Maurkice Pouncey (Steelers) and reserve Chris Myers (Houston) — Oh, brother! While Mike Pouncey has been cited by numerous media outlets this season as the top center in the league, his brother, Maurkice, was named the AFC's starter, even though he hasn't started every game at center for the Steelers this season. Mike Pouncey has wasted no time establishing a strong connection with rookie QB Ryan Tannehill and was a key in RB Reggie Bush's quest for a second straight 1,000-yard campaign.

7. Colts QB Andrew Luck Beaten out by starter Peyton Manning (Broncos) and backups Tom Brady (Patriots) and Matt Schaub (Texans) — While Manning and Brady have proven to be perennial locks, PFW's poll believes Luck, who has engineered a record-tying seven fourth-quarter game-winning drives, should be the AFC's No. 3 QB over Schaub. "He's been as good as advertised and then some," one daily Colts observer said of the league's first overall draft pick. "He's been putting a young team on his back week in and week out, and he's been doing it behind one of the worst offensive lines in the league. He's had too many interceptions, but he drives the ball downfield more than any QB in the league."

8. Panthers DE Greg Hardy Beaten out by starters Jason Pierre-Paul (Giants) and Julius Peppers (Bears) and Jared Allen (Vikings) — Probably the most under-the-radar player on our list, Hardy can't hold a candle to Peppers, who has come on strong down the stretch. But a strong case can be made for Hardy over both Paul and Allen. "He has been a beast," one pollster said of Hardy. "He has 11 sacks, and they have not been cheap ones."

9. Bears OLB Lance Briggs Beaten out by starters Aldon Smith (49ers) and DeMarcus Ware (Cowboys) and reserve Clay Matthews (Packers) — Briggs is a victim of circumstances at a position overflowing with highly productive 3-4 pass rushers. But while Matthews has been playing as well as ever when healthy, he did miss four games with a hamstring injury, and Smith is still a work in progress defending the run and in coverage. "Briggs has had a better season than he did last season," one close Bears watcher said of a player left off the Pro Bowl team for the first time in seven years.

10. Chargers FS Eric Weddle Beaten out by starter Ed Reed (Ravens) — Reed is a great player, but there were some pollsters who thought he might not have even been the best free safety in the AFC North let alone the AFC. Weddle, meanwhile, is "year after year one of the best safeties in the NFL with his playmaking and ball-hawking ability (three interceptions, nine passes defensed, two forced fumbles)," according to one AFC West evaluator.

— Dan Arkush

AFC EAST

By Kevin Fishbain

Re-signing Levitre key to Bills 2013 offense

Injuries to the Bills' offensive line in 2011 helped show how valuable OLG **Andy Levitre** is to Buffalo. Different year, same story in 2012, with multiple injuries affecting the unit, but Levitre was the constant.

It's no secret that the Bills like Levitre, and with **C.J. Spiller** in the backfield, anything they can do to keep the O-line in tact moving forward is key, which would include re-signing Levitre.

The fourth-year pro has started all 64 games he has played since entering the league in 2009. Statistically, he's having his best season, having allowed only half a sack all season and being penalized once for holding. Levitre is key in the Bills' screen game and Buffalo is among the most successful teams in the league in rushing over left guard.

"He has been solid, 'Steady Eddie' for us and played well," **Chan Gailey** told reporters last week. "He has been one of the pleasant things for offense as far as consistency goes."

The Bills already re-signed Levitre's fellow starting guard, **Kraig Urbik**, and FS **Jairus Byrd** is the only other free-agent-to-be that demands a lot of attention. One of the two players could receive the franchise tag, with the other getting a long-term agreement. According to NFL.com, the franchise tag for an O-lineman in 2013 will be $9.660 million, almost $3 million more than the tag for a safety. Economically, locking down Levitre long-term would help the cap, and leave the tag as an option for Byrd. If there's anything going against Levitre, it's that the Bills' top backup guard, **Chad Rinehart**, is a solid player, and certainly cheaper, but he is still a drop-off in talent from Levitre.

Many consider Levitre a Pro Bowl snub, and his consistency has been crucial for the Bills; now the next step is for **Buddy Nix** to find a way to keep him in Buffalo.

LANDRY WON'T COME CHEAP The safety position was a serious priority for the Jets last offseason, and they shored up the position with veteran additions **Yeremiah Bell** and **LaRon Landry**. Landry, specifically, has been very impressive, and injury-free. He started the first 15 games, but not in Week 17, when the Jets opened in the nickel. Landry, who has 99 tackles, eight passes defensed and a career-high four forced fumbles this season, earned a Pro Bowl nod, and keeping the safety for 2013 may not be easy, or cheap. Landry recently told the *New York Daily News* that he would not take a hometown discount. "I love this organization. I love them for giving me an opportunity," he said. "But at the end of the day, I'm going to sit down with my agent and my family and make the best business decision." Landry's 2012 salary is $3.5 million, and the expected franchise tag number for safeties, per NFL.com, is $6.798 million. Landry cannot be franchised because of a clause in his contract, but the franchise-tag figure may be in the range of what his asking price will be. One daily observer singled out Landry as a player the Jets would definitely want to keep among their impending free agents, which include starters **Matt Slauson** and **Dustin Keller**. One thing that may work in the Jets' favor is Landry's injury history, which could keep other teams from breaking the bank for him.

EVALUATING MILLER The last weeks of the season have allowed Dolphins rookie RB **Lamar Miller** to get extra opportunities, and perhaps give Miami fans hope for the running game if **Reggie Bush** does not return in 2013. In early November, Miller was curiously absent from the backfield, considering he played well early and we had heard the team was excited about Miami (Fla.) product. With **Daniel Thomas** on injured reserve, Miller finished the season as the No. 2 back, and he ran for 73 yards on 10 carries in the team's Week 16 win over the Bills. He contributed 13 yards on five carries and 22 yards on two catches in Week 17. Most importantly, Miller stayed healthy this season, as durability was one of his negatives coming out of college. "He contributed nicely. He ran the ball hard. Took care of the football," head coach **Joe Philbin** said following the Week 16 game. "He hasn't had a ton of carries or touches yet this season, but I thought he did a good job with his ball security as well." Bush had another solid season as a runner and receiver, and told reporters last week he would like to stay in Miami, but the Dolphins' list of free agents is long, with priorities at other positions that don't have similar depth. The Dolphins traded up in the draft for Thomas in 2011 and Miller in '12, so the franchise clearly has planned for the pair to be the future backfield. While the offense would be better with Bush in the fold, the Dolphins found it difficult to involve Miller as a No. 3 back. If Miami feels comfortable moving forward with Miller and Thomas, it would be easier to part ways with Bush.

Steelers CB Cortez Allen showed playmaking ability in Weeks 16 and 17 and his role is growing.

AFC NORTH

By Mike Wilkening

Steelers CB Allen could have bright future

Two days before the Steelers' season finale, CB **Cortez Allen** was asked what he would take away from his second NFL campaign.

"I still have a lot of growing to do," Allen said. " ... There's still so much to learn."

More improvement from Allen would be an exciting prospect for the Steelers considering the promise he has shown in 2012.

Allen's potential was on full display in the Week 16 loss to Cincinnati, when he had a hand in all three Bengals turnovers. He twice intercepted Bengals QB **Andy Dalton**, and he forced an **A.J. Green** fumble recovered by S **Ryan Clark** in Pittsburgh territory. The interceptions were the first of the 24-year-old Allen's NFL career. Allen shared credit for the takeaways with his teammates, saying that the defense's collective play "enabled me to make the plays I did."

Allen had another big day in Week 17, recording eight tackles, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery in a win over the Browns.

Improved technique will be a focus of Allen's offseason workouts. He figures to be no worse than the Steelers' third cornerback

(Continued on Page 6)

AFC WHISPERS

■ We hear that no Titan with an expiring contract will be a greater priority to bring back in 2013 than TE **Jared Cook**. Before being placed on injured reserve, Cook was the club's third-leading receiver and, though he made waves for voicing his displeasure with former coordinator **Chris Palmer**'s offense and his lack of involvement in it, we hear Cook is optimistic that he can carve out a greater role in the offense in the future. With WR **Kenny Britt**'s lack of dependability, re-signing Cook — or giving him the franchise tag, which could be an option, we hear — to promote QB **Jake Locker**'s growth is paramount.

■ Colts GM **Ryan Grigson** is a strong candidate for Executive of the Year honors because virtually every button he has pushed since arriving in Indianapolis has helped the Colts to their improbable 11-5 mark and wild-card playoff berth. Of course, each move has had a varying level of impact, and we hear that free-agent SS **Tom Zbikowski** has not made as large of an impact as the club had hoped for. A strong presence in the locker room and a guy who has come up with a few timely plays this season, "Zibby" simply isn't the type of playmaker on the back end of the defense that the Colts prefer. Strong safety could be on the club's offseason wish list, we hear.

■ The way we hear it, the Ravens are hoping for more from second-year CB **Jimmy Smith** as they enter the postseason. The Ravens' 2011 first-round pick, Smith has flashed potential but hasn't put it all together.

■ One of the numerous reasons the Bengals' defense looks formidable entering January is the play of CB **Leon Hall**. We're told Hall really looks like he has rounded back into top form. Hall is in his first season back after an Achilles injury that prematurely ended his 2011 campaign.

■ If GM **Gene Smith** is let go this offseason, as expected, we hear his shrewd waiver claim of DE **Jason Babin** is likely to be a parting gift for whomever replaces him. One source in North Florida said "he would be shocked if Babin wasn't a Jaguar next season," as "he clearly adds a pass-rush dimension that was missing prior to his arrival." Babin has collected 1½ sacks and forced two fumbles in five games with the Jaguars, and our source indicates Babin has been a solid addition in the locker room, as well.

■ The Broncos would face a good problem to have, should they advance to the AFC title game, as **Willis McGahee** (MCL, broken leg) would be eligible to return. **Knowshon Moreno** has been a pleasant surprise with **Ronnie Hillman** as his complement. **John Fox** is no stranger to two-back situations, and if McGahee were healthy, it would bolster the backfield. Moreno has worked to improve his pass blocking, but that's one area specifically where McGahee would provide a boost.

THE WAY WE HEAR IT

(Continued from Page 5)

in 2013, and a starting spot is quite possible, especially if **Keenan Lewis** departs in free agency.

We may look back and see 2012 as a "bridge" season of sorts for Allen, a campaign where he showed he could be a consistent contributor for an older defense that will need its younger players to continue to step forward.

"I do feel like I've progressed a little each week," Allen said.

BOLD BENGALS After the Bengals clinched a playoff berth with a victory at Pittsburgh on Dec. 23, head coach **Marvin Lewis** laughed as he noted that he had thanked his team "for bailing me out." Indeed, Lewis' aggressiveness was one of the notable aspects of the Bengals' 13-10 victory. Lewis called for a 56-yard field goal in the fourth quarter, an attempt that fell short. Earlier, he elected to keep the offense on the field when the Bengals faced a 4th-and-22 from the Pittsburgh 33. That gamble failed, too. In the end, Lewis and the Bengals escaped, but Lewis' confidence in his players wasn't lost on anyone. The way we hear it, it's very apparent that Lewis is willing to make assertive, calculated risks this season. The Bengals' personnel could be a guiding factor. Cincinnati has a strong defense and a very good short-yardage rushing offense. What's more, the Bengals believe in veteran PK **Josh Brown**, who has replaced the injured **Mike Nugent**. In short, some boldness from the Bengals in the postseason shouldn't be a surprise.

INJURY ISSUES The Ravens' final injury report of the regular season listed 16 players. That's 10 more injured players than the Ravens listed entering the 2011 season finale. That's just one way to measure the ways the Ravens have had to deal with a laundry list of health woes this season. The Ravens' injury issues have been extensive on defense. OLB **Terrell Suggs** (biceps), DT **Haloti Ngata** (knee) and SS **Bernard Pollard** (ribs) are among the defenders who have dealt with nagging injuries. Time and again, the Ravens have had to draw on their defensive depth, with ILB **Dannell Ellerbe** and CB **Corey Graham** two players who have distinguished themselves when getting extended playing time, the way we hear it. Nevertheless, it's been a struggle for the Ravens' defense in 2012. While the Ravens are likely to have stalwart MLB **Ray Lewis** (triceps) back for the playoffs, they will not be close to fully healthy on defense as they begin to play the games that will define their season.

AFC SOUTH

By Arthur Arkush

Tebow to Jaguars not quite a 'certainty'

There is a chance that the Jaguars' starting QB in 2013 is not currently on the roster. Week One starter **Blaine Gabbert**, before being placed on injured reserve with a shoulder injury, was demoted by head coach **Mike Mularkey**, and our sources expressed significant concerns regarding Gabbert's leadership skills and passion for the game — not to mention his total ineptitude on the field — even prior to his demotion.

The man whom replaced Gabbert, **Chad Henne**, got out of the gate like gangbusters, but his numbers have since tapered off to, well, Gabbert-like production. Yes, the offense has performed more efficiently with Henne at the controls. No, he has not done enough to instill great confidence within the organization that he can be the long-term solution under center.

Thus, when a report surfaced recently indicating Jets disgruntled QB **Tim Tebow**, a Jacksonville native and iconic figure throughout the state of Florida, was a "virtual certainty" to land with the Jaguars in 2013, it made sense on a number of levels.

Tebow is revered in Jacksonville. The club is unsettled at the QB position. Owner **Shad Khan** stuck his toe in the water when Tebow was on the trade market prior to the season.

However, after doing a little digging, we hear that categorizing his arrival in Jacksonville after the season as imminent is a major stretch.

Khan's prior interest in Tebow is understandable, particularly from a business standpoint. He would very likely help a small-market team that has trouble filling its gargantuan stadium do just that. Yet, the Jaguars' ticket sales have improved this season — and Khan didn't mandate his football people, mainly embattled GM **Gene Smith**, to acquire him at all costs last offseason, just to put out feelers.

Smith's likely on borrowed time in Jacksonville. We hear there is a strong chance he will be dismissed after the season, which likely means a new GM would have to sign off on Tebow, or, potentially steer clear of the job altogether if Tebow is part of the deal.

Similarly, we don't yet know the future of Mularkey. There is a chance that he could be spared after the season, if a new GM approves.

As one source astutely pointed out, the author of the original report — ESPN's well-connected **Chris Mortensen** — shares an agent, **Jimmy Sexton**, with Tebow.

Tebow could very well end up a Jaguar. But as the source notes, "there are only two virtual certainties in life: Death and taxes."

McCARTHY UNRELIABLE? Prior to the start of the season, few Titans had arrows pointing higher than MLB **Colin McCarthy**, who was named a defensive captain after a superb rookie campaign in which he demonstrated a keen sense for being around the football and a real knack for making big plays in big moments. Fast-forward nearly four months, and we hear McCarthy is back to square one, forced to again dispel the knock on him coming out of the University of Miami: A player with immense upside, but also an injury track record that couldn't be ignored. After missing his fourth consecutive game in Week 16 because of a concussion and the eighth overall game this season (McCarthy has also dealt with various lower-body ailments), we hear the Titans likely will be forced to seek reinforcements at middle linebacker in the offseason. To be clear: the club still loves McCarthy's potential and

RB Darren McFadden's inability to stay healthy and the fact that he's not a great fit in the Raiders' offense means he could wind up on the trade block this offseason.

thinks he has star qualities. However, his replacements this season, aging veterans **Will Witherspoon** and **Tim Shaw**, are nothing more than situatonal players and strong special-teams contributors on their best days, we hear. The good news is that the other two-thirds of Tennessee's linebacking corps, fellow second-year player **Akeem Ayers** and rookie **Zach Brown**, have provided encouraging signs that they are building blocks for the future. Unfortunately, McCarthy might not again fall under that category until he can consistently stay out of the training room and get back to being a dynamic player in the middle of the Titans' defense.

SCHAUB STRUGGLING **Matt Schaub** is a Pro Bowl quarterback in 2012, but the much bigger question, particularly amid Houston's anemic offensive output in the past three games, is: Can he be a Super Bowl QB? There is plenty of blame to go around for Houston's sudden slide. That the offensive line is sending three players to Hawaii is misleading — only two players on the entire offense, WR **Andre Johnson** and OLT **Duane Brown** — have played consistently in December, we hear. The line isn't blocking well enough. The running game isn't popping consistently enough. The No. 2 WR spot continues to be in flux. Head coach **Gary Kubiak**'s play-calling must improve. His tendency to throw on the first offensive series to get Schaub in a rhythm and wait until the second possession to begin establishing the run has led to a lot of 3-0 leads, but also 3rd-and-longs, where the Texans have been absolutely miserable of late. Yet, in a QB-driven league, the biggest Texans critics look first at Schaub's struggles. Although he won't admit it, he is pressing, we hear. And although the Texans want to grind the clock and be a time-of-possession football team, the offense must start with the quarterback. The club that was brimming with confidence as it roared out to an 11-1 start has lost its edge, particularly on offense. Schaub played very well in those 12 games. He needs to be that guy again, when his team needs him most.

AFC WEST

By Kevin Fishbain & Dan Parr

Raiders could be open to shopping RB McFadden

We hear GM **Reggie McKenzie**'s frustration with the Raiders' running game has been directed more toward the blocking of the offensive line than the team's top back, **Darren McFadden**, who has battled injuries and struggled when relatively healthy this season.

The Raiders' running game is among the lowest ranked in the league and it has produced a league-low four rushing touchdowns.

One of first decisions Oakland has to make this offseason is whether to keep offensive coordinator **Greg Knapp**. Knapp's zone-blocking system has not been the best fit for McFadden, who has one year left on his rookie contract. However, our sources expect the Raiders to dangle McFadden in trade talks this offseason, especially if Knapp returns. Indications are McKenzie believes McFadden can bounce back from a down year and get back to the form he showed in 2010 and '11 before injuries cut his season short, but the GM also would be open to listening if a team showed a willingness to part with a draft pick, or picks, for McFadden's services.

The question is what would the Raiders' asking price be? And how much interest would there be in McFadden after he has missed 13 games over the past two seasons and is coming off a season in which he has gained a career-low 3.3 yards per carry?

OT ISSUES IN SAN DIEGO The expected new regime in San Diego will have to work to repair an offense that fell well short of expectations, but still has talent at the skill positions. Part of the problem this year was the offensive line, including at tackle, where the Chargers' starting OTs battled injuries and protection issues. OLT **Jared Gaither** played in only four games and went on I.R. with a groin injury. **Norv Turner** didn't mince words, saying, "We gave Jared every opportunity to be a part of this team, and it just hasn't worked out." Gaither, who gave up four sacks in his four games, is due $4.5 million next year, and we hear that the "poor effort" label that has followed him in his career was a factor this season with his health. The new staff will have the challenge of making sure Gaither is healthy, and what they want protecting **Philip Rivers**' blind side. Things haven't been much better on the right side, where **Jeromey Clary** gave up a career-high in sacks and missed two games with a knee injury, though he is generally solid. The backups for Gaither and Clary indicated a depth issue at the position. Draft targets remain speculative until we know the new head coach and GM, but offensive tackle is expected to be high on the priority list. Not known for having much mobility, Rivers didn't help his own cause, but he has been sacked 49 times this season, 11 more than his previous career-high. Gaither and Clary, barring injury, would likely be starting in 2013 because of their contracts, unless a new regime wants to go in another direction right away. Regardless, it's a position worth watching in San Diego in the next few months.

NFC EAST

By Eric Edholm

Personnel changes are coming for Giants

Expect the Giants to shave some salaries and allow some veterans to walk in the offseason. Bank on it: There will be more changes this offseason for Big Blue than there have been perhaps in the past two offseasons combined.

Impending free-agent DE **Osi Umenyiora** has not hidden the fact that there could be a better opportunity elsewhere — and the Giants are prepared for some parting shots, too. OT **David Diehl**, having lost his job at one point, is a strong possibility to be playing elsewhere next season.

Others, such as LB **Michael Boley**, CB **Corey Webster** and DE **Justin Tuck** have been mentioned. Boley's playing time has been reduced. Webster has had a season to forget and might need to do what former Redskins CB **Carlos Rogers** did two years ago and change scenery (signing with the 49ers) to revive his career. Tuck clearly has not been himself and could move on, although that's far from certain.

If the price tag for free-agent SS **Kenny Phillips** gets too high, the Giants could allow him to go, too. Interestingly, TE **Martellus Bennett**, whose contract also is up, hasn't had his contract negotiated yet to return. That still could happen, but the Giants are notorious for setting a market price and sticking to it. If Bennett's demands go too high, he could walk and the Giants would be looking at a new starting tight end for the fourth year in a row.

SHOWING STRENGTH As the wide-9 defensive alignment went away with the dismissal of DL coach **Jim Washburn**, the Eagles made another change up front. They shifted rookie **Mychal Kendricks** from the strong side to weak-side linebacker. It's a move that has made Kendricks more effective after he had leveled off. Kendricks started well in his rookie season but later had trouble getting off blocks and keeping step for step with tight ends and running backs in pass patterns. On the weak side in the Eagles' defensive formation, Kendricks has been able to move more freely without having to disengage from blocks. His speed is what got him drafted in the second round, and it's at this position where he has the best chance to thrive going forward. The Eagles' next defensive scheme — after the expected departure of head coach **Andy Reid** — is unknown. But don't be shocked, assuming the next coordinator sticks to a base 4-3 defense, that Kendricks is a fixture on the weak side.

NFC NORTH

By Dan Arkush & Dan Parr

Changes coming to Packers' ILB corps?

What position do our Packers insiders consider to be the most intriguing with the offseason all of a sudden just around the corner?

The vote goes to inside linebacker, where a surplus of quality talent could make for some very tough decisions for the team's braintrust.

Blame **Brad Jones**, who would get lots of votes as the team's most pleasant surprise this season, for being primarily responsible for creating an interesting dilemma at a position that has persevered quite well despite season-ending injuries to MLBs **Desmond Bishop**, who was lost before the season started, and his replacement, **D.J. Smith**.

Considered undersized at outside linebacker, Jones was shifted to the inside this season — a move some close observers thought would be a bad fit for his leggy stature. But after Smith went down for the count in Week Six at Houston, the Packers coaches opted to start Smith over **Rob Francois**.

While he has missed some tackles on occasion and given up a fair amount of plays in pass protection, Jones has played the run exceptionally well and has applied good pressure on cross-blitzes starting alongside strong-inside 'backer **A.J. Hawk** in the base defense and nickel defense and as the only LB in the dime defense.

(Continued on Page 8)

NFC WHISPERS

■ Cowboys special-teams coordinator **Joe DeCamillis** is receiving attention for soon-to-be vacant head-coaching positions. For years, he has been regarded as a future head coach, whether on the college or pro level, and this could be his first serious crack at getting interviews.

■ Oregon head coach **Chip Kelly** has been the name most associated with the expected head-coaching vacancy in Philadelphia, and there's no doubt that the Eagles have done their homework on the college offensive guru. But he's far from guaranteed to be the only strong candidate. Depending on how far the Broncos advance in the postseason, offensive coordinator **Mike McCoy** could be on their minds. McCoy has impressed in his work with quarterbacks in Carolina and Denver and possesses the leadership qualities to make him attractive to several teams.

■ Observers in Minnesota have noted the fine job of Vikings OL coach **Jeff Davidson**, whipping into shape a group that often was disjointed in 2011. The result has been a career rushing season for RB **Adrian Peterson** and a consistently solid passing pocket, despite a few wrinkles in the lineup from last season.

■ Saints offensive coordinator **Pete Carmichael Jr.** has been connected with head-coaching openings on the NFL and college level in the past year, but the talk we're hearing around the league is that Carmichael has not improved his reputation in 2012, even though New Orleans' offense remains one of the league's most productive units. Carmichael's responsibilities increased last season and they did even more this season with **Sean Payton** serving a suspension.

■ We hear the 49ers have not been very happy lately with the tentative play of **Ted Ginn Jr.** both as a receiver and as a kick returner.

■ After a strong start, we hear the Cardinals have been disappointed with third-round rookie CB **Jamell Fleming**. "They're hoping he'll grow up," one team insider said of Fleming. "He had some early success, and then he tapered off. He has a tendency to get complacent. And he has not been as good on special teams as he needs to be."

■ Seahawks QB **Russell Wilson** believes the area in which he has made the most progress this season is in third-down and red-zone situations. "Great quarterbacks are tremendous in third down and red zone, and I think in two-minute situations as well," Wilson said. "I thrive for those moments. I can't wait for those moments. That's when you want to play the QB position. I think we've done a great job of really harping on those situations and doing an excellent job of late capitalizing on our opportunities."

THE WAY WE HEAR IT

(Continued from Page 7)

An unrestricted free agent in March, the consensus is that Jones has proven he has what it takes to be a legitimate starting ILB. Could Jones possibly figure as a re-signed starter with the Packers in 2013 alongside Bishop, replacing Hawk, whose cap hit next season is a hefty $7.1 million? With Francois, **Jamari Lattimore** and rookie **Terrell Manning** also in a deep and talented mix — provided Bishop and Smith come back fully healthy — something's got to give.

If Hawk, who has been having a very solid year himself, returns next season, we hear it's a very good bet his contract will be significantly reduced.

BEARS' CB DECISION It took nearly a full decade in the league before **Charles Tillman** made his first Pro Bowl last season as a ninth-year veteran. On Wednesday, he became the first cornerback in Bears history to be named to back-to-back Pro Bowls. Making the feat a bit more impressive is that we had heard whispers during training camp that the Bears were concerned Tillman was in decline. There was talk that **Tim Jennings** — who was named to his first Pro Bowl Wednesday — not Tillman, had played the best of any corner at Bears camp. It was not the first time there had been preseason chatter about Tillman being on the downswing. In fact, what was largely perceived to be a demotion before the 2010 season — the Bears' decision to move Tillman from left to right corner — has turned into a move that preempted some of his finest seasons and the greatest accolades of his career. Will Tillman be rewarded this offseason for proving the doubters wrong? Do the Bears want to include Jennings, who has had a career year in his seventh season after signing a two-year deal last offseason, in their long-term plans? It will be interesting to see the approach GM **Phil Emery** takes with his Pro Bowl corners. Both Tillman, who turns 33 in February, and Jennings, 29, are due to become free agents after next season and, at the moment, the Bears do not have any young corners that they have been grooming to take their starting jobs. There is nickel back **D.J. Moore**, 25, but he is due to become a free agent this offseason and it appears the team has soured on him. Tillman and Jennings are not young players any more, but they are not getting any cheaper with age.

Are the Bears going to have Pro Bowl CB Tim Jennings in their long-term plans?

NFC SOUTH

By Dan Parr

Saints DE Smith could return at reduced rate

The Saints put questions about **Sean Payton**'s future to rest with the announcement of his new contract, and one of the next big issues for the team to tackle will be its salary-cap situation.

GM **Mickey Loomis** will not be able to just nibble around the edges to make the team cap compliant this offseason. The Saints are going to have to cut significant salary off the books just to get to the cap, which is expected to be around $121 million (the Saints have about $136 million committed to next year's cap).

Some might be ready to write off DRE **Will Smith** as a goner — he's due $9 million plus a $1 million bonus and has a cap figure of $14.5 million in 2013. If he doesn't agree to restructure his contract, it's highly likely that he will be released, but the possibility of Smith agreeing to a drastic pay cut in order to stay with the Saints should not be ruled out, we hear.

It will be no surprise if the Saints do make an effort to keep Smith in the fold. Evaluators say the team does not have a better option to start at right end on the roster, and the Saints are unlikely to have the salary-cap flexibility to compete for one of the better players available at the position in free agency.

BAKER BOUNCES BACK The Falcons have been rewarded this season for the faith they showed in OLT **Sam Baker**, and Baker could, in turn, be rewarded by the Falcons this offseason. Baker's performance declined last season as he battled injuries. He underwent a back procedure and was benched. However, the Falcons showed a renewed confidence in him in the offseason. When some of the team's fans were calling for the Falcons to replace Baker, head coach **Mike Smith** praised Baker's resiliency and told PFW at the NFL Scouting Combine that he would be very comfortable with Baker returning as the team's starting left tackle. The Falcons believed that Baker would bounce back as long as he could stay healthy, and he has responded, starting every game and allowing few sacks. He is in the final year of his rookie contract and is due to become an unrestricted free agent, but it would be a surprise if the Falcons do not make a push to work out a new deal with him before he hits the open market.

NFC WEST

By Dan Arkush

Seahawks' O-line a major factor in offensive success

Daily team observers agree that the decision to totally take the training wheels off rookie QB **Russell Wilson** and give him free rein in a read-option attack that maximizes both his throwing and rushing skills has been by far the biggest factor behind the Seahawks' recent offensive explosiveness.

But they also agree that while it's impossible not to single out Wilson, who has done enough to warrant serious Rookie of the Year consideration, major credit should also go to the offensive line in front of him.

"It's a line that is playing very well right now," said one observer of a unit that has been doing an excellent job both run-blocking and pass-blocking in recent weeks. "Allowing **Mario Williams** and **Aldon Smith** zero sacks (in Weeks 15-16) is no small feat. The zone-read is working because the guys are blocking the way they are supposed to block."

Rams head coach **Jeff Fisher** couldn't agree more.

"I think it's one of the better lines, yes. It really is," Fisher said four days before his team's regular-season finale in Seattle. "They're tough. They're downfield. They finish. They're well-coached and they understand when you're blocking and protecting for a quarterback that runs around as much as he does, it requires some technique changes. Their guys, they're very patient and productive."

Two members of assistant head coach/offensive line **Tom Cable**'s finely coordinated unit — OLT **Russell Okung** and C **Max Unger** — were selected as Pro Bowl starters.

"They're the mortar between the bricks," said one daily team observer. "Cable said recently that if there's a left tackle playing better right now than Russell Okung, he'd like to see him. And I definitely think Unger has been playing at a Pro Bowl level all season."

But a supporting cast of **Paul McQuistan** at left guard, brawny **Breno Giacomini** at right tackle and the combination of rookie **J.R. Sweezy** and **John Moffitt** at right guard has also been rock-solid for the most part.

"McQuistan is the poster child of Tom Cable linemen," the observer said of the ex-Raider, who played under Cable in Oakland. "Giacomini is Pete's (head coach **Pete Carroll**) kind of tackle. He plays to the echo of the whistle. They are really pleased and intrigued by Sweezy, who has come back from a rough start. He's a very determined player."

SMITH'S STATUS IFFY Even though they don't make football players any tougher than **Justin Smith**, our 49ers sources are not about to bet their mortgages that the defense's emotional leader and anchor of the D-line will be recovered sufficiently enough from the partial tear of the left triceps tendon he suffered in the Week 15 win over New England to participate in the playoffs. "It really depends on his pain threshold," one daily team observer said. "Not playing in the regular-season finale will help, and so would, obviously, getting a first-round bye. But he really has a serious injury that is definitely going to require surgery. I would not be surprised if he does not play at all." If that ends up being the case, the consensus is that it would be a major loss the Niners could ill afford. "At the beginning of the season, if you had to pick the one guy they would miss the most due to a serious injury, it would have to have been Justin," the observer said. "They certainly didn't react well to his absence in the second half of the New England game and the Seattle loss, and a lot of that was psychological." In Smith's absence, the onus is on fourth-year pro **Ricky Jean Francois** to fill a huge void. "He's actually bigger than Justin (295 pounds, compared to Smith's 285 pounds), so he adds a little bulk," the observer said of Jean Francois. "And after looking bad on that early TD run by **Marshawn Lynch** in the Seattle game, he actually settled down and played pretty well (six tackles). But where the defense really gets hurt is in the pass rush, because of Smith's great ability on stunts to free up (starting ROLB) **Aldon** (**Smith**) for sacks. That's gone without Justin."

BYE-BYE BEANIE? Following in the footsteps of high-profile defenders **Adrian**

The 49ers' defense is not the same without heart-and-soul DT Justin Smith, whose status for the playoffs is up in the air because of injury.

Wilson and **Darnell Dockett**, RB **Beanie Wells** has become the latest Cardinals player to publicly predict that his days in the desert are probably numbered. The day after being benched by an obviously irritated **Ken Whisenhunt** following his fumble that was recovered and returned for a TD that opened the floodgates in the Cardinals' 28-13 loss to the Bears in Week 16, Wells told the local media that it was "inevitable" he likely would be moving on after this season. But while it might indeed turn out that Wilson, Dockett and Wells are all sent packing, we hear it is far from a foregone conclusion that any of them will be released, considering how unprepared the team currently is to replace them. "**Rashad Johnson**, who has been replacing Adrian, is not under contract after this season," one team insider said. "With Wells gone, you've got **Ryan Williams**, who has been unable to stay healthy, and **LaRod Stephens-Howling**, another free agent after this season. As for Dockett, they really have nobody behind him. You can't just get rid of three guys like that." If the Cardinals do get rid of Wells, there will be many in Cardinals Nation saying, "good riddance," with most close team observers in agreement that the former first-round draft pick has turned out to be a bona fide disappointment. "There were some who thought he might have turned a corner last season, but the tendency for injuries, the perceived lack of passion, all those same questions remain after four seasons. The fumble against the Bears is just the latest thing with him. It's really been one thing after another."

AUDIBLES

The following quotes are from NFL scouts, coaches and front-office personnel, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"(Jets QB) **Mark Sanchez** is not a pressure player. I think part of the reason he was selected was because (the Jets) felt like he had the right temperament and personality to handle all the criticism that comes in New York. Where I think they erred is in the preparation and demands of the position — USC quarterbacks have not been known as grinders, and I think the kid has had his head too much in the bright lights. ... If you ask me, they need to flush it all and start fresh. None of it is working right now — the quarterback, the head coach, the GM. They need a complete culture change."

■ "Missing on two drafts two years in a row does not hurt San Diego (for) those two years. It hits 3-4 years down the road when those (draft picks) are supposed to be good starters and depth players. The draft-heavy teams like San Diego and Chicago that really don't like dipping into free agency or the waiver wire — when they realize they don't have six or eight positions that they can play with, it forces you to jump in (to free agency). San Diego got involved with free agency the last two years and they missed on (the players they signed). It put them behind the 8-ball, to where they are reacting instead of acting. The bad drafts caught up to them. That's how you fall off."

■ "What's interesting (is) you can come back quickly if you hit on two drafts. Where I have to give the Colts a lot of credit is the job they did in the (2012) draft. (**Andrew**) **Luck**, **Coby Fleener**, (**T.Y.**) **Hilton**, the other tight end (**Dwayne Allen**), they picked up the running back (**Vick Ballard**) in there and the other receiver (**LaVon**) **Brazill**. That is not where I would give them the most credit, though. It was sitting there in the middle of August and realizing 'we don't have any corners.' It's easy to forget that **Vontae Davis** was not the first guy they traded for. They landed (**Cassius**) **Vaughn** from Denver (in late May). They made a mistake on **Justin King** (who was signed in early June) and they cut him Week Six. They traded for (**Josh**) **Gordy** from St. Louis. Then they traded for Davis. They signed **Darius Butler**, whom Carolina cut on the final cutdown, after he sat on the street for (three weeks). They added three corners in a four-week period after the middle of August — that to me was huge. Butler and Vaughn both had key picks for TDs. For the news it generated, Davis has probably been the least productive. The other thing they have done really well is churning the bottom of the roster."

■ "(Cardinals head coach) **Ken Whisenhunt** is a great coach. His biggest problem is they didn't solve the quarterback issue. I think they thought they had it figured out with (**Kevin**) **Kolb**. They should have known better."

■ "I heard a lot of people saying the loss of **Justin Smith** had a lot to do with the 49ers' struggles in New England and Seattle. I don't buy it. **Ricky Jean Francois** didn't play too bad. They ran at him a few times early, but he played well enough. There were five other Pro Bowlers on the field with him. I don't think you can ever put it on one guy."

■ "San Diego is the job everyone wants. It's a great place to live. The Spanos family has been around a long time. They don't fly by the seat of their pants. They're one of the good-guy owners in the league. They get it. It's a coveted place to be."

■ "Am I the only one that finds it odd that the judge (**Robert E. Wallace**) who presided over (Seahawks CB **Richard**) **Sherman**'s appeal (of a four-game suspension for violating the league's policy on performance-enhancing drugs) was (a longtime employee of) the team (St. Louis) that the Seahawks are playing this week? You want to talk about a conflict of interest. **Roger Goodell** needs to take a harder look at some of the checks and balances that are in place. In a lot of cases, I don't think they are serving the best interests of the league."

■ "I think (Bears head coach) **Lovie Smith** is a good coach. The question is — how much has he been involved with personnel? That is what has caught up to him. How responsible has he been for not breaking up the band and setting the direction? That's the question."

COVER STORY

QUEST FOR NEW ORLEANS

Twelve teams are vying for a trip to the Big Easy to battle for a Super Bowl title in the Superdome

By PFW STAFF

Parity avoided the AFC in 2012, but was alive and well in the NFC, and we have a lot more questions about that side of the bracket heading into the postseason.

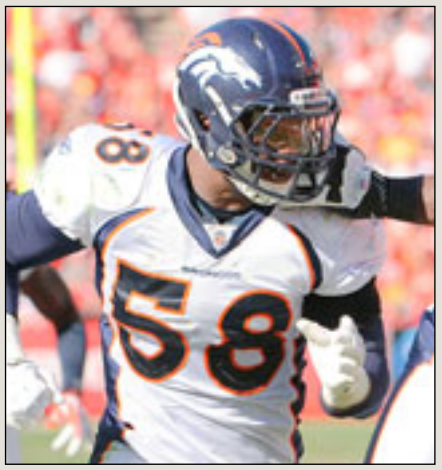
Only one new team made the playoffs in the AFC — the 11-5 Colts, who completed an incredible turnaround from 2-14 with rookie QB Andrew Luck at the helm. The Colts got their 11th win by knocking the Texans from the No. 1 seed to the No. 3 seed, giving Houston its third loss in four games.

The Texans have a playoff rematch with the Bengals, and the Colts face a Ravens team that lost four of its last five regular-season games. None of those four teams is getting much respect, as many prognosticators expect the two most explosive offenses will meet in the AFC title game, which would be quite the treat — Manning vs. Brady — with the Broncos and Patriots holding the conference's top two seeds.

In the NFC, the Falcons earned the top seed with a 13-3 record, but won't earn the reputation of being a Super Bowl favorite until they finally win a playoff game. The Packers and 49ers have looked like championship teams at times this season, but also had lapses. The NFC's hottest team, the Seahawks, has been unimpressive on the road, and would need to win three away from Seattle to make it to New Orleans. They'll start the run against another surprise playoff team, the Redskins, who won the NFC East for the first time since 1999.

The Vikings are the biggest shocker in the NFC thanks to a Herculean effort from Adrian Peterson, but can they win beat the Packers for a second straight week and win in Lambeau Field?

The 12 playoff teams are listed in order of their power ranking by PFW's editors following Week 17. Find out the key players and keys on offense and defense for each club.



Von Miller is capable of changing games with his big-play ability.

1 DENVER BRONCOS

13-3 / FIRST PLACE IN AFC WEST

KEYS TO OFFENSE The offense runs through Peyton Manning, and it has been dominant, especially in the second half of the season. Manning has shown little-to-no side effects from missing a year of football, hitting Eric Decker on quick routes and Demaryius Thomas on big plays. Knowshon Moreno has stepped in for Willis McGahee and run the ball well. The O-line has been superb all season and will need to continue that to keep Manning protected and the offense humming.

KEYS TO DEFENSE The defense is at its best when edge rushers Von Miller and Elvis Dumervil can pin their ears back and get after the passer, something they can do when Denver builds a lead. The Broncos have been one of the best against the run this season thanks to DT Kevin Vickerson, and CBs Champ Bailey and Chris Harris form quite the corner duo. Opponents might look to attack Denver's safeties and the deep middle of the field to keep up with Manning.

PLAYER TO WATCH If the Broncos want to get to New Orleans, they likely will have to beat the Texans and/or Patriots, two teams that defeated Denver earlier this season, and two teams that can score plenty of points, especially New England. Von Miller is the team's best defensive player and opponents will do whatever possible to keep him at bay. In last year's playoff loss to the Patriots, an injury-hampered Miller was held without tackle — all he managed was two QB hits. Miller is a playmaker and can change the game on a dime. We can expect good things from Manning and the offense, but if Miller, who is healthy this year, is making impact plays, Denver will be difficult to beat.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... the offense and defense work in tandem the way they have during the 11-game win streak, with the offense building a lead and the defense creating turnovers. The Broncos have the ability to come from behind, but can't afford costly turnovers. Things are humming for Denver right now, there's not much they should change.

Tom Brady has again performed at an MVP-type level.

2 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

12-4 / FIRST PLACE IN AFC EAST

KEYS TO OFFENSE This year's Patriots offense has shown plenty of balance as one of the league leaders in running the football. They are nearly unstoppable when running and throwing out of the no-huddle. Tom Brady has put up MVP-caliber numbers, and TE Rob Gronkowski, who is a key to both the run and pass games, returned in Week 17 (and had a TD catch) after missing five games with a broken arm. Keeping the offense in rhythm by giving Brady time and avoiding turnovers is crucial to the Pats' success.

KEYS TO DEFENSE This unit is better than the past two years but still has its leaks, especially in the secondary. ILB Jerod Mayo and DT Vince Wilfork head the run defense, which is very good up the middle. If DEs Chandler Jones and Rob Ninkovich can get into the backfield off the edge, it will make things easier for the pass defense. Similar to recent Bill Belichick defenses, this one is adept at taking the ball away, and creating turnovers is this group's biggest strength.

PLAYER TO WATCH The Patriots aimed to shore up the secondary when trading for CB Aqib Talib, and it has made things better with Devin McCourty at safety and Kyle Arrington in the slot, but Talib needs to play up to his potential. If he can be a lockdown corner, especially if the Pats face the Texans and Andre Johnson and/or the Broncos and Demaryius Thomas, Talib's ability to cover an opponent's best receiver will go a long way in getting the Patriots to New Orleans. Talib can make the rest of the secondary better if he sticks to the receivers he mans up with on the outside and can help create turnovers.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... The highest-scoring team in the league can beat any team in a shootout, but it's the defense that will bring the Lombardi Trophy back to Foxborough. If the pass rush can get going and the secondary holds, the Patriots can make things very difficult for opponents by creating turnovers. The "D" has let the Pats down the past two seasons. It is the key to a title.

Julio Jones is a big-play weapon in the Falcons' explosive passing game.

3 ATLANTA FALCONS

13-3 / FIRST PLACE IN NFC SOUTH

KEYS TO OFFENSE The Falcons were able to secure the No. 1 seed in the NFC with one of the league's lowest-ranked running games. However, it's worth noting that their losses in Week 10 and Week 14 also happened to be a couple of their least productive rushing performances of the season. Even Pro Bowl QB Matt Ryan, who has played some of his best football in the final weeks of the regular season, could struggle if RBs Michael Turner and Jacquizz Rodgers are bottled up and put the offense in predictable passing situations. Ryan has enjoyed solid pass protection and he has elite targets in WRs Julio Jones and Roddy White and TE Tony Gonzalez. However, Mike Smith still realizes the importance of balance on offense.

KEYS TO DEFENSE Even some of the best quarterbacks in the league — including Super Bowl winners Peyton Manning, Eli Manning and Drew Brees — were thrown off their game by the disguised coverages drawn up by coordinator Mike Nolan. Those three quarterbacks combined for a touchdown-interception ratio of 4-11 in their four games combined against Atlanta this season. With Nolan's creativity, the secondary's playmaking ability is enhanced. In the front seven, there is good speed on the edges but the group's tackling has been suspect.

PLAYER TO WATCH SS William Moore might be knocking off the rust in the playoffs. He missed the final four games of the regular season with a hamstring injury, so it will have been six weeks since he last was active in a game by the time the Falcons next play.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... they don't allow their past playoff failures — three playoff appearances, no playoff wins in the past four seasons — to negatively affect their mindset this time around. If a team can force the Falcons to run the ball and also pound away at Atlanta's run defense, a physical slugfest does not play to Atlanta's favor. If the Falcons stay out of that situation, there is no reason they can't go all the way.

NaVorro Bowman is one of six 49ers defenders voted to the Pro Bowl.

4 SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

11-4-1 / FIRST PLACE IN NFC WEST

KEYS TO OFFENSE QB Colin Kaepernick must continue to manufacture big plays in a passing offense that has been hurt by the season-ending loss of primary slot weapon Mario Manningham. Specially designed runs featuring Kaepernick also must help move the chains. Featured back Frank Gore must be a force rushing both inside and outside, as well as receiving out of the backfield. Versatile backup TE Delanie Walker could pick up the slack underneath lined up as the slot receiver.

KEYS TO DEFENSE Even if he's at less than full strength, the ability of DL anchor Justin Smith (partial triceps tear) to fill his usual tone-setting role will be an important factor. Increased pressure on the left side from DT Ray McDonald and OLB Ahmad Brooks could help open up more opportunities for ROLB Aldon Smith (19½ sacks). Speedy Pro Bowl ILBs Patrick Willis and NaVorro Bowman must play their usual complete games from sideline to sideline. San Francisco's hard-hitting, sure-tackling secondary must create meaningful turnovers. LCB Carlos Rogers, who was a bit erratic down the stretch, must offer steadier coverage in the slot. Nickel corner Chris Culliver has shown a knack for making big plays.

PLAYERS TO WATCH We'll give you two — 14-year veteran WR Randy Moss and second-round rookie LaMichael James. The Niners are going to need somebody to step up on offense. Moss, a future Hall of Famer who has a ton of postseason experience (12 games), and James, a relatively untapped resource with legitimate home run-hitting ability, appear to be the top candidates to provide such a boost.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... the team can put a stop to its puzzling trend of suffering a big letdown in every third game so far this season. That task would be best achieved by storming out of the gate in their second playoff game — assuming they win their playoff opener, of course — and never look back, like they did in their Week 11 Monday-night rout of the Bears.

COVER STORY

Russell Wilson has worked his way into the Rookie of the Year discussion.

5 SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

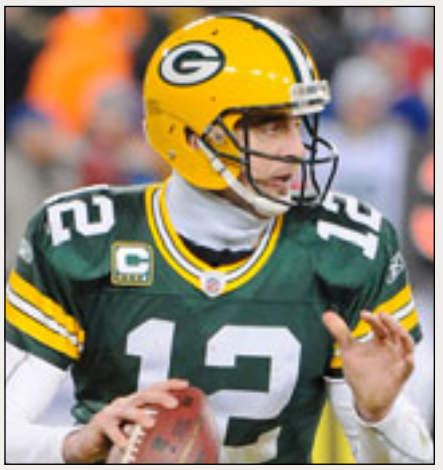
11-5 / SECOND PLACE IN NFC WEST

KEYS TO OFFENSE Rookie QB Russell Wilson and punishing RB Marshawn Lynch have no doubt become the deadliest weapons in a read-option, run-first attack that has been hard to stop since being unleashed in its entirety late in the Seahawks' huge come-from-behind win in Chicago in Week 13. But an increasingly balanced passing attack is also providing a big boost, with starters Sidney Rice and Golden Tate (seven TDs each), slot specialist Doug Baldwin and TEs Zach Miller and Anthony McCoy all making their presence felt more in a significant manner.

KEYS TO DEFENSE A first-class secondary adept at single press coverage enables arguably the league's fastest defense to line up in a lot of eight-man fronts to stop the run, which it does exceedingly well. A rock-solid defensive line featuring the unsung Brandon Mebane in the middle and Red Bryant and dangerous pass rushers Chris Clemons and first-round draft pick Bruce Irvin on the edges must overcome the season-ending loss of DE Jason Jones (knee), who provided a strong inside presence. Quick, instinctive second-round rookie Bobby Wagner has been a revelation at middle linebacker.

PLAYER TO WATCH LCB Richard Sherman defied the odds with his successful appeal of a four-game suspension for allegedly testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs. Admittedly savoring the rush of being on center stage, look for Sherman (eight interceptions), who many close observers believe has been the league's top cornerback with Darrelle Revis on the shelf, to go out of his way to make the Pro Bowl voters who so wrongfully snubbed him look like fools.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... their defense and special teams continue to score points at a steady clip along with the offense, thereby stuffing the opposition in cavernous holes that just keep getting deeper and deeper. Continuing to get major breaks from the officials — like they did in wins against the Packers and Bears — certainly won't hurt.



Aaron Rodgers has a slew of offensive weapons from which to choose.

6 GREEN BAY PACKERS

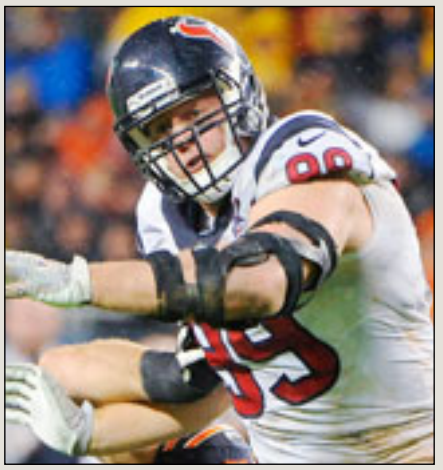
11-5 / FIRST PLACE IN NFC NORTH

KEYS TO OFFENSE While reigning MVP Aaron Rodgers' numbers might not be as imposing as they were last season, he is doing a masterful job taking what defenses designed to take away big downfield plays are giving him underneath. The offense is accelerating its up-tempo no-huddle usage, effectively tiring out frustrated defenses with various looks and different weapons. While a receiving corps spearheaded by the versatile Randall Cobb, TD machine James Jones, TE Jermichael Finley and Jordy Nelson remains the featured attraction, an increasingly multifaceted ground game consisting of Ryan Grant, Alex Green, diminutive DuJuan Harris, FB John Kuhn and possibly James Starks also has been providing a major impact.

KEYS TO DEFENSE ROLB Clay Matthews has been playing better than ever — both against the run and pass — since returning from a hamstring injury that forced him to miss four games. A pass defense that has improved dramatically this season should get a boost from seasoned vet Charles Woodson, who missed the last nine regular-season games (collarbone). Rookie Casey Hayward (six interceptions) has excelled in the slot, displaying Woodson-like instincts. The defense must continue doing a good job finishing tackles, which was a gigantic problem last season.

PLAYER TO WATCH It will be interesting to see if Cobb, who has been a major force both as a receiver and kick returner, will remain as dangerous a weapon after suffering an ankle injury in Week 16. No Packer has made more big plays on a consistent basis than him.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... the ground game continues being an effective complement to the passing offense, the defense creates tide-turning takeaways and offers another viable pass-rushing threat besides Matthews, the revamped offensive line does not implode and — last but not least — struggling PK Mason Crosby does not choke.



Relentless defender J.J. Watt recorded an impressive 20½ sacks in 2012.

7 HOUSTON TEXANS

12-4 / FIRST PLACE IN AFC SOUTH

KEYS TO OFFENSE The Texans' offense is all about rhythm, something it has lacked while mustering a paltry four touchdowns over the past 18 quarters. Houston has found itself in unmanageable 3rd-and-long situations, as RB Arian Foster and the running game have not been clicking consistently. At its best, Houston first uses Foster to stretch defenses sideline to sideline and force extra defenders in the box, before QB Matt Schaub strikes over the top and often to the backside of the field with WR Andre Johnson and TE Owen Daniels.

KEYS TO DEFENSE No team in the league dials up pressure more frequently than Wade Phillips' Texans. However, this group has not harassed QBs as effectively as it did a season ago. Outside of J.J. Watt, who moves around frequently, no defender has been a consistent source of pass rush. Phillips plays a lot of man-free coverage on the back end, which has left his "D" susceptible to big plays. The Texans also have been vulnerable when teams spread them out in their dime package.

PLAYER TO WATCH The Texans took a leap of faith before the season, rewarding QB Matt Schaub with a long-term extension, even though he was coming off a season-ending foot injury and never had been in the postseason. Schaub's numbers are solid this season, but he has not played well the past month and, as previously mentioned, playing in January is uncharted waters for him. Schaub showed an ability to carry his team in comeback victories over the Jaguars and Lions, but this will be a step up in class, and the critics won't disappear until Schaub leads his team to success in the postseason.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... they regain their edge and confidence, starting on the offense. Houston needs to regain its smashmouth identity and make teams fear Foster, which gives Schaub the freedom he needs to thrive. Defensively, Watt needs a partner in crime. We have come to expect him raising his level of play when the stakes are the highest; who is ready to do the same?

Robert Griffin III gives opponents a lot to worry about with his arm and legs.

8 WASHINGTON REDSKINS

10-6 / FIRST PLACE IN NFC EAST

KEYS TO OFFENSE Defenses must decide what they fear most: The power running of Alfred Morris (200 rushing yards in Week 17), the straight-line foot speed of Robert Griffin III or Griffin's laser arm. The triple threat has made Mike Shanahan's West Coast-meets-spread-option offense very dangerous. They have been one of the best running teams in the NFL all season long, and Griffin clearly has been a big reason for that. But his knee injury has taken some of his mobility away, and the transformation of Morris into one of the game's best power runners has been a stunning development. Griffin likely will have to sit back and throw a good amount, too, and someone other than Pierre Garcon must step up for him to be effective. But it's a scary-good group.

KEYS TO DEFENSE They love to pressure and force quarterbacks into mistakes. They'll live with giving up yards, and their secondary play has been inconsistent at best at times this season. Ryan Kerrigan has been a beast outside, and ILBs London Fletcher and Perry Riley have been active. The defensive line slants and collapses pockets; it's not a dominant group but has held up well most of the season. Jim Haslett has gone from goat to hot play-caller as the Redskins have allowed 21 points or fewer in 6-of-8 games.

PLAYER TO WATCH OLG Kory Lichtensteiger. He suffered an ankle injury in the win over the Cowboys but made his way back into the game. If he's not healthy, the run game will suffer. He's a key — albeit little-known — element of the Redskins' rushing attack.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... Griffin can stay healthy and do his thing, Morris can continue running through (and past) defenders and Haslett's blitz-heavy scheme creates sacks and turnovers. This is a high-octane team, and Griffin's once-in-a-generation maturity could make him the rare rookie to be able to handle the pressure. Is this a perfect team? No, but Griffin has the magic touch — and everyone is feeding off it.

Geno Atkins has been dominant and leads an unsung Bengals defense.

9 CINCINNATI BENGALS

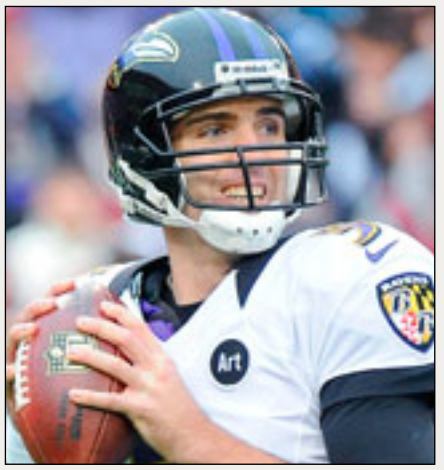
10-6 / SECOND PLACE IN AFC NORTH

KEYS TO OFFENSE The Bengals need their running game to thrive as it did for much of the second half of the season. The more RB BenJarvus Green-Ellis can give the offense, the less pressure on QB Andy Dalton, and that's a good thing, considering that Dalton has two reliable targets (WR A.J. Green, TE Jermaine Gresham). Teams will work to take away Green, the Bengals' go-to guy. He will get his catches, but Dalton needs other pass catchers to consistently work open. Slot receiver Andrew Hawkins is a player to watch; he has the quickness to turn a short pass into a big play. Dalton, for his part, must be a prudent and accurate passer.

KEYS TO DEFENSE The Bengals' defense is their greatest strength. Their pass rush, led by Pro Bowl DT Geno Atkins (12½ sacks), is first-rate — no small asset to have in a conference loaded with powerful passing attacks. Moreover, the Bengals have been stout vs. both the run and pass of late. The biggest concern with the defense would be how it holds up against a top-caliber passing game, but the same can be said for just about every other defense in the AFC.

PLAYER TO WATCH With exceptional size, speed, leaping ability, athleticism and hands, Green can give any defense major problems. He can be the catalyst for a postseason run. The Bengals have the defense to slow the opposition, and one big play can be the difference between winning and losing. In Green, the Bengals have one of the top playmakers in the AFC. If Green takes his game to another level, a la Larry Fitzgerald in 2008, look out.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... Green plays out of his mind, Dalton raises his game, Green-Ellis plays like a featured back, the defense dominates and the special teams take care of business. This might be the most dangerous Bengals club since the '05 edition, but the AFC is loaded, and a quick exit from the postseason wouldn't be a surprise.



Joe Flacco has won in the postseason but needs to take his game up a notch.

10 BALTIMORE RAVENS

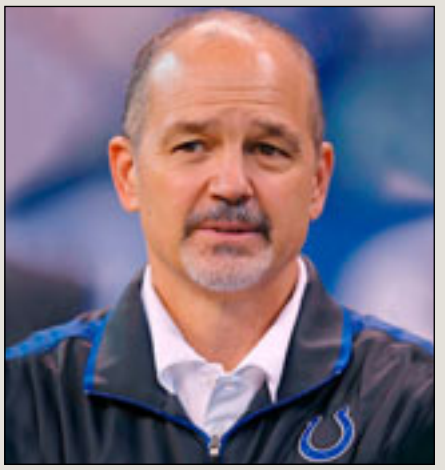
10-6 / FIRST PLACE IN AFC NORTH

KEYS TO OFFENSE The Ravens had three regular-season dress rehearsals with new offensive coordinator Jim Caldwell. Now, it's show time. The Ravens can't afford many flubbed lines from the cast or missed notes from the band. If the Ravens are to thrive in January, their offense must be in perfect rhythm. QB Joe Flacco must limit mistakes while making out-of-the-ordinary plays when it's needed. RB Ray Rice must be ... well, Ray Rice. WR Torrey Smith needs to be a top-notch deep threat and a legitimate go-to target.

KEYS TO DEFENSE Injuries have taken their toll on the Ravens' defense, and the health of the group is going to be an issue as long as Baltimore is in the postseason. The Ravens just need to get as much as they can from OLB Terrell Suggs, DT Haloti Ngata, SS Bernard Pollard and MLB Ray Lewis in the season's biggest games. Moreover, the complementary defensive players must be at the top of their games, as must defensive coordinator Dean Pees. It's all hands on deck for the Ravens' defense; they will need contributions throughout the group if they are to pull through. Baltimore will bend on defense, but it cannot break and hope to last long in January.

PLAYER TO WATCH It's this simple for the Ravens: if their offense is pedestrian, they are Super Bowl long shots. But if their offense is above-average, they can play with anyone in the conference. Flacco needs to be at his very best for the Ravens to be legit threats in the AFC. If he falters, there won't be a spin doctor in the world who can help his on-field reputation. Flacco has won wild-card games, and he has won divisional-round games. The big gaps in his résumé are obvious to everyone. There's not much left to say, is there?

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... Flacco plays like a blue-chip quarterback, Rice stars as a dual-threat back, the defense recaptures some of its past magic and the special-teams units are both sound and explosive.



Colts head coach Chuck Pagano returned to the sideline in Week 17.

11 INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

11-5 / SECOND PLACE IN AFC SOUTH

KEYS TO OFFENSE Limiting mistakes. As incredible as Andrew Luck has been, he has forced the issue at times. The key is finding balance. If rookie RB Vick Ballard can be effective, it should take pressure off Luck. Expecting the protection to improve now would be naïve, thus Luck's footwork and accuracy under duress must improve. Getting WR Reggie Wayne involved without forcing it to him is imperative. Indy's green skill-position players can't show their inexperience now.

KEYS TO DEFENSE It is likely this group is going to need to make more big plays than it did during the regular season for the Colts to be a threat. Players like OLBs Dwight Freeney and Robert Mathis and FS Antoine Bethea must call on their postseason experience and lead the charge. Getting gashed on the ground like they did in Week 16 won't cut it. A young group will need to play with great discipline.

PLAYER TO WATCH How can it not be Luck? The kid's short-term memory and courage under fire have been two of his greatest qualities. Those are traits that will be needed more than ever when the postseason bullets start flying. We can't say it enough: Luck needs to protect the football to give his team a chance. The defense isn't good enough to mask Luck's mistakes. He can't be gun-shy — the willingness to drive the ball downfield is the reason the offense is so deadly. But the accuracy that has been an issue in recent weeks needs shoring up. Perhaps above all else, Luck needs to protect himself. He is the only chance that the Colts have, and consistent pressure is imminent.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... The Colts' modus operandi this season, coming from behind in the fourth quarter, is not a recipe for success in the playoffs. The Colts have to come out of the gate fast, and they likely need to be on the right side of the turnover differential. A consistent pass rush from Freeney and Mathis is the best shot they have defensively. Offensively, and overall, we have learned that this team should never be counted out.

Adrian Peterson fell just short of the all-time single-season rushing record.

12 MINNESOTA VIKINGS

10-6 / SECOND PLACE IN NFC NORTH

KEYS TO OFFENSE All hail Adrian Peterson and his 2,097 rushing yards (about half of which came after contact) this season and everything he does for this offense. But also credit coordinator Bill Musgrave for calling an excellent game against the Packers in Week 17 and allowing QB Christian Ponder to throw to open receivers. The O-line gave him time, the receivers got open and Ponder made the big throws. He hasn't done it consistently this season, and there's no game breaker with Percy Harvin on I.R. But Ponder can be effective off play-action when Peterson starts running through people and when the QB gets outside the pocket.

KEYS TO DEFENSE The secondary has been dicey, and when CB Antoine Winfield reaggravated his broken hand, it sent the group into a second-half tailspin in Week 17. It's pretty much required that the front seven pressures and moves quarterbacks off their spots because the coverage looks shaky without Winfield in there. Chris Cook dropped a would-be interception last week and A.J. Jefferson was burned repeatedly. Still, DEs Jared Allen, Brian Robison and Everson Griffen can rush from almost any technique, rookie S Harrison Smith has had moments and the run "D" has stepped up most games. LBs Chad Greenway and Erin Henderson are fast-flow tacklers who work well both going forward and in reverse.

PLAYER TO WATCH WR Jarius Wright looked like Harvin on a 65-yard catch against the Packers early in the fourth quarter last week that shifted momentum when everyone in the house was expecting a Peterson handoff. Wright could be a difference maker for an offense that lacks game-breaking speed.

THEY'LL WIN THE SUPER BOWL IF ... Peterson continues his 131-yard rushing average — or exceeds it — in the postseason and Ponder plays like he did in Week 17. The defense doesn't have to dominate, but it does have to play as tough and steady as it did down the stretch before last week's shootout.

FEATURE

HEAD COACHES REPORT CARD

We grade the performance of each of the men who held head-coaching positions in 2012

By PFW STAFF

Eight new head coaches took the helm of their respective teams in 2012, one more than the seven new head coaches who took charge in '11. In other words, nearly one-half of the league's top coaches have completed less than three years in their current role.

With so much volatility surrounding such a high-pressure, win-now job, it's understandable to anticipate there will be at least one-quarter of the league's head-coaching jobs available this offseason.

In fact, it might be more. As PFW detailed a few weeks ago, as many as 15 of the league's current head coaches face an uncertain future with their clubs in 2013. It would be a shock if that many jobs came open, but you get the picture — this offseason will be a busy one for many franchises. There could be as many as eight new general managers taking over this offseason, as well.

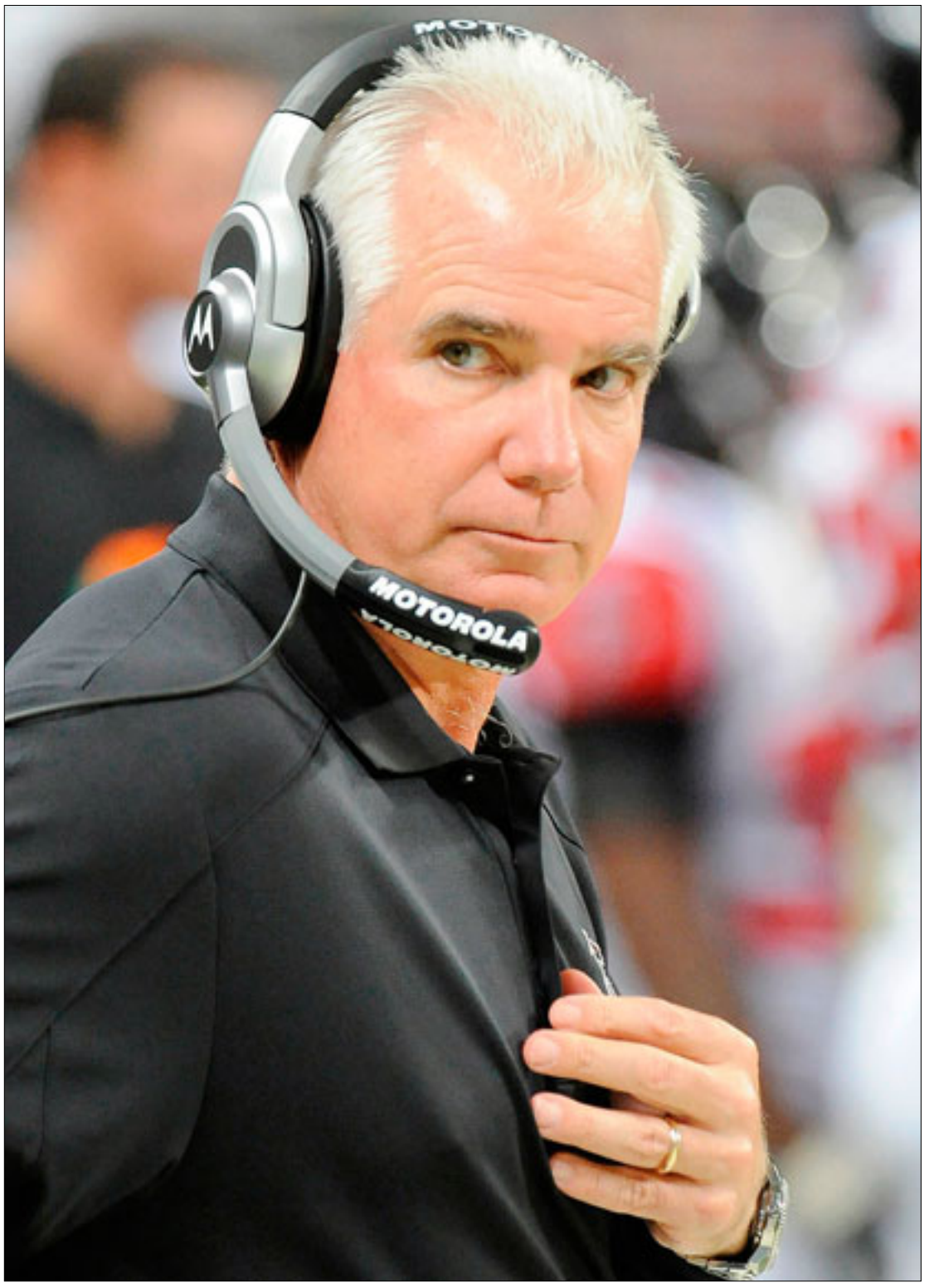
We take a look at the job performance for each of the men who served in a head-coaching capacity for an NFL team in 2012, analyze their positives and negatives and give them an overall grade.

The grades range from the A-plus given to Mike Smith, who guided his Falcons to the best record in the NFC, to the D-minus grade that two coaches, the Cardinals' Ken Whisenhunt and the Lions' Jim Schwartz, received.

Thirteen of the coaches mentioned in the following pages received a grade of C-minus or worse, meaning that they are clearly in the line of fire for the changes that are likely to come this offseason.

Of the remaining coaches, a robust 15 received a grade of B or better, which bodes well for their future.

NOTE: Coaches are listed in alphabetical order, by team.



SPORTPICS

In his fifth season in charge of the Falcons, Mike Smith worked well with new offensive and defensive coordinators to direct Atlanta to the NFC's best record.

KEN WHISENHUNT
ARIZONA CARDINALS

Were it not for a host of costly injuries at quarterback, running back and the offensive line, as well as a relatively solid defense under the direction of Ray Horton, Whisenhunt would get a failing grade. Entrusted with significant input in personnel decisions, Whisenhunt was a dismal failure this season in that regard. A QB situation that has been a major mess from the moment John Skelton was named the Week One starter over Kevin Kolb has been a particularly big problem. Expected by many to be a consistent contender after a strong finish last season, the Cardinals suffered through a prolonged losing streak for the third consecutive season under Whisenhunt — a monumental nine-game collapse that quickly made the team's eyebrow-raising 4-0 start a distant memory. The offense has been a standing joke all season, with the Cardinals' QBs other than Kolb registering a 3-18 TD-interception ratio. The lowlight was a 58-0 embarrassment in Seattle in Week 14 — the worst loss in franchise history. Put simply, it's hard to imagine Whisenhunt doing any worse this season. If he rides off into the Arizona sunset shortly after the Cardinals' miserable season mercifully grinds to a halt, few people will be surprised.

GRADE: D-MINUS

MIKE SMITH
ATLANTA FALCONS

Smith recruited two of the top coordinators available last offseason in Dirk Koetter (offense) and Mike Nolan (defense), and the team has benefited from Smith's ability to help bring those coaches on board. Smith led an organized, disciplined and well-prepared Falcons team to the best record in the NFC with only a few bumps along the way. Only three of the teams the Falcons played this season finished with a record above the .500 mark, but the Falcons went 3-0 in games against those teams. GM Thomas Dimitroff has assembled a very talented roster, and Smith and his staff have helped promising youngsters like WR Julio Jones and WLB Sean Weatherspoon develop into stars.

GRADE: A-PLUS

JOHN HARBAUGH
BALTIMORE RAVENS

It wasn't always pretty, but the gritty Ravens finished atop the AFC North for the second consecutive season. The Ravens have been remarkably consistent winners throughout Harbaugh's tenure, and that reliability has been perhaps the defining trait of his five seasons on the job. However, the Ravens did slump late in the season, and in the midst of only the club's second three-game losing streak since 2009, Harbaugh fired offensive coordinator Cam Cameron, replacing him with QB coach Jim Caldwell. Time will tell if the move makes a difference for a talented-but-erratic offense, but there's no doubting that it was the most surprising and bold move of Harbaugh's tenure. Credit Harbaugh for guiding the Ravens through another successful regular season, but Baltimore's postseason play ultimately will tell the tale on how he's judged for the 2012 campaign.

GRADE: B

SPORTPICS

A late-season slide moved Lovie Smith from a near-lock to return as Bears head coach in 2013 to the hot seat entering the final year of his deal with the club.

CHAN GAILEY
BUFFALO BILLS

Expectations in Buffalo were as high as they had been in almost a decade, but Gailey's Bills struggled from start to finish. In a crucial third season, Gailey will finish without reaching seven wins, let alone a .500 record or the playoffs, as the league's longest active playoff drought is now up to 13 years. He promoted Dave Wannstedt to defensive coordinator, and with the free-agent additions of DEs Mario Williams and Mark Anderson, the excitement was palpable, but the unit got off to a horrible start. The "D" was corrected at the bye and improved, but regressed late in the campaign. Gailey's loyalty in QB Ryan Fitzpatrick remained unwavering, which didn't help the coach's cause considering Fitzpatrick produced another inconsistent season. The offensive play-calling confused many observers at times, especially in the red zone, where the Bills consistently struggled to punch it in the endzone.

GRADE: D

RON RIVERA
CAROLINA PANTHERS

To Rivera's credit, the Panthers never quit on him. He kept the team together even after a 1-6 start to the season. The Panthers won five of their final six games this season, but they mostly beat up on teams as bad or worse than themselves. Only one of those wins (Week 14 over the Falcons) in the second half of the season came against a team contending for a playoff spot. Rivera's Panthers continued to struggle to hold leads and win close games, including in Week 11, when Carolina lost in overtime to the Buccaneers despite taking an 11-point lead with six minutes left in the fourth quarter. The Panthers were 1-7 in games decided by seven points or fewer and lost four games in which they led in the fourth quarter.

GRADE: C-MINUS

LOVIE SMITH
CHICAGO BEARS

The Bears started out 7-1 and there was talk of a contract extension for Smith. But five losses in a six-game span between Weeks 10-15 left the team's once-solid playoff hopes in jeopardy. Smith's overall defensive strategy — take the ball away and score — was very effective against the mediocre-to-poor teams. Chicago's offense never was able to really establish a firm identity, though. Smith's decision to promote Mike Tice to offensive coordinator did not lead to improvement on that side of the ball, even with a true No. 1 wide receiver (Brandon Marshall). Even the defense, Smith's specialty, was out of sorts in losses to the 49ers and Seahawks.

GRADE: C-PLUS

MARVIN LEWIS
CINCINNATI BENGALS

At midseason, the Bengals were 3-5. Thereafter, though, the Bengals found their way, rallying to make the playoffs for the second season in a row for the first time since 1981-82. A strong defense was the catalyst for the Bengals' surge, and the offense got a lift from a running game that perked up in the latter stages of the season. Overall, the Bengals were better at season's end than at the beginning. That's a credit to the coaching, from Lewis to Jay Gruden on offense and Mike Zimmer on defense. The Bengals played with a purpose down the stretch; Lewis was noticeably more aggressive in his game management, especially in wins at Kansas City and Pittsburgh (albeit with mixed results). In the end, though, Lewis pushed most of the right buttons with this young, talented team.

GRADE: B

PAT SHURMUR
CLEVELAND BROWNS

Shurmur's second season at the helm was better than his first. The Browns were more competitive and won more games than in 2011. Moreover, they acquitted themselves well in most of their losses. Nevertheless, the Browns were again nonfactors in the AFC playoff race. The offense — Shurmur's handiwork — still lagged behind the rest of the division. Also, the defense, weakened by injury, wasn't as strong as it was in 2011. Shurmur's game management was all too shaky at times. He was too conservative in a loss at Indianapolis, electing to punt one play after the Browns called for a deep pass on 3rd-and-1 in Colts territory in the fourth quarter. Two weeks later, he made the dubious decision to go for it on fourth down deep in Cleveland territory. The play failed, and the Ravens added an insurance field goal in a 10-point win. Finally, the Browns' worst performances came late in the season, a time when a young team needs to be hitting its stride. While Shurmur did some nice things in his second NFL campaign, he didn't excel.

GRADE: D-PLUS

JASON GARRETT
DALLAS COWBOYS

In a season beset by injuries on the field, tragedy off of it and constant chatter about his status with the team, Garrett has done an excellent job eliminating the distractions and getting his players to focus on the tasks at hand, playing their best football of the season down the stretch. He might not be an excellent game manager, but Garrett still is a quality play-caller who worked around the team's shortcomings to score a good amount of points. In one of the most demanding jobs in sports, Garrett might be — gasp — a tad underrated.

GRADE: B

JOHN FOX
DENVER BRONCOS

Many will point out that Fox has quite the helper in Peyton Manning, essentially a coach on the field, but Fox still deserves plenty of credit for the Broncos' success. Remember, this team started 2-3 and had to deal with lots of personnel changes, including the distraction that comes with acquiring the best free agent in NFL history. The offense has hummed, and Fox wasn't afraid to use Knowshon Moreno, despite being inactive for several weeks, when Willis McGahee went down, and that has worked out nicely. The defense, though, is the biggest surprise. With a few new start-

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FEATURE

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ers and a new coordinator, the unit ranks as one of the league's best. It's difficult to win in the NFL week-in and week-out, and while the schedule was favorable in the second half, the Broncos took care of business and, thanks in part to Fox, are now legitimate Super Bowl contenders.

GRADE: A

JIM SCHWARTZ
DETROIT LIONS

One season after making the playoffs, the Lions fell apart. First, their special teams faltered in September losses at Tennessee and vs. Minnesota. Later, an inability to close out games buried their flickering playoff homes. Finally, they hit bottom with an embarrassing loss at feeble Arizona. It was simply a rotten season for the Lions, their head coach included. His unfortunate decision to challenge a controversial Houston rushing TD in Week 12 cost his team a chance to have the play overturned. That was bad, but so, too, were the persistent kicking-game issues early in the season, problems that put Detroit in an early hole. What's more, why couldn't the Lions finish games in stronger fashion? Also, why did QB Matthew Stafford seem to take a step backward in his fourth NFL season? The Lions have the talent to compete with the league's best teams, but they are also capable of losing to anyone. They simply were too inconsistent in too many phases this season, and those problems need to be fixed.

GRADE: D-MINUS

MIKE McCARTHY
GREEN BAY PACKERS

It was *déjà vu* for McCarthy, who did a terrific job this season very similar to the one he turned in two seasons ago, when the Packers were also bombarded nonstop with a host of injuries to key players but still managed to win the Super Bowl in great part because of the replacement parts who were pressed into service. Fill-ins across the board are once again performing above and beyond the call of duty, with McCarthy displaying genuine trust and patience in his troops. There have been some undeniable glitches, however. McCarthy got away with murder when the Packers' ill-advised gadget play on a punt return went terribly astray against the Bears in Week 15. And he publicly beat himself up over what he considered poor game plans in losses to the Seahawks and Giants. But both the offense and defense have continued functioning smoothly despite lots of moving parts in certain areas (most notably the offensive line and running back), as McCarthy appears to have his team well positioned for another deep playoff run.

GRADE: A-MINUS

GARY KUBIAK
HOUSTON TEXANS

Kubiak entered the season in an unfamiliar position: no longer on the hot seat. Rewarded with a contract extension prior to the season for his masterful coaching in 2011, Kubiak and his club responded very well to having a target on their backs for the first time. Houston stormed out to an 11-1 record, easily dispatching a number of foes and again showing the type of offensive balance and playmaking defense that is the envy of so many teams around the league. However, Houston's three losses were all lopsided, and Kubiak did not have his players ready to play in any of the three contests. Nonetheless, repeating as division champions and overcoming the rebuilding of half of the offensive line and losing his defensive captain for the season early in Week Five — as well as overcoming a barrage of other injuries later in the season — again earns Kubiak a high mark.

GRADE: B-PLUS

CHUCK PAGANO/ BRUCE ARIANS
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Many pegged the Colts to again be picking at the top of the first round in 2013 *before* the club began the season 1-2 and Pagano was diagnosed with leukemia during the Week Four bye. That they rallied from a 21-3 halftime deficit against Green Bay and rattled off wins in 8-of-10 contests, including tying an NFL record with seven fourth-quarter game-winning drives, to put a stranglehold on a wild-card berth speaks volumes about the way Arians prepared his troops to weather even the toughest of storms. The numbers don't add up — minus-30 point differential and minus-12 turnover ratio — but Arians didn't allow his team to quit, much like its inspirational leader. Arians has not only done a masterful job developing top pick Andrew Luck, he has overcome a rash of injuries on both sides of the ball, continually plugging in unknown entities who have found ways to make meaningful contributions.

Chuck Pagano inspired his "Chuckstrong" Colts to qualify for the playoffs.

GRADE: A

MIKE MULARKEY
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

Suffice to say, Mularkey's first — and potentially only season — in Jacksonville couldn't have gone much worse. Brought in to develop QB Blaine Gabbert and give the NFL's most anemic offense in 2011 a shot in the arm, he coaxed only minimal improvement out of both, with Gabbert being demoted before being placed on injured reserve and the offense once again lacking any type of consistent big-play punch. The defense plummeted from No. 6 overall in '11 to No. 31 with mostly the same personnel. Mularkey was dealt a tough hand, with inadequate talent to compete for the postseason and a plethora of injuries, most notably to franchise RB Maurice Jones-Drew, who was also a training-camp holdout. However, Mularkey was too conservative early and acted out of desperation only once it was too late. With all that being said, Mularkey managed to keep his team fighting until the end of the season, a testament to the culture he helped create.

GRADE: D

ROMEO CRENNEL
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

It's not Crennel's fault he didn't have a quarterback this season, but there was plenty to question, such as his handling of the defense (he was the de facto coordinator until midseason) and his usage of his best (and perhaps only) playmaker in RB Jamaal Charles. Still, Crennel's players spoke out on his behalf, saying they wanted him back next season and that they thought he could lead them to the playoffs. And to a man, the Chiefs said that Crennel held his head up highest when tragedy struck with the Jovan Belcher murder-suicide. There's no question Crennel was dealt a shaky hand; he didn't play it perfectly, either, but he also had a lot of supporters amongst the players.

GRADE: D-PLUS

JOE PHILBIN
MIAMI DOLPHINS

When watching HBO's "Hard Knocks" in August, the Dolphins did not look like a seven-win team. With question marks all over the field, especially at quarterback, the bar was set very low for Philbin in his first season. After enduring the distraction that is the reality show, Philbin has done a very solid job in his first season. Ryan Tannehill has proven to be not only the right draft pick, but the right choice at quarterback. The defense remains an above-average unit, and many of the Dolphins' losses came in close games, but that can generally be a knock on a coach. He has his team's respect, but 2013 will be a bigger test, with a potential roster overhaul coming because of several key players entering free agency.

GRADE: B

LESLIE FRAZIER
MINNESOTA VIKINGS

Although Frazier was probably safer entering this season with the support of his ownership and front office, the outward view was that he and the Vikings needed to win this season. They did. On several times, when it appeared that the team would drop from contention, it came up with win after season-saving win, and Frazier's even-keeled demeanor was a big reason for that. The players say he treats them with respect and like men — and they have rewarded him with great effort and good play despite some personnel shortcomings at a few spots. Frazier's handling of Adrian Peterson coming off injury, the changing of defensive coordinators and the inconsistency of QB Christian Ponder — all were deft. In another year, Frazier might have been more of a Coach of the Year candidate.

GRADE: A-MINUS

BILL BELICHICK
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

This wasn't Belichick's finest coaching performance, in the regular season, at least. The Patriots fell to a subpar Cardinals team, at home, earlier in the season and struggled to put teams away. Belichick's decision to bring in Josh McDaniels and get more out of the running game has been a big success, though, with the Patriots having the league's best offense. The defense has been better, and draft picks Chandler Jones and Dont'a Hightower have had very positive early returns in the front seven. The trade for CB Aqib Talib improved the secondary, but it still has been the team's downfall at times.

GRADE: B-PLUS

AARON KROMER/JOE VITT
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

With Sean Payton suspended, Vitt, Payton's right-hand man and the team's linebackers coach, was tabbed to lead the Saints in the offseason. He had a six-game "bounty" suspension of his own to start the regular season, though, and Kromer, the team's offensive-line coach/running-game coordinator, was given the head-coaching baton just a couple weeks before the start of the season. Kromer didn't commit to the running game. He also couldn't get the defense on track — New Orleans started the season with a four-game losing streak, which included a game in which the Saints blew an 18-point second-half lead at home to the Chiefs. Kromer had things back on the right track with back-to-back wins when Vitt returned, and the team was on its way into the playoff picture before Drew Brees' interception binge vs. the 49ers and Falcons basically finished off the Saints. The defense and running game improved on Vitt's watch, but he did oversee blowout losses at Denver and at the Giants.

KROMER GRADE: D-PLUS
VITT GRADE: C-PLUS

TOM COUGHLIN
NEW YORK GIANTS

Blame Coughlin, if you will, for the Giants' end-of-season struggles and fall from the playoffs a year after winning a Super Bowl. But it became clear by season's end that when few could figure out why the Giants were not winning more, the fact that the players looked resigned to rest on their laurels was to blame. Coughlin is in no danger of losing his job, and he coached with enough fearlessness to be respected. The coaches tried some lineup changes, they shook a few things up, but ultimately they just didn't have enough to get back. Let's put it this way: There were far worse coaching jobs turned in elsewhere this season.

GRADE: C-PLUS

REX RYAN
NEW YORK JETS

After a disastrous finish to last season, 2012 was already set up to be a crucial year for Ryan, whose bravado seemed to lose some support. He toned down his preseason predictions, but not the circus around his team, thanks in large part to the trade for Tim Tebow. The Tebow-Mark Sanchez drama was often a distraction, and Ryan continued to show his confidence in Sanchez throughout the QB's turnover-filled season, before finally benching him in Week 16 — but for Greg McElroy, not Tebow. Ryan's defense picked things up late, but it got off to a rough start, especially against the run. Injuries didn't help the Jets' cause, and could be a reason to be less harsh on Ryan. Their best player, and arguably the top defensive player in the league, CB Darrelle Revis, was lost for the season in Week Three, and WR Santonio Holmes, the top offensive playmaker, went on I.R. early, too.

GRADE: D-PLUS

DENNIS ALLEN
OAKLAND RAIDERS

Most league observers expected the Raiders to struggle in Allen's first season at the helm, but the team was not even competitive many weeks. They lost by 21 or more points five times and eight losses were by 10 or more points. The defense he was expected to improve — Allen was the first head coach with a background in defense that the team had hired since John Madden — was tougher to gain yards against, but it still ranked among the most generous in points allowed. The Raiders beat up on bad teams like the Chiefs (twice) and Jaguars and had their best win of the season in a Week Three upset of the Steelers, but this team never turned the corner.

GRADE: D-PLUS

ANDY REID
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Reid often was fond of saying, "It's on me." Several of the Eagles' mistakes were on his head, but others clearly fall under the category of bad fortune. Still, his handling of the Juan Castillo, Jim Washburn and Jason Babin situations left a lot to be desired, and though some of that leaked over from last season, there was plenty of time to fix things prior to the 2012 campaign. Here's the reality: The Eagles opened 3-1 and played in a division that was decided on a Week 17 game between teams with 9-6 and 8-7 records. Had the Eagles not lost eight games in a row — even, say, splitting those games — they would have been in the race and Reid would not be getting fired.

GRADE: D

MIKE TOMLIN
PITTSBURGH STEELERS

The 2012 Steelers were strong and sound on defense. In that regard, they were like many of the better Pittsburgh teams of this generation. However, these Steelers also were far more vulnerable than their recent predecessors. They struggled during QB Ben Roethlisberger's three-game absence with shoulder and rib injuries, but surprisingly enough, they were even worse after he returned. The Steelers' offense, with Todd Haley replacing Bruce Arians as coordinator, left something to be desired. The running game rarely was in top form, and the passing game was too erratic, considering all of the talent on hand. Tomlin's overall tenure in Pittsburgh has been a smashing success, but this was one of the most disappointing campaigns in his six seasons on the job. The team's veteran "D" turned in a wonderful season, and Pittsburgh just couldn't capitalize.

GRADE: C

JEFF FISHER
ST. LOUIS RAMS

Wasting no time in establishing a comfort zone after a one-year hiatus, Fisher has proven more than worthy of being one of the league's highest-paid coaches after masterfully choreographing a dramatic turnaround by the youngest team in the league. One year removed from the Rams' 2-14 disaster under Steve Spagnuolo, the team's 4-1-1 record within the dramatically improved NFC West — as well as its totally unexpected opportunity entering the regular-season finale to finish with a winning record for the first time since 2003 — are reasons enough to give Fisher serious consideration for Coach of the Year honors. Under Fisher, a team that had an average record of 3-13 over the previous five seasons was competitive in almost every game, displaying a tremendous resilience and physical edge. If not for a pummeling by the Patriots in London, flat efforts in home losses to the Jets and Vikings and a loss to the Dolphins that the Rams let slip away, Fisher would have received a perfect grade. Instilling new energy and confidence in every aspect of the Rams' organization, he has the arrow definitely pointing up in St. Louis.

GRADE: A-MINUS.

NORV TURNER
SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

Dean Spanos made it clear by giving Turner another year that 2012 would be a make-or-break campaign, and Turner's club broke, which is expected to cost him his job. The problems that plagued the Chargers last season — turnovers and poor late-game play — returned in 2012. The Chargers blew leads in back-to-back prime-time games, including a 24-0 lead on "Monday Night Football" in a 35-24 loss to the Broncos in Week Six, and it continued to go bad from there. Turner is known for his offensive prowess as a coach, but this year's "O" was far from imposing. The run game never got going and the passing game didn't utilize free-agent pickups Robert Meachem and Eddie Royal. The defense ended up being the rock of this year's team, but it still had its issues, especially in the fourth quarter.

GRADE: D

JIM HARBAUGH
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Harbaugh has picked up where he left off last season in his stellar debut as the Niners' head coach. Continuing to thrive on operating outside the box, his bold decision to replace Alex Smith with second-year QB Colin Kaepernick has proven to be a masterstroke that warrants a passing grade because of that move alone. But statement-making victories against top-flight opponents like the Packers in Week One, the Bears in Week 11 and the Patriots in Week 15 — as well as the fact that the Niners have yet to lose two games in a row under his direction — are further testaments to Harbaugh's ability to thrive at the pro level. Harbaugh has been far from perfect, however, as evidenced by his team's disturbing knack for suffering a letdown in every third game this season, beginning with the loss to the Vikings in Minnesota in Week Three and ending with the Week 16 loss to the surging Seahawks, which was the worst defeat so far in the Harbaugh era.

GRADE: A-MINUS

PETE CARROLL
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

After a pair of lackluster 7-9 campaigns in his first two seasons on the job in Seattle, Carroll appears to have gotten his act together in a big way in his third season, energetically calling the shots for a team that couldn't be hotter with the playoffs looming. Ignoring detractors, Carroll boldly turned the starting QB job over to third-round rookie Russell Wilson late in the preseason while allowing high-profile free-agent addition Matt Flynn to collect dust on the sideline. Initially choosing to play it safe with an ultra-conservative passing offense with Wilson under center, Carroll decided to completely turn the rookie loose in the final stages of a huge comeback victory against the Bears in a freewheeling read-option offense that has been nearly unstoppable ever since. In the meantime, Carroll's fingerprints remain all over a speedy, hard-hitting defense that ranks right up there with the best in the league, a few ill-timed breakdowns in losses to the Lions and Dolphins notwithstanding. Clearly, Carroll and GM John Schneider, who deserves kudos for another stellar drafting job this season, have made the Seahawks very relevant again.

GRADE: A

GREG SCHIANO
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

Schiano was in line for a better grade — maybe even Coach of the Year consideration — before the Bucs unraveled down the stretch. His demanding approach, while not universally adored, was working. Tampa Bay rallied from a 1-3 start to a 6-4 mark and seemed poised to make a run at a wild-card spot in the NFC. Josh Freeman had gone from a regressing quarterback to an MVP candidate and RB Doug Martin was breaking off one 100-yard game after another even though the team's offensive line was weakened by injuries. The Bucs had been competitive just about every week of the season until Week 15, when they imploded in a 41-0 loss at New Orleans. Freeman came undone. The Bucs dropped five of their last six games. It was a season split between extremes.

GRADE: C

MIKE MUNCHAK
TENNESSEE TITANS

Munchak has had very few solutions to Tennessee's myriad problems this season. The Titans were 1-5 in the division and surrendered 50-plus points twice. The offense continued to nosedive after Munchak's curiously timed decision to fire close friend and offensive coordinator Chris Palmer in Week 13. QB Jake Locker's play declined sharply after missing more than a month with a shoulder injury. Munchak's expertise, the offensive line, was one of his club's biggest disappointments for the second season in a row. What's more, Munchak was slow to adapt when his plodding O-line couldn't perform the scheme it was asked to execute, and defensive coordinator Jerry Gray, beyond coaching a terrible tackling unit, took too long to dial up the aggressiveness when his zone-based scheme was failing miserably. Although owner Bud Adams deserves much of the blame for his offseason meddling, Munchak has, at times, appeared to be in over his head in his second season in charge.

GRADE: D

MIKE SHANAHAN
WASHINGTON REDSKINS

How different this grade appeared as late as Week 10. That was when Mike Shanahan said he would evaluate the team with next season in mind. Oh, that sandbagger ... All the Redskins did was — behind two rookie quarterbacks — win seven consecutive games to win the NFC East for the first time since 1999. Early in the season, there were OL problems, defensive issues and the rest of the division frankly looked to be a notch above the 'Skins, even with the excitement of second overall pick Robert Griffin III. This Redskins team is far from perfect, but Shanahan turned in a strong coaching performance down the stretch.

GRADE: B-PLUS

OPINION

WHAT YOU THINK

Class, per Hub Arkush

I was shocked when reading Hub Arkush's predictions for winners the rest of this season in the Dec. 23 issue when he said he "had pause" regarding the New England-Denver game, "BUT IF CLASS PREVAILS," New England would come away the winner.

Not sure how Mr. Arkush defines CLASS, but is it the Spygate actions of Bill Belichick against the Jets a few years back, duplicated by his disciple Josh McDaniels in London vs. San Francisco while employed by the Broncos, for which he was fired?

Or does he think Pat Bowlen, John Elway, Peyton Manning and Champ Bailey are CLASSLESS?

Dunno why Mr. Arkush has such a love affair going with New England and the constantly demonstrated opposite with the Denver Broncos, but PFW should certainly be more objective when reporting about all NFL teams — particularly issues such as "class," which, in the case of New England and Denver, he quite obviously has exactly backward!

— Bookie Louise,
Gunnison, Colo.

LETTERS POLICY

Send letters to letters@pfwmedia.com, by fax to (847) 940-1108 or by U.S. mail to Letters to the Editor, Pro Football Weekly, 302 Saunders Road, Suite 100, Riverwoods, IL 60015. Limit of 250 words. Include name, hometown and daytime phone number (phone for verification purposes only). We reserve the right to edit letters for content and brevity.

WHAT WE THINK

A way to make fines more fair

We're not completely cynical, so we believe the NFL is sincerely interested in protecting the safety of its players. Nor are we naïve, so we know the league is just as interested in protecting itself from claims by former players that it concealed information about football-related head injuries.

Whatever the motivation, the NFL adds more and more rules banning potentially dangerous hits, and is enforcing those rules more aggressively than ever. The result is a record number of fines handed down by the league office for illegal hits.

We have supported the NFL's efforts to protect players from the types of head injuries that can have devastating long-term consequences, and continue to do so. But we also sympathize with the frustrations of players, particularly on defense, who complain that they're no longer sure what's legal and what isn't because of uneven enforcement of the rules.

It's hard enough for players to adjust their games to avoid the types of hits they have made for years but are now banned. Those are adjustments they will have to make, however, for the long-term safety of players and the future of their sport.

But we've seen a number of cases in recent seasons when players were fined for seemingly clean hits because of overzealous interpretation of the rules. That does nothing to improve safety, and is why we think the decisions to hand down such fines should be made by a panel of former players and coaches.

The current system features an officiating crew in the NFL's New York headquarters reviewing videotape of every game and flagging plays that might merit discipline. League officials then review those plays, with the final decision on discipline made by Ray Anderson, the NFL's vice president of football operations.

The process is meticulous but flawed. Too often, it seems, players are fined for questionable hits, or hits that couldn't be avoided because of last-second moves made by offensive players.

We think it would make more sense to have these plays reviewed by a panel of, say, three former players and two ex-coaches who would decide whether a hit merits discipline. That would result in more equitable enforcement of the rules, and a better understanding among players of what is and isn't permitted.

We think the NFL is doing the right thing by adopting new rules to prevent potentially dangerous hits on defenseless players. But if it wants to achieve its goal of improving safety without diminishing the excitement of the game, it needs to make sure those rules are enforced fairly and consistently.

PUBLISHER'S PEN Hub Arkush, publisher/editor

Sorting out NFL hardware debate

Normally, I would wait a couple of weeks until the winners of some of the most important annual awards in pro football have been handed out and then give my opinion on how right or wrong we got it. This year, I can't wait for two reasons. The first is that, as often as not, we get it wrong, and I'd like to avoid seeing that happen again this year if I can offer some compelling arguments for voters to consider. The second is that this year three of the most important awards — Most Valuable Player, Comeback Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year — offer some of the most compelling races we've ever seen.

From where I sit, the race for the NFL's 2012 MVP is all about J.J. Watt, Peyton Manning, Adrian Peterson, Tom Brady and Aaron Rodgers, but before I start testifying, I think it's important to establish the criteria for the winner.

All too often, voters confuse the best player in the league in a given season — or the most productive player — with the MVP. For those guys, you can vote for Player of the Year or Offensive Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year. If that was the discussion we were having right now you would have to add Calvin Johnson, Aldon Smith, Brandon Marshall, Von Miller, Arian Foster and others to the ballot.

But I believe the MVP has to be the player who was the most instrumental and indispensable to his team, having an outstanding regular season and accomplishing great things. Where would the Texans, Broncos, Vikings, Patriots and Packers be without Watt, Manning, Peterson, Brady and Rodgers?

I will not vote for Rodgers or Brady this year because I believe there's a chance their clubs still would be playoff teams without them, and both have had a couple stretches where they weren't as good as they could have been. Three or four weeks ago, I would have voted for Watt, but the Texans recently have become quite pedestrian and Watt, while still playing great, hasn't been able to do anything about it. I believe this vote comes down to Manning and Peterson, because each has been the difference between their clubs being contenders or irrelevant. In the end, I'll vote for Manning for MVP because he has taken the Broncos from afterthought to legitimate Super Bowl contender, and as great as Peterson has been — in fact, he has had the better individual season — the Vikings just aren't a Super Bowl threat.

Comeback Player of the Year is a two-horse race, also between Manning and Peterson, with Jamaal Charles a distant third, and I believe this one has to go to Peterson. As great and valuable as Manning has been, his comeback has been meticulously planned and orchestrated over a more than reasonable time frame, and I don't believe there was any reason to believe he wouldn't come back as well as he has.

Peterson's season, on the other hand, has been nothing short of a miracle. Most players aren't even playing again yet 7-8 months after a complete knee reconstruction. Peterson hasn't just played, he has been better than ever. Even though he has been the best running back in football for a number of years, he has had one of the greatest seasons by a running back in NFL history while carrying an entire team on his back as a shocking playoff contender. I believe "A.D." should be a slam dunk for this award.

The Rookie of the Year Award will come down to Robert Griffin III, Russell Wilson, Andrew Luck and Alfred Morris. All have had memorable and outstanding rookie campaigns. But Luck's and Morris' individual accomplishments just don't measure up to those of RG3 or Wilson. Some will penalize RG3 in a match race with Wilson because of his far loftier draft status, and that will be a mistake. As great and surprising as Wilson has been, RG3's numbers are clearly superior, and what he has meant to the Redskins has been, too. Many folks expected Seattle to be a wild-card team with or without Wilson, but nobody saw the Redskins battling for an NFC East title, and it has happened almost exclusively because of Griffin. To give the Rookie of the Year Award to anyone but RG3 would be a gross injustice.

While other award choices might not be as easy, to me, these three should be as clear as day.

OPINION

NOTHING TO SALVAGE Arthur Arkush

Smith left Khan no choice but to move on

It's tough to survive a 2-14 record.

Future Hall of Fame executive Bill Polian couldn't do it in Indianapolis in 2011. It says here his replacement, Colts GM Ryan Grigson, is the NFL's Executive of the Year for the miraculous job he has done completely reconstructing the Colts and returning them to prominence in only one season.

If Polian couldn't survive the Colts' wreckage, exactly no one should be surprised by the reports (as of this writing) that Jaguars GM Gene Smith is out in Jacksonville.

Owner Shahid Khan didn't just make the correct decision by relieving Smith, he made the only decision.

Granted, it's a pretty raw deal for first-year head coach Mike Mularkey, who, much like former Colts head coach Jim Caldwell, is likely to share Smith's fate once Khan hires a new GM, who will likely want his own head coach. Mularkey was set up for failure from the moment he assumed responsibility of Smith's flawed team, but it's a harsh reality in a harsh business.

Most will look directly at the QB position when writing Smith's Jaguars obituary, and they will be partially correct in doing so. There is really no way to sugarcoat the unmitigated disaster that marked QB Blaine Gabbert's first two seasons as a pro. Yet, Smith's troubles began well before Gabbert's did.

His preferred method of roster building — finding core pieces through the draft and supplementing those pieces in free agency — sounds good. It's the same way the NFL's most successful clubs, such as the Steelers and Packers, go about their business. But problems started to arise when draft misses forced Smith to stray from the original plan.

Other than his first pick as the team's GM, 2009 first-round OLT Eugene Monroe, how many other cornerstone pieces has Smith stockpiled for a rebuilding organization in his four years at the helm?

CSM PHOTOS

Jaguars owner Shahid Khan now realizes his decision to give Gene Smith a fourth year as GM was a mistake.

Maybe Justin Blackmon and/or Cecil Shorts (hopefully for Jaguars fans).

By contrast, how many key building blocks did Grigson net in his first draft alone? Andrew Luck is obvious, but TE Dwayne Allen and WR T.Y. Hilton are also home runs. What's more, Grigson unearthed a gem in free agency in ex-CFL star ILB Jerrell Freeman. CBs Cassius Vaughn and Vontae Davis, both acquired in trades, also have been instrumental to the Colts' success.

Smith's first big foray into free agency was in the 2010 offseason, after the club had swung and missed on pass rushers in his first two drafts, when he took a "calculated risk" by signing veteran DE Aaron Kampman, coming off season-ending knee surgery. Kampman collected more money in two seasons in Jacksonville (more than $13 million) than starts (eight) and sacks (four) combined.

Unfortunately, it was just one example of more bad things to come for Smith in free agency.

In the 2011 offseason, he signed LB Clint Session away from the division-rival Colts. Session pocketed $11.5 million in his one season in Jacksonville while making just six starts because of concussions.

In the 2012 preseason, Smith gave WR Laurent Robinson $14 million guaranteed to help bolster the league's worst passing offense one season earlier. Coming off a career-best 11 TD receptions in '11, Robinson didn't find the endzone in his four starts before being placed on injured reserve because of concussions.

Smith had rotten luck with some of these signings, to be sure, but he also acted out of desperation because of repeated failures through the draft. To wit: Robinson was claimed off waivers by the Cowboys before the '11 season. Why didn't the Jaguars make that claim and get that career-best production for the veteran's minimum?

By all accounts, Smith is one of the hardest working GMs in the business, and one with great courage in his convictions. Watching him reach for a player like DT Tyson Alualu or repeatedly trade up to nab lesser-known players became a regular occurrence on draft weekend.

However, when the worst season in franchise history comes in Year Four of the rebuilding project, while elsewhere in the division, the Colts are rewriting the rule book on how quickly a team can rebuild, Khan was left no choice but to put Smith out of his misery. Khan also deserves blame for allowing ex-owner Wayne Weaver to talk him into keeping Smith. Jaguars fans must hope their owner makes a more well-informed decision this time.

HYPE MACHINE Barry Jackson

ESPN's NFL coverage qualifies as mixed bag

ESPN does a lot right on its NFL coverage. Among them: producing the most creative, outside-the-box pregame features, and Ron Jaworski dissecting tape with a surgeon's precision.

But you also see stuff that leaves you shaking your head. Such as:

■ Stuart Scott on "MNF" postgame shows. Either he's overhyping and overselling everything — "You won't believe what we're going to show you next!" — or he's saying things like this: That second touchdown pass by Colin Kaepernick "was straight out stupid. Stupid! Stupid! That means good, Steve [Young]."

■ Trent Dilfer and Young treating poor play as a personal affront, as if someone had wronged them. Yes, it's OK to be passionate, but their reaction to subpar performances often seemed repetitive and excessive.

Dilfer was so angry after the Jets' awful showing in Tennessee that he ranted as if someone had egged his house. At least Dilfer can poke fun at himself, noting that Mark Sanchez's play bothered him so much because "I was as crappy as you can be."

■ ESPN on ESPN crime. At least a couple times this year, ESPN reporters contradicted each other's stories, leaving viewers wondering what to believe. Two ESPN New York reporters said Tim Tebow told coaches he wouldn't run the "Wildcat" package against San Diego because he was upset about not getting the starting job. Adam Schefter reported Tebow said no such thing. (Tebow denied the ESPN New York story.)

■ ESPN taking credit for stories first reported elsewhere. In Week 17, the network scroll cited "sources" in reporting Sean Payton had agreed to a new contract with the Saints. But Fox's Jay Glazer broke the story earlier. When an ESPN producer tried to defend it, Glazer tweeted: "That may be the dumbest thing I've ever heard."

■ ESPN's "total quarterback rating." It took some arrogance for the network to believe it could persuade fans to use a new quarterback rating system instead of the NFL's longtime formula. Why waste everybody's time?

THIS AND THAT

■ Fox couldn't have been pleased to lose Cowboys-Redskins to NBC in Week 17, but the NFL did the right thing, because the game would not have aired in six major Western markets had it been a Fox 4:25 p.m. ET game.

■ Love those miked-up segments on Showtime's "Inside the NFL," with audio captured from NFL Films. Best of the year: Houston's J.J. Watt telling Baltimore's Ray Rice — during the game — that "I've eaten burritos bigger than you." Second-best: Cincinnati's Andy Dalton complaining, during a game, about the NFL not building restrooms on sidelines.

■ Here's what appeared on CBS' scroll of "headlines" in Week 16: "Phil Simms says the Steelers and Bengals are confident and mad." And this qualifies as news how?

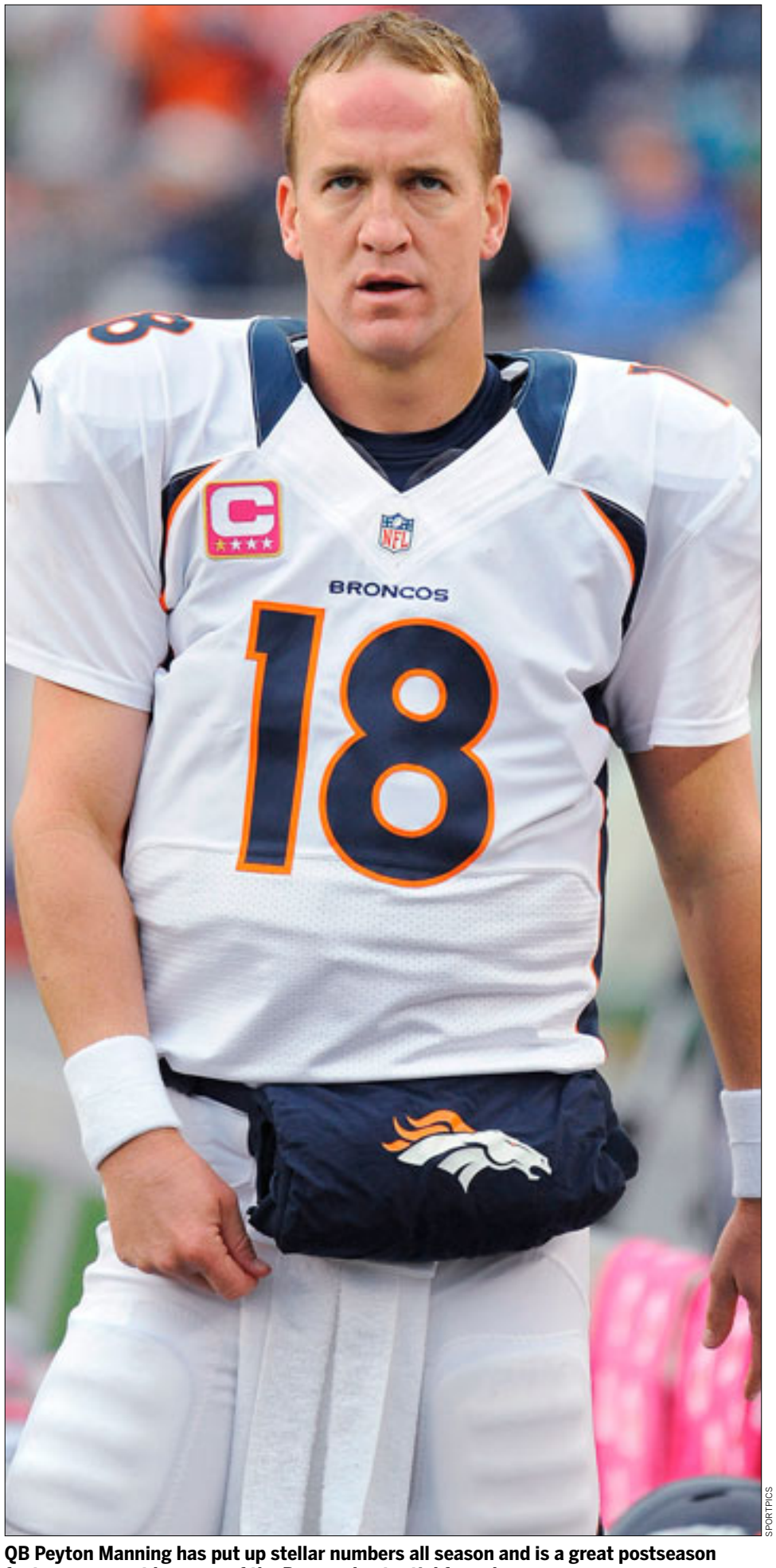
■ Don Criqui was rusty in his first NFL game of the season for CBS (Dolphins-Bills), identifying the wrong city where the game was being played, noting "the second quarter is about to open" a few plays into the second quarter and saying Reggie Bush has "110 yards [combined] receiving and catching."

■ Worst decision of the season: Fox, in Week 16, should have allowed viewers outside Maryland and New York/New Jersey to stick with overtime of Saints-Cowboys instead of switching them to the start of Giants-Ravens.

■ Biggest waste-of-time: CBS' James Brown asking analysts if 49ers coach Jim Harbaugh's job will be in jeopardy if Kaepernick doesn't play well. Of course not!

Barry Jackson covers sports media for the Miami Herald.

FANTASY FOOTBALL



SPORTPICS

QB Peyton Manning has put up stellar numbers all season and is a great postseason fantasy prospect because of the Broncos' potential for a deep run.

Top of draftboard has AFC feel

By Mike Wilkening
Fantasy editor

In the summer, fantasy football rosters are usually constructed with little or no emphasis on your expectation of how the NFL standings will look at season's end. Yes, it would be great to have players on winning teams, but points are points.

In the postseason, though, your blueprint likely will be different. The more players whose teams will play multiple playoff games, the better in leagues that hold one draft at the outset of the postseason.

What follows is a positional breakdown of the six major positions in fantasy football — quarterback, running back, wide receiver, tight end, defense/special teams and placekicker — entering the postseason. Players are ranked on expected value for the entire postseason. As always, tailor your draftboard to your league's rules.

QUARTERBACKS

1. Peyton Manning / Broncos
2. Tom Brady / Patriots
3. Aaron Rodgers / Packers
4. Matt Ryan / Falcons
5. Matt Schaub / Texans
6. Joe Flacco / Ravens
7. Robert Griffin III / Redskins
8. Colin Kaepernick / 49ers
9. Russell Wilson / Seahawks
10. Andy Dalton / Bengals
11. Andrew Luck / Colts
12. Christian Ponder / Vikings

There's plenty to like about Manning and Brady; either is a strong top choice at the position. Manning ranks third all-time in postseason passing yards (5,389). Brady, meanwhile, has attempted more passes (793) than any other quarterback in NFL playoff history. You know what you are getting from Brady and Manning, who have started a combined 41 playoff games. Rodgers, who has the highest passer rating ever among qualifying postseason passers, is the best of the NFC quarterbacks available. Ryan is also a reasonable high pick; the Falcons will have at least one home game, and they have a potent passing attack. Still, the Falcons' postseason struggles in Ryan's tenure (zero wins in three appearances) could cause him to slide in some drafts. Schaub could be a nice value pick if the Texans recapture their best form, but he, too, could fall in drafts with Houston faltering down the stretch. The sleepers are Flacco, Kaepernick, Dalton and Wilson. Flacco has won five postseason starts in four NFL seasons. Kaepernick and Griffin are intriguing dual threats. Dalton had some big regular-season games for fantasy owners in 2012. Wilson's late-season improvement was eye-catching.

RUNNING BACKS

1. Arian Foster / Texans
2. Stevan Ridley / Patriots
3. Ray Rice / Ravens
4. Frank Gore / 49ers
5. Alfred Morris / Redskins
6. Marshawn Lynch / Seahawks
7. Adrian Peterson / Vikings
8. Michael Turner / Falcons
9. Knowshon Moreno / Broncos
10. BenJarvus Green-Ellis / Bengals
11. Ryan Grant / Packers
12. DuJuan Harris / Packers
13. Vick Ballard / Colts
14. Danny Woodhead / Patriots
15. Jacquizz Rodgers / Falcons
16. Alex Green / Packers
17. Willis McGahee / Broncos
18. Shane Vereen / Patriots
19. Brian Leonard / Bengals
20. Ronnie Hillman / Broncos
21. Ben Tate / Texans
22. Bernard Pierce / Ravens
23. LaMichael James / 49ers
24. Evan Royster / Redskins
25. Brandon Bolden / Patriots
26. Jason Snelling / Falcons
27. Justin Forsett / Texans
28. Lance Ball / Broncos
29. Cedric Peerman / Bengals
30. Robert Turbin / Seahawks
31. Toby Gerhart / Vikings
32. Delone Carter / Colts

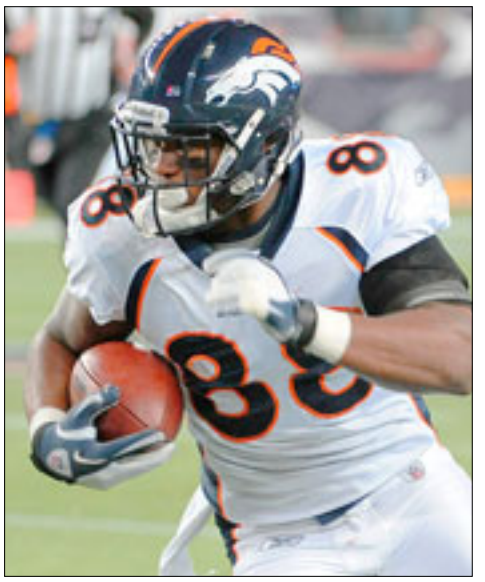
We'll give Foster the nod based on his exceptional 2011 postseason production (285 rushing yards, three TDs) and 2012 regular-season output (1,641 combined yards and 17 TDs). What's more, the Texans' fall to the No. 3 in the AFC might enhance his value in the eyes of some fantasy owners, as Foster now could play as many as four postseason games. However, the Texans' poor play in the final two weeks of the season could convince some fantasy owners to look elsewhere for their top back. Ridley or Rice are acceptable alternatives to Foster. Ridley (12 rushing TDs) gets a healthy number

of goal-line looks for the Patriots' potent offense. Rice is one of the game's top dual threats at his position. Gore is the lead back for an offense with a strong running game. Morris entered Redskins lore with a 200-yard, three-TD performance in the season finale. Peterson and Lynch are exceptional, but both of their teams will have to go on the road in Round One. Turner is an interesting sleeper; he gets short-yardage work, and TDs are oh-so-valuable in this format. Moreno's value takes a hit with McGahee eligible to return if the Broncos reach the AFC championship game. A hamstring issue sidelined Green-Ellis in Week 17. The Packers' backfield is unsettled; Grant, Green and Harris could offer slivers of value, but none looks like a featured back. Woodhead is the most interesting of the complementary backs on the list; he has had some productive games this season.

WIDE RECEIVERS

1. Demaryius Thomas / Broncos
2. Wes Welker / Patriots
3. Roddy White / Falcons
4. Andre Johnson / Texans
5. Julio Jones / Falcons
6. Eric Decker / Broncos
7. Brandon Lloyd / Patriots
8. Randall Cobb / Packers
9. Michael Crabtree / 49ers
10. A.J. Green / Bengals
11. Jordy Nelson / Packers
12. James Jones / Packers
13. Greg Jennings / Packers
14. Torrey Smith / Ravens
15. Pierre Garcon / Redskins
16. Anquan Boldin / Ravens
17. Reggie Wayne / Colts
18. Sidney Rice / Seahawks
19. Josh Morgan / Redskins
20. T.Y. Hilton / Colts
21. Golden Tate / Seahawks
22. Donnie Avery / Colts
23. Randy Moss / 49ers
24. Doug Baldwin / Seahawks
25. Brandon Stokley / Broncos
26. Santana Moss / Redskins
27. Leonard Hankerson / Redskins
28. Kevin Walter / Texans
29. Marvin Jones / Bengals
30. Michael Jenkins / Vikings
31. Andrew Hawkins / Bengals
32. Harry Douglas / Falcons
33. Jerome Simpson / Vikings
34. Deion Branch / Patriots
35. Jarius Wright / Vikings
36. Jacoby Jones / Ravens

Thomas' one-handed TD catch in the season finale vs. the Chiefs is only one example of how his wide-ranging skill set can vex opposing defenses. Welker also merits strong consideration early in drafts, too, but he isn't a downfield threat like Thomas. The Falcons' exceptional WR duo of White and Jones will go early in drafts. Some owners will prefer White, others will prefer Jones — just as was the case in summer drafts. Like the Texans' other skill-position players, Johnson could lose a little luster with Houston not in top form. Those who lose out on Thomas would do well to secure Decker, a key part of the Broncos' passing game in his own right. Crabtree has taken a big step forward this season. Green is a clear-cut No. 1 receiver; his standing in drafts will be tied to owners' confidence in the Bengals' ability to win at least one playoff game. The Packers' WR corps will be tough for fantasy owners to separate. Cobb. Nelson, Jones and Jennings should also be drafted, but it's anyone's guess as to which of those players will lead the club in fantasy points. Smith and Boldin are key targets for the Ravens, who will need their offense to be in top form to make a playoff run.



(Clockwise from top left) Arian Foster, Demaryius Thomas, Stephen Gostkowski and Rob Gronkowski are the top playoff fantasy players at their respective divisions.

TIGHT ENDS

1. Rob Gronkowski / Patriots
2. Tony Gonzalez / Falcons
3. Aaron Hernandez / Patriots
4. Owen Daniels / Texans
5. Vernon Davis / 49ers
6. Jermichael Finley / Packers
7. Dennis Pitta / Ravens
8. Jacob Tamme / Broncos
9. Jermaine Gresham / Bengals
10. Kyle Rudolph / Vikings
11. Zach Miller / Seahawks
12. Joel Dreessen / Broncos
13. Dwayne Allen / Colts
14. Delanie Walker / 49ers
15. Coby Fleener / Colts
16. Logan Paulsen / Redskins
17. Anthony McCoy / Seahawks
18. Ed Dickson / Ravens
19. Niles Paul / Redskins

Gronkowski, who returned to the lineup in Week 17 and caught a TD pass in the Patriots' rout of Miami, is the clear-cut top option at his position. No other tight end has Gronkowski's upside. He can be drafted in the range of the go-to wideouts in playoff drafts. Gonzalez is a trusted target for Falcons QB Matt Ryan and a nice consolation prize for those who lose out on Gronkowski. Likewise, Hernandez also would be a fine tight end to add for the playoff run. He's not a TD threat of Gronkowski's caliber, but he will get plenty of passes thrown his way. Daniels (104 targets, 62 catches, 716 yards, six TDs) is the top alternative to Andre Johnson in the Texans' passing game. Davis is a wonderful talent who sometimes gets lost in the shuffle in the 49ers' attack. Finley has caught 14 passes for 132 yards (on 16 targets) in two 2012 games vs. Minnesota. Pitta finished second on the Ravens in catches (61) and TD receptions (seven).

DEFENSES

1. Denver Broncos
2. San Francisco 49ers
3. New England Patriots
4. Houston Texans
5. Atlanta Falcons
6. Green Bay Packers
7. Seattle Seahawks
8. Baltimore Ravens
9. Cincinnati Bengals
10. Washington Redskins
11. Minnesota Vikings
12. Indianapolis Colts

The Broncos' defense gets the nod with Denver clinching the No. 1 seed in the AFC. The 49ers also merit top-defense consideration, too. The Patriots scored eight return TDs in the regular season —six on defense, two on special teams. The Texans' defense has gone off-form but played well in two 2011 meetings vs. Cincinnati. The Falcons, Packers and Ravens will appeal most to owners who believe those clubs can make a postseason run. Seattle and Cincinnati have top defensive talent but will start the playoffs on the road.

PLACEKICKERS

1. Stephen Gostkowski / Patriots
2. Matt Prater / Broncos
3. Matt Bryant / Falcons
4. Mason Crosby / Packers
5. David Akers / 49ers
6. Shayne Graham / Texans
7. Justin Tucker / Ravens
8. Kai Forbath / Redskins
9. Steven Hauschka / Seahawks
10. Josh Brown / Bengals
11. Blair Walsh / Vikings
12. Adam Vinatieri / Colts

Your plan at this position must be a function of how you expect the postseason to unfold. Give preference to placekickers on strong contenders rather than longer shots. The focus must be on getting as many games out of the PK position as you can.

HANDICAPPER'S CORNER

WILD-CARD ROUND Early pointspreads as of Sunday, Dec. 30

PFW STAFF SELECTIONS

EARLY LAS VEGAS LINE Home team in caps. Asterisk (*) denotes team will cover pointspread but lose game. Boldface selection indicates best bet.

	Hub Arkush Publisher/ editor	**Keith Schleiden** Editor-in-chief	**Mike Holbrook** Managing editor	**Dan Arkush** Executive editor	**Eric Edholm** Senior editor	**Mike Wilkening** Senior editor	**Dan Parr** Associate editor	**Kevin Fishbain** Associate editor	**Arthur Arkush** Associate editor	**PFW** consensus
SATURDAY										
HOUSTON -4½ vs. Cincinnati (43½)	Houston	Houston	Cincinnati	Cincinnati*	Cincinnati	Cincinnati*	Cincinnati*	Houston	Cincinnati*	Cincinnati*
GREEN BAY -7½ vs. Minnesota (46)	Minnesota*	Minnesota*	Green Bay	Green Bay	Green Bay	Green Bay	Green Bay	Green Bay	Green Bay	Green Bay
SUNDAY										
BALTIMORE -6½ vs. Indianapolis (46½)	Baltimore	Indianapolis*	Indianapolis*	Baltimore	Indianapolis*	Baltimore	Indianapolis*	Indianapolis*	Indianapolis*	Indianapolis*
Seattle -2½ vs. WASHINGTON (45½)	Seattle	Washington	Washington	Seattle	Seattle	Washington	Washington	Washington	Washington	Washington
Last week vs. spread	7-9	4-12	6-10	8-8	4-12	6-10	4-12	4-12	5-11	5-11
Season to date vs. spread	115-134-7	112-137-7	125-124-7	117-132-7	122-127-7	133-116-7	123-126-7	137-112-7	122-127-7	124-125-7
Last week best bets	0-3	0-3	1-2	2-1	1-2	1-2	0-3	0-3	0-3	1-3
Season to date best bets	22-28-1	23-26-2	25-25-1	17-32-2	23-28	26-22-3	24-25-2	22-27-2	16-33-2	33-33-2
Last week straight-up	11-5	11-5	11-5	12-4	13-3	10-6	12-4	12-4	12-4	12-4
Season to date straight-up	164-91-1	151-104-1	169-86-1	162-93-1	163-92-1	168-87-1	159-96-1	172-83-1	157-98-1	157-98-1

WILD-CARD ROUND OPPONENTS VS. SPREAD H – home, A – away, N – neutral, followed by team's score; number in parentheses is number of points by which that team was favored to win; E – game was rated as even; W – beat the pointspread; * – team beat the pointspread in both regular-season meetings that year; T – neither beat the pointspread; P – playoff game

MATCHUP	2011	2010		
Cincinnati at Houston	A-10 H-31(-4)WP	H-19(-3) A-20W	Did not play	
Minnesota at Green Bay	A-7 H-45(-12)W	H-27W A-33(-10)	H-3 A-31(-3)W*	A-24 H-28(-3)W

MATCHUP	2011	2010
Indianapolis at Baltimore	A-10W H-24(-16)	Did not play
Seattle at Washington	H-17(-3) A-23W	Did not play

10-YEAR SERIES RECORDS

Cincinnati at Houston	(3-3)(1-1)(1-1)
Minnesota at GREEN BAY	(13-7)(7-3)(4-6)
INDIANAPOLIS at Baltimore	(6-1)(3-1)(4-0)
Seattle at WASHINGTON	(5-0)(2-0)(2-0)

Series leader is listed in CAPS with its record listed first, followed by series leader's record at this week's game site, followed by series leader's record vs. pointspread at this week's site. This year's games not included.

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VEGAS DREAMING Mike Wilkening

Rookie passers add intrigue to wild-card round

A win in the wild-card playoff round is a five-star hotel on a Tuesday night, a first-class seat on a flight from Chicago to Detroit on a Thursday morning, a 70-percent-off cashmere sweater that doesn't quite go with most of the slacks in your closet, but has a label you normally can't afford. These are all nice things, but none of them make you feel like you have made it. It is just a little chunk of reassurance that you *might* be able to step up in class.

Wild-card wins are sweet, but they are not special. Plenty of scruffy teams have snuck under the first line of velvet ropes, scooted past a distracted bouncer and dashed into the foyer.

The other night, I looked through 20 years of wild-card-round box scores. More than anything else, the occasional lack of standout QB play struck me. It wasn't many games, but it was enough to catch my attention. The obvious recent example is last season, when the Texans pulled through Round One with rookie T.J. Yates under center and the Broncos stunned Pittsburgh with an unexpected barrage of Tim Tebow passes.

For your viewing enjoyment, here is the complete list of quarterbacks who have started for wild-card winners since 1992. Some are future Hall of Famers. Most are familiar. A nice handful, though, have probably escaped your memory:

AFC: Tebow, Yates, Mark Sanchez, Joe Flacco, Philip Rivers, David Garrard, Tom Brady, Peyton Manning, Ben Roethlisberger, Chad Pennington, Steve McNair, Tommy Maddox, Elvis Grbac, Rich Gannon, Trent Dilfer, Jay Fiedler, Dan Marino, Mark Brunell, Drew Bledsoe, John Elway, Kordell Stewart, Jim Harbaugh, Jim Kelly, Vinny Testaverde, Joe Montana, Jeff Hostetler, Frank Reich, Stan Humphries.

NFC: Eli Manning, Drew Brees, Aaron Rodgers, Matt Hasselbeck, Kurt Warner, Tony Romo, Donovan McNabb, Jeff Garcia, Jake Delhomme, Mark Brunell, Daunte Culpepper, Marc Bulger, Brett Favre, Aaron Brooks, Jeff George, Brad Johnson, Steve Young, Jake Plummer, Trent Dilfer, Randall Cunningham, Troy Aikman, Rodney Peete, Steve Walsh, Phil Simms, Mark Rypien.

Look, there is no doubting the importance of QB play in the postseason. You are going to be a happier and saner handicapper backing teams with quality passers under center.

However, there are many ways to get out of Round One, and it isn't just on the arm of a blue-chip QB.

Nor do you necessarily need an experienced signalcaller to win in the wild-card round. Yates' sixth NFL start came in the Texans' wild-card win over Cincinnati last January. The Bengals themselves started a rookie at quarterback in Andy Dalton. Before Yates, Jets QB Mark Sanchez (2009) and Ravens QB Joe Flacco ('08) both helped their teams to wild-card wins as rookies — and on the road, no less.

Sanchez, Flacco and Yates didn't have to carry their respective teams; all were buoyed by strong defenses that were outstanding in those Round One wins. All were essentially game managers.

In short, they are unlike the three rookie starters for wild-card teams in the 2012 postseason: the Redskins' Robert Griffin III, the Colts' Andrew Luck and the Seahawks' Russell Wilson. All three rookies have played a key role in their respective club's run to the postseason. Wilson's case is perhaps most analogous to those of Yates, Sanchez and Flacco in that the Seahawks have a strong defense, but Wilson's strong late-season play suggests he can help Seattle's offense trade punches if it comes to that.

With the playoffs upon us, handicappers are left to decide if the playoff teams led by rookie passers will be compromised by inexperience at the most important position on the field. History isn't much of a guide; we don't see many rookie passers in postseason games. In the past 20 seasons, only seven first-year quarterbacks — Dalton, Flacco, Sanchez, Yates, Shaun King, Roethlisberger and Matt Ryan — have started playoff games, with Flacco, Sanchez, Yates, Roethlisberger and King winning their debuts.

My suspicion is the rookie passers won't flop. They might get beat, but they won't go meekly.

Yes, this is just the beginning of the postseason, and a win is no occasion to print T-shirts, but if you are getting under the velvet ropes into Round Two, you will have to be swinging some elbows. I don't see any gimmes, and I am speaking to the handicappers in the class, too. I don't think there are any free squares this year. Everyone has a chance to at least be competitive, which means landing on the right side is all the more difficult.

It's the price we pay for parity.

Mike Wilkening is PFW's handicapping columnist. Read his weekly picks column as well as other handicapping features at ProFootballWeekly.com. He can be reached at mwilkening@pfwmedia.com.

WILD-CARD PREVIEW

When the Bengals have the ball

Bengals QB Andy Dalton has been solid but not spectacular in his second season (27 TDs, 16 interceptions, 87.4 passer rating). He has a great rapport with one of the game's most dominant receivers, A.J. Green, but he sometimes takes unnecessary sacks and his accuracy can be streaky.

Green, who is almost unstoppable against single coverage, had a great battle against Texans CB Johnathan Joseph last year. However, Joseph has not maintained his Pro Bowl level, opening the door for running mate Kareem Jackson, who has blossomed in his third season, and nickel CB Brandon Harris, who is competitive but lacks discipline, to chip in. A key for Dalton will be getting his other pass catchers involved. Marvin Jones is athletic but inexperienced. Andrew Hawkins is deadly in space. TE Jermaine Gresham is a good athlete with playmaking skills.

Perhaps the biggest difference with this Bengals offense compared to last season is RB BenJarvus Green-Ellis (hamstring, check status). The "Law Firm" is a powerful, between-the-tackles runner whom the Bengals will use to test Houston's "D" up the middle.

Of course, in the middle is often where Cincinnati will find Defensive Player of the Year front-runner J.J. Watt (20½ sacks, 16 batted balls). Watt made the tide-turning play in the last meeting, picking off Dalton right before the half and rumbling 29 yards for a touchdown. Watt and fellow DE Antonio Smith (career-high seven sacks) will disrupt from different spots along the line.

BENGALS DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR 82 Jones* / 19 Tate / 88 Whalen
OLT 77 Whitworth / 73 Collins
OLG 65 Boling / 74 Roland
C 64 Cook / 66 Robinson*
ORG 68 Zeitler* / 66 Robinson*
ORT 71 Smith / 74 Roland
TE 84 Gresham / 80 Charles* / 89 Quinn
WR 18 Green / 16 Hawkins / 11 Sanzenbacher
QB 14 Dalton / 7 Gradkowski
RB 42 Green-Ellis / 40 Leonard / 30 Peerman / 34 Herron*
FB 32 Conner

DEFENSE

DLE 96 Dunlap / 91 Geathers
NT 94 Peko / 90 Sims / 79 Thompson*
DT 97 Atkins / 75 Still*
DRE 93 Mich. Johnson / 95 Gilberry
SLB 99 Lawson / 51 Skuta
MLB 58 Maualuga / 51 Skuta
WLB 55 Burfict* / 57 Rey / 59 Lamur*
LCB 23 Newman / 22 Clements / 37 Lewis-Harris*
RCB 29 Hall / 24 A. Jones / 25 Allen
SS 33 Crocker / 22 Clements / 26 Mays / 45 Miles
FS 20 Nelson / 43 Iloka*

SPECIALISTS

P 10 Huber
PK 3 J. Brown
H 10 Huber
PR 19 Tate / 24 A.Jones / 16 Hawkins / 82 M. Jones*
KR 19 Tate / 16 Hawkins / 82 M. Jones*
LS 46 Harris
* Rookie

BENGALS AT TEXANS

Saturday, Jan. 5, 2013 — 4:30 p.m. ET

LOCATION Reliant Stadium **TURF** Grass **MEETING OF THE YEAR** First

OVERVIEW

For the second year in a row, Cincinnati visits Houston in a wild-card playoff clash. The Texans defeated the Bengals 31-10 last January, with RB Arian Foster erupting for 153 yards and a pair of scores and then-rookie DLE J.J. Watt bursting onto the scene with a sack and pick-six of Bengals QB Andy Dalton.

Houston was the AFC's top seed before dropping three of its final four games to lose a bye week and fall to the No. 3 seed.

The Bengals, who won 7-of-8 games down the stretch, blowing a late nine-point lead to Dallas in its lone loss in this span, are making a second consecutive postseason appearance for the first time since 1981-82. The Bengals are 0-3 in the playoffs under Marvin Lewis.

These teams have a number of similarities, including two of the league's best receivers, two of the best defensive linemen and two of the best pass-rushing units.

THE MATCHUPS

CINCINNATI BENGALS | Advantage | **HOUSTON TEXANS**

Only one of A.J. Green's 11 TDs has come in the past six weeks.

QB ⇦ ⇨
RB ⇨
WR ⇦ ⇨
OL ⇨
DL ⇦ ⇨
LB ⇨
DB ⇨
ST ⇦
Coach ⇦ ⇨

Arian Foster has a career-high 351 carries this season.

10-6-0	Season record	12-4-0
8-7-1	Season record vs. spread	9-7-0
6-2-0	Home/road record	6-2-0
6-2-0	Home/road record vs. spread	5-3-0
6-1-0	Record on natural turf	10-2-0
6-1-0	Record on natural turf vs. spread	9-3-0

BENGALS SCHEDULE

Pointspread Refers to Cincinnati

DATE	OPPONENT	SPREAD	SCORE
Sept. 10	At Baltimore	(+7)	13-44
Sept. 16	Cleveland	(-7)	34-27
Sept. 23	At Washington	(+3)	38-31
Sept. 30	At Jacksonville	(+1.5)	27-10
Oct. 7	Miami	(-3)	13-17
Oct. 14	At Cleveland	(-2)	24-34
Oct. 21	Pittsburgh	(+1)	17-24
Oct. 28	BYE		
Nov. 4	Denver	(+5)	23-31
Nov. 11	New York Giants	(+3.5)	31-13
Nov. 18	At Kansas City	(-3)	28-6
Nov. 25	Oakland	(-7.5)	34-10
Dec. 2	At San Diego	(+1)	20-13
Dec. 9	Dallas	(-3.5)	19-20
Dec. 13	At Philadelphia	(-5)	34-13
Dec. 23	At Pittsburgh	(+3.5)	13-10
Dec. 30	Baltimore	(-6.5)	23-17
POSTSEASON			
Jan. 5	At Houston		

TEXANS SCHEDULE

Pointspread Refers to Houston

DATE	OPPONENT	SPREAD	SCORE
Sept. 9	Miami	(-13)	30-10
Sept. 16	At Jacksonville	(-6.5)	27-7
Sept. 23	At Denver	(-2)	31-25
Sept. 30	Tennessee	(-13)	38-14
Oct. 8	At New York Jets	(-9.5)	23-17
Oct. 14	Green Bay	(-4)	24-42
Oct. 21	Baltimore	(-6.5)	43-13
Oct. 28	BYE		
Nov. 4	Buffalo	(-11)	21-9
Nov. 11	At Chicago	(+1)	13-6
Nov. 18	Jacksonville	(-14.5)	43-37*
Nov. 22	At Detroit	(-3.5)	34-31*
Dec. 2	At Tennessee	(-6.5)	24-10
Dec. 10	At New England	(+5.5)	14-42
Dec. 16	Indianapolis	(-10.5)	29-17
Dec. 23	Minnesota	(-7.5)	6-23
Dec. 30	At Indianapolis	(-6.5)	16-28
POSTSEASON			
Jan. 5	Cincinnati		

* Overtime

When the Texans have the ball

At its best, the Texans' balanced offense is difficult to defend, but this group has been terrible over the past month. RBs Arian Foster and Ben Tate have not had clean running lanes, and QB Matt Schaub has been inconsistent and not dealt well with pressure. Houston's ground game is designed to stretch defenses horizontally, setting up the play-action and boot-action over the top and to the backside of the formation.

WR Andre Johnson had a long TD catch in last year's wild-card win over the Bengals but was less than 100 percent. He has been healthy this season and posted a career-high 1,598 receiving yards, including 12-141-0 in Week 17. TE Owen Daniels is Schaub's second favorite target, and FB James Casey and rookie WR DeVier Posey have shown flashes.

Much like Houston, the Bengals have an interior defender who has been unblockable at times: DT Geno Atkins (12½ sacks, four forced fumbles). Atkins is 6-1, 300 pounds, yet he has the kind of elite burst and explosion to be a game wrecker while also creating opportunities for his teammates. Texans undersized C Chris Myers and OGs Wade Smith and rookie Ben Jones will be called upon to contend with Atkins. DEs Michael Johnson (11½ sacks) and Carlos Dunlap (six sacks, four forced fumbles) can wreak havoc on the edges.

Cincinnati has made great strides in coverage as the season has progressed, with CB Leon Hall's play standing out. Veteran CB Terence Newman has been slowed by a groin injury (check status).

TEXANS DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR 80 Johnson / 18 Jean
OLT 76 Brown / 66 Gardner
OLG 74 W. Smith / 67 White
C 55 Myers / 60 Jones*
ORG 60 Jones* / 62 Caldwell / 79 Brooks*
ORT 75 Newton / 68 Harris
TE 81 Daniels / 88 Graham
WR 83 Walter / 82 Martin* / 11 Posey*
QB 8 Schaub / 13 Yates
RB 23 Foster / 44 Tate / 28 Forsett
FB 86 Casey / 40 Clutts

DEFENSE

DLE 99 Watt
NT 95 Cody / 92 Mitchell / 97 McClain
DRE 94 A. Smith / 93 Crick*
SLB 98 Barwin / 50 Braman / 58 Reed
MO 51 Sharpton / 52 Dobbins
MLB 53 James / 97 Ruud
WLB 59 Mercilus* / 57 Nading
LCB 25 K. Jackson / 22 Ball / 26 B. Harris
RCB 24 Joseph / 20 Carmichael / 30 Routt
SS 38 Manning / 27 Demps / 35 Pleasant*
FS 29 Quin / 31 Keo

SPECIALISTS

P 5 D. Jones
PK 17 Graham
H 5 D. Jones
PR 82 Martin*
KR 82 Martin*
LS 46 Weeks
* Rookie

WILD-CARD PREVIEW

When the Vikings have the ball

RB Adrian Peterson enters the second season hot on the heels of arguably the most remarkable regular season ever by a running back, considering the serious knee injury that shut him down late in 2011.

Peterson pummeled the Packers' defense with 210 rushing yards in Week 13, but two of Green Bay's best run defenders, ROLB Clay Matthews and DRE C.J. Wilson, sat out that game with injuries.

Matthews, who has been playing extremely well since returning from a hamstring injury that forced him to miss four games, and Wilson were back in the lineup in Week 17. But Peterson was still a near-unstoppable force, gaining 199 yards on a career-high 34 carries (5.9 avg.), in addition to catching a two-yard TD pass.

Green Bay's pass rush, which managed only one sack (by Matthews) in Week 17, will need to put more pressure on QB Christian Ponder, who has been very efficient in the last month since struggling mightily in the first game vs. the Packers (only one interception in the last four games, all wins). Key matchups in the trenches pit Matthews vs. rookie OLT Matt Kalil, who has excelled on pulls and screens, and NT B.J. Raji vs. underrated C John Sullivan.

Green Bay's "D" also can't afford to overlook either TE Kyle Rudolph, who is Ponder's favorite target with Percy Harvin out, or shifty fourth-round rookie WR Jarius Wright, who is being used like the Packers' multifaceted Randall Cobb. Wright had a TD and a team-high 65-yard catch in Week 17.

VIKINGS DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
WR 81 Simpson / 19 Aromashodu
OLT 75 Kalil*
OLG 74 Johnson / 78 Kropog
C 65 Sullivan / 61 Berger
ORG 63 Fusco / 76 Schwartz
ORT 71 Loadholt
TE 82 Rudolph / 89 Carlson / 40 Ellison*
WR 84 Jenkins / 17 Wright* / 11 S. Burton
QB 7 Ponder / 14 Webb / 4 Bethel-Thompson
RB 28 Peterson / 32 Gerhart / 48 Asiata
FB 42 Felton

DEFENSE
DLE 96 Robison / 91 D. Reed / 92 Johnson
NT 98 Guion / 90 Evans
UT 93 Williams / 99 Ballard
DRE 69 Allen / 97 Griffen
SLB 52 Greenway / 51 Dean
MLB 54 Brinkley / 57 Cole* / 58 McKenzie
WLB 50 Henderson / 55 Mitchell
LCB 26 Winfield / 21 Robinson* / 27 B. Burton
RCB 20 Cook / 24 Jefferson / 35 Sherels
SS 33 Sanford / 36 Blanton*
FS 22 H. Smith* / 41 Raymond / 34 Sendejo

SPECIALISTS
P 5 Kluwe
PK 3 Walsh*
H 5 Kluwe
PR 35 Sherels / 17 Wright* / 21 Robinson*
KR 35 Sherels
LS 46 Loeffler
* Rookie

VIKINGS AT PACKERS

Saturday, Jan. 5, 2013 — 8 p.m. ET

LOCATION Lambeau Field **TURF** Grass **MEETING OF THE YEAR** Third

OVERVIEW

After combining for 849 total yards in Minnesota's playoff-clinching 37-34 victory at the Metrodome in Week 17, a much different type of game could be in the offing at what could be a very frigid Lambeau Field on Saturday evening.

Finishing the regular season with four consecutive victories, the red-hot Vikings snapped Green Bay's 12-game win streak against divisional opponents when rookie PK Blair Walsh nailed a 29-yard field goal with no time remaining.

Vikings RB Adrian Peterson's 199-yard, two-TD performance that fell nine yards short of Eric Dickerson's single-season league rushing record was the featured attraction. But QB Christian Ponder also came up big for Minnesota, making amends for his sloppy two-interception outing in the Vikings' 23-14 loss to the Packers in Week 13 with an error-free, three-TD performance.

THE MATCHUPS

MINNESOTA VIKINGS | Advantage | **GREEN BAY PACKERS**

Adrian Peterson has rushed for 409 yards vs. Green Bay in '12.

QB ⇨
⇦ RB
WR ⇨
⇦ OL
⇦ DL
LB ⇨
DB ⇨
⇦ ST
Coach ⇨

ROLB Clay Matthews had the Packers' lone sack in Week 17.

10-6-0	Season record	11-5-0
8-7-1	Season record vs. spread	9-7-0
3-5-0	Home/road record	7-1-0
3-5-0	Home/road record vs. spread	5-3-0
1-3-0	Record on natural turf	9-1-0
1-3-0	Record on natural turf vs. spread	7-3-0

VIKINGS SCHEDULE
Pointspread Refers to Minnesota

DATE	OPPONENT	SPREAD	SCORE
Sept. 9	Jacksonville	(-3.5)	26-23*
Sept. 16	At Indianapolis	(-3)	20-23
Sept. 23	San Francisco	(+7)	24-13
Sept. 30	At Detroit	(+3.5)	20-13
Oct. 7	Tennessee	(-6)	30-7
Oct. 14	At Washington	(-2)	26-38
Oct. 21	Arizona	(-7)	21-14
Oct. 25	Tampa Bay	(-5.5)	17-36
Nov. 4	At Seattle	(+5)	20-30
Nov. 11	Detroit	(+3)	34-24
Nov. 18	BYE		
Nov. 25	At Chicago	(+6.5)	10-28
Dec. 2	At Green Bay	(+7)	14-23
Dec. 9	Chicago	(+1)	21-14
Dec. 16	At St. Louis	(+3)	36-22
Dec. 23	At Houston	(+7.5)	23-6
Dec. 30	Green Bay	(+3)	37-34
POSTSEASON			
Jan. 5	At Green Bay		

* Overtime

PACKERS SCHEDULE
Pointspread Refers to Green Bay

DATE	OPPONENT	SPREAD	SCORE
Sept. 9	San Francisco	(-6)	22-30
Sept. 13	Chicago	(-6)	23-10
Sept. 24	At Seattle	(-3.5)	12-14
Sept. 30	New Orleans	(-7.5)	28-27
Oct. 7	At Indianapolis	(-6.5)	27-30
Oct. 14	At Houston	(+4)	42-24
Oct. 21	At St. Louis	(-5)	30-20
Oct. 28	Jacksonville	(-15.5)	24-15
Nov. 4	Arizona	(-10.5)	31-17
Nov. 11	BYE		
Nov. 18	At Detroit	(-3)	24-20
Nov. 25	At New York Giants	(+2.5)	10-38
Dec. 2	Minnesota	(-7)	23-14
Dec. 9	Detroit	(-6.5)	27-20
Dec. 16	At Chicago	(-3)	21-13
Dec. 23	Tennessee	(-10.5)	55-7
Dec. 30	At Minnesota	(-3)	34-37
POSTSEASON			
Jan. 5	Minnesota		

When the Packers have the ball

Aside from a rare lost fumble, Packers QB Aaron Rodgers displayed MVP-type form in Week 17, throwing four TD passes (two to WR Greg Jennings) with zero interceptions and connected with four different receivers (Jennings, Jordy Nelson, James Jones and TE Jermichael Finley) for at least 62 receiving yards.

A Vikings secondary that might be without veteran CB Antoine Winfield, who left the Week 17 game after reinjuring a broken hand (check status), could have additional problems trying to contain WR Randall Cobb, who is a good bet to be back after sitting out the regular-season finale with an ankle injury (check status). Cobb had a team-leading 6-62 receiving in Week 13.

Green Bay OTs Marshall Newhouse and Don Barclay must do a much better job vs. Vikings DEs Brian Robison, Jared Allen and Everson Griffen, who combined for all five of the Vikings' sacks in Week 17 (three by Griffen).

After falling behind early in Week 17, the Packers abandoned a ground game that has been very effective lately with a host of different players making contributions. Street pickup DuJuan Harris, who was Green Bay's sole rushing threat last Sunday (14-70), figures to have a lot more company this Saturday from the likes of Ryan Grant, who had 80 rushing yards and two TDs at Lambeau Field in a Week 16 rout of the Titans, Alex Green and FB John Kuhn.

Finley, who has at least 60 receiving yards in five of the last seven games, figures to keep Vikings SS Jamarca Sanford on his toes.

PACKERS DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
WR 85 G. Jennings / 89 J. Jones / 11 Boykin*
OLT 74 Newhouse / 70 Lang
OLG 70 Lang / 62 Dietrich-Smith / 64 Van Roten*
C 62 Dietrich-Smith / 63 Saturday
ORG 71 Sitton / 62 Dietrich-Smith
ORT 67 Barclay* / 70 Lang
TE 88 Finley / 83 Crabtree / 84 D.J. Williams
WR 87 Nelson / 18 Cobb / 80 Driver / 10 Ross
QB 12 Rodgers / 6 Harrell
RB 20 Green / 25 Grant / 26 Harris / 44 Starks
FB 30 Kuhn

DEFENSE
DLE 79 Pickett / 96 Neal / 76 Daniels*
NT 90 Raji / 79 Pickett / 91 Miller
DRE 98 Wilson / 99 Worthy*
LOLB 93 Walden / 50 Zombo
BLB 50 Hawk / 49 Francois
MLB 59 B. Jones / 57 Lattimore / 56 Manning*
ROLB 52 Matthews / 54 Moses* / 57 Lattimore
LCB 38 T. Williams / 31 House / 24 Bush
RCB 37 Shields / 29 Hayward*
SS 42 Burnett / 21 Woodson
FS 43 M.D. Jennings / 22 McMillan*

SPECIALISTS
P 8 Masthay
PK 2 Crosby
H 8 Masthay / 18 Cobb
PR 18 Cobb / 38 T. Williams / 87 Nelson
KR 18 Cobb / 37 Shields / 87 Nelson
LS 61 Goode / 62 Dietrich-Smith
* Rookie

WILD-CARD PREVIEW

When the Colts have the ball

The Colts are extremely young and dangerous on offense. Rookie QB Andrew Luck has been superb, constantly elevating players around him, but he also has been mistake-prone away from Lucas Oil Stadium.

Coordinator Bruce Arians, who has vast knowledge of designing game plans against Baltimore from his eight years with the Steelers, runs the most vertical offense in the NFL. Luck often operates out of the shotgun, looking for his favorite target, veteran Reggie Wayne, who lines up all over the formation, and outside speed threats, Donnie Avery and rookie T.Y. Hilton (70-yard TD against Houston last week).

The Ravens will welcome back their emotional leader and future Hall of Famer, ILB Ray Lewis (triceps), who has missed the past 10 games. Baltimore no longer boasts a vaunted, shut-down defense, but it still has the firepower to make life miserable for a young QB and offense. After resting in Week 17, NT Haloti Ngata and OLB Terrell Suggs will be a key focus for the Colts to contain. They will need an extraordinary effort all across the line to give Luck as much time as possible. However, he has shown Ben Roethlisberger-like qualities in extending plays.

Rookie RB Vick Ballard is the top dog in the backfield. The Colts' offense operates at maximum efficiency when Ballard gets his touches. Rookie TEs Dwayne Allen and Coby Fleener also must be accounted for.

Baltimore's secondary is undermanned, but FS Ed Reed has had a Hall of Fame career outsmarting QBs.

COLTS DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	87 Wayne / 13 Hilton*
OLT	74 Castonzo / 60 Sowell*
OLG	76 Reitz / 72 Linkenbach / 73 Olsen
C	64 Satele / 62 Shipley
ORG	75 McGlynn / 78 Hills / 73 Olsen
ORT	69 Justice / 72 Linkenbach / 78 Hills
TE	80 Fleener* / 85 Saunders
F	83 Allen*
WR	11 Avery / 15 Brazill* / 10 Palmer*
QB	12 Luck* / 5 Stanton
RB	33 Ballard* / 37 Moore / 34 Carter / 36 Karim

DEFENSE

DLE	90 Redding / 67 Guy
NT	99 A. Johnson / 68 Tevaseu / 97 Heard
DRE	91 Matthews / 66 Geathers
SLB	98 Mathis / 92 J. Hughes
MIKE	53 Conner / 54 Harvey
WILL	50 Freeman / 51 Angerer / 58 Fokou
RUSH	93 Freeney / 97 Westerman
LCB	21 V. Davis / 32 Vaughn
RCB	20 Butler / 27 Gordy / 21 T. Williams
SS	28 Zbikowski / 38 S. Brown / 26 Howell*
FS	41 Bethea / 35 Lefeged

SPECIALISTS

P	1 McAfee
PK	4 Vinatieri
H	1 McAfee
PR	13 Hilton* / 15 Brazill* / 28 Zbikowski
KR	28 Zbikowski / 13 Hilton* / 15 Brazill*
LS	45 Overton

* Rookie

COLTS AT RAVENS

Sunday, Jan. 6, 2013 — 1 p.m. ET

LOCATION M&T Bank Stadium **TURF** Artificial **MEETING OF THE YEAR** First

OVERVIEW

The Colts' goal after head coach Chuck Pagano was diagnosed with leukemia in September was to extend the season long enough for Pagano to return. He did in Week 17, leading the Colts past the Texans. Pagano's return to Baltimore will be even sweeter, after he cut his teeth as secondary coach and defensive coordinator for the Ravens from 2008-11.

Ravens offensive coordinator Jim Caldwell also will be motivated to call plays against the team that fired him last year.

The Colts enter the playoffs on a high note, having won 9-of-11. The Ravens are limping into the postseason, losers of 4-of-5. However, they rested most of their key starters in a 23-17 loss to the Bengals in the regular-season finale.

The Colts have won both playoff meetings between these teams, most recently in '09 when they won 20-3 in the divisional round on their way to Super Bowl XLIV.

THE MATCHUPS

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS | Advantage | **BALTIMORE RAVENS**

Andrew Luck tied for second in the NFL with 18 interceptions.

QB ⇦ ⇨
RB ⇨
WR ⇦ ⇨
OL ⇨
DL ⇨
LB ⇦
DB ⇦ ⇨
ST ⇨
Coach ⇨

Ed Reed is the active career leader with 61 interceptions.

11-5-0	Season record	10-6-0
11-5-0	Season record vs. spread	7-8-1
4-4-0	Home/road record	6-2-0
4-4-0	Home/road record vs. spread	3-5-0
8-3-0	Record on artificial turf	6-3-0
8-3-0	Record on artificial turf vs. spread	3-6-0

COLTS SCHEDULE

Pointspread Refers to Indianapolis

DATE	OPPONENT	SPREAD	SCORE
Sept. 9	At Chicago	(+10)	21-41
Sept. 16	Minnesota	(+3)	23-20
Sept. 23	Jacksonville	(-3)	17-22
Sept. 30	BYE		
Oct. 7	Green Bay	(+6.5)	30-27
Oct. 14	At New York Jets	(+3.5)	9-35
Oct. 21	Cleveland	(-1)	17-13
Oct. 28	At Tennessee	(+3.5)	19-13*
Nov. 4	Miami	(+2.5)	23-20
Nov. 8	At Jacksonville	(-3)	27-10
Nov. 18	At New England	(+10)	24-59
Nov. 25	Buffalo	(-2)	20-13
Dec. 2	At Detroit	(+7)	35-33
Dec. 9	Tennessee	(-3.5)	27-23
Dec. 16	At Houston	(+10.5)	17-29
Dec. 23	At Kansas City	(-5)	20-13
Dec. 30	Houston	(+6.5)	28-16
POSTSEASON			
Jan. 6	At Baltimore		

* Overtime

RAVENS SCHEDULE

Pointspread Refers to Baltimore

DATE	OPPONENT	SPREAD	SCORE
Sept. 10	Cincinnati	(-7)	44-13
Sept. 16	At Philadelphia	(+3)	23-24
Sept. 23	New England	(-2.5)	31-30
Sept. 27	Cleveland	(-11)	23-16
Oct. 7	At Kansas City	(-6)	9-6
Oct. 14	Dallas	(-3)	31-29
Oct. 21	At Houston	(+6.5)	13-43
Oct. 28	BYE		
Nov. 4	At Cleveland	(-3.5)	25-15
Nov. 11	Oakland	(-7.5)	55-20
Nov. 18	At Pittsburgh	(-3)	13-10
Nov. 25	At San Diego	(-1)	16-13*
Dec. 2	Pittsburgh	(-7)	20-23
Dec. 9	At Washington	(+2.5)	28-31*
Dec. 16	Denver	(+3)	17-34
Dec. 23	New York Giants	(+2.5)	33-14
Dec. 30	At Cincinnati	(+6.5)	17-23
POSTSEASON			
Jan. 6	Indianapolis		

* Overtime

When the Ravens have the ball

QB Joe Flacco has won five playoff games in his first four seasons, yet his up-and-down play remains an issue for the Ravens. Flacco definitely can be rattled under pressure, making the matchups between OLT Michael Oher and Colts OLB Dwight Freeney and ORT Kelechi Osemele and OLB Robert Mathis a major focal point. Freeney's numbers are pedestrian, but he has come on strong lately. Chuck Pagano is likely to have some exotic pressure packages up his sleeve for Flacco.

The Colts have had trouble defending the edges against the run. Former Ravens DLE Cory Redding and ILBs Kavell Conner, Pat Angerer and Jerrell Freeman will have to be disciplined and physical against Ravens RB Ray Rice, who can hurt opponents in many ways — when he is properly utilized. This will be just Jim Caldwell's fourth game calling plays, so this is not a group that is necessarily fully in sync.

Flacco has nice weapons in the passing game, beginning with WR Torrey Smith, who can take the top off the defense while also outjumping defensive backs when the ball is in the air. Trusted veteran Anquan Boldin is a good intermediate and third-down target. TE Dennis Pitta has developed a strong rapport with Flacco.

The Colts rely on a lot of man coverage from RCB Vontae Davis (three picks the past two weeks) and LCB Cassius Vaughn. Darius Butler works in the slot. Although the Colts have struggled to create turnovers, this is a fearless group of playmakers at corner whose best play has come in recent weeks.

RAVENS DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	82 T. Smith / 12 J. Jones / 16 D. Reed
OLT	74 Oher / 78 McKinnie
OLG	76 Reid / 63 B. Williams / 70 Harewood
C	77 Birk / 66 Gradkowski*
ORG	73 Yanda / 63 B. Williams
ORT	72 Osemele* / 76 Reid
TE	88 Pitta / 84 Dickson / 86 Bajema
WR	81 Boldin / 17 Doss / 83 Thompson*
QB	5 Flacco / 2 Taylor
RB	27 Rice / 30 Pierce* / 35 Allen
FB	44 Leach

DEFENSE

DT	92 Ngata / 95 Hall*
NT	62 Cody / 96 Kemoeatu
DE	90 McPhee / 97 Jones / 93 Tyson*
RUSH	55 Suggs / 99 Kruger / 54 Hamilton*
WILL	59 Ellerbe / 51 Ayanbadejo
MIKE	52 Lewis / 56 Bynes* / 51 Ayanbadejo
SAM	91 Upshaw* / 50 McClellan
LCB	24 Graham / 22 Smith / 39 C. Johnson
RCB	29 Ca. Williams / 23 C. Brown
SS	31 Pollard / 32 Ihedigbo
FS	20 E. Reed / 37 Considine / 38 O. Brown*

SPECIALISTS

P	4 Koch
PK	9 Tucker*
H	4 Koch
KR	12 Jones / 83 Thompson* / 35 Allen / 16 Reed
PR	12 J. Jones / 17 Doss / 20 Reed
LS	46 Cox

* Rookie

WILD-CARD PREVIEW

When the Seahawks have the ball

All season long, the Seahawks have leaned on RB Marshawn Lynch. But the team started getting hot when QB Russell Wilson hit his groove. After a stretch when Wilson and his receivers appeared to lack chemistry, they got on the same page, and the passing attack finally hit its stride. This might not be the top big-play offense in the playoffs, but it has been very effective of late.

Since losing to the 49ers in Week Seven and turning in one of his worst performances of the season, Wilson has hit on at least two-thirds of his passes in five of the past nine games and has gained 7.9 yards or more per attempt in seven of those nine games.

What makes the Seahawks dangerous is that several players can beat you. WRs Golden Tate and Sidney Rice might be the big-play guys, but in each of the past four victories, no Seahawk caught more than four passes. Still, that hasn't prevented TE Zach Miller and WR Doug Baldwin from stepping up after slow starts.

The Redskins will pressure Wilson, and he was sacked six times in Week 17. They like to attack but might not blitz him as much as they did Cowboys QB Tony Romo in the regular-season finale because of Wilson's scrambling ability.

The Seahawks have leaned on Lynch, and the Redskins must tackle more surely than they did in Week 17, when DeMarco Murray and Felix Jones both ran well. Lynch can break tackles, make ankle-breaking cuts and gain more than what his solid offensive line — led by OLT Russell Okung and C Max Unger — blocks for him.

SEAHAWKS DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR 18 Rice / 89 Baldwin / 11 Kearse*
OLT 76 Okung / 65 Omiyale
OLG 74 Moffitt / 64 Sweezy* / 63 R. Johnson*
C 60 Unger / 61 Jeanpierre
ORG 67 McQuistan / 64 Sweezy*
ORT 68 Giacomini / 65 Omiyale / 75 Person
TE 86 Miller / 85 A. McCoy / 84 McGrath*
WR 81 Tate / 10 Butler
QB 3 Wilson* / 15 Flynn
RB 24 Lynch / 22 Turbin* / 33 Washington
FB 26 Robinson

DEFENSE

DLE 79 Bryant / 98 Scruggs*
DLT 99 Branch / 94 Howard*
DRT 92 Mebane / 69 McDonald
DRE 91 Clemons / 51 Irvin*
OLB 56 Hill / 53 Smith
MLB 54 Wagner* / 55 Farwell
OLB 50 Wright / 48 Morgan
LCB 25 Sherman / 23 Trufant / 41 Maxwell
RCB 28 Thurmond / 37 Lane* / 35 Shead*
SS 31 Chancellor / 32 J. Johnson / 27 Guy*
FS 29 Thomas / 42 Maragos

SPECIALISTS

P 9 Ryan
PK 4 Hauschka
H 9 Ryan
PR 33 Washington / 81 Tate
KR 33 Washington / 81 Tate
LS 49 Gresham
* Rookie

SEAHAWKS AT REDSKINS

Sunday, Jan. 6, 2013 — 4:30 p.m. ET

LOCATION FedEx Field **TURF** Grass **MEETING OF THE YEAR** First

OVERVIEW

In the wild-card weekend's final game, we have a terrific battle of rookie quarterbacks who can throw and run. It could come down to which defense can make the most game-changing plays and can slow down these fantastic playmakers.

Robert Griffin III has been a franchise changer for the Redskins, mixing a blend of athleticism, guile, arm strength and confidence. The Redskins have rallied around that latter characteristic in winning seven consecutive games to capture their first division title since 1999.

Meanwhile, fellow rookie Russell Wilson might not have entered the NFL with the same hoopla, but his play down the stretch has been as impressive, and his ascension has mirrored that of the Seahawks, who have won five in a row.

The last time these teams played, in 2011, Rex Grossman and Tarvaris Jackson were the QBs. My, how much has changed.

THE MATCHUPS

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS	Advantage	WASHINGTON REDSKINS
	QB	
	RB	
	WR	
	OL	
	DL	
	LB	
	DB	
	ST	
	Coach	

Marshawn Lynch gained a career-high 1,590 yards in '12.

Alfred Morris set a Redskins rookie record with 1,613 yards.

11-5-0	Season record	10-6-0
11-5-0	Season record vs. spread	11-5-0
3-5-0	Home/road record	5-3-0
4-4-0	Home/road record vs. spread	5-3-0
2-3-0	Record on natural turf	8-4-0
3-2-0	Record on natural turf vs. spread	8-4-0

SEAHAWKS SCHEDULE

Pointspread Refers to Seattle

DATE	OPPONENT	SPREAD	SCORE
Sept. 9	At Arizona	(-3)	16-20
Sept. 16	Dallas	(+3)	27-7
Sept. 24	Green Bay	(+3.5)	14-12
Sept. 30	At St. Louis	(-2)	13-19
Oct. 7	At Carolina	(+1.5)	16-12
Oct. 14	New England	(+4.5)	24-23
Oct. 18	At San Francisco	(+7.5)	6-13
Oct. 28	At Detroit	(+2.5)	24-28
Nov. 4	Minnesota	(-5)	30-20
Nov. 11	New York Jets	(-5)	28-7
Nov. 18	BYE		
Nov. 25	At Miami	(-3)	21-24
Dec. 2	At Chicago	(+3)	23-17*
Dec. 9	Arizona	(-10)	58-0
Dec. 16	At Buffalo	(-4.5)	50-17
Dec. 23	San Francisco	(-2.5)	42-13
Dec. 30	St. Louis	(-11)	20-13
POSTSEASON			
Jan. 6	At Washington		

* Overtime

REDSKINS SCHEDULE

Pointspread Refers to Washington

DATE	OPPONENT	SPREAD	SCORE
Sept. 9	At New Orleans	(+8.5)	40-32
Sept. 16	At St. Louis	(-4)	28-31
Sept. 23	Cincinnati	(-3)	31-38
Sept. 30	At Tampa Bay	(+2.5)	24-22
Oct. 7	Atlanta	(+3)	17-24
Oct. 14	Minnesota	(+2)	38-26
Oct. 21	At New York Giants	(+6.5)	23-27
Oct. 28	At Pittsburgh	(+5)	12-27
Nov. 4	Carolina	(-3)	13-21
Nov. 11	BYE		
Nov. 18	Philadelphia	(-3.5)	31-6
Nov. 22	At Dallas	(+3.5)	38-31
Dec. 3	New York Giants	(+3)	17-16
Dec. 9	Baltimore	(-2.5)	31-28*
Dec. 16	At Cleveland	(+4.5)	38-21
Dec. 23	At Philadelphia	(-4)	27-20
Dec. 30	Dallas	(-3)	28-18
POSTSEASON			
Jan. 6	Seattle		

* Overtime

When the Redskins have the ball

Robert Griffin III has been a revelation, but the Redskins would not be in the postseason without RB Alfred Morris. His powerful, downhill, one-cut style has been a perfect fit in the Mike Shanahan zone series, and Morris has carried the Redskins' rushing game while Griffin has been limited by the knee sprain he has played through the past two weeks.

Only a handful of teams have had success rushing against the Seahawks, who set the edge well, dominate up front and keep their lanes pretty well (with some exceptions lately as they get more aggressive). But the teams that have run well against them, such as the Vikings, 49ers and Dolphins, have done so with a commitment to the run. The Seahawks can be worn down a little by a patient approach.

Griffin's lateral movement has been compromised, and the read-option game they like to run hasn't been as effective lately. But Griffin scored on a keeper last week and still appears to be able to make plays when needed. The Seahawks must read their keys and not fall for the play-action fakes that make the 'Skins' passing game so dangerous.

WR Pierre Garcon is the biggest weapon. He's just as likely to take a three-yard slant as he is to catch a 20-yard deep in-route. The rest of the receiving duties are split up among Santana Moss, Josh Morgan, Leonard Hankerson and others.

The Seahawks' secondary might be the finest in the NFL. They play a ton of man defense, press at the line and feed off the pressure the front four can — occasionally — provide. The Redskins must get the ball out quickly.

REDSKINS DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR 15 Morgan / 89 Moss / 19 Briscoe
OLT 71 T. Williams / 79 Hurt / 68 Compton*
OLG 78 Lichtensteiger / 67 LeRibeus*
C 63 Montgomery
ORG 66 Chester / 73 Gettis*
ORT 74 Polumbus
TE 82 Paulsen / 84 Paul / 47 Cooley
WR 88 Garcon / 85 Hankerson / 11 Robinson
QB 10 R. Griffin* / 12 Cousins* / 8 Grossman
RB 46 Morris* / 22 Royster / 25 K. Williams
FB 36 Young

DEFENSE

DLE 99 Jenkins / 90 Worthington
NT 96 Cofield / 92 Baker
DRE 72 Bowen / 64 Golston
LOLB 53 Kerrigan / 58 So'oto
MLB 59 Fletcher / 97 Alexander
JLB 56 Riley / 53 Kehl / 55 Muckelroy
ROLB 50 R. Jackson / 51 C. Wilson
LCB 23 Hall / 45 Murphy
RCB 26 J. Wilson / 39 Crawford* / 30 Johnson
SS 37 Doughty / 24 Gomes
FS 41 M. Williams / 32 Pugh

SPECIALISTS

P 6 Rocca
PK 2 Forbath
H 6 Rocca / 8 Grossman
PR 16 Banks / 39 Crawford*
KR 16 Banks / 84 Paul / 11 A. Robinson
LS 57 Sundberg
* Rookie

NFL STANDINGS WEEK 17

AFC

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIVISION			CONF		
z-New England	12	4	0	.750	557	331	6	0	0	11	1	0
Miami	7	9	0	.438	288	317	2	4	0	5	7	0
Buffalo	6	10	0	.375	344	435	2	4	0	5	7	0
New York Jets	6	10	0	.375	281	375	2	4	0	4	8	0

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIVISION			CONF		
z-Baltimore	10	6	0	.625	398	344	4	2	0	8	4	0
y-Cincinnati	10	6	0	.625	391	320	3	3	0	7	5	0
Pittsburgh	8	8	0	.500	336	314	3	3	0	5	7	0
Cleveland	5	11	0	.313	302	368	2	4	0	5	7	0

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIVISION			CONF		
z-Houston	12	4	0	.750	416	331	5	1	0	10	2	0
y-Indianapolis	11	5	0	.688	357	387	4	2	0	8	4	0
Tennessee	6	10	0	.375	330	471	1	5	0	5	7	0
Jacksonville	2	14	0	.125	255	444	2	4	0	2	10	0

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIVISION			CONF		
z-Denver	13	3	0	.813	481	289	6	0	0	10	2	0
San Diego	7	9	0	.438	350	350	4	2	0	7	5	0
Oakland	4	12	0	.250	290	443	2	4	0	4	8	0
Kansas City	2	14	0	.125	211	425	0	6	0	0	12	0

z — clinched division title; y — clinched wild-card berth.

WEEK 17 RESULTS

Tampa Bay 22, Atlanta 17
Buffalo 28, New York Jets 9
Cincinnati 23, Baltimore 17
Chicago 26, Detroit 24
Indianapolis 28, Houston 16
Carolina 44, New Orleans 38
New York Giants 42, Philadelphia 7
Pittsburgh 24, Cleveland 10
Tennessee 38, Jacksonville 20
Minnesota 37, Green Bay 34
New England 28, Miami 0
Denver 38, Kansas City 3
San Diego 24, Oakland 21
San Francisco 27, Arizona 13
Seattle 20, St. Louis 13
Washington 28, Dallas 18

WILD-CARD MATCHUPS

ALL TIMES EASTERN
Cincinnati at Houston, 4:30 p.m. (Sat.)
Minnesota at Green Bay, 8 p.m. (Sat.)
Indianapolis at Baltimore, 1 p.m. (Sun.)
Seattle at Washington, 4:30 p.m. (Sun.)

NFC

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIVISION			CONF		
z-Washington	10	6	0	.625	436	388	5	1	0	8	4	0
New York Giants	9	7	0	.563	429	344	3	3	0	8	4	0
Dallas	8	8	0	.500	376	400	3	3	0	5	7	0
Philadelphia	4	12	0	.250	280	444	1	5	0	2	10	0

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIVISION			CONF		
z-Green Bay	11	5	0	.688	433	336	5	1	0	8	4	0
y-Minnesota	10	6	0	.625	379	348	4	2	0	7	5	0
Chicago	10	6	0	.625	375	277	3	3	0	7	5	0
Detroit	4	12	0	.250	372	437	0	6	0	3	9	0

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIVISION			CONF		
z-Atlanta	13	3	0	.813	419	299	3	3	0	9	3	0
New Orleans	7	9	0	.438	461	454	3	3	0	5	7	0
Carolina	7	9	0	.438	357	363	3	3	0	5	7	0
Tampa Bay	7	9	0	.438	389	394	3	3	0	4	8	0

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIVISION			CONF		
z-San Francisco	11	4	1	.719	397	273	3	2	1	7	4	1
y-Seattle	11	5	0	.688	412	245	3	3	0	8	4	0
St. Louis	7	8	1	.469	299	348	4	1	1	6	5	1
Arizona	5	11	0	.313	250	357	1	5	0	3	9	0

z — clinched division title; y — clinched wild-card berth.

LINE OF THE WEEK

Terrelle Pryor • QB • Oakland Raiders

Pryor completed a mere 46 percent of his passes in his first start, and not too much should be made of the non-playoff "D" he faced. But Pryor got going after a slow start, ran well (9-49-1 rushing) and got the Raiders back in gear after a blocked punt changed momentum. Pryor's performance wasn't pretty, but he did give himself a chance to be considered for the starting job next season with Carson Palmer's future in doubt.

OPPONENT	CMP.	ATT.	YDS.	TD	INT
Chargers	13	28	150	2	1

TEAM ON THE RISE

Minnesota Vikings

How many times this season has it appeared as if the Vikings were going to fade from postseason contention? It didn't happen as they won four consecutive games to finish the regular season at 10-6 and earn the No. 6 seed in the NFC playoffs. Naturally, RB Adrian Peterson's run toward the record books was a big reason why. But improved play from QB Christian Ponder and the defense were just as deserving considerations. The Vikings toppled the Packers in Week 17 with a last-second Blair Walsh (who also has been huge) field goal that set up a playoff matchup with ... the Packers.

TEAM ON THE DECLINE

Chicago Bears

The Bears beat the Lions in Week 17 and then had to wait to see what the Vikings did. That was punishment for starting the season 7-1 but losing five of their final eight games and finishing third in the NFC North. And though the Bears finished the season with a 10-6 record, missing the postseason has started the questions about head coach Lovie Smith's place with the team. QB Jay Cutler took his portion of the blame, the short-yardage run game broke down, and the defense, which allowed 21 or more points in four of the final five games, didn't finish the job.

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK

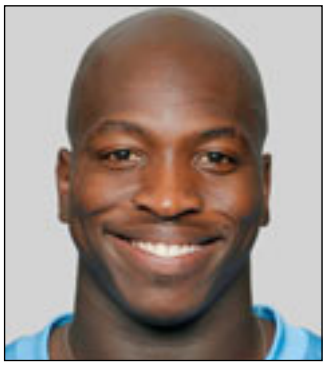
Alfred Morris • RB • Washington Redskins

He was among the deserving players left off the NFC Pro Bowl roster, but Morris certainly looked like he belonged in Week 17. The Redskins' rookie running back had 33 carries for 200 yards (6.1 average) and three touchdowns in an NFC East-title clinching 28-18 win over the Cowboys. "I could never imagine coming in here my rookie year and doing what I've been able to do," said Morris, a sixth-round pick from Florida Atlantic. "It's better than my wildest dreams." He set the Redskins' single-season rushing record with the former record holder, Clinton Portis, on hand to watch Morris make history. Each time the Cowboys struck, Morris had an answer, including in the fourth quarter, when he responded to each score by Dallas with a touchdown run, including a game-icing, one-yard plunge with 1:09 left in the game.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Everson Griffen • DE • Minnesota Vikings

A week after he made his first career start, Griffen recorded a career-high three sacks in Minnesota's wild-card-clinching playoff win over Green Bay. He delivered four hits on Packers QB Aaron Rodgers with a playoff spot on the line for the Vikings, who would have had their season end with a loss. It was another very positive sign from Griffen, who has been delivering quite a few of them in his third season. There were questions about his discipline and mental makeup after he didn't interview well at the NFL Scouting Combine in 2010, and those questions appeared to be very much justified when he was arrested twice in three days in late January 2011. The Vikings say Griffen has done a lot of growing up this season, though, and his future is looking as bright as ever after Week 17.



SPECIAL-TEAMS PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Darius Reynaud • RS • Tennessee Titans

It was a disappointing season for Tennessee, but Reynaud was among the Titans that made sure it ended on a high note with a 38-20 win over the Jaguars. The game was tied at 14 in the final minute of the first half when Reynaud broke free on a 69-yard punt return for a touchdown. He didn't cool off at halftime. The fourth-year veteran returned a punt 81 yards for a score less than two minutes into the third quarter. Tennessee didn't need much from its offense Sunday — Reynaud's touchdowns were bookended by interception returns for TDs by Titans LB Zach Brown, as the Titans became first team in league history to have two players score twice on returns. They did it all in about a five-minute span of game time, and Reynaud's 160 yards on punt returns set a franchise record.

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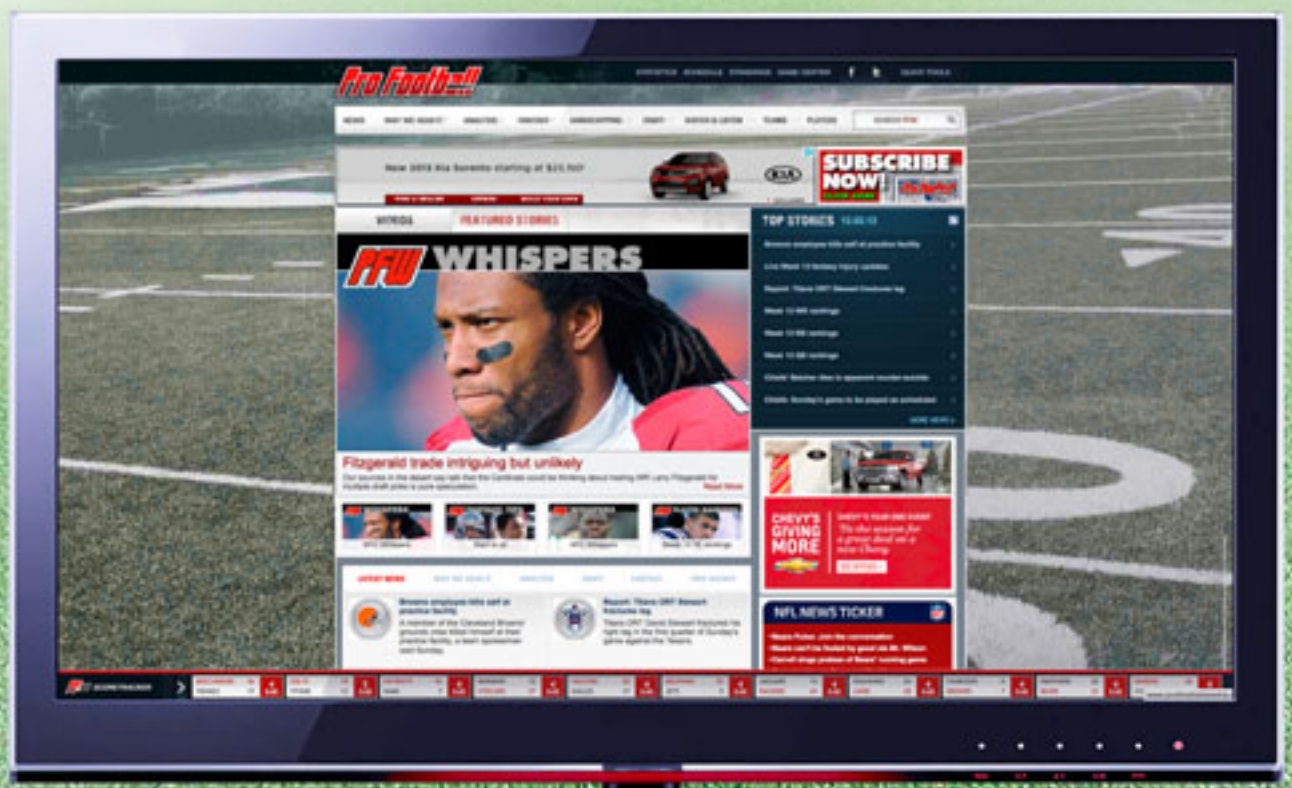

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AFC INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING

Player	Team	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Charles	K.C.	285	1,509	5.3	91	5
Foster	Hou.	351	1,424	4.1	46	15
Ridley	N.E.	290	1,263	4.4	41	12
Spiller	Buff.	207	1,244	6.0	62	6
C. Johnson	Ten.	276	1,243	4.5	94	6
Rice	Balt.	257	1,143	4.4	46	9
Green-Ellis	Cin.	278	1,094	3.9	48	6
Greene	N.Y.J.	276	1,063	3.9	36	8
Bush	Mia.	227	986	4.3	65	6
Richardson	Clev.	267	950	3.6	32	11
Ballard	Ind.	211	814	3.9	26	2
McGahee	Den.	167	731	4.4	31	4
McFadden	Oak.	216	707	3.3	64	2
Mathews	S.D.	184	707	3.8	31	1
Dwyer	Pitt.	156	623	4.0	34	2
Pierce	Balt.	108	532	4.9	78	1
Moreno	Den.	139	528	3.8	20	4
Powell	N.Y.J.	110	437	4.0	18	4
F. Jackson	Buff.	115	437	3.8	15	3
D. Brown	Ind.	108	417	3.9	19	1
Jones-Drew	Jax.	86	414	4.8	59	1
Redman	Pitt.	110	410	3.7	28	2
Forsett	Hou.	63	374	5.9	81	1
Hillman	Den.	84	327	3.9	31	1
Thomas	Mia.	91	325	3.6	20	4
Battle	S.D.	95	311	3.3	52	3
Hillis	K.C.	85	309	3.6	18	1
Woodhead	N.E.	76	301	4.0	19	4
Locker	Ten.	41	291	7.1	32	1
Jennings	Jax.	101	283	2.8	21	2
Tate	Hou.	65	279	4.3	25	2
Bolden	N.E.	56	274	4.9	27	2
Hardesty	Clev.	65	271	4.2	25	1
Reece	Oak.	59	271	4.6	17	0
Peerman	Cin.	36	258	7.2	48	1
Luck	Ind.	62	255	4.1	19	5
Vereen	N.E.	62	251	4.0	16	3
L. Miller	Mia.	51	250	4.9	28	1
Draughn	K.C.	59	233	3.9	25	2
Goodson	Oak.	35	221	6.3	43	0
R. Brown	S.D.	46	220	4.8	21	0
Tannehill	Mia.	49	211	4.3	31	2

RECEIVING

Player	Team	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Welker	N.E.	118	1,354	11.5	59	6
A. Johnson	Hou.	112	1,598	14.3	60	4
Wayne	Ind.	106	1,355	12.8	33	5
Green	Cin.	97	1,350	13.9	73	11
D. Thomas	Den.	94	1,434	15.3	71	10
Decker	Den.	85	1,064	12.5	55	13
St. Johnson	Buff.	79	1,046	13.2	63	6
Myers	Oak.	79	806	10.2	29	4
Hartline	Mia.	74	1,083	14.6	80	1
Lloyd	N.E.	74	911	12.3	53	4
Miller	Pitt.	71	816	11.5	43	8
A. Brown	Pitt.	66	787	11.9	60	5
Boldin	Balt.	65	921	14.2	43	4
Blackmon	Jax.	64	865	13.5	81	5
Wallace	Pitt.	64	836	13.1	82	8
Gresham	Cin.	64	737	11.5	55	5
Wright	Ten.	64	626	9.8	38	4
Daniels	Hou.	62	716	11.5	39	6
Bess	Mia.	61	778	12.8	39	1
Pitta	Balt.	61	669	11.0	61	7
Rice	Balt.	61	478	7.8	43	1
Avery	Ind.	60	781	13.0	48	3
Bowe	K.C.	59	801	13.6	47	3
Kerley	N.Y.J.	56	827	14.8	66	2
Floyd	S.D.	56	814	14.5	39	5
Shorts	Jax.	55	979	17.8	80	7
R. Gronkowski	N.E.	55	790	14.4	41	11
Little	Clev.	53	647	12.2	43	4
Tamme	Den.	52	555	10.7	36	2
Lewis	Jax.	52	540	10.4	26	4
Reece	Oak.	52	496	9.5	56	1
McCluster	K.C.	52	452	8.7	31	1
Moore	Oak.	51	741	14.5	58	7
Hawkins	Cin.	51	533	10.5	59	4
Hernandez	N.E.	51	483	9.5	31	5
Richardson	Clev.	51	367	7.2	27	1
Hilton	Ind.	50	861	17.2	70	7
Gordon	Clev.	50	805	16.1	71	5
T. Smith	Balt.	49	855	17.4	54	8
Gates	S.D.	49	538	11.0	34	7
Watson	Clev.	49	501	10.2	27	3
R. Brown	S.D.	49	371	7.6	25	0
Washington	Ten.	46	746	16.2	71	4
Britt	Ten.	45	589	13.1	46	4
Stokley	Den.	45	544	12.1	38	5
Allen	Ind.	45	521	11.6	40	3
Sanders	Pitt.	44	626	14.2	37	1
Cook	Ten.	44	523	11.9	61	4
Chandler	Buff.	43	571	13.3	43	6
Spiller	Buff.	43	459	10.7	66	2
McFadden	Oak.	42	258	6.1	20	1
Heyward-Bey	Oak.	41	606	14.8	59	5
Walter	Hou.	41	518	12.6	52	2
Jones	Buff.	41	443	10.8	68	4
Dreessen	Den.	41	356	8.7	30	5
Fasano	Mia.	41	332	8.1	22	5
Woodhead	N.E.	40	446	11.2	25	3
Foster	Hou.	40	217	5.4	23	2
Streater	Oak.	39	584	15.0	64	3
Mathews	S.D.	39	252	6.5	24	0
Alexander	S.D.	37	658	17.8	80	7
C. Johnson	Ten.	36	232	6.4	22	0
Bush	Mia.	35	292	8.3	25	2
Charles	K.C.	35	236	6.7	22	1
Casey	Hou.	34	330	9.7	30	3
F. Jackson	Buff.	34	217	6.4	34	1
Moeaki	K.C.	33	453	13.7	38	1
Graham	Buff.	31	322	10.4	51	1
J. Jones	Balt.	30	406	13.5	47	1
D. Williams	Ten.	30	324	10.8	27	0
Cumberland	N.Y.J.	29	359	12.4	39	3
Keller	N.Y.J.	28	317	11.3	32	2
Schilens	N.Y.J.	28	289	10.3	25	2
G. Graham	Hou.	28	263	9.4	27	3
Fleener	Ind.	26	281	10.8	26	2
McGahee	Den.	26	221	8.5	31	0
Binns	Mia.	24	287	12.0	48	1
Robinson	Jax.	24	252	10.5	32	0
Ogbonnaya	Clev.	24	187	7.8	38	0
Draughn	K.C.	24	158	6.6	23	0
Stevens	Ten.	23	275	12.0	46	1
Shipley	Jax.	23	244	10.6	36	1
Royal	S.D.	23	234	10.2	31	1
Spurlock	S.D.	23	200	8.7	22	1
Green-Ellis	Cin.	22	104	4.7	13	0
S. Hill	N.Y.J.	21	252	12.0	33	3
Edelman	N.E.	21	235	11.2	56	3
Dickson	Balt.	21	225	10.7	40	0
Moreno	Den.	21	167	8.0	26	0
Leach	Balt.	21	143	6.8	18	0
Baldwin	K.C.	20	325	16.3	57	1
Holmes	N.Y.J.	20	272	13.6	38	1
Hagan	Oak.	20	259	13.0	38	0
Cameron	Clev.	20	226	11.3	28	1
Redman	Pitt.	19	244	12.8	55	0
Greene	N.Y.J.	19	151	7.9	30	0
Jennings	Jax.	19	130	6.8	26	0
Benjamin	Clev.	18	298	16.6	69	2
Clay	Mia.	18	212	11.8	31	2
M. Jones	Cin.	18	201	11.2	23	1
Edwards	N.Y.J.	18	199	11.1	19	1
Dwyer	Pitt.	18	106	5.9	15	0
Massaquoi	Clev.	17	254	14.9	54	0
Cotchery	Pitt.	17	205	12.1	24	0
Ballard	Ind.	17	152	8.9	19	1
Powell	N.Y.J.	17	140	8.2	16	0
Gates	N.Y.J.	16	224	14.0	42	0
Goodson	Oak.	16	195	12.2	64	1
Sanu	Cin.	16	154	9.6	34	4
Criner	Oak.	16	151	9.4	17	1
Branch	N.E.	16	145	9.1	25	0
Thomas	Mia.	15	156	10.4	32	0
W. Johnson	Pitt.	15	137	9.1	26	1
Battle	S.D.	15	108	7.2	18	1
Meachem	S.D.	14	207	14.8	46	2
B. Smith	Buff.	14	152	10.9	35	2
Jones-Drew	Jax.	14	86	6.1	13	1
Rainey	Pitt.	14	60	4.3	14	0
Tate	Cin.	13	211	16.2	44	1
Norwood	Clev.	13	137	10.5	27	0
A. Smith	Clev.	13	47	3.6	17	0

PASSING

Player	Team	Att	Comp	Comp Pct	Yds	TD	TD Pct	Lg	Int	Int Pct	Avg Gain	Rating
Manning	Den.	583	400	68.6	4,659	37	6.3	71	11	1.9	7.99	105.8
Brady	N.E.	637	401	63.0	4,827	34	5.3	83	8	1.3	7.58	98.7
Roethlisberger	Pitt.	449	284	63.3	3,265	26	5.8	82	8	1.8	7.27	97.0
Schaub	Hou.	544	350	64.3	4,008	22	4.0	60	12	2.2	7.37	90.7
Rivers	S.D.	527	338	64.1	3,606	26	4.9	80	15	2.8	6.84	88.6
Flacco	Balt.	531	317	59.7	3,817	22	4.1	61	10	1.9	7.19	87.7
Dalton	Cin.	528	329	62.3	3,669	27	5.1	59	16	3.0	6.95	87.4
Palmer	Oak.	565	345	61.1	4,018	22	3.9	64	14	2.5	7.11	85.3
Fitzpatrick	Buff.	505	306	60.6	3,400	24	4.8	68	16	3.2	6.73	83.3
Gabbert	Jax.	278	162	58.3	1,662	9	3.2	80	6	2.2	5.98	77.4
Luck	Ind.	627	339	54.1	4,374	23	3.7	70	18	2.9	6.98	76.5
Tannehill	Mia.	484	282	58.3	3,294	12	2.5	80	13	2.7	6.81	76.1
Locker	Ten.	314	177	56.4	2,176	10	3.2	71	11	3.5	6.93	74.0
Weeden	Clev.	517	297	57.4	3,385	14	2.7	71	17	3.3	6.55	72.6
Henne	Jax.	308	166	53.9	2,084	11	3.6	81	11	3.6	6.77	72.2
Sanchez	N.Y.J.	453	246	54.3	2,883	13	2.9	66	18	4.0	6.36	66.9
Cassel	K.C.	277	161	58.1	1,796	6	2.2	46	12	4.3	6.48	66.7

SCORING

Player	Team	TD	XP/att	FG/att	2XP	Pts
Gostkowski	N.E.	0	66/66	29/35	0	153
S. Graham	Hou.	0	45/45	31/38	0	138
Prater	Den.	0	55/55	26/32	0	133
Tucker	Balt.	0	42/42	30/33	0	132
Janikowski	Oak.	0	25/25	31/34	0	118
Suisham	Pitt.	0	34/34	28/31	0	118
Dawson	Clev.	0	29/29	29/31	0	116
Vinatieri	Ind.	0	37/37	26/33	0	115
Bironas	Ten.	0	35/35	25/31	0	110
Foster	Hou.	17	0/0	0/0	0	102
Lindell	Buff.	0	39/39	21/24	0	102
Succop	K.C.	0	17/17	28/34	0	101
Folk	N.Y.J.	0	30/30	21/27	0	93
Scobee	Jax.	0	18/19	25/28	0	93
D. Carpenter	Mia.	0	26/26	22/27	0	92
Nugent	Cin.	0	35/35	19/23	0	92
Novak	S.D.	0	33/33	18/20	0	87
Decker	Den.	13	0/0	0/0	0	78
Richardson	Clev.	12	0/0	0/0	0	72
Ridley	N.E.	12	0/0	0/0	0	72
Green	Cin.	11	0/0	0/0	0	66
R. Gronkowski	N.E.	11	0/0	0/0	0	66
Rice	Balt.	10	0/0	0/0	0	60
D. Thomas	Den.	10	0/0	0/0	0	60
Miller	Pitt.	8	0/0	0/0	1	50
Bush	Mia.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
Greene	N.Y.J.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
Hilton	Ind.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
T. Smith	Balt.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
Spiller	Buff.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
Wallace	Pitt.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
Alexander	S.D.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Gates	S.D.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Moore	Oak.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Pitta	Balt.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Shorts	Jax.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Woodhead	N.E.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Jo. Brown	Cin.	0	8/8	11/12	0	41
Chandler	Buff.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Charles	K.C.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Daniels	Hou.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Green-Ellis	Cin.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
St. Johnson	Buff.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
C. Johnson	Ten.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Welker	N.E.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Kaeding	Mia.	0	9/9	8/10	0	33
Blackmon	Jax.	5	0/0	0/0	1	32
Fasano	Mia.	5	0/0	0/0	1	32
A. Brown	Pitt.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Dreessen	Den.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Edelman	N.E.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Floyd	S.D.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Gordon	Clev.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Gresham	Cin.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Hernandez	N.E.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Heyward-Bey	Oak.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Lloyd	N.E.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Luck	Ind.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Stokley	Den.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Wayne	Ind.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Boldin	Balt.	4	0/0	0/0	1	26
Britt	Ten.	4	0/0	0/0	1	26
McGahee	Den.	4	0/0	0/0	1	26
Battle	S.D.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Brady	N.E.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Cook	Ten.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Dalton	Cin.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Hawkins	Cin.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
F. Jackson	Buff.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
A. Johnson	Hou.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
J. Jones	Balt.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Jones	Buff.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Lewis	Jax.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Little	Clev.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Moreno	Den.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Myers	Oak.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Powell	N.Y.J.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Sanu	Cin.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
B. Smith	Buff.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Thomas	Mia.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Vereen	N.E.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Washington	Ten.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Wright	Ten.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Lane	Mia.	3	0/0	0/0	1	20
Streater	Oak.	3	0/0	0/0	1	20
Allen	Ind.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Avery	Ind.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Ballard	Ind.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Benjamin	Clev.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Bowe	K.C.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Carter	Ind.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Casey	Hou.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Cumberland	N.Y.J.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Flacco	Balt.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
G. Graham	Hou.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Harper	Ten.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
S. Hill	N.Y.J.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Kerley	N.Y.J.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
McFadden	Oak.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Reynaud	Ten.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Rosario	S.D.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Spurlock	S.D.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Watson	Clev.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Jennings	Jax.	2	0/0	0/0	1	14
Ball	Den.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Bolden	N.E.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Brown	Ten.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Butler	Ind.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
T. Carter	Den.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Clay	Mia.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Draughn	K.C.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Dwyer	Pitt.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Fleener	Ind.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
C. Harris	Den.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Hester	Den.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Holliday	Den.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Jammer	S.D.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Jones-Drew	Jax.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Keller	N.Y.J.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
McKelvin	Buff.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Meachem	S.D.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Pope	Pitt.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Rainey	Pitt.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Redman	Pitt.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Schilens	N.Y.J.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
L. Smith	Buff.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Tamme	Den.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Tannehill	Mia.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Tate	Hou.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Thigpen	Mia.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Walter	Hou.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
D. Williams	S.D.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
D. Brown	Ind.	1	0/0	0/0	1	8
Criner	Oak.	1	0/0	0/0	1	8
Owens	Jax.	1	0/0	0/0	1	8
Phillips	S.D.	1	0/0	0/0	0	8

SACKS

Player	Tm	Sacks
Watt	Hou.	20.5
Miller	Den.	18.5
C. Wake	Mia.	15.0
Atkins	Cin.	13.0
M. Johnson	Cin.	11.5
Dumervil	Den.	11.0
M. Williams	Buff.	10.5
Houston	K.C.	10.0
Phillips	S.D.	9.5
Hali	K.C.	9.0
Kruger	Balt.	9.0
Mathis	Ind.	8.0
Ninkovich	N.E.	8.0
Babin	Jax.	7.0
Liuget	S.D.	7.0
Sheard	Clev.	7.0
A. Smith	Hou.	7.0
Morgan	Ten.	6.5
Ayers	Ten.	6.0
Dunlap	Cin.	6.0
Gilberry	Cin.	6.0
J. Harrison	Pitt.	6.0
Jones	N.E.	6.0
Mercilus	Hou.	6.0
Parker	Clev.	6.0
Timmons	Pitt.	6.0
Wimbley	Ten.	6.0
Wolfe	Den.	6.0
Brown	Ten.	5.5
Coples	N.Y.J.	5.5
Dareus	Buff.	5.5
Reyes	S.D.	5.5
Woodyard	Den.	5.5
Freeney	Ind.	5.0
Ngata	Balt.	5.0
Odrick	Mia.	5.0
Wilkerson	N.Y.J.	5.0
K. Williams	Buff.	5.0
Worilds	Pitt.	5.0
Ellerbe	Balt.	4.5
Houston	Oak.	4.5
A. Jones	Balt.	4.5
Keisel	Pitt.	4.5
Starks	Mia.	4.5
Foote	Pitt.	4.0
Hightower	N.E.	4.0
J. Hughes	Ind.	4.0
Rucker	Clev.	4.0
Woodley	Pitt.	4.0
Alualu	Jax.	3.5
D. Jackson	Clev.	3.5
Klug	Ten.	3.5
McIntyre	N.Y.J.	3.5
Misi	Mia.	3.5
Shaughnessy	Oak.	3.5
Vernon	Mia.	3.5
Barnes	S.D.	3.0
Barwin	Hou.	3.0
Bryant	Oak.	3.0
Butler	S.D.	3.0
Casey	Ten.	3.0
Francis	N.E.	3.0
Geathers	Cin.	3.0
Harris	N.Y.J.	3.0
Hood	Pitt.	3.0
Hughes	Clev.	3.0
T. Jackson	K.C.	3.0
Martin	Ten.	3.0
Mayo	N.E.	3.0
Mincey	Jax.	3.0
K. Moore	Buff.	3.0
Pace	N.Y.J.	3.0
Scott	N.E.	3.0
Wheeler	Oak.	3.0
Wilfork	N.E.	3.0

INTERCEPTIONS

Player	Team	No	Yds	Lg	TD
Byrd	Buff.	5	81	45	0
McCourty	N.E.	5	53	34	0
Butler	Ind.	4	101	51	2
C. Williams	Balt.	4	90	63	1
Wilson	N.E.	4	87	45	0
E. Reed	Balt.	4	78	34	1
Jackson	Hou.	4	71	63	1
B. Scott	Buff.	4	66	32	1
Griffin	Ten.	4	59	33	0
McCourty	Ten.	4	29	28	0
R. Jones	Mia.	4	28	15	0
D. Cox	Jax.	4	18	16	0
Brown	Ten.	3	156	79	2
C. Harris	Den.	3	144	98	2
Dennard	N.E.	3	95	87	1
Jammer	S.D.	3	89	80	1
Timmons	Pitt.	3	80	53	1
Haden	Clev.	3	64	50	0
Cromartie	N.Y.J.	3	53	40	1
Crocker	Cin.	3	52	29	0
Weddle	S.D.	3	52	23	1
Gregory	N.E.	3	50	36	0
U. Young	Clev.	3	44	44	0
Woodyard	Den.	3	40	25	0
Flowers	K.C.	3	28	29	0
Davis	Ind.	3	26	26	0
Posluszny	Jax.	3	20	13	0
S. Brown	Clev.	3	20	19	1
Nelson	Cin.	3	10	10	0

FIELD-GOAL ACCURACY

Player	Team	1-19 Yds	20-29 Yds	30-39 Yds	40-49 Yds	50 or Longer	Total	Avg Yds Att	Avg Yds Made	Avg Yds Miss	Lg
Dawson	Clev.	0-0	8-9	8-9	6-6	7-7	29-31	37.2	37.4	33.5	53
		.000	.889	.889	1.000	1.000	.936				
Janikowski	Oak.	1-1	9-9	10-10	5-5	6-9	31-34	37.4	35.3	58.7	57
		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.667	.912				
Tucker	Balt.	0-0	8-8	8-8	10-13	4-4	30-33	39.2	38.7	44.3	56
		.000	1.000	1.000	.769	1.000	.909				
Suisham	Pitt.	0-0	7-8	8-8	12-12	1-3	28-31	36.9	36.2	43.7	52
		.000	.875	1.000	1.000	.333	.903				
Novak	S.D.	1-1	5-5	6-6	4-4	2-4	18-20	36.2	34.2	54.5	51
		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.500	.900				
Scobee	Jax.	1-1	4-4	8-8	11-13	1-2	25-28	37.5	36.3	47.3	50
		1.000	1.000	1.000	.846	.500	.893				
Lindell	Buff.	1-1	3-3	10-11	6-7	1-2	21-24	36.1	35.0	44.3	50
		1.000	1.000	.909	.857	.500	.875				
Gostkowski	N.E.	0-0	8-8	10-12	9-13	2-2	29-35	37.1	35.9	42.8	53
		.000	1.000	.833	.692	1.000	.829				
Nugent	Cin.	2-2	5-5	5-5	6-9	1-2	19-23	37.1	35.2	46.3	55
		1.000	1.000	1.000	.667	.500	.826				
Succop	K.C.	0-0	4-5	12-15	10-12	2-2	28-34	37.3	37.6	35.8	52
		.000	.800	.800	.833	1.000	.824				
S. Graham	Hou.	1-1	8-8	11-11	7-9	4-9	31-38	38.2	35.5	49.7	51
		1.000	1.000	1.000	.778	.444	.816				
D. Carpenter	Mia.	0-0	3-3	9-9	8-10	2-5	22-27	39.9	37.6	49.8	53
		.000	1.000	1.000	.800	.400	.815				
Prater	Den.	1-1	7-7	10-11	5-9	3-4	26-32	36.2	34.2	45.0	53
		1.000	1.000	.909	.556	.750	.813				
Bironas	Ten.	0-0	6-6	13-13	5-10	1-2	25-31	37.5	35.4	46.5	53
		.000	1.000	1.000	.500	.500	.807				
Vinatieri	Ind.	1-1	8-8	4-7	9-10	4-7	26-33	38.9	37.0	46.1	53
		1.000	1.000	.571	.900	.571	.788				
Folk	N.Y.J.	0-0	7-8	6-8	5-7	3-4	21-27	36.3	35.5	38.8	54
		.000	.875	.750	.714	.750	.778				

PUNTING

Player	Team	No	Yds	Lg	Gross Avg	TB	Ins 20	Blk	Ret	Ret Yds	Net Avg
Colquitt	Den.	67	3,099	67	46.3	4	27	0	33	197	42.1
Huber	Cin.	76	3,540	69	46.6	7	33	0	27	210	42.0
Fields	Mia.	73	3,666	67	50.2	9	29	0	42	470	41.3
Anger	Jax.	91	4,353	73	47.8	5	31	1	40	495	40.8
Koch	Balt.	83	3,911	60	47.1	7	28	0	50	383	40.8
Colquitt	K.C.	83	3,887	71	46.8	7	45	0	27	362	40.8
Scifres	S.D.	81	3,914	66	48.3	7	30	3	40	362	40.6
D. Jones	Hou.	88	4,150	66	47.2	5	28	0	48	483	40.5
Kern	Ten.	81	3,855	71	47.6	5	30	2	39	405	40.4
McAfee	Ind.	73	3,500	64	47.9	7	26	1	32	375	40.3
Lechler	Oak.	81	3,826	68	47.2	9	21	1	45	450	39.0
Malone	N.Y.J.	84	3,848	61	45.8	8	27	2	31	375	38.5
Powell	Buff.	65	2,860	62	44.0	2	23	0	27	345	38.1
Mesko	N.E.	60	2,585	62	43.1	6	28	1	23	154	37.9
Butler	Pitt.	77	3,374	79	43.8	6	26	1	30	306	37.8
Hodges	Clev.	90	3,766	58	41.8	4	29	0	34	343	37.1

KICKOFF RETURNS

Player	Team	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
J. Jones	Balt.	38	1,167	30.7	108	2
McKnight	N.Y.J.	39	1,072	27.5	100	1
Cribbs	Clev.	43	1,178	27.4	74	0
Thigpen	Mia.	38	1,040	27.4	96	1
Rainey	Pitt.	39	1,035	26.5	68	0
Holliday	Den.	21	552	26.3	105	1
Tate	Cin.	32	795	24.8	45	0
McCourty	N.E.	27	654	24.2	104	1
Martin	Hou.	31	741	23.9	54	0
Francies	Oak.	20	475	23.8	32	0
Reynaud	Ten.	53	1,240	23.4	105	1
Draughn	K.C.	23	537	23.3	41	0

PUNT RETURNS

Player	Team	No	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
McKelvin	Buff.	23	14	431	18.7	88	2
Reynaud	Ten.	31	17	410	13.2	81	2
Thigpen	Mia.	26	6	316	12.2	72	1
Martin	Hou.	22	10	267	12.1	71	0
Cribbs	Clev.	38	8	457	12.0	60	0
A. Jones	Cin.	26	0	301	11.6	81	1
Hilton	Ind.	26	18	300	11.5	75	1
Holliday	Den.	47	10	481	10.2	76	1
Welker	N.E.	25	7	243	9.7	31	0
J. Jones	Balt.	37	16	341	9.2	63	1
Tate	Cin.	21	11	187	8.9	32	0
Arenas	K.C.	34	4	297	8.7	27	0
A. Brown	Pitt.	27	8	183	6.8	29	0

NFC INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING

Player	Team	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Peterson	Minn.	348	2,097	6.0	82	12
Morris	Wash.	335	1,613	4.8	39	13
Lynch	Sea.	315	1,590	5.0	77	11
Martin	T.B.	319	1,454	4.6	70	11
Gore	S.F.	258	1,214	4.7	37	8
Forte	Chi.	248	1,094	4.4	46	5
S. Jackson	St.L.	257	1,042	4.1	46	4
Bradshaw	N.Y.G.	221	1,015	4.6	37	6
McCoy	Phil.	200	840	4.2	34	2
R. Griffin	Wash.	120	815	6.8	76	7
Turner	Atl.	222	800	3.6	43	10
Leshoure	Det.	215	798	3.7	16	9
Newton	Car.	127	741	5.8	72	8
D. Williams	Car.	173	737	4.3	65	5
Murray	Dall.	161	663	4.1	48	4
Ingram	N.O.	156	602	3.9	31	5
Brown	Phil.	115	564	4.9	65	4
Wilson	Sea.	94	489	5.2	25	4
D. Richardson	St.L.	98	475	4.8	53	0
P. Thomas	N.O.	105	473	4.5	48	1
A. Green	G.B.	135	464	3.4	41	0
Kaepernick	S.F.	63	415	6.6	50	5
J. Bell	Det.	82	414	5.0	67	3
Bush	Chi.	114	411	3.6	20	5
F. Jones	Dall.	111	402	3.6	22	3
A. Brown	N.Y.G.	73	385	5.3	31	8
Hunter	S.F.	72	371	5.2	26	2
Rodgers	Atl.	94	362	3.9	43	1
Turbin	Sea.	78	359	4.6	26	0
Wilson	N.Y.G.	71	358	5.0	52	4
Stephens-Howling	Ariz.	111	357	3.2	52	4
Stewart	Car.	93	336	3.6	21	1
Vick	Phil.	62	332	5.4	20	1
Rodgers	G.B.	54	259	4.8	27	2
Starks	G.B.	71	255	3.6	22	1
Ponder	Minn.	60	253	4.2	29	2
Benson	G.B.	71	248	3.5	11	1
Sproles	N.O.	48	244	5.1	47	1

RECEIVING

Player	Team	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
C. Johnson	Det.	122	1,964	16.1	53	5
Marshall	Chi.	118	1,508	12.8	56	11
Witten	Dall.	110	1,039	9.4	36	3
Gonzalez	Atl.	93	930	10.0	25	8
Bryant	Dall.	92	1,382	15.0	85	12
White	Atl.	92	1,351	14.7	59	7
Cruz	N.Y.G.	86	1,092	12.7	80	10
Crabtree	S.F.	85	1,105	13.0	49	9
J. Graham	N.O.	85	982	11.6	46	9
Colston	N.O.	83	1,154	13.9	60	10
Cobb	G.B.	80	954	11.9	39	8
Jones	Atl.	79	1,198	15.2	80	10
Sproles	N.O.	75	667	8.9	44	7
S. Smith	Car.	73	1,174	16.1	66	4
V. Jackson	T.B.	72	1,384	19.2	95	8
Fitzgerald	Ariz.	71	798	11.2	37	4
Maclin	Phil.	69	857	12.4	70	7
Olsen	Car.	69	843	12.2	47	5
Austin	Dall.	66	943	14.3	49	6
L. Moore	N.O.	65	1,041	16.0	51	6
J. Jones	G.B.	64	784	12.3	49	14
Roberts	Ariz.	64	759	11.9	46	5
M. Williams	T.B.	63	996	15.8	65	9
Amendola	St.L.	63	666	10.6	56	3
Harvin	Minn.	62	677	10.9	45	3
Finley	G.B.	61	667	10.9	40	2
Pettigrew	Det.	59	567	9.6	24	3
Celek	Phil.	57	684	12.0	34	1
Bennett	N.Y.G.	55	626	11.4	33	5
McCoy	Phil.	54	373	6.9	36	3
Nicks	N.Y.G.	53	692	13.1	50	3
Avant	Phil.	53	648	12.2	39	0
Rudolph	Minn.	53	493	9.3	29	9
Rodgers	Atl.	53	402	7.6	32	1
J. Bell	Det.	52	485	9.3	50	0
B. Gibson	St.L.	51	691	13.5	34	5
Rice	Sea.	50	748	15.0	46	7
Nelson	G.B.	49	745	15.2	73	7
Martin	T.B.	49	472	9.6	64	1
Morgan	Wash.	48	510	10.6	32	2
Clark	T.B.	47	435	9.3	33	4
D. Jackson	Phil.	45	700	15.6	77	2
Tate	Sea.	45	688	15.3	51	7
Floyd	Ariz.	45	562	12.5	53	2
Housler	Ariz.	45	417	9.3	33	0
LaFell	Car.	44	677	15.4	62	4
Garcon	Wash.	44	633	14.4	88	4
Forte	Chi.	44	340	7.7	47	1
Givens	St.L.	42	698	16.6	65	3
Kendricks	St.L.	42	519	12.4	80	4
Scheffler	Det.	42	504	12.0	57	1
Manningham	S.F.	42	449	10.7	40	1
Moss	Wash.	41	573	14.0	77	8
V. Davis	S.F.	41	548	13.4	53	5
Jenkins	Minn.	40	449	11.2	32	2
Peterson	Minn.	40	217	5.4	20	1
Hixon	N.Y.G.	39	567	14.5	41	2
P. Thomas	N.O.	39	354	9.1	36	1
Hankerson	Wash.	38	543	14.3	68	3
Z. Miller	Sea.	38	396	10.4	30	3
Douglas	Atl.	38	396	10.4	37	1
S. Jackson	St.L.	38	321	8.4	22	0
G. Jennings	G.B.	36	366	10.2	45	4
Murray	Dall.	34	247	7.3	22	0
Leshoure	Det.	34	214	6.3	15	0
T. Young	Det.	33	383	11.6	46	4
Ogletree	Dall.	32	436	13.6	65	4
Snelling	Atl.	31	203	6.5	16	1
Pettis	St.L.	30	261	8.7	36	4
Bennett	Chi.	29	375	12.9	60	2
Baldwin	Sea.	29	366	12.6	148	3
Moss	S.F.	28	434	15.5	55	3
Underwood	T.B.	28	425	15.2	62	2
Gore	S.F.	28	234	8.4	26	1
Tolbert	Car.	27	268	9.9	26	0
Burleson	Det.	27	240	8.9	26	2
Simpson	Minn.	26	274	10.5	33	0
F. Jones	Dall.	26	266	10.2	39	2
Doucet	Ariz.	26	200	7.7	18	0
Murphy	Car.	25	336	13.4	55	1
Paulsen	Wash.	25	308	12.3	31	1
Harbor	Phil.	25	186	7.4	19	2
Jeffery	Chi.	24	367	15.3	55	3
F. Davis	Wash.	24	325	13.5	29	0
D. Richardson	St.L.	24	163	6.8	26	0
Cooper	Phil.	23	248	10.8	23	3
Bradshaw	N.Y.G.	23	245	10.7	59	0
Hester	Chi.	23	242	10.5	39	1
Lynch	Sea.	23	196	8.5	27	1
Henderson	N.O.	22	316	14.4	41	1
Broyles	Det.	22	310	14.1	40	2
Wright	Minn.	22	310	14.1	65	2
Walker	S.F.	21	344	16.4	45	3
Gerhart	Minn.	20	155	7.8	21	0
Randle	N.Y.G.	19	298	15.7	56	3
Johnson	Phil.	19	256	13.5	32	0
K. Davis	Chi.	19	229	12.1	25	2
Turbin	Sea.	19	181	9.5	20	0
Powell	Ariz.	19	132	6.9	25	0
Turner	Atl.	19	128	6.7	60	1
A. McCoy	Sea.	18	291	16.2	67	3
A. Green	G.B.	18	125	6.9	19	0
Thomas	Det.	18	108	6.0	12	1
Harris	Dall.	17	222	13.1	36	1
Stewart	Car.	17	157	9.2	30	1
Heller	Det.	17	150	8.8	19	1
King	Ariz.	17	129	7.6	27	0
Stephens-Howling	Ariz.	17	106	6.2	24	0
Stocker	T.B.	16	165	10.3	33	1
Kuhn	G.B.	15	148	9.9	32	0
Beasley	Dall.	15	128	8.5	20	0
Royster	Wash.	15	109	7.3	25	0
Barden	N.Y.G.	14	220	15.7	31	0
K. Williams	S.F.	14	212	15.1	57	1
St. Smith	St.L.	14	131	9.4	25	0
Ware	T.B.	14	100	7.1	23	0
Benson	G.B.	14	97	6.9	18	0
Collins	N.O.	14	70	5.0	12	2

PASSING

Player	Team	Att	Comp	Comp Pct	Yds	TD	TD Pct	Lg	Int	Int Pct	Avg Gain	Rating
Rodgers	G.B.	552	371	67.2	4,295	39	7.1	73	8	1.4	7.78	108.0
R. Griffin	Wash.	393	258	65.6	3,200	20	5.1	88	5	1.3	8.14	102.4
Wilson	Sea.	393	252	64.1	3,118	26	6.6	67	10	2.5	7.93	100.0
Ryan	Atl.	615	422	68.6	4,719	32	5.2	80	14	2.3	7.67	99.1
Brees	N.O.	670	422	63.0	5,177	43	6.4	80	19	2.8	7.73	96.3
Romo	Dall.	648	425	65.6	4,903	28	4.3	85	19	2.9	7.57	90.5
Manning	N.Y.G.	536	321	59.9	3,948	26	4.9	80	15	2.8	7.37	87.2
Newton	Car.	485	280	57.7	3,869	19	3.9	82	12	2.5	7.98	86.2
Bradford	St.L.	551	328	59.5	3,702	21	3.8	80	13	2.4	6.72	82.6
Freeman	T.B.	558	306	54.8	4,065	27	4.8	95	17	3.0	7.28	81.6
Cutler	Chi.	434	255	58.8	3,033	19	4.4	60	14	3.2	6.99	81.3
Ponder	Minn.	483	300	62.1	2,935	18	3.7	65	12	2.5	6.08	81.2
Stafford	Det.	727	435	59.8	4,967	20	2.8	57	17	2.3	6.83	79.8
Foles	Phil.	265	161	60.8	1,699	6	2.3	46	5	1.9	6.41	79.1
Vick	Phil.	351	204	58.1	2,362	12	3.4	77	10	2.8	6.73	78.1

SCORING

Player	Team	TD	XP/att	FG/att	2XP	Pts
Tynes	N.Y.G.	0	46/46	33/39	0	145
Bryant	Atl.	0	44/44	33/38	0	143
Walsh	Minn.	0	36/36	35/38	0	141
Hanson	Det.	0	38/38	32/36	0	134
Akers	S.F.	0	44/44	29/42	0	131
Bailey	Dall.	0	37/37	29/31	0	124
Barth	T.B.	0	39/39	28/33	0	123
Hauschka	Sea.	0	46/48	24/27	0	118
Crosby	G.B.	0	50/50	21/33	0	113
Hartley	N.O.	0	57/57	18/22	0	111
Henery	Phil.	0	25/26	27/31	0	106
Feely	Ariz.	0	25/25	25/28	0	100
Gould	Chi.	0	33/33	21/25	0	96
Zuerlein	St.L.	0	26/26	23/31	0	95
Forbath	Wash.	0	33/34	17/18	0	84
J. Jones	G.B.	14	0/0	0/0	0	84
Peterson	Minn.	13	0/0	0/0	1	80
Morris	Wash.	13	0/0	0/0	0	78
Bryant	Dall.	12	0/0	0/0	1	74
Lynch	Sea.	12	0/0	0/0	0	72
Martin	T.B.	12	0/0	0/0	0	72
Marshall	Chi.	11	0/0	0/0	0	66
Turner	Atl.	11	0/0	0/0	0	66
Colston	N.O.	10	0/0	0/0	0	60
Cruz	N.Y.G.	10	0/0	0/0	0	60
Gore	S.F.	10	0/0	0/0	0	60
Jones	Atl.	10	0/0	0/0	0	60
Rudolph	Minn.	9	0/0	0/0	1	56
Cobb	G.B.	9	0/0	0/0	0	54
Crabtree	S.F.	9	0/0	0/0	0	54
J. Graham	N.O.	9	0/0	0/0	0	54
Leshoure	Det.	9	0/0	0/0	0	54
M. Williams	T.B.	9	0/0	0/0	0	54
A. Brown	N.Y.G.	8	0/0	0/0	1	50
V. Jackson	T.B.	8	0/0	0/0	1	50
Sproles	N.O.	8	0/0	0/0	1	50
Gonzalez	Atl.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
Moss	Wash.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
Newton	Car.	8	0/0	0/0	0	48
Gano	Car.	0	20/21	9/11	0	47
Medlock	Car.	0	23/23	7/10	0	44
Nelson	G.B.	7	0/0	0/0	1	44
R. Griffin	Wash.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Maclin	Phil.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Rice	Sea.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Tate	Sea.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Tolbert	Car.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
White	Atl.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
D. Williams	Car.	7	0/0	0/0	0	42
Cundiff	Wash.	0	17/17	7/12	0	38
Austin	Dall.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Bradshaw	N.Y.G.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Forte	Chi.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
L. Moore	N.O.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Wilson	N.Y.G.	6	0/0	0/0	0	36
Bennett	N.Y.G.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Bush	Chi.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
V. Davis	S.F.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Garcon	Wash.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
B. Gibson	St.L.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Harvin	Minn.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Ingram	N.O.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
C. Johnson	Det.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
F. Jones	Dall.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Kaepernick	S.F.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
McCoy	Phil.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Olsen	Car.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
Roberts	Ariz.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
B. Wells	Ariz.	5	0/0	0/0	0	30
S. Jackson	St.L.	4	0/0	0/0	1	26
Kendricks	St.L.	4	0/0	0/0	1	26
Mare	Chi.	0	7/7	6/8	0	25
Brown	Phil.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Clark	T.B.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Fitzgerald	Ariz.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Jenkins	St.L.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
G. Jennings	G.B.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
LaFell	Car.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Murray	Dall.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Ogletree	Dall.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Pettis	St.L.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
S. Smith	Car.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Stafford	Det.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Stephens-Howling	Ariz.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Wilson	Sea.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
T. Young	Det.	4	0/0	0/0	0	24
Amendola	St.L.	3	0/0	0/0	1	20
Givens	St.L.	3	0/0	0/0	1	20
Baldwin	Sea.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
J. Bell	Det.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Cooper	Phil.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Crabtree	G.B.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Hankerson	Wash.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Jeffery	Chi.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
A. McCoy	Sea.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Z. Miller	Sea.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Morgan	Wash.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Morgan	N.O.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Moss	S.F.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Nicks	N.Y.G.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Pettigrew	Det.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Randle	N.Y.G.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
A. Robinson	Wash.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
D. Thomas	N.O.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Tillman	Chi.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Walker	S.F.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Witten	Dall.	3	0/0	0/0	0	18
Burleson	Det.	2	0/0	0/0	1	14
Harris	Dall.	2	0/0	0/0	1	14
Bennett	Chi.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Blount	T.B.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Briggs	Chi.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Broyles	Det.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Collins	N.O.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
K. Davis	Chi.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Dixon	S.F.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Driver	G.B.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Finley	G.B.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Floyd	Ariz.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Grant	G.B.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Harbor	Phil.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
D. Harris	G.B.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Hixon	N.Y.G.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Hunter	S.F.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Ivory	N.O.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
D. Jackson	Phil.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Jenkins	Minn.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Munnerlyn	Car.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Murphy	Car.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Ponder	Minn.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Quick	St.L.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Rodgers	G.B.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Rodgers	Atl.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Royster	Wash.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Sherman	Sea.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
K. Smith	Det.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Smith	Minn.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Stewart	Car.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
P. Thomas	N.O.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Underwood	T.B.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
L. Washington	Sea.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Wright	Minn.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Young	Wash.	2	0/0	0/0	0	12
Romo	Dall.	1	0/0	0/0	1	8

SACKS

Player	Tm	Sacks
Ald. Smith	S.F.	19.5
C. Johnson	Car.	12.5
Matthews	G.B.	12.0
C. Clemons	Sea.	11.5
Long	St.L.	11.5
Peppers	Chi.	11.5
Ware	Dall.	11.5
Allen	Minn.	11.0
Hardy	Car.	11.0
Spencer	Dall.	11.0
Quinn	St.L.	10.5
Abraham	Atl.	10.0
Avril	Det.	9.5
Bennett	T.B.	9.0
D. Washington	Ariz.	9.0
Kerrigan	Wash.	8.5
Robison	Minn.	8.5
Griffen	Minn.	8.0
Irvin	Sea.	8.0
Jordan	N.O.	8.0
Suh	Det.	8.0
Idonije	Chi.	7.5
Hayes	St.L.	7.0
Wooton	Chi.	7.0
Brooks	S.F.	6.5
Campbell	Ariz.	6.5
Pierre-Paul	N.Y.G.	6.5
D. Edwards	Car.	6.0
Melton	Chi.	6.0
Smith	N.O.	6.0
Umenyiora	N.Y.G.	6.0
Cox	Phil.	5.5
Fairley	Det.	5.5
Graham	Phil.	5.5
Galette	N.O.	5.0
McCoy	T.B.	5.0
Dunbar	St.L.	4.5
Jackson	Wash.	4.5
Neal	G.B.	4.5
Acho	Ariz.	4.0
Biermann	Atl.	4.0
Brockers	St.L.	4.0
Groves	Ariz.	4.0
Hatcher	Dall.	4.0
Jenkins	Phil.	4.0
Joseph	N.Y.G.	4.0
Moses	G.B.	4.0
Schofield	Ariz.	4.0
Te'o-Nesheim	T.B.	4.0
Tuck	N.Y.G.	4.0
Babineaux	Atl.	3.5
Riley	Wash.	3.5
Vanden Bosch	Det.	3.5
Blackburn	N.Y.G.	3.0
Bowers	T.B.	3.0
V. Butler	Dall.	3.0
Canty	N.Y.G.	3.0
T. Cole	Phil.	3.0
Fletcher	Wash.	3.0
Greenway	Minn.	3.0
Hawk	G.B.	3.0
Er. Henderson	Minn.	3.0
J. Jones	Sea.	3.0
Kiwanuka	N.Y.G.	3.0
Mebane	Sea.	3.0
Mikell	St.L.	3.0
Sims	St.L.	3.0
J. Smith	S.F.	3.0
Walden	G.B.	3.0
Walker	Atl.	3.0
Weatherspoon	Atl.	3.0
Wilson	N.O.	3.0
Wilson	Ariz.	3.0
L. Alexander	Wash.	2.5
Alexander	Car.	2.5
Bunkley	N.O.	2.5
Cofield	Wash.	2.5
Jackson	Det.	2.5
McClellin	Chi.	2.5
McDonald	S.F.	2.5
Paea	Chi.	2.5
Wilson	G.B.	2.5
Worthy	G.B.	2.5
Bowman	S.F.	2.0
Burnett	G.B.	2.0
Daniels	G.B.	2.0
David	T.B.	2.0
Evans	Minn.	2.0
Foster	T.B.	2.0
Guion	Minn.	2.0
Jean Francois	S.F.	2.0
J. Johnson	Sea.	2.0
B. Jones	G.B.	2.0
Langford	St.L.	2.0
Lenon	Ariz.	2.0
Nicholas	Atl.	2.0
Perry	G.B.	2.0
Scruggs	Sea.	2.0
Smith	G.B.	2.0
Team	G.B.	2.0
Wagner	Sea.	2.0
K. Williams	Minn.	2.0
C. Williams	Det.	2.0

INTERCEPTIONS

Player	Team	No	Yds	Lg	TD
Jennings	Chi.	9	105	31	1
S. Brown	N.Y.G.	8	307	70	0
Sherman	Sea.	8	57	29	1
Peterson	Ariz.	7	64	31	0
Hayward	G.B.	6	81	24	0
DeCoud	Atl.	6	42	24	0
Samuel	Atl.	5	110	79	1
Fletcher	Wash.	5	29	10	0
Barber	T.B.	4	160	78	1
Jenkins	St.L.	4	150	41	3
Hall	Wash.	4	62	27	0
Moore	Atl.	4	51	33	0
Webster	N.Y.G.	4	45	38	0
Wright	Chi.	4	45	45	1
Rhodes	Ariz.	4	39	30	0
Jackson	Wash.	4	19	17	1
Carr	Dall.	3	120	47	1
P. Robinson	N.O.	3	99	99	1
Smith	Minn.	3	87	56	2
L. Johnson	T.B.	3	86	83	1
E. Thomas	Sea.	3	80	57	1
Boley	N.Y.G.	3	74	51	0
Tillman	Chi.	3	71	36	3
Finnegan	St.L.	3	68	32	1
Wagner	Sea.	3	55	10	0
Browner	Sea.	3	39	35	0
Winfield	Minn.	3	37	31	0
Shields	G.B.	3	32	32	0
Greer	N.O.	3	31	28	0
Goldson	S.F.	3	21	20	0
Rodgers-Cromartie	Phil.	3	14	14	

FIELD-GOAL ACCURACY

Player	Team	1-19 Yds	20-29 Yds	30-39 Yds	40-49 Yds	50 or Longer	Total	Avg Yds Att	Avg Yds Made	Avg Yds Miss	Lg
Forbath	Wash.	0-0	3-3	2-3	11-11	1-1	17-18	40.4	40.6	37.0	50
		.000	1.000	.667	1.000	1.000	.944				
Bailey	Dall.	1-1	5-5	13-13	7-7	3-5	29-31	37.3	36.2	52.5	51
		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.600	.936				
Walsh	Minn.	0-0	10-10	8-9	7-9	10-10	35-38	39.3	39.3	39.3	56
		.000	1.000	.889	.778	1.000	.921				
Feely	Ariz.	0-0	6-6	9-10	8-10	2-2	25-28	38.6	38.2	41.7	61
		.000	1.000	.900	.800	1.000	.893				
Hanson	Det.	1-1	3-3	10-10	16-19	2-3	32-36	39.4	38.6	46.3	53
		1.000	1.000	1.000	.842	.667	.889				
Hauschka	Sea.	1-1	7-7	10-10	5-5	1-4	24-27	35.4	33.1	54.0	52
		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.250	.889				
Henery	Phil.	0-0	8-9	8-9	11-12	0-1	27-31	35.5	34.7	40.5	49
		.000	.889	.889	.917	.000	.871				
Bryant	Atl.	1-1	8-9	10-11	10-13	4-4	33-38	36.6	36.3	38.6	55
		1.000	.889	.909	.769	1.000	.868				
Barth	T.B.	0-0	7-7	3-4	12-13	6-9	28-33	41.3	40.1	48.4	57
		.000	1.000	.750	.923	.667	.849				
Tynes	N.Y.G.	0-0	11-11	14-16	7-9	1-3	33-39	35.2	33.8	42.3	50
		.000	1.000	.875	.778	.333	.846				
Gould	Chi.	0-0	7-7	5-7	7-9	2-2	21-25	36.6	35.6	41.8	54
		.000	1.000	.714	.778	1.000	.840				
Hartley	N.O.	0-0	9-9	4-6	2-3	3-4	18-22	34.6	32.7	43.5	53
		.000	1.000	.667	.667	.750	.818				
Zuerlein	St.L.	1-1	4-4	4-6	7-7	7-13	23-31	44.7	42.3	51.8	60
		1.000	1.000	.667	1.000	.538	.742				
Akers	S.F.	1-1	8-9	11-13	7-13	2-6	29-42	37.5	35.2	42.5	63
		1.000	.889	.846	.538	.333	.691				

PUNTING

Player	Team	No	Yds	Lg	Gross Avg	TB	Ins 20	Blk	Ret	Ret Yds	Net Avg
Lee	S.F.	67	3,226	66	48.1	4	36	0	36	249	43.2
Morstead	N.O.	74	3,707	70	50.1	6	20	0	31	391	43.2
Zastudil	Ariz.	112	5,209	70	46.5	8	46	0	48	415	41.4
Ryan	Sea.	65	2,963	73	45.6	3	30	0	29	252	40.8
Bosher	Atl.	60	2,847	63	47.5	4	22	2	26	241	40.7
Hekker	St.L.	82	3,756	68	45.8	4	22	0	41	402	39.9
Kluwe	Minn.	72	3,237	59	45.0	2	18	0	41	341	39.7
Podlesh	Chi.	81	3,399	64	42.0	6	34	0	25	84	39.4
Weatherford	N.Y.G.	58	2,757	68	47.5	6	22	0	38	353	39.4
Masthay	G.B.	70	3,043	65	43.5	5	30	1	24	179	38.9
N. Harris	Det.	67	2,783	58	41.5	1	21	0	28	241	37.6
Moorman	Dall.	71	3,179	66	44.8	4	24	0	32	429	37.6
Koenen	T.B.	76	3,440	64	45.3	6	22	1	40	440	37.4
Rocca	Wash.	68	2,984	61	43.9	3	22	2	39	320	37.2
Nortman	Car.	76	3,267	63	43.0	7	20	1	37	318	36.5
McBriar	Phil.	55	2,560	66	46.5	7	13	1	26	378	36.5

KICKOFF RETURNS

Player	Team	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
L. Washington	Sea.	27	784	29.0	98	1
Wilson	N.Y.G.	57	1,533	26.9	97	1
Cadet	N.O.	26	690	26.5	75	0
Hester	Chi.	24	621	25.9	40	0
Rodgers	Atl.	23	592	25.7	77	0
Cobb	G.B.	38	964	25.4	46	0
Powell	Ariz.	21	507	24.1	65	0
Banks	Wash.	22	527	24.0	55	0
Givens	St.L.	23	539	23.4	48	0
Boykin	Phil.	45	1,037	23.0	44	0
Logan	Det.	28	597	21.3	40	0

PUNT RETURNS

Player	Team	No	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Harris	Dall.	22	11	354	16.1	78	1
Johnson	Phil.	26	28	291	11.2	98	1
Ginn	S.F.	32	12	326	10.2	38	0
Parrish	T.B.	30	15	298	9.9	39	0
Cobb	G.B.	31	21	292	9.4	75	1
Logan	Det.	33	23	300	9.1	48	0
Sherels	Minn.	32	27	287	9.0	77	1
L. Washington	Sea.	41	17	356	8.7	52	0
Peterson	Ariz.	51	14	426	8.4	26	0
Hester	Chi.	40	6	331	8.3	44	0
Sproles	N.O.	23	14	183	8.0	37	0
Franks	Atl.	21	18	163	7.8	28	0
Banks	Wash.	26	5	178	6.8	27	0

NFL TEAM STATISTICS

OFFENSE	BAL	BUF	CIN	CLE	DEN	HOU	IND	JAX	KC	MIA	NE	NYJ	OAK	PIT	SD	TEN
GAMES (W-L-T)	10-6-0	6-10-0	10-6-0	5-11-0	13-3-0	12-4-0	11-5-0	2-14-0	2-14-0	7-9-0	12-4-0	6-10-0	4-12-0	8-8-0	7-9-0	6-10-0
FIRST DOWNS	314	301	292	279	380	341	360	269	286	288	444	299	300	307	293	260
Rushing	98	103	95	71	112	114	110	76	118	93	151	102	72	80	81	70
Passing	182	176	173	185	232	205	208	157	144	158	256	162	200	202	184	166
Penalty	34	22	24	23	36	22	42	36	24	37	37	35	28	25	28	24
TOTAL YARDS GAINED	5640	5486	5323	5028	6366	5953	5799	4788	5108	4984	6846	4787	5504	5324	4756	5010
Average Per Game	352.5	342.9	332.7	314.3	397.9	372.1	362.4	299.3	319.3	311.5	427.9	299.2	344.0	332.8	297.3	313.1
RUSHING (NET)	1901	2217	1745	1593	1832	2123	1671	1369	2395	1802	2184	1896	1420	1537	1461	1687
Average Per Game	118.8	138.6	109.1	99.6	114.5	132.7	104.4	85.6	149.7	112.6	136.5	118.5	88.8	96.1	91.3	105.4
PASSING (NET)	3739	3269	3578	3435	4534	3830	4128	3419	2713	3182	4662	2891	4084	3787	3295	3323
Average Per Game	233.7	204.3	223.6	214.7	283.4	239.4	258.0	213.7	169.6	198.9	291.4	180.7	255.3	236.7	205.9	207.7
RUSHES	444	442	430	396	481	508	440	358	500	440	523	494	376	412	411	378
Average Yards	4.3	5.0	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.2	3.8	3.8	4.8	4.1	4.2	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.6	4.5
PASSES ATTEMPTED	560	511	540	566	588	554	628	586	475	504	641	493	629	574	528	540
Completed	334	309	335	328	402	354	339	328	273	293	402	272	376	354	338	318
Percent Completed	59.6	60.5	62.0	58.0	68.4	63.9	54.0	56.0	57.5	58.1	62.7	55.2	59.8	61.7	64.0	58.9
Sacked	38	30	46	36	21	28	41	50	40	37	27	47	27	37	49	39
Yards Lost	257	161	229	233	137	216	246	327	224	243	182	287	208	225	311	254
Had Intercepted	11	17	16	18	11	13	18	17	20	13	9	19	16	14	15	16
Yards Opp. Ret.	231	256	187	296	218	136	406	400	368	198	112	264	296	168	220	260
Opp. TDs On Int.	3	2	4	2	2	0	3	5	4	2	0	1	2	2	2	4
PUNTS	83	80	76	90	67	88	74	92	83	76	61	86	82	79	84	83
Gross Average	47.1	44.3	46.6	41.8	46.3	47.2	47.3	47.3	46.8	49.7	42.4	44.7	46.7	43.0	46.6	46.4
Touchbacks	7	3	7	4	4	5	7	5	7	10	6	8	9	6	7	5
Net Average	40.8	37.1	42.0	37.1	42.1	40.5	40.3	40.8	40.8	40.7	37.9	38.5	39.0	37.6	40.6	40.4
Blocked	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	3	2
PUNT RETURNS	43	26	47	41	48	38	28	34	43	31	42	23	34	41	33	31
Average Return	9.4	17.1	10.4	14.8	9.3	10.9	11.1	7.3	8.7	11.2	12.0	10.3	5.1	7.3	9.7	15.3
Return For TD	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3
KICKOFF RETURNS	60	42	41	50	28	44	43	53	49	40	38	50	42	43	40	63
Average Return	27.3	27.0	22.6	25.4	23.1	21.7	22.3	21.0	21.6	27.1	21.2	26.2	22.3	25.3	23.9	23.6
Returns For TD	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	-1	0	1	1
PENALTIES	121	104	99	113	100	108	94	101	92	82	97	83	108	92	103	106
Yards	1127	871	857	1005	805	873	801	955	733	724	840	708	939	938	796	847
FUMBLES	14	23	19	22	22	12	21	20	26	25	14	32	22	33	24	21
Fumbles Lost	5	17	10	8	14	4	9	9	17	13	7	18	10	16	11	12
Opponent Fumbles	23	26	26	25	23	23	11	17	19	23	42	16	14	19	29	15
Opponent Fumbles Rec.	12	9	16	12	8	14	3	11	6	6	21	12	8	10	14	5
3RD-DOWN ATTEMPTS	217	198	217	218	213	221	229	216	212	207	226	217	220	224	217	217
Conv. to 1st Down	80	77	74	67	96	83	98	64	70	78	110	80	77	94	82	83
3rd Down Efficiency	36.9	38.9	34.1	30.7	45.1	37.6	42.8	29.6	33.0	37.7	48.7	36.9	35.0	42.0	37.8	38.2
4TH-DOWN ATTEMPTS	14	8	16	16	5	7	8	26	15	15	12	14	16	13	11	15
Conv. to 1st Down	6	5	11	7	3	4	7	8	7	5	8	7	4	6	6	5
4th-Down Efficiency	42.9	62.5	68.8	43.8	60.0	57.1	87.5	30.8	46.7	33.3	66.7	50.0	25.0	46.2	54.5	33.3
Time of Possession	28:06	28:07	30:26	27:54	31:16	32:55	30:36	27:27	29:58	28:30	30:42	29:54	29:26	32:07	31:12	27:19
TOUCHDOWNS	44	40	43	31	57	46	40	25	18	31	67	31	27	36	39	36
Rushing	17	12	11	12	12	19	11	5	9	15	25	12	4	8	4	10
Passing	22	24	28	16	37	22	23	20	8	13	34	14	24	27	26	17
Returns	5	4	4	3	8	5	6	0	1	3	8	5	-1	1	9	9
1-PT. PAT/ATTEMPTS	42/42	39/39	43/43	29/29	55/55	45/45	37/37	18/19	17/17	29/29	66/66	30/30	25/25	34/34	39/39	35/35
2-PT. PAT/ATTEMPTS	1/1	0/1	0/0	0/2	1/2	0/0	1/2	3/7	0/1	2/2	0/1	0/1	2/3	1/2	0/0	1/1
FG/FGA	30/33	21/24	30/35	29/31	26/32	31/38	26/33	25/28	28/34	23/30	29/35	21/27	31/34	28/31	25/27	25/31
Total Points	398	344	391	302	481	416	357	255	211	288	557	281	290	336	350	330

OFFENSE	AZ	ATL	CAR	CHI	DAL	DET	GB	MIN	NO	NYG	PHI	SF	SEA	STL	TB	WAS	NFL AVG
GAMES (W-L-T)	5-11-0	13-3-0	7-9-0	10-6-0	8-8-0	4-12-0	11-5-0	10-6-0	7-9-0	9-7-0	4-12-0	11-4-1	11-5-0	7-8-1	7-9-0	10-6-0	
FIRST DOWNS	246	343	328	292	338	382	341	306	352	327	332	322	311	287	301	341	317.6
Rushing	58	70	123	99	76	84	85	113	64	103	111	128	129	79	89	144	96.9
Passing	168	247	171	163	237	272	213	163	267	187	190	172	153	189	188	171	191.9
Penalty	20	26	34	30	25	26	43	30	21	37	31	22	29	19	24	26	28.8
TOTAL YARDS GAINED	4209	5906	5771	4969	5994	6540	5751	5385	6574	5687	5665	5789	5610	5264	5820	6131	5555.2
Average Per Game	263.1	369.1	360.7	310.6	374.6	408.8	359.4	336.6	410.9	355.4	354.1	361.8	350.6	329.0	363.8	383.2	347.2
RUSHING (NET)	1204	1397	2088	1970	1265	1613	1702	2634	1577	1862	1874	2491	2579	1714	1837	2709	1854.7
Average Per Game	75.3	87.3	130.5	123.1	79.1	100.8	106.4	164.6	98.6	116.4	117.1	155.7	161.2	107.1	114.8	169.3	115.9
PASSING (NET)	3005	4509	3683	2999	4729	4927	4049	2751	4997	3825	3791	3298	3031	3550	3983	3422	3700.6
Average Per Game	187.8	281.8	230.2	187.4	295.6	307.9	253.1	171.9	312.3	239.1	236.9	206.1	189.4	221.9	248.9	213.9	231.3
RUSHES	352	378	462	470	355	391	433	486	370	409	413	492	536	410	416	519	435.2
Average Yards	3.4	3.7	4.5	4.2	3.6	4.1	3.9	5.4	4.3	4.6	4.5	5.1	4.8	4.2	4.4	5.2	4.3
PASSES ATTEMPTED	608	615	490	485	658	740	558	483	671	539	618	436	405	557	566	442	555.9
Completed	337	422	284	287	434	445	374	300	423	323	367	289	259	332	311	291	338.5
Percent Completed	55.4	68.6	58.0	59.2	66.0	60.1	67.0	62.1	63.0	59.9	59.4	66.3	64.0	59.6	54.9	65.8	60.9
Sacked	58	28	36	44	36	29	51	32	26	20	48	41	33	35	26	33	36.5
Yards Lost	378	210	244	299	263	212	293	184	190	142	284	253	203	233	161	244	235.4
Had Intercepted	21	14	12	16	19	17	8	12	19	15	15	8	10	14	17	8	14.6
Yards Opp. Ret.	379	158	200	241	340	475	47	72	356	288	391	70	115	182	269	142	241.9
Opp. TDs On Int.	5	1	3	2	3	4	0	1	3	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	2.2
PUNTS	112	62	77	81	69	76	71	72	74	58	72	67	65	82	77	70	77.2
Gross Average	46.5	45.9	42.4	42.0	44.0	41.4	42.9	45.0	50.1	47.5	46.3	48.1	45.6	45.8	44.7	42.6	45.5
Touchbacks	8	4	7	6	3	1	5	2	6	6	7	4	3	4	6	3	5.5
Net Average	41.4	40.7	36.5	39.4	39.1	36.9	38.9	39.7	43.2	39.4	36.9	43.2	40.8	39.9	37.4	37.2	39.6
Blocked	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0.7
PUNT RETURNS	54	26	27	44	34	35	36	32	25	20	30	36	42	37	36	36	35.4
Average Return	8.2	7.9	10.2	7.6	12.4	8.6	11.0	9.0	7.6	7.2	10.3	10.5	8.5	6.6	9.0	9.3	9.7
Return For TD	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.6
KICKOFF RETURNS	40	27	39	47	36	34	43	44	51	63	60	49	29	38	31	38	43.6
Average Return	23.3	23.7	22.2	19.8	20.6	20.0	25.0	26.6	24.8	26.2	21.0	24.8	27.1	21.0	20.3	23.5	23.6
Returns For TD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.4
PENALTIES	102	55	98	102	117	103	103	90	104	72	98	109	110	130	101	116	100.4
Yards	857	415	835	811	853	944	923	830	911	578	818	960	890	978	815	985	850.7
FUMBLES	25	9	22	20	20	24	16	21	13	13	37	26	16	24	16	26	21.2
Fumbles Lost	13	4	10	8	10	16	8	11	5	6	22	8	8	8	6	6	10.3
Opponent Fumbles	17	16	18	35	18	19	18	23	19	25	21	21	27	17	16	17	21.2
Opponent Fumbles Rec.	11	11	12	20	9	6	5	12	11	14	5	11	13	4	8	10	10.3
3RD-DOWN ATTEMPTS	230	204	204	219	212	228	213	210	207	192	222	194	199	209	212	190	212.9
Conv. to 1st Down	58	92	88	80	93	97	90	78	91	78	83	68	80	67	76	68	81.3
3rd Down Efficiency	25.2	45.1	43.1	36.5	43.9	42.5	42.3	37.1	44.0	40.6	37.4	35.1	40.2	32.1	35.8	35.8	38.2
4TH-DOWN ATTEMPTS	24	8	9	13	11	15	13	11	14	10	24	12	18	24	17	17	14.1
Conv. to 1st Down	10	2	3	5	8	6	7	7	8	5	14	8	11	13	7	12	7.0
4th-Down Efficiency	41.7	25.0	33.3	38.5	72.7	40.0	53.8	63.6	57.1	50.0	58.3	66.7	61.1	54.2	41.2	70.6	49.9
Time of Possession	29:00	30:52	29:42	31:35	30:39	31:14	30:26	28:36	28:38	29:10	29:36	30:50	31:36	28:50	30:08	31:04	30:00
TOUCHDOWNS	25	46	44	42	41	39	53	39	58	47	29	44	49	32	44	52	40.5
Rushing	10	12	21	11	8	17	9	16	10	18	10	17	16	5	13	22	12.5
Passing	11	32	19	21	29	22	40	18	43	26	18	23	27	22	27	24	23.7
Returns	4	2	4	10	4	0	4	5	5	3	1	4	6	5	4	6	4.3
1-PT. PAT/ATTEMPTS	25/25	44/44	43/44	40/40	37/37	38/38	50/50	36/36	57/57	46/46	25/26	44/44	46/48	26/26	39/39	50/51	38.4/38.6
2-PT. PAT/ATTEMPTS	0/0	0/2	0/0	1/2	3/4	1/1	1/3	2/3	1/1	1/1	0/3	0/0	0/0	5/5	1/4	1/1	0.9/1.8
FG/FGA	25/28	33/38	16/21	27/33	29/31	32/36	21/33	35/38	18/22	33/39	27/31	29/42	24/27	23/31	28/33	24/30	26.6/31.8
Total Points	250	419	357	375	376	372	433	379	461	429	280	397	412	299	389	436	364.1

DEFENSE	BAL	BUF	CIN	CLE	DEN	HOU	IND	JAX	KC	MIA	NE	NYJ	OAK	PIT	SD	TEN
OPP. POINTS	344	435	320	368	289	331	387	444	425	317	331	375	443	314	350	471
OPP. 1ST DOWNS	326	349	307	345	287	292	325	364	301	320	340	293	304	273	316	358
Rushing	105	136	99	104	73	94	102	133	106	79	100	96	95	78	85	122
Passing	187	182	183	203	183	167	190	194	176	215	207	161	180	169	201	210
Penalty	34	31	25	38	31	31	33	37	19	26	33	36	29	26	30	26
OPP. YDS. GAINED	5615	5806	5115	5821	4652	5172	5988	6088	5704	5708	5972	5174	5672	4413	5223	5999
Avg. Per Game	350.9	362.9	319.7	363.8	290.8	323.3	374.3	380.5	356.5	356.8	373.3	323.4	354.5	275.8	326.4	374.9
RUSHING (NET)	1965	2333	1715	1898	1458	1560	2200	2256	2171	1734	1630	2138	1897	1450	1542	2035
Avg. Per Game	122.8	145.8	107.2	118.6	91.1	97.5	137.5	141.0	135.7	108.4	101.9	133.6	118.6	90.6	96.4	127.2
PASSING (NET)	3650	3473	3400	3923	3194	3612	3788	3832	3533	3974	4342	3036	3775	2963	3681	3964
Avg. Per Game	228.1	217.1	212.5	245.2	199.6	225.8	236.8	239.5	220.8	248.4	271.4	189.8	235.9	185.2	230.1	247.8
OPP. RUSHES	492	470	423	457	404	390	428	545	482	431	415	495	444	391	406	483
Avg. Yards	4.0	5.0	4.1	4.2	3.6	4.0	5.1	4.1	4.5	4.0	3.9	4.3	4.3	3.7	3.8	4.2
OPP. PASSES	557	536	560	600	559	581	535	535	464	600	594	494	526	523	568	564
Completed	335	306	346	378	321	308	334	341	279	353	369	266	347	299	347	374
Pct. Comp.	60.1	57.1	61.8	63.0	57.4	53.0	62.4	63.7	60.1	58.8	62.1	53.8	66.0	57.2	61.1	66.3
Sacked	37	36	51	38	52	44	32	20	27	42	37	30	25	37	38	39
Yards Lost	250	196	361	233	364	269	189	128	161	242	213	170	185	196	244	241
Intercepted By	13	12	14	17	16	15	12	12	7	10	20	11	11	10	14	19
Yards Ret.	196	178	164	230	347	333	155	122	119	99	371	117	91	127	336	358
Ret. for TD	2	1	2	2	5	3	4	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	5	4
OPP. PUNTS	89	72	86	88	94	92	71	68	74	86	67	89	69	88	80	70
Gross Avg.	46.2	44.6	44.4	46.0	48.1	45.2	47.0	46.0	46.8	44.4	50.3	44.3	46.0	45.2	45.4	44.1
Touchbacks	2	8	8	9	7	3	5	7	8	4	4	8	2	8	5	4
Net Avg.	41.2	36.2	36.8	37.0	41.9	40.0	41.2	40.3	39.5	39.4	41.6	39.9	42.9	40.0	40.2	36.1
Blocked	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
OPP. PUNT RET.	49	35	27	34	33	48	32	40	27	43	23	31	45	30	40	39
Avg. Ret.	7.8	14.8	7.8	10.1	6.0	10.1	11.7	12.4	13.4	11.3	6.7	12.1	10.0	10.2	9.1	10.4
OPP. KICKOFF RET.	37	51	60	43	34	62	34	39	27	35	60	54	30	46	45	33
Avg. Ret.	23.2	22.4	24.5	19.8	22.1	25.7	24.7	25.9	25.6	24.8	20.5	21.9	28.9	24.0	22.6	26.1
OPP. PENALTIES	107	80	90	120	123	90	128	101	81	121	101	109	101	100	102	86
Yards	929	693	779	1008	951	863	1208	820	670	1045	932	805	925	882	798	717
OPP. 3RD-DOWN ATT.	232	209	219	223	216	215	197	215	202	238	205	226	212	206	214	214
Conv. To 1st Down	83	92	79	85	66	71	75	89	79	87	82	84	83	73	90	85
3rd Down Efficiency	35.8	44.0	36.1	38.1	30.6	33.0	38.1	41.4	39.1	36.6	40.0	37.2	39.2	35.4	42.1	39.7
OPP. 4TH-DOWN ATT.	12	12	12	11	18	16	7	9	4	17	23	15	14	11	10	14
Conv. To 1st Down	6	6	5	7	7	5	3	4	3	12	9	12	8	8	4	6
4th-Down Efficiency	50.0	50.0	41.7	63.6	38.9	31.3	42.9	44.4	75.0	70.6	39.1	80.0	57.1	72.7	40.0	42.9
OPP. TOUCHDOWNS	33	53	34	44	32	38	42	48	47	32	38	44	50	33	41	54
Rushing	15	23	13	14	5	5	14	19	11	10	10	17	18	9	10	16
Passing	15	25	16	27	25	29	23	21	29	18	27	20	28	19	28	31
Returns	3	5	5	3	2	4	5	8	7	4	1	7	4	5	3	7
1-PT. PAT/ATTEMPTS	31/31	50/51	33/33	42/42	29/29	38/38	39/39	46/46	47/47	30/30	38/38	43/43	50/50	30/31	39/39	52/52
2-PT. PAT/ATTEMPTS	1/2	2/1	1/1	1/1	0/3	0/0	0/3	1/1	0/0	1/2	0/0	0/1	0/0	1/2	1/3	1/2
OPP. FG/FGA	37/39	21/28	27/32	20/24	22/25	21/24	32/41	36/43	32/38	31/40	21/25	22/31	31/37	28/33	19/21	29/31

DEFENSE	AZ	ATL	CAR	CHI	DAL	DET	GB	MIN	NO	NYG	PHI	SF	SEA	STL	TB	WAS	NFL AVG
OPP. POINTS	357	299	363	277	400	437	336	348	454	344	444	273	245	348	394	388	364.1
OPP. 1ST DOWNS	288	298	326	286	317	305	308	345	380	317	317	284	295	327	329	340	317.6
Rushing	107	99	98	75	92	107	83	82	116	104	108	72	80	107	75	89	96.9
Passing	160	189	196	186	195	167	191	229	236	196	178	178	186	197	226	223	191.9
Penalty	21	10	32	25	30	31	34	34	28	17	31	34	29	23	28	28	28.8
OPP. YDS. GAINED	5405	5849	5329	5050	5687	5458	5388	5600	7042	6134	5491	4710	4899	5482	6078	6043	5555.2
Avg. Per Game	337.8	365.6	333.1	315.6	355.4	341.1	336.8	350.0	440.1	383.4	343.2	294.4	306.2	342.6	379.9	377.7	347.2
RUSHING (NET)	2192	1971	1761	1627	2003	1889	1896	1692	2361	2066	2021	1507	1649	1880	1320	1532	1854.7
Avg. Per Game	137.0	123.2	110.1	101.7	125.2	118.1	118.5	105.8	147.6	129.1	126.3	94.2	103.1	117.5	82.5	95.8	115.9
PASSING (NET)	3213	3878	3568	3423	3684	3569	3492	3908	4681	4068	3470	3203	3250	3602	4758	4511	3700.6
Avg. Per Game	200.8	242.4	223.0	213.9	230.3	223.1	218.3	244.3	292.6	254.3	216.9	200.2	203.1	225.1	297.4	281.9	231.3
OPP. RUSHES	506	411	416	388	441	420	418	427	457	449	479	407	368	442	377	363	435.2
Avg. Yards	4.3	4.8	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.0	5.2	4.6	4.2	3.7	4.5	4.3	3.5	4.2	4.3
OPP. PASSES	497	551	555	592	511	544	568	612	602	534	485	567	564	547	627	636	555.9
Completed	270	337	371	350	320	346	313	391	370	341	292	337	327	362	410	393	338.5
Pct. Comp.	54.3	61.2	66.8	59.1	62.6	63.6	55.1	63.9	61.5	63.9	60.2	59.4	58.0	66.2	65.4	61.8	60.9
Sacked	38	29	39	41	34	34	47	44	30	33	30	38	36	52	27	32	36.5
Yards Lost	228	182	284	289	211	237	309	284	194	231	198	270	247	325	193	209	235.4
Intercepted By	22	20	11	24	7	11	18	10	15	21	8	14	18	17	18	21	14.6
Yards Ret.	306	246	181	488	147	135	246	224	369	496	31	216	255	382	419	257	241.9
Ret. for TD	2	1	3	8	1	0	1	3	4	1	0	2	2	4	3	3	2.2
OPP. PUNTS	93	64	67	89	74	79	75	76	63	54	78	79	78	73	79	65	77.2
Gross Avg.	44.8	47.9	45.9	43.6	45.4	45.9	44.7	44.0	45.7	44.9	43.7	45.7	45.1	44.3	45.1	46.4	45.5
Touchbacks	4	7	5	5	10	5	2	1	8	4	8	7	2	5	4	6	5.5
Net Avg.	39.2	42.5	40.3	38.8	37.1	40.8	38.9	40.0	40.1	40.8	37.7	39.1	40.0	39.5	40.0	39.4	39.6
Blocked	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	0	0.7
OPP. PUNT RET.	48	26	37	25	29	33	24	41	31	38	40	36	29	41	40	39	35.4
Avg. Ret.	8.6	9.3	8.6	3.4	9.6	9.9	7.5	8.3	12.6	9.3	13.6	6.9	8.7	9.8	11.0	8.2	9.7
OPP. KICKOFF RET.	32	48	39	37	50	52	51	33	42	70	41	48	50	30	27	55	43.6
Avg. Ret.	26.4	22.2	18.9	20.7	22.0	23.3	23.4	24.1	25.0	23.7	24.7	26.9	22.9	24.3	25.2	23.0	23.6
OPP. PENALTIES	100	83	86	78	89	93	123	111	102	102	118	93	102	90	103	100	100.4
Yards	810	641	711	704	726	789	1055	949	835	900	992	758	902	758	851	816	850.7
OPP. 3RD-DOWN ATT.	222	200	202	220	202	208	218	230	208	198	203	215	198	213	219	215	212.9
Conv. To 1st Down	73	81	73	78	81	76	83	95	80	84	83	71	76	80	88	95	81.3
3rd Down Efficiency	32.9	40.5	36.1	35.5	40.1	36.5	38.1	41.3	38.5	42.4	40.9	33.0	38.4	37.6	40.2	44.2	38.2
OPP. 4TH-DOWN ATT.	9	13	19	16	11	6	23	20	19	21	10	25	10	16	14	14	14.1
Conv. To 1st Down	4	6	10	10	6	5	9	11	10	10	2	14	3	6	6	8	7.0
4th-Down Efficiency	44.4	46.2	52.6	62.5	54.5	83.3	39.1	55.0	52.6	47.6	20.0	56.0	30.0	37.5	42.9	57.1	49.9
OPP. TOUCHDOWNS	40	31	37	29	45	49	37	39	53	38	52	29	25	37	48	43	40.5
Rushing	12	16	11	6	17	13	12	10	18	9	11	7	8	18	13	11	12.5
Passing	20	14	22	19	22	26	24	28	31	26	33	19	15	16	30	31	23.7
Returns	8	1	4	4	6	10	1	1	4	3	8	3	2	3	5	1	4.3
1-PT. PAT/ATTEMPTS	38/38	30/30	32/32	26/26	43/44	46/46	34/34	33/35	53/53	38/38	51/52	27/27	24/24	36/36	45/45	36/36	38.4/38.6
2-PT. PAT/ATTEMPTS	1/2	0/1	1/4	2/2	0/1	2/3	1/3	3/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/2	0/1	0/1	2/3	5/7	0.9/1.8
OPP. FG/FGA	25/35	27/32	35/37	23/27	29/33	31/41	26/30	25/30	27/33	26/30	27/29	22/27	23/25	30/37	19/28	28/30	26.6/31.8

NFL TEAM RANKINGS

AFC

BAL	BUF	CIN	CLE	DEN	HOU	IND	JAX	KC	MIA	NE	NYJ	OAK	PIT	SD	TEN	OFFENSE
16	19	22	25	4	7	10	29	24	27	1	30	18	21	31	26	Total Yards/Game
11	6	18	24	16	8	22	30	5	17	7	12	28	26	27	21	Rushing Yards/Game
12	4	20	21	25	16	26	24	6	19	17	23	27	28	31	10	Avg. Gain/Rush
15	25	17	19	5	11	7	21	32	26	4	30	8	14	24	22	Passing Yards/Game
15	20	19	25	1	13	18	28	31	22	6	29	16	17	24	23	Avg. Gain/Pass Play
6	29	24t	27	5	9	21	23	32	17	1	31	16	11	20	24t	Pct. Had Intercepted
17	11	25	13	1	9	15	26	24	19	5	31	6	14	29	18	Pct. QB Sacks Allowed
15	19t	24t	29	3	7t	4	30	28	26	1	22	21	17	23	31	First Downs/Game
16	13	21	26	6	15	23	29	27	25	10	31	18	24	30	22	Avg. Gain/Off. Play
20t	13	27	30	3	17	7	31	28	16	1	20t	26	10	15	14	3rd Down Efficiency
22	8	4	21	10	12t	1	30	19	27t	5t	17t	31t	20	14	27t	4th Down Efficiency
16	1	11	3	18	9	7	29	21	6	5	12	32	28	15	2	Punt Return Avg.
1	4	19	8	18	23	21	27	24	3	25	6	20	9	13	15	Kickoff Return Avg.
8	23	12	31	16	7	6	5	9	2	29	21	10	25	11	14	Gross Punting Avg.
6	27	4	26	3	10	13	11	8	9	24	23	21	25	19	17	Net Punting Avg.
10	21	12	24	2	8	18t	30	32	27	1	28	26	22	20	23	Points/Game
1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	32	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	Extra Point Pct.
6	12	15	1t	23	22	26	8t	19	28	18	27	5	7	3	24	Field Goal Pct.

BAL	BUF	CIN	CLE	DEN	HOU	IND	JAX	KC	MIA	NE	NYJ	OAK	PIT	SD	TEN	DEFENSE
17	22	6	23	2	7	26	30	20	21	25	8	18	1	9	27	Opp. Yards/Game
20	31	12	19	3	7	29	30	27	13	9	26	18	2	6	24	Opp. Rush Yds./Game
8	30	11	13	2	9	31	12	25	10	6	21	20	4	5	15	Avg. Gain/Rush
17	10	7	25	3	16	21	22	12	27	29	2	20	1	18	26	Opp. Pass Yds./Game
16	14	6	17	1	8	21	28	30	19	27	9	26	2	15	20	Avg. Gain/Pass Play
19	22	15	13	12	14	20t	20t	31	28	6	23	24	27	18	5	Pct. Intercepted By
17	13	3	19	2	6	25	32	26	10	21	24	30	8	15	12	QB Sack Pct.
21t	29	13	27t	4	6	20	31	10	19	25t	7	11	1	15	30	Opp. 1st Downs/Game
10	22	5	16	1	8	30	21	27	17	24	7	23	2	9	19	Avg. Gain/Def. Play
7	31	8	16	1	3t	14	28	19	11	22	12	20	5	29	21	3rd Down Efficiency
17t	17t	9	27	5	3	10t	13t	30	28	6t	31	24t	29	8	10t	4th Down Efficiency
7	32	6	21	2	20	26	28	30	25	3	27	19	22	13	23	Opp. Punt Return Avg.
13	9	20	2	7	27	22	28	26	23	3	5	32	17	10	29	Opp. Kickoff Ret. Avg.
26	9	8	23	31	15	29	25	28	7	32	6	24	16	18	4	Opp. Gross Punt Avg.
27	2	3	4	29	15	28	20	13t	12	30	21	31	23	19	1	Opp. Net Punt Avg.
12t	26	8	19	4	9t	21	29t	25	7	9t	20	28	6	16	32	Opp. Points/Game
32	4	17t	11t	25	23	7	13	16	6	15	2	14	19	26	30	Opp. Field Goal Pct.

BAL	BUF	CIN	CLE	DEN	HOU	IND	JAX	KC	MIA	NE	NYJ	OAK	PIT	SD	TEN	MISCELLANEOUS
11	25	10	24	2	8t	21	31	32	20	1	26	29	14	16	28	Point Differential
8t	27t	11	12t	17t	7	26	21	31t	24t	1	29	23	24t	14t	22	Turnover Edge
30	29	21	13	6	15	1	26	19	3	10	9	16	18	14	25	Penalty Yards Edge
12	10	9	3	7	14	20	32	29	17	1	23	30	26	16	2	Punt Ret. Differential
5	2	20	1	14	29	23	30	28	9	15	3	32	13	12	22	KO Return Differential
29	28	14	30	5	1	13	31	17	27	11	18	21	2	7	32	Time of Possession

NFC

OFFENSE	AZ	ATL	CAR	CHI	DAL	DET	GB	MIN	NO	NYG	PHI	SF	SEA	STL	TB	WAS
Total Yards/Game	32	8	12	28	6	3	13	20	2	14	15	11	17	23	9	5
Rushing Yards/Game	32	29	9	10	31	23	20	2	25	14	13	4	3	19	15	1
Avg. Gain/Rush	32	29	9	14	30	18	22	1	13	7	8	3	5	15	11	2
Passing Yards/Game	28	6	16	29	3	2	9	31	1	12	13	23	27	18	10	20
Avg. Gain/Pass Play	32	4	5	27	10	14	12	30	3	9	26	8	7	21	11	2
Pct. Had Intercepted	30	7	12	28	22	8	2	14	19	18	10	4	13	15	26	3
Pct. QB Sacks Allowed	32	7	20	27	10	4	28	16	3	2	22	30	23	12	8	21
First Downs/Game	32	6	12	24t	10	2	7t	18	5	13	11	14	16	27	19t	7t
Avg. Gain/Off. Play	32	7	5	28	11	12	14	17	2	4	20	3	9	19	8	1
3rd Down Efficiency	32	2	6	22	5	8	9	19	4	11	18	25	12	29	23	24
4th Down Efficiency	23	31t	27t	26	2	25	16	7	12t	17t	11	5t	9	15	24	3
Punt Return Avg.	24	25	14	27	4	22	8	20	26	30	13	10	23	31	19	17
Kickoff Return Avg.	17	14	22	32	29	31	10	5	11	7	28	12	2	26	30	16
Gross Punting Avg.	13	17	28	30	24	32	26	20	1	4	15	3	19	18	22	27
Net Punting Avg.	5	15	32	16	20	29	22	14	2	18	30	1	7	12	28	31
Points/Game	31	7	18t	16	15	17	5	14	3	6	29	11	9	25	13	4
Extra Point Pct.	1t	1t	29	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	1t	30	1t	31	1t	1t	28
Field Goal Pct.	8t	14	29	20t	1t	10t	32	4	20t	17	13	31	10t	30	16	25

DEFENSE	AZ	ATL	CAR	CHI	DAL	DET	GB	MIN	NO	NYG	PHI	SF	SEA	STL	TB	WAS
Opp. Yards/Game	12	24	10	5	19	13	11	16	32	31	15	3	4	14	29	28
Opp. Rush Yds./Game	28	21	14	8	22	16	17	11	32	25	23	4	10	15	1	5
Avg. Gain/Rush	22	29	18	14	27	24	26	7	32	28	16	3	23	19	1	17
Opp. Pass Yds./Game	5	23	13	8	19	14	11	24	31	28	9	4	6	15	32	30
Avg. Gain/Pass Play	11	22	12	4	25	18	7	10	32	29	23	3	5	13	31	24
Pct. Intercepted By	1	4	26	2	32	25	9	30	16	3	29	17	8	10	11	7
QB Sack Pct.	5	27	9	11	16	20	4	7	29	23	22	14	18	1	31	28
Opp. 1st Downs/Game	5	9	21t	3	16t	12	14	27t	32	16t	16t	2	8	23	24	25t
Avg. Gain/Def. Play	12	29	15	4	25	18	13	11	32	31	20	3	6	14	28	26
3rd Down Efficiency	2	25	9	6	23	10	15	27	18	30	26	3t	17	13	24	32
4th Down Efficiency	13t	15	19t	26	21	32	6t	22	19t	16	1	23	2	4	10t	24t
Opp. Punt Return Avg.	11	14	10	1	16	18	5	9	29	15	31	4	12	17	24	8
Opp. Kickoff Ret. Avg.	30	8	1	4	6	14	15	18	24	16	21	31	11	19	25	12
Opp. Gross Punt Avg.	11	30	21	1	17	22	10	3	19	12	2	20	13	5	14	27
Opp. Net Punt Avg.	11	32	24	7	5	26	8	22	17	25	6	10	18	13t	9	16
Opp. Points/Game	17	5	18	3	24	27	11	14t	31	12t	29t	2	1	14t	23	22
Opp. Field Goal Pct.	3	17t	31	20	24	5	21t	11t	10	21t	28	9	27	8	1	29

MISCELLANEOUS	AZ	ATL	CAR	CHI	DAL	DET	GB	MIN	NO	NYG	PHI	SF	SEA	STL	TB	WAS
Point Differential	27	5	18	6	19	23	7	13	15	8t	30	4	3	22	17	12
Turnover Edge	17t	5t	16	2	27t	30	10	17t	14t	4	31t	8t	5t	17t	12t	3
Penalty Yards Edge	17	4	23	22	24	27	7	8	20	2	5	31	12	32	11	28
Punt Ret. Differential	19	22	11	4	8	21	6	15	31	25	28	5	18	27	24	13
KO Return Differential	24	11	6	18	19	25	10	7	17	8	27	21	4	26	31	16
Time of Possession	23	9	19	4	12	6	15	26	25	22	20	10	3	24	16	8

TURNOVERS / TAKEAWAYS

	TURNOVERS GAME Fum	Int	Tot	TURNOVERS SEASON Fum	Int	Tot	TAKEAWAYS GAME Fum	Int	Tot	TAKEAWAYS SEASON Fum	Int	Tot	DIF
N.E.	0	0	0	7	9	16	1	1	2	21	20	41	+25
Chi.	0	0	0	8	16	24	3	1	4	20	24	44	+20
Wash.	0	0	0	6	8	14	0	3	3	10	21	31	+17
N.Y.G.	0	0	0	6	15	21	0	1	1	14	21	35	+14
Atl.	0	0	0	4	14	18	0	1	1	11	20	31	+13
Sea.	0	0	0	8	10	18	0	1	1	13	18	31	+13
Hou.	0	2	2	4	13	17	0	0	0	14	15	29	+12
Balt.	0	1	1	5	11	16	0	0	0	12	13	25	+9
S.F.	0	0	0	8	8	16	1	1	2	11	14	25	+9
G.B.	1	0	1	8	8	16	0	0	0	5	18	23	+7
Cin.	0	0	0	10	16	26	0	1	1	16	14	30	+4
Clev.	3	1	4	8	18	26	0	0	0	12	17	29	+3
T.B.	0	1	1	6	17	23	0	0	0	8	18	26	+3
N.O.	0	1	1	5	19	24	0	1	1	11	15	26	+2
S.D.	0	0	0	11	15	26	0	1	1	14	14	28	+2
Car.	0	1	1	10	12	22	0	1	1	12	11	23	+1
Ariz.	1	1	2	13	21	34	0	0	0	11	22	33	-1
Den.	1	0	1	14	11	25	0	0	0	8	16	24	-1
Minn.	0	0	0	11	12	23	1	0	1	12	10	22	-1
St.L.	0	1	1	8	14	22	0	0	0	4	17	21	-1
Jax.	0	3	3	9	17	26	0	0	0	11	12	23	-3
Ten.	0	0	0	12	16	28	0	3	3	5	19	24	-4
Oak.	0	1	1	10	16	26	0	0	0	8	11	19	-7
Mia.	1	1	2	13	13	26	0	0	0	6	10	16	-10
Pitt.	0	0	0	16	14	30	3	1	4	10	10	20	-10
Ind.	0	0	0	9	18	27	0	2	2	3	12	15	-12
Buff.	1	0	1	17	17	34	1	1	2	9	12	21	-13
Dall.	0	3	3	10	19	29	0	0	0	9	7	16	-13
N.Y.J.	1	1	2	18	19	37	1	0	1	12	11	23	-14
Det.	3	1	4	16	17	33	0	0	0	6	11	17	-16
K.C.	0	0	0	17	20	37	1	0	1	6	7	13	-24
Phil.	0	1	1	22	15	37	0	0	0	5	8	13	-24

TEAM EFFICIENCY

OFFENSE	OFF PLAYS	RUSH AVG	PASS AVG	OFF AVG	DEFENSE	DEF PLAYS	RUSH AVG	PASS AVG	DEF AVG
1. Wash.	994	5.22	7.20	6.17	1. Den.	1015	3.61	5.23	4.58
2. N.O.	1067	4.26	7.17	6.16	2. Pitt.	951	3.71	5.29	4.64
3. S.F.	969	5.06	6.91	5.97	3. S.F.	1012	3.70	5.29	4.65
4. N.Y.G.	968	4.55	6.84	5.88	4. Chi.	1021	4.19	5.41	4.95
5. Car.	988	4.52	7.00	5.84	5. Cin.	1034	4.05	5.56	4.95
6. Den.	1090	3.81	7.45	5.84	6. Sea.	968	4.48	5.42	5.06
7. Atl.	1021	3.70	7.01	5.78	7. N.Y.J.	1019	4.32	5.79	5.08
8. T.B.	1008	4.42	6.73	5.77	8. Hou.	1015	4.00	5.78	5.10
9. Sea.	974	4.81	6.92	5.76	9. S.D.	1012	3.80	6.07	5.16
10. N.E.	1191	4.18	6.98	5.75	10. Balt.	1086	3.99	6.14	5.17
11. Dall.	1049	3.56	6.81	5.71	11. Minn.	1083	3.96	5.96	5.17
12. Det.	1160	4.13	6.41	5.64	12. Ariz.	1041	4.33	6.01	5.19
13. Buff.	983	5.02	6.04	5.58	13. G.B.	1033	4.54	5.68	5.22
14. G.B.	1042	3.93	6.65	5.52	14. St.L.	1041	4.25	6.01	5.27
15. Hou.	1090	4.18	6.58	5.46	15. Car.	1010	4.23	6.01	5.28
16. Balt.	1042	4.28	6.25	5.41	16. Clev.	1095	4.15	6.15	5.32
17. Minn.	1001	5.42	5.34	5.38	17. Mia.	1073	4.02	6.19	5.32
18. Oak.	1032	3.78	6.23	5.33	18. Det.	998	4.50	6.17	5.47
19. St.L.	1002	4.18	6.00	5.25	19. Ten.	1086	4.21	6.57	5.52
20. Phil.	1079	4.54	5.69	5.25	20. Phil.	994	4.22	6.74	5.52
21. Cin.	1016	4.06	6.11	5.24	21. Jax.	1100	4.14	6.90	5.53
22. Ten.	957	4.46	5.74	5.24	22. Buff.	1042	4.96	6.07	5.57
23. Ind.	1109	3.80	6.17	5.23	23. Oak.	995	4.27	6.85	5.70
24. Pitt.	1023	3.73	6.20	5.20	24. N.E.	1046	3.93	6.88	5.71
25. Mia.	981	4.10	5.88	5.08	25. Dall.	986	4.54	6.76	5.77
26. Clev.	998	4.02	5.71	5.04	26. Wash.	1031	4.22	6.75	5.86
27. K.C.	1015	4.79	5.27	5.03	27. K.C.	973	4.50	7.20	5.86
28. Chi.	999	4.19	5.67	4.97	28. T.B.	1031	3.50	7.28	5.90
29. Jax.	994	3.82	5.38	4.82	29. Atl.	991	4.80	6.69	5.90
30. S.D.	988	3.55	5.71	4.81	30. Ind.	995	5.14	6.68	6.02
31. N.Y.J.	1034	3.84	5.35	4.63	31. N.Y.G.	1016	4.60	7.17	6.04
32. Ariz.	1018	3.42	4.51	4.13	32. N.O.	1089	5.17	7.41	6.47

INSIDE THE RED ZONE

OFFENSE	OFF POSS	TOT TD	TOT FG	SCOR %	TD %	DEFENSE	OFF POSS	TOT TD	TOT FG	SCOR %	TD %
1. N.E.	70	49	17	.943	.700	1. Mia.	54	23	21	.815	.426
2. N.O.	57	39	13	.912	.684	2. Balt.	53	23	25	.906	.434
3. G.B.	47	32	9	.872	.681	3. Ariz.	45	20	14	.756	.444
4. Wash.	53	32	11	.811	.604	4. Sea.	38	17	13	.789	.447
5. Det.	55	33	13	.836	.600	5. Atl.	42	19	15	.810	.452
6. T.B.	47	28	9	.787	.596	6. N.Y.G.	50	23	19	.840	.460
7. Den.	66	39	19	.879	.591	7. Hou.	40	20	12	.800	.500
8. Atl.	63	37	20	.905	.587	8. St.L.	53	27	15	.792	.509
9. Car.	46	27	11	.826	.587	9. Ind.	53	27	23	.943	.509
10. Sea.	54	31	20	.944	.574	10. Chi.	41	21	11	.780	.512
11. Balt.	49	28	15	.878	.571	11. Cin.	41	21	14	.854	.512
12. Hou.	57	32	22	.947	.561	12. Det.	39	20	18	.974	.513
13. Mia.	38	21	11	.842	.553	13. N.E.	46	24	12	.783	.522
14. Pitt.	49	27	18	.918	.551	14. Pitt.	42	22	13	.833	.524
15. N.Y.G.	62	34	22	.903	.548	15. Jax.	66	35	21	.848	.530
16. Cin.	57	31	19	.877	.544	16. K.C.	64	34	23	.891	.531
17. Ind.	48	26	14	.833	.542	17. Car.	50	27	18	.900	.540
18. Minn.	52	28	18	.885	.538	18. Phil.	55	30	18	.873	.545
19. St.L.	37	19	9	.757	.514	19. Dall.	55	30	19	.891	.545
20. Dall.	49	25	19	.898	.510	20. T.B.	54	30	17	.870	.556
21. S.F.	55	28	20	.873	.509	21. Oak.	54	30	17	.870	.556
22. Chi.	46	23	18	.891	.500	22. N.O.	70	39	17	.800	.557
23. Ten.	36	18	14	.889	.500	23. Clev.	53	30	10	.755	.566
24. Buff.	48	24	15	.813	.500	24. Wash.	52	30	16	.885	.577
25. N.Y.J.	47	23	13	.766	.489	25. N.Y.J.	41	24	11	.854	.585
26. S.D.	47	22	18	.851	.468	26. Den.	41	24	14	.927	.585
27. Jax.	36	16	14	.833	.444	27. Minn.	51	31	14	.882	.608
28. Phil.	50	22	18	.800	.440	28. S.F.	36	22	12	.944	.611
29. Clev.	39	17	17	.872	.436	29. G.B.	47	29	14	.915	.617
30. Oak.	42	18	20	.905	.429	30. Ten.	58	37	16	.914	.638
31. Ariz.	40	16	14	.750	.400	31. Buff.	55	38	14	.945	.691
32. K.C.	37	10	16	.703	.270	32. S.D.	40	28	10	.950	.700

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TRANSACTIONS

(As reported, Dec. 23-28)

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

BALTIMORE — **Dec. 24: Practice-squad addition:** LB D.J. Bryant. **Dec. 26: Activated:** ILB Ray Lewis (from reserve/injured, designated for return). **Reserve/injured:** WR LaQuan Williams (hamstring).

BUFFALO — **Dec. 24: Reserve/injured:** TE Scott Chandler (knee). **Dec. 26: Practice-squad addition:** TE Derek Buttles. **Practice-squad deletion:** OT J.B. Shugarts. **Tryouts:** TE Derek Buttles; TE Dan Gronkowski. **Dec. 28: Roster addition:** WR Kevin Elliott (from Bills practice squad).

CLEVELAND — **Dec. 24: Roster addition:** QB Thaddeus Lewis (from Browns practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** WR Mohamed Massaquoi (knee). **Dec. 26: Roster addition:** QB Josh Johnson (released by 49ers 8/31). **Reserve/injured:** S Usama Young (thumb). **Practice-squad addition:** CB Jordan Mabin. **Visits:** QB Josh Johnson; CB Jordan Mabin.

CINCINNATI — **Dec. 25: Assigned on waivers:** WR Dane Sanzenbacher from Bears. **Reserve/injured:** CB Dre Kirkpatrick (knee). **Dec. 28: Roster addition:** CB Chris Lewis-Harris (from Bengals practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** PK Mike Nugent (calf).

HOUSTON — **Dec. 26: Practice-squad addition:** TE Steve Skelton.

JACKSONVILLE — **Dec. 24: Assigned on waivers:** OG Mark Asper; TE Allen Reisner (both from Vikings). **Roster addition:** WR Jerrell Jackson (from Jaguars practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** RB Rashad Jennings (shoulder); LB Greg Jones (fractured leg); WR Cecil Shorts (concussion). **Dec. 26: Practice-squad addition:** DB Curtis Holcomb. **Visit:** DB Curtis Holcomb. **Dec. 28: Roster addition:** DT Jerome Long (from Chiefs practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** RB Maurice Jones-Drew (foot).

KANSAS CITY — **Dec. 28: Practice-squad deletion:** DT Jerome Long (signed to Jaguars active roster).

MIAMI — **Dec. 28: Tryout:** DT Marcus Dixon.

NEW ENGLAND — **Dec. 24: Placed on waivers:** WR Kamar Aiken; RB James Develin. **Practice-squad deletions:** WR Tony Logan; OG Jeremiah Warren. **Reinstated:** DE Jermaine Cunningham (from reserve/suspended by commissioner). **Roster exemption:** DE Jermaine Cunningham (expires 12/31). **Dec. 26: Practice-squad additions:** WR Kamar Aiken; RB James Develin; S Cyhl Quarles. **Dec. 28: Tryouts:** WR Shawn Gore; LB Nic Harris; DE Jason Vega; WR Isaiah Williams.

N.Y. JETS — **Dec. 24: Placed on waivers:** WR Mardy Gilyard. **Dec. 27: Reserve/injured:** CB Aaron Berry (hamstring). **Tryouts:** RB Shawn Asiata; S David Caldwell; RB John Clay; TE Brody Eldridge; WR Shawn Gore; CB Cliff Harris; RB Chad Kackert; LB Danny Lansanah; DT Frank Okam; RB Giavanni Ruffin. **Dec. 28: Roster addition:** RB John Griffin (from Jets practice squad).

OAKLAND — **Dec. 27: Reserve/injured:** DT Richard Seymour (hamstring).

PITTSBURGH — **Dec. 26: Roster additions:** S Da'Mon Cromartie-Smith (from Steelers practice squad); RB Jamie McCoy (from Chargers practice squad); LB Marshall McFadden (from Steelers practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** RB Baron Batch (arm); TE Heath Miller (knee); CB Ike Taylor (leg). **Practice-squad additions:** DB Walter McFadden; WR Bert Reed. **Dec. 28: Roster additions:** WR David Gilreath; NT Alameda Ta'amu (both from Steelers practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** OT Mike Adams (ankle); CB Curtis Brown (ankle); WR Mike Wallace (hip). **Visits:** RB Jason Ford; WR Tori Gurley.

SAN DIEGO — **Dec. 26: Roster additions:** S Sean Cattouse; CB Greg Gatson (both from Chargers practice squad). **Practice-squad deletion:** RB Jamie McCoy (signed to Steelers active roster). **Reserve/injured:** DT Aubrayo Franklin (knee); S Brandon Taylor (knee). **Practice-squad additions:** CB Arthur Hobbs; TE Anthony Miller.

TENNESSEE — **Dec. 26: Practice-squad addition:** RB Alvester Alexander. **Practice-squad/injured:** LB Mike Mohamed. **Visits:** RB Alvester Alexander; RB Steve Slaton. **Dec. 28: Roster addition:** RB Collin Mooney (from Titans practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** LB Colin McCarthy (concussion).

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

ARIZONA — **Dec. 26: Roster addition:** WR Kerry Taylor (from Cardinals practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** TE Rob Housler (shoulder). **Practice-squad addition:** DE Everette Thompson. **Dec. 28: Tryouts:** RB Jourdan Brooks; TE Zack Pianalto.

ATLANTA — **Dec. 24: Reserve/injured:** WR Kevin Cone (groin). **Roster exemption lifted:** C Joe Hawley. **Tryouts:** WR Emmanuel Arceneaux; WR Jaymar Johnson.

CAROLINA — **Dec. 26: Reserve/injured:** OG Amini Silatolu (wrist).

CHICAGO — **Dec. 24: Placed on waivers:** WR Dane Sanzenbacher. **Dec. 26: Roster addition:** S Troy Nolan (waived by Texans 11/17). **Dec. 28: Placed on waivers:** DE Cheta Ozougwu. **Roster addition:** RB Harvey Unga (from Bears practice squad).

DALLAS — **Dec. 27: Practice-squad addition:** DE Monte Taylor. **Tryout:** DE Matt Roth.

GREEN BAY — **Dec. 27: Placed on waivers:** RB Johnny White (from reserve/injured).

MINNESOTA — **Dec. 26: Practice-squad addition:** TE Chase Ford. **Dec. 27: Visit:** TE Chase Ford.

NEW ORLEANS — **Dec. 28: Roster addition:** CB A.J. Davis (from Saints practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** RB Pierre Thomas (knee).

N.Y. GIANTS — **Dec. 26: Roster addition:** CB Terrence Frederick (from Giants practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** TE Travis Beckum (knee). **Practice-squad addition:** CB Brandon Bing.

PHILADELPHIA — **Dec. 24: Practice-squad addition:** LB Marcus Dowtin. **Tryouts:** LB Marcus Dowtin; CB Chris Hawkins; S Devin Holland. **Dec. 26: Roster addition:** DT Antonio Dixon (waived by Eagles 8/31). **Reserve/injured:** QB Nick Foles (hand).

ST. LOUIS — **Dec. 26: Practice-squad addition:** DE Mason Brodine.

SAN FRANCISCO — **Dec. 25: Practice-squad deletion:** LB Alex Hoffman-Ellis. **Dec. 26: Practice-squad additions:** DT Lamar Divens; S Curtis Taylor. **Visits:** DT Lamar Divens; S Curtis Taylor. **Dec. 28: Roster addition:** DE Tony Jerod-Eddie (from 49ers practice squad). **Reserve/injured:** WR Mario Manningham (knee).

SEATTLE — **Dec. 24: Placed on waivers:** WR Deon Butler. **Roster exemption lifted:** S Winston Guy. **Tryout:** DE Ray Edwards. **Dec. 25: Practice-squad deletion:** DE Monte Taylor. **Dec. 26: Practice-squad addition:** TE Cooper Helfet. **Dec. 28: Placed on waivers:** DT Hebron "Loni" Fangupo; CB Ron Parker. **Roster addition:** WR Deon Butler (waived by Seahawks 12/24).

TAMPA BAY — **Dec. 24: Reinstated:** CB Eric Wright (from reserve/suspended by commissioner). **Roster exemption:** CB Eric Wright (expires 12/31). **Dec. 26: Practice-squad addition:** S Nick Saenz.

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NFList

Last year's fired coaches have mixed results in '12

By Kevin Fishbain
Associate editor

As we head into January, 12 teams prepare to make a run at the Super Bowl, and 20 others figure out how to get back on track for 2013. Several of those teams will be searching for new head coaches in the coming weeks.

Two of the big-name head coaches who are expected to be leaving their posts, Andy Reid and Norv Turner, could find work quickly.

Reid will be rumored as a head-coaching candidate in San Diego because of his ties to Southern California, and many believe he will be back in a post soon, but rarely has a head coach been fired, then returned to the same position with another team without a year off. Turner will garner consideration as an offensive coordinator somewhere next season, but not as a head coach.

Many of the other head-coaching situations remain in flux as of this writing, but those who get the pink slip can look at last year's victims as inspiration that they might not be unemployed long. Here is a look at the head coaches who were fired in or after the 2011 season and how they have fared in new assistant jobs in '12:

Hue Jackson — After only one year as the Raiders' head coach, Jackson was fired shortly after new GM Reggie McKenzie took over football operations. It was not a happy exit, but Jackson found work a month later, returning to Cincinnati, where he was a WR coach from 2004-06. In his second stint with the team, he has worked as an assistant coach with the Bengals' special teams and defensive backs.

Todd Haley — The Chiefs fired Haley 13 games into his second season in charge in early December 2011. The Steelers then hired Haley in early February to help open up the passing game. Much was said prior to the season about Haley working with QB Ben Roethlisberger, and the relationship hasn't been too cozy, especially when Roethlisberger appeared to call out Haley's play-calling following Week 15. Despite the offense having its share of struggles, Haley has been rumored as a candidate for other jobs.

Steve Spagnuolo — Spagnuolo was fired following the end of a 2-14 regular season. Less than three weeks later, the Saints hired him based on his previous success as the Giants' defensive coordinator. However, the Saints' stop unit was miserable to start the season, allowing 400-plus yards in the first 10 contests. The "D" improved as the season wore on, but it was a big disappointment overall.

Jack Del Rio — Del Rio was the first head coach to be let go in 2011, as the Jaguars fired him on Nov. 30 with a 3-8 record. He joined the Broncos in late January as their seventh defensive coordinator in seven seasons, reuniting with John Fox — the pair worked together in Carolina in 2002. The Broncos' defense has been extremely impressive this season, ranking near the top of the league against the run and pass. It's been a good year for Del Rio's résumé.

After being fired by Jacksonville in 2011, Jack Del Rio has found success running Denver's defense this season.

Jim Caldwell — Peyton Manning sitting out the 2011 season certainly didn't help Caldwell's cause, and he couldn't survive a 2-14 season. Less than two weeks after being fired, Caldwell was hired as the Ravens' quarterbacks coach, and he was promoted to offensive coordinator after Cam Cameron was fired in mid-December. The Ravens hope that Caldwell's experience with Manning can help get more out of Joe Flacco, though it has been an up-and-down season for Baltimore's offense.

Tony Sparano — Sparano might be the least successful of last year's fired head coaches, and the one in most jeopardy of being out of a job again. Miami fired Sparano in early December with the team on the verge of another losing season. On Jan. 11, the Jets hired Sparano to replace Brian Schottenheimer and return the team to the ground-and-pound philosophy. The offense, though, has been a disaster this season, with the distraction and ineffective use of Tim Tebow a prime culprit.

Raheem Morris — The Buccaneers fired Morris on "Black Monday" after 10 straight losses to end the season. Nine days later, the Redskins hired Morris to coach the team's defensive backs. The unit has dealt with injuries, and the 'Skins are 30th against the pass, but the entire team has been a pleasant surprise this season, with the defense doing just enough. The personnel that Morris is working with isn't great, and next season might be a better indicator of his work.

A-BOMBS

PFW executive editor Dan Arkush unleashes his Week 17 reflections.

With the 2012 regular season coming to a close, award ballots start to weigh heavy on the brain. Before filling out my annual PFW/PFWA ballot some time this coming week, I thought the time seemed right to recognize the top players, in my opinion, in each division — on both sides of the ball.

AFC East

Offensive MVP: Patriots QB **Tom Brady** — He's been off the mark a bit in recent weeks, but on balance, Brady has done another masterful job directing the league's top-ranked offense.

Defensive MVP: Dolphins DE **Cameron Wake** — With 15 sacks, Wake has somewhat quietly become one of the league's most productive pass rushers. Jets CB **Antonio Cromartie** deserves honorable mention for stepping up in **Darrelle Revis**' absence.

AFC North

Offensive MVP: Bengals WR **A.J. Green** — The favorite target of "Red Rifle" QB **Andy Dalton**, Green has been a consistently potent weapon, scoring TDs in 10 different games and reaching at least 99 receiving yards in six games.

Defensive MVP: Bengals DT **Geno Atkins** — A defensive tackle getting 12½ sacks speaks volumes. Atkins is another under-the-radar player who has had an over-the-top season, establishing himself as the league's top interior pass rusher.

AFC South

Offensive MVP: Texans RB **Arian Foster** — Second in the AFC in rushing behind Kansas City's **Jamaal Charles** and the NFL's TD leader (15), Foster has been a steady chain mover in the league's best ball-control offense.

TIM SADLON

Texans RB Arian Foster has been the most valuable weapon in what has been the league's best ball-control offense.

Defensive MVP: Texans DE **J.J. Watt** — You could make a pretty strong case for Watt as a league MVP candidate. Showing off a nonstop motor, he has been brilliant pretty much on a weekly basis, both as a pass rusher and as a run defender.

AFC West

Offensive MVP: Broncos QB **Peyton Manning** — **John Elway** hit the jackpot with the 36-year-old future Hall of Famer. Performing with a new cast of characters, the AFC's top-rated passer hasn't missed a beat on the road to Canton.

Defensive MVP: Broncos OLB **Von Miller** — In addition to sneaking up on higher-profile sack leaders Watt and **Aldon Smith**, Miller (17½ sacks) has done a dynamite job spearheading **Jack Del Rio**'s well-rounded defense.

NFC East

Offensive MVP: Redskins QB **Robert Griffin III** — RG3 has proven more than worthy of the high price in draft choices **Mike Shanahan** paid to land him with the second overall pick in the draft. Griffin has made **Cam Newton**'s rookie season look tame in comparison.

Defensive MVP: Redskins OLB **Ryan Kerrigan** — It came down to Cowboys OLB Anthony Spencer and Redskins OLB Ryan Kerrigan, with Kerrigan getting the nod after notching six tackles in the Week 17 Washington win that sealed the division title.

NFC North

Offensive MVP: Vikings RB **Adrian Peterson** — In a division overflowing with tremendous candidates (Packers QB **Aaron Rodgers**, Lions WR **Calvin Johnson**), Peterson gets the nod. He has had the best season by a running back that I've witnessed in a number of years.

Defensive MVP: Bears CB **Charles Tillman** — A high-octane takeaway machine in one of the league's most opportunistic defenses. Teammate **Julius Peppers** is a close second.

NFC South

Offensive MVP: Falcons QB **Matt Ryan** — Matty just might ice league MVP honors if he can come out of the gate strong in the playoffs, which he has yet to do in his career. Ryan has done a fine job taking advantage of a great Falcons receiving corps.

Defensive MVP: Panthers MLB **Luke Kuechly** — This was an amazingly tough category to fill. I finally opted for Kuechly over Buccaneers Pro Bowl DT **Gerald McCoy**. The Panthers' first-round rookie has done a great job replacing **Jon Beason** in the middle, leading the league in tackles.

NFC West

Offensive MVP: Seahawks QB **Russell Wilson** — Since being turned totally loose by head coach **Pete Carroll**, Wilson is making a late charge for Rookie of the Year honors over RG3 and the Colts' **Andrew Luck**.

Defensive MVP: 49ers FS **Dashon Goldson** — San Francisco's pass defense has improved significantly this season, and Goldson has been the primary reason.

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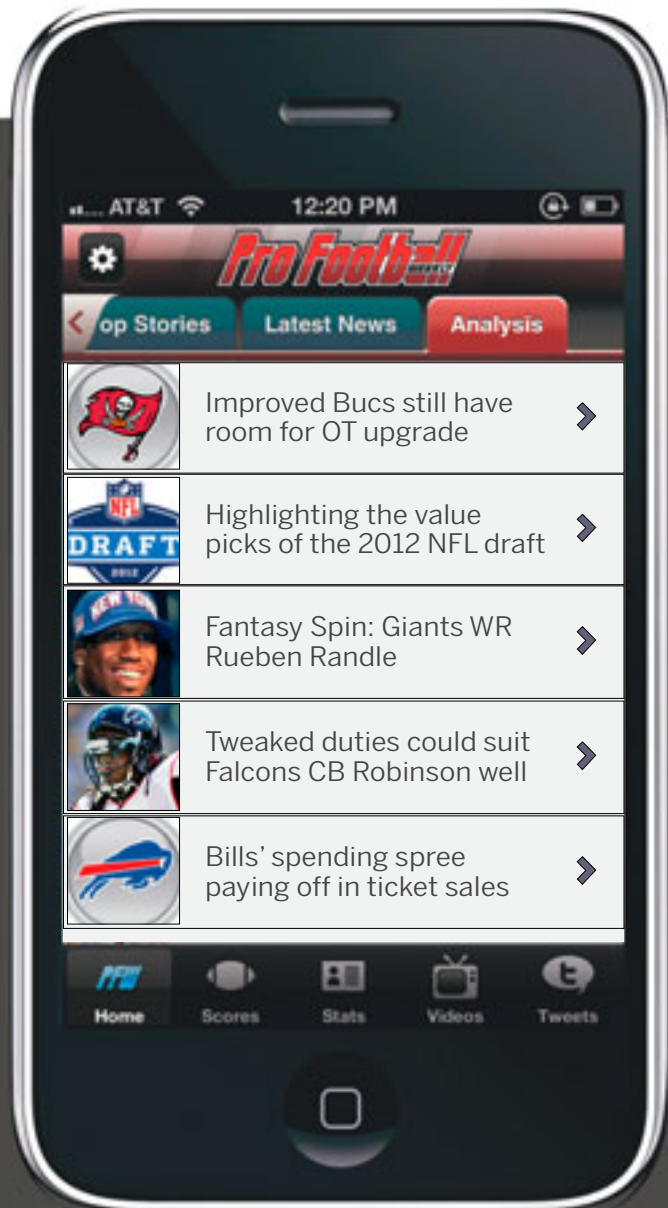

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