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FALL'S COMING UP & THE NFL IS HEATING UP!; WEEK TOPS OFF WITH ROMO VS. RODGERS, FAVRE VS. RIVERS

Great way to start. Great way to come back.

That can easily summarize developments in the NFL so far that have already packed a season's worth of surprise and suspense into the league's first...two weeks.

As autumn looms next Monday, who can imagine what's in store?

Look at things so far. Three of the 2-0 teams (Buffalo, Carolina and Denver) won only seven games apiece last year. So things are looking up for them.

But, hold on. Just look at last year. The Giants started 0-2 and won the Super Bowl. The Chargers began 1-3 and reached the AFC Championship Game. It's two weeks down – and a *long* way to go!

"It's a great way to start the season," says wide receiver **LARRY FITZGERALD** of the 2-0 Arizona Cardinals. "But it would be a lot better to be 3-0. That's where my mind-frame is."

If there have been great starts to the season, there have also been great comebacks. Just look at Week 2.

Three teams – Carolina, Indianapolis and San Francisco -- overcame deficits of at least 14 points to win – the first time that many teams have done so since Week 13 of 2006. "You have to continue to fight and continue to battle," says Indianapolis head coach **TONY DUNGY**. "That's the way a lot of NFL games are."

So let's see what's in store for Week 3. Five games – but far from the only ones – that should provide some fireworks:

PITTSBURGH STEELERS (2-0) at PHILADELPHIA EAGLES (1-1)

STORYLINE: Roethlisberger vs. McNabb...Parker vs. Westbrook...and DeSean vs. Hines.

This Keystone State matchup – the teams have not met since 2004 -- just may have it all.

The Steelers are 2-0 and the Eagles – scoring 75 points in their first two games – certainly could be that way after their wild, back-and-forth classic against Dallas Monday night.

The matchup should have the state rocking. The quarterbacks have been fairly flawless this season, with neither throwing an interception. Both have above-100.0 passer ratings, with the Steelers' **BEN ROETHLISBERGER** leading the NFL in the category (136.3), while Eagles **QB DONOVAN MC NABB** has fired for the second-most yards in the league (642 to **JAY CUTLER**'s 650).

The running backs – Pitt's **WILLIE PARKER** and Philly's **BRIAN WESTBROOK** – have started the season hot. Westbrook leads the NFL in TDs with five (3 rushing, 2 receiving) and Parker, with the most carries in the league (53), ties Westbrook and Dallas' **MARION BARBER** for the most rush TDs (3).

Finally, there's the matchup between Eagles wide receiver **DE SEAN JACKSON** -- who Monday night tied former Eagle **DON LOONEY** (1940) as the only NFL rookie to open his career with two consecutive 100-yard receiving games -- and the Steelers' 11-year veteran **HINES WARD**, who ties for the league lead in TD catches (3).

NFL MNF FACTOID

MONDAY NIGHT MAYHEM: There were seven lead changes in Week 2's *Monday Night Football* game won by Dallas over Philadelphia, 41-37. That is the most in an NFL game since seven on December 24, 2006 when Tennessee topped Buffalo 30-29.

ARIZONA CARDINALS (2-0) at WASHINGTON REDSKINS (1-1)

STORYLINE: Veteran quarterback, young quarterback – both adapting well.

And it has produced the kind of results they'll want to continue this week.

Of course, Cardinals **QB KURT WARNER** – in his 11th NFL season – has seen it all and knows that each game can call for different tactics. In Week 1 against San Francisco, it was mostly a stay-on-the-ground second half to preserve a 23-13 win. Last Sunday, he brought out the cannons against Miami, throwing for 361 yards and three scores as **WRs ANQUAN BOLDIN** and **LARRY FITZGERALD** each had 100-yard receiving efforts for the sixth time in the same game.

New Redskins head coach **JIM ZORN** – a 12-year NFL QB – sees the same adaptability developing in his young quarterback – 26-year-old **JASON CAMPBELL**. Twice last Sunday in the Redskins' 29-24 win over New Orleans, Campbell audibled and completed key passes. The most important was his 67-yard TD strike to **WR SANTANA MOSS** that produced the winning points.

"I want to see even better play in the weeks to come," says Zorn. Cards coach **KEN WHISENHUNT** couldn't agree more.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS (1-1) at DENVER BRONCOS (2-0)

STORYLINE: May seem like a division game for Drew Brees!

This will be the first meeting with an AFC West team for New Orleans **QB DREW BREES** since his San Diego Chargers days (2001-05), and he will be competing against the NFL's top-rated offense (463.5 yards per game).

The Saints will try to replicate their Week 1 performance when Brees threw for 343 yards and three touchdowns and **RB REGGIE BUSH** was scooting through the secondary with eight catches for 112 yards and a TD.

New Orleans will face a hot team. **QB JAY CUTLER** leads the NFL in passing yards (650). Denver's second-round draft choice, **WR EDDIE ROYAL**, had 146 receiving yards in Week 1. Last Sunday, **WR BRANDON MARSHALL** tied **TOM FEARS** (12/3/50) for the second-most receptions in a game (18) behind **TERRELL OWENS'** 20 on 12/17/00.

That all said, Brees is ready for the AFC West Broncos. "We just haven't hit our stride yet," he says. "But it's coming."

DALLAS COWBOYS (2-0) at GREEN BAY PACKERS (2-0) (Sunday, NBC, 8:15 PM ET)

STORYLINE: Romo vs. Rodgers – again!

Sure, this is Packers **QB AARON RODGERS'** first year as an NFL starter, but the four-year veteran received his first extensive career action last year when he replaced an injured **BRETT FAVRE** in the second quarter of a game on November 29 on the road against...the Dallas Cowboys. Rodgers compiled then-career highs in attempts (26), completions (18) and yards (201), and threw his first NFL touchdown in a 37-27 Green Bay loss.

Fast forward to 2008 and the lone Week 3 matchup of 2-0 teams features Rodgers against the QB he competed against last November, **TONY ROMO** – who threw four TDs in that game and set the Dallas season record for TD passes with 32.

Rodgers has yet to throw an interception this year and is fresh off engineering his first fourth-quarter comeback win. He will face a Cowboys 3-4 defense that will try to rattle him with its diverse blitzing packages. Wisconsin-native Romo, who grew up a Packers fan, comes off a raucous 312-yard, three-TD victory (41-37) over Philadelphia Monday night. But the Cowboys have never won in five trips to Lambeau Field (including playoffs) since their inception in 1960.

NEW YORK JETS (1-1) at SAN DIEGO CHARGERS (0-2) (Monday, ESPN, 8:30 PM ET)

STORYLINE: Brett likes Mondays, but Antonio and Quentin will be waiting.

Jets **QB BRETT FAVRE** has had some of his most memorable games on Monday night. He ranks second all-time to **DAN MARINO** on Mondays in passing yards (7,678 to Marino's 9,654) and touchdowns (57 to Marino's 74). Plus he has the longest TD completion ever on MNF (99 yards).

Thing is, he also has thrown 37 interceptions on Mondays (the record) and will face a unit that led the NFL in pickoffs last year with 30, sparked by speedy **CBs ANTONIO CROMARTIE** (with a league-leading 10) and **QUENTIN JAMMER**.

The Jets, meanwhile, will have to prepare for an excitable guy who can remind you of a young Favre -- Chargers **QB PHILIP RIVERS**. Coming off a 377-yard, three-TD game in Denver, Rivers ties the Broncos' **JAY CUTLER** for the most touchdown passes through two weeks, with six. And he's not worried about 0-2! "It's too early to get carried away with an 0-2 or 2-0 record," says Rivers.

2008 NFL STANDINGS

American Football Conference - 2008 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	2	0	0	1.000	36	20	16	3	1-0	1-0	1-0	1.000	2-0	1.000	0-0	2W	2-0
Buffalo Bills	2	0	0	1.000	54	26	28	6	1-0	1-0	0-0	.000	1-0	1.000	1-0	2W	2-0
New York Jets	1	1	0	.500	30	33	-3	4	0-1	1-0	1-1	.500	1-1	.500	0-0	1L	1-1
Miami Dolphins	0	2	0	.000	24	51	-27	3	0-1	0-1	0-1	.000	0-1	.000	0-1	2L	0-2
AFC North Team	W	L	T	▼ Pct	PF	PA	Net Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
Pittsburgh Steelers	2	0	0	1.000	48	23	25	6	1-0	1-0	1-0	1.000	2-0	1.000	0-0	2W	2-0
Baltimore Ravens	1	0	0	1.000	17	10	7	2	1-0	0-0	1-0	1.000	1-0	1.000	0-0	1W	1-0
Cleveland Browns	0	2	0	.000	16	38	-22	1	0-2	0-0	0-1	.000	0-1	.000	0-1	2L	0-2
Cincinnati Bengals	0	2	0	.000	17	41	-24	2	0-1	0-1	0-1	.000	0-2	.000	0-0	2L	0-2
AFC South Team	W	L	T	▼ Pct	PF	PA	Net Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
Tennessee Titans	2	0	0	1.000	41	17	24	5	1-0	1-0	1-0	1.000	2-0	1.000	0-0	2W	2-0
Indianapolis Colts	1	1	0	.500	31	44	-13	3	0-1	1-0	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	1-1	1W	1-1
Jacksonville Jaguars	0	2	0	.000	26	37	-11	2	0-1	0-1	0-1	.000	0-2	.000	0-0	2L	0-2
Houston Texans	0	1	0	.000	17	38	-21	2	0-0	0-1	0-0	.000	0-1	.000	0-0	1L	0-1
AFC West Team	W	L	T	▼ Pct	PF	PA	Net Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
Denver Broncos	2	0	0	1.000	80	52	28	10	1-0	1-0	2-0	1.000	2-0	1.000	0-0	2W	2-0
Oakland Raiders	1	1	0	.500	37	49	-12	4	0-1	1-0	1-1	.500	1-1	.500	0-0	1W	1-1
San Diego Chargers	0	2	0	.000	62	65	-3	7	0-1	0-1	0-1	.000	0-1	.000	0-1	2L	0-2
Kansas City Chiefs	0	2	0	.000	18	40	-22	2	0-1	0-1	0-1	.000	0-2	.000	0-0	2L	0-2
National Football Conference - 2008 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
New York Giants	2	0	0	1.000	57	20	37	6	1-0	1-0	1-0	1.000	2-0	1.000	0-0	2W	2-0
Dallas Cowboys	2	0	0	1.000	69	47	22	9	1-0	1-0	1-0	1.000	1-0	1.000	1-0	2W	2-0
Philadelphia Eagles	1	1	0	.500	75	44	31	9	1-0	0-1	0-1	.000	1-1	.500	0-0	1L	1-1
Washington Redskins	1	1	0	.500	36	40	-4	4	1-0	0-1	0-1	.000	1-1	.500	0-0	1W	1-1
NFC North Team	W	L	T	▼ Pct	PF	PA	Net Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
Green Bay Packers	2	0	0	1.000	72	44	28	9	1-0	1-0	2-0	1.000	2-0	1.000	0-0	2W	2-0
Chicago Bears	1	1	0	.500	46	33	13	5	0-0	1-1	0-0	.000	0-1	.000	1-0	1L	1-1
Detroit Lions	0	2	0	.000	46	82	-36	5	0-1	0-1	0-1	.000	0-2	.000	0-0	2L	0-2
Minnesota Vikings	0	2	0	.000	34	42	-8	2	0-1	0-1	0-1	.000	0-1	.000	0-1	2L	0-2
NFC South Team	W	L	T	▼ Pct	PF	PA	Net Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
Carolina Panthers	2	0	0	1.000	46	41	5	4	1-0	1-0	0-0	.000	1-0	1.000	1-0	2W	2-0
New Orleans Saints	1	1	0	.500	48	49	-1	6	1-0	0-1	1-0	1.000	1-1	.500	0-0	1L	1-1
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	1	1	0	.500	44	33	11	5	1-0	0-1	1-1	.500	1-1	.500	0-0	1W	1-1
Atlanta Falcons	1	1	0	.500	43	45	-2	4	1-0	0-1	0-1	.000	1-1	.500	0-0	1L	1-1
NFC West Team	W	L	T	▼ Pct	PF	PA	Net Pts	TD	Home	Road	Div	Pct	Conf	Pct	Non-Conf	Streak	Last 5
Arizona Cardinals	2	0	0	1.000	54	23	31	6	1-0	1-0	1-0	1.000	1-0	1.000	1-0	2W	2-0
San Francisco 49ers	1	1	0	.500	46	53	-7	4	0-1	1-0	1-1	.500	1-1	.500	0-0	1W	1-1
St. Louis Rams	0	2	0	.000	16	79	-63	1	0-1	0-1	0-0	.000	0-2	.000	0-0	2L	0-2
Seattle Seahawks	0	2	0	.000	40	67	-27	4	0-1	0-1	0-1	.000	0-1	.000	0-1	2L	0-2

LAST WEEK'S NFL RESULTS (SEPTEMBER 14-15)

(Home team in CAPS)

Byes: Baltimore, Houston

Sunday, September 14

CAROLINA 20, Chicago 17
Tennessee 24, CINCINNATI 7
Green Bay 48, DETROIT 25
Buffalo 20, JACKSONVILLE 16
Oakland 23, KANSAS CITY 8
Indianapolis 18, MINNESOTA 15
N.Y. Giants 41, ST. LOUIS 13
WASHINGTON 29, New Orleans 24
San Francisco 33, SEATTLE 30 (OT)

Sunday, September 14, Cont.'d.

TAMPA BAY 24, Atlanta 9
ARIZONA 31, Miami 10
DENVER 39, San Diego 38
New England 19, N.Y. JETS 10
Pittsburgh 10, CLEVELAND 6

Monday, September 15

DALLAS 41, Philadelphia 37

WEEK 3 SCHEDULE – SEPTEMBER 21-22

(All times local)

Sunday, September 21

Kansas City at Atlanta, 1:00 PM
Oakland at Buffalo, 1:00 PM
Tampa Bay at Chicago, 12:00 PM
Carolina at Minnesota, 12:00 PM
Miami at New England, 1:00 PM
Cincinnati at N.Y. Giants, 1:00 PM
Houston at Tennessee, 12:00 PM
Arizona at Washington, 1:00 PM
New Orleans at Denver, 2:05 PM

Sunday, September 21, Cont.'d.

Detroit at San Francisco, 1:05 PM
St. Louis at Seattle, 1:05 PM
Cleveland at Baltimore, 4:15 PM
Jacksonville at Indianapolis, 4:15 PM
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia, 4:15 PM
Dallas at Green Bay, 7:15 PM (NBC)

Monday, September 22

N.Y. Jets at San Diego, 5:30 PM (ESPN)