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NFL-POST-2 1/8/08

UP NEXT, THE DIVISIONALS! DOMINANT TEAMS MAKE UP THE ROUND

The cream of the crop!

That's what fans will be watching this weekend as the NFL takes the next step on the way to Super Bowl XLII with its Divisional Playoffs. The remaining eight teams in the 2007 playoffs have a combined record of 101-31.

"This is always about the next game," says San Diego Chargers head coach **NORV TURNER**. "It doesn't get any better than winning. This is why you play. This is why you coach. But we've got to set the stage for this week."

"This week" should be tougher than last week, if for no other reason than the top four playoff seeds – Dallas, Green Bay, Indianapolis and New England – will be in action after enjoying a Wild Card bye.

The Divisionals are packed with storylines:

- It is only the sixth time in the past 38 seasons (since 1970) that the Divisional Playoff teams combined for a .750 or better regular-season record (.758).
- Two of the games – both on Sunday -- are regular-season rematches – San Diego-Indianapolis and New York Giants-Dallas. The Giants will be the first team in history to enter a road divisional game with an 8-1 road record.
- One game features the NFL's top passing offense (New England) and the league's No. 2 rushing offense (Jacksonville).
- Another – Seattle at Green Bay – comes packed with a week's worth of storylines. One will be talked about continuously until gametime (and maybe into it) – Seattle quarterback **MATT HASSELBECK**'s boast upon winning the overtime coin flip in a 2003 Wild Card matchup the last time the teams met in the playoffs of, "We want the ball and we're going to score."

As Round 2 of the 2007 NFL playoffs approaches, every player on the eight Divisional teams has just that type of confidence. A rundown of the weekend:

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS (11-6) at GREEN BAY PACKERS (13-3) (Saturday, 4:30 PM ET, FOX)

STORYLINE: Start counting the storylines!

There's the Hasselbeck OT scenario above (the Packers won on **AL HARRIS**' 52-yard interception return)...**MIKE HOLMGREN**, who won Super Bowl XXXI as the Packers' coach, trying to break a three-game losing streak in Green Bay as Seattle's coach...and Hasselbeck remembering his stint as Packers **QB BRETT FAVRE**'s backup in 1999-2000.

But that's all history. It's this Saturday that counts, when Seattle's speedy defense, with one of its big assets being its ability to rush the passer (45 sacks, fourth-most in the NFL this season), comes full force against Favre, whose OL gave up the third-fewest sacks in '07 (19, tie).

"He's seen it all," says Seattle **S BRIAN RUSSELL** of Favre, who this year became the NFL's all-time winningest quarterback. "He'll take a risk. You think you've got a guy covered, and he'll throw it back shoulder or throw it up and make it a jump ball. You've got your work cut out for you."

NFL PLAYOFF FACTOID

POLITICAL FOOTBALL: Senator **BARACK OBAMA** (D-Ill.), at a Democratic presidential debate in Manchester, New Hampshire last Saturday, was asked if he had paid attention to the Republican debate that preceded the Democratic session. "I was going back and forth between the Republicans and football," said Obama, meaning the Washington Redskins' Wild Card game against Seattle on TV.

Hasselbeck, of course, learned well under Favre. He has led Seattle to five playoffs in a row, the last four as NFC West champions, and tied Favre in TD passes this year with 28.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS (12-5) at NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS (16-0) (Saturday, 8:00 PM ET, CBS)

STORYLINE: *Battle of the 24-pointers!*

Sure, everybody knows that the Patriots went 16-0 this year for only the NFL's fourth unbeaten/untied season in history and set a league scoring record with 589 points. But they weren't the only team to dominate opponents. The Jaguars, through the Wild Card, have an active streak of scoring at least 24 points in 11 consecutive games. Only the Patriots and Dallas, both with 13 games, posted longer such streaks this year.

"People think of Jacksonville as a conservative, run-the-ball, tough defense kind of team," says Patriots head coach **BILL BELICHICK**. "They're way past that, way past it."

Indeed, the Jaguars – led by explosive **RBs FRED TAYLOR** and **MAURICE JONES-DREW** -- piled up 400 yards in five of their last six regular-season games, missing by 19 yards in Week 17 of making it six straight. But they face a real force.

The Patriots, led by Associated Press' 2007 NFL MVP **TOM BRADY** (with an NFL season-record 50 TD passes), seem capable of adjusting to whatever defenses throw at them. If the passing lanes are open, they will go to them continuously through **WRs RANDY MOSS** (NFL season-record 23 TD catches) and **WES WELKER** (tie for NFL reception lead with 112). If they have to mix that in with a running game, that's fine too. **RB LAURENCE MARONEY** this year topped his rookie season with 835 yards. And they're tough at home: New England has won nine playoff games in a row there.

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS (12-5) at INDIANAPOLIS COLTS (13-3) (Sunday, 1:00 PM ET, CBS)

STORYLINE: *Repeat?*

Indianapolis certainly hopes not. On a rainy Sunday night in San Diego last November 11, Colts **QB PEYTON MANNING** threw a team-record six interceptions against the Chargers, with eventual NFL INT leader (10) **ANTONIO CROMARTIE** accounting for half of them. Scoring 14 unanswered points in the fourth quarter, Indy lined up ol' reliable **K ADAM VINATIERI** with 1:31 left only to see him push a 29-yard attempt wide right. Chargers 23, Colts 21.

"We played poorly in all phases the last game and we fought in the second half," says Colts **LB GARY BRACKETT**. "If it proved anything, it's that we have to start fast. That's what we want to do Sunday."

That was Indy's last loss for the next six weeks, and they accomplished that with one of their major cogs missing – **WR MARVIN HARRISON** (knee), who should return Sunday. It was really not a problem, because **WR REGGIE WAYNE** assumed the No. 1 role, finishing with the league's top receiving yardage mark (1,510).

As for San Diego's receiving, the mid-season trade for **WR CHRIS CHAMBERS** gave it a solid two-pronged offense. Now it was not just **RB LA DAINIAN TOMLINSON** (1,474 yards to lead the NFL in rushing) carrying the load, but defenses had to also scheme for a Chargers receiving game. That was readily seen in the Wild Card as Chambers (121) and **VINCENT JACKSON** (114) became only the third receiving tandem in Chargers playoff history to both post 100-yard games. But San Diego goes against the defense that allowed the fewest points in the league this year (262).

NEW YORK GIANTS (11-6) at DALLAS COWBOYS (13-3) (Sunday, 4:30 PM ET, FOX)

STORYLINE: *Big Blue...Big D...Oh, Boy!*

It is the 54th time since 1970 that teams have met three times in a season. But only 11 times has a club swept all three games, as the Cowboys will be looking to do Sunday. Plus the Giants have that unique record going for them. Never before has a road team entered a divisional game with an 8-1 road record, which the Giants boast this year.

"We love playing there, we love going to Dallas," says Giants **QB ELI MANNING**. "There are no secrets between the teams. It's a tough challenge against Dallas, we know that. We played them two times. Maybe the third will be a charm."

The division rivals have played each other 91 times since 1960, but this will be the first playoff game between the two. And the Giants, indeed, have done well in Dallas, splitting the past eight games there.

The last was on Sunday night on '07 Kickoff Weekend when the teams combined for the most points in the series, 80, with Dallas winning 45-35. Cowboys eventual Pro Bowl **QB TONY ROMO** threw for 345 yards and four TDs.

Even with pounding RBs such as Dallas' **MARION BARBER** and New York's **BRANDON JACOBS**, and stellar receivers such as the Giants' **PLAXICO BURRESS** and **AMANI TOOMER** and the Cowboys' **JASON WITTEN** and perhaps **TERRELL OWENS** (ankle), the game could come down to the big boys. The Giants' dominating defense led the league in sacks (53). Dallas surrendered 25, the 10th fewest in the league.

2007 FINAL NFL STANDINGS

AFC - 2007 Regular Season

AFC East

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Net	Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
*- New England Patriots	16	0	0	1.000	589	274	315	75	8-0	8-0	6-0	1.000	12-0	1.000	4-0	16W	5-0	
Buffalo Bills	7	9	0	.438	252	354	-102	25	4-4	3-5	4-2	.667	6-6	.500	1-3	3L	2-3	
New York Jets	4	12	0	.250	268	355	-87	26	3-5	1-7	2-4	.333	4-8	.333	0-4	1W	2-3	
Miami Dolphins	1	15	0	.063	267	437	-170	29	1-7	0-8	0-6	.000	1-11	.083	0-4	2L	1-4	

AFC North

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Net	Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
z- Pittsburgh Steelers	10	6	0	.625	393	269	124	46	7-1	3-5	5-1	.833	7-5	.583	3-1	1L	2-3	
Cleveland Browns	10	6	0	.625	402	382	20	46	7-1	3-5	3-3	.500	7-5	.583	3-1	1W	3-2	
Cincinnati Bengals	7	9	0	.438	380	385	-5	41	5-3	2-6	3-3	.500	6-6	.500	1-3	2W	3-2	
Baltimore Ravens	5	11	0	.313	275	384	-109	28	4-4	1-7	1-5	.167	2-10	.167	3-1	1W	1-4	

AFC South

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Net	Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
z- Indianapolis Colts	13	3	0	.813	450	262	188	54	6-2	7-1	5-1	.833	9-3	.750	4-0	1L	4-1	
y- Jacksonville Jaguars	11	5	0	.688	411	304	107	50	6-2	5-3	2-4	.333	8-4	.667	3-1	1L	3-2	
y- Tennessee Titans	10	6	0	.625	301	297	4	28	5-3	5-3	4-2	.667	7-5	.583	3-1	3W	4-1	
Houston Texans	8	8	0	.500	379	384	-5	43	6-2	2-6	1-5	.167	5-7	.417	3-1	1W	3-2	

AFC West

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Net	Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
z- San Diego Chargers	11	5	0	.688	412	284	128	49	7-1	4-4	5-1	.833	9-3	.750	2-2	6W	5-0	
Denver Broncos	7	9	0	.438	320	409	-89	34	5-3	2-6	3-3	.500	6-6	.500	1-3	1W	2-3	
Kansas City Chiefs	4	12	0	.250	226	335	-109	24	2-6	2-6	2-4	.333	3-9	.250	1-3	9L	0-5	
Oakland Raiders	4	12	0	.250	283	398	-115	30	2-6	2-6	2-4	.333	4-8	.333	0-4	4L	1-4	

NFC - 2007 Regular Season

NFC East

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Net	Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
*- Dallas Cowboys	13	3	0	.813	455	325	130	54	6-2	7-1	4-2	.667	10-2	.833	3-1	1L	3-2	
y- New York Giants	10	6	0	.625	373	351	22	44	3-5	7-1	3-3	.500	7-5	.583	3-1	1L	3-2	
y- Washington Redskins	9	7	0	.563	334	310	24	35	5-3	4-4	3-3	.500	7-5	.583	2-2	4W	4-1	
Philadelphia Eagles	8	8	0	.500	336	300	36	38	3-5	5-3	2-4	.333	5-7	.417	3-1	3W	3-2	

NFC North

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Net	Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
z- Green Bay Packers	13	3	0	.813	435	291	144	49	7-1	6-2	4-2	.667	9-3	.750	4-0	1W	3-2	
Minnesota Vikings	8	8	0	.500	365	311	54	43	5-3	3-5	3-3	.500	6-6	.500	2-2	2L	3-2	
Detroit Lions	7	9	0	.438	346	444	-98	37	5-3	2-6	3-3	.500	4-8	.333	3-1	1L	1-4	
Chicago Bears	7	9	0	.438	334	348	-14	34	4-4	3-5	2-4	.333	4-8	.333	3-1	2W	2-3	

NFC South

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Net	Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
z- Tampa Bay Buccaneers	9	7	0	.563	334	270	64	36	6-2	3-5	5-1	.833	8-4	.667	1-3	2L	2-3	
Carolina Panthers	7	9	0	.438	267	347	-80	28	2-6	5-3	3-3	.500	7-5	.583	0-4	1W	3-2	
New Orleans Saints	7	9	0	.438	379	388	-9	47	3-5	4-4	3-3	.500	6-6	.500	1-3	2L	2-3	
Atlanta Falcons	4	12	0	.250	259	414	-155	26	3-5	1-7	1-5	.167	3-9	.250	1-3	1W	1-4	

NFC West

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Net	Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
z- Seattle Seahawks	10	6	0	.625	393	291	102	44	7-1	3-5	5-1	.833	8-4	.667	2-2	1L	3-2	
Arizona Cardinals	8	8	0	.500	404	399	5	49	6-2	2-6	3-3	.500	5-7	.417	3-1	2W	3-2	
San Francisco 49ers	5	11	0	.313	219	364	-145	24	3-5	2-6	3-3	.500	4-8	.333	1-3	1L	2-3	
St. Louis Rams	3	13	0	.188	263	438	-175	27	1-7	2-6	1-5	.167	3-9	.250	0-4	4L	1-4	

x - Clinched playoff, y - Clinched Wild Card, z - Clinched Division

* - Clinched Division and Homefield Advantage

WILD CARD WEEKEND RESULTS (JANUARY 5-6)

(Home team in CAPS)

Saturday, January 5

SEATTLE 35, Washington 14
Jacksonville 31, PITTSBURGH 29

Sunday, January 6

N.Y. Giants 24, TAMPA BAY 14
SAN DIEGO 17, Tennessee 6

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS SCHEDULE – JANUARY 12-13

(All times Eastern)

Saturday, January 12

Seattle at Green Bay, 4:30 PM (FOX)
Jacksonville at New England, 8:00 PM (CBS)

Sunday, January 13

San Diego at Indianapolis, 1:00 PM (CBS)
N.Y. Giants at Dallas, 4:30 PM (FOX)

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME: Sunday, January 20, 3:00 PM ET (CBS)

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME: Sunday, January 20, 6:30 PM ET (FOX)

SUPER BOWL XLII: Sunday, February 3 at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, 6:30 PM ET (FOX)

PRO BOWL: Sunday, February 10 at Aloha Stadium, Honolulu, Hawaii, 6:00 PM ET (FOX)