

2005 KICKOFF WEEKEND NOTES

It’s a special time, Kickoff Weekend, which begins on Thursday, September 8 this season in primetime. Everybody’s ready!

“Every game matters and this is the first one,” says Green Bay Packers head coach **MIKE SHERMAN**. “You want to get off to a good start.”

Some clubs have excelled in openers. Some notable active NFL kickoff streaks:

- The Super Bowl champion **NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS**, who host the Oakland Raiders in the spotlight Kickoff 2005 game on Thursday night September 8, have won eight of their past 10 home openers, and own a perfect 3-0 record at Gillette Stadium.
- The **OAKLAND RAIDERS** are 28-6-1 (.814) in home openers since 1970.
- Since the 1970 merger, the **MIAMI DOLPHINS** are 29-6 (.829) in home openers, the best mark in the NFL during that time. The Dolphins own a 22-16-1 (.577) opening-game mark and have won 11 of their past 13 openers.
- The **JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS** have won seven of their past nine openers for an NFL-best 7-3 (.700) opening-game record (minimum five games).
- The **DALLAS COWBOYS** have an NFC-best 30-14-1 (.682) record in openers. The Cowboys have won eight of their past 11 home openers, for an overall 24-9 (.727) home kickoff record.
- **MIKE SHANAHAN**, head coach of the **DENVER BRONCOS**, is 10-2 (.833) in career openers. The Broncos have won 13 of their past 16 openers. Denver is 28-6-1 (.814) in home openers since 1970. Denver has won four openers in a row, the longest current streak in the NFL.
- The **INDIANAPOLIS COLTS**, who travel to Baltimore to face the Ravens for a Sunday night matchup, have won five of their past six openers.
- The **CHICAGO BEARS** and **NEW YORK GIANTS** have each won 40 openers, the most wins on Kickoff Weekend by any team.
- **MARTY SCHOTTENHEIMER**, head coach of the **SAN DIEGO CHARGERS**, has 11 Kickoff Weekend wins, the most among active NFL coaches.
- The **NEW YORK JETS**, who visit Arrowhead Stadium to face the Kansas City Chiefs in Week 1, open the season on the road for the 34th time in the club’s 46-year history.
- The **ST. LOUIS RAMS** have won nine of their past 13 openers and eight of their past 10 openers in St. Louis.
- **NFC NORTH DIVISION STREAKS:** The **MINNESOTA VIKINGS** have won 15 of their past 18 home openers. The **CHICAGO BEARS** have won 15 of their last 21 home openers. The **DETROIT LIONS** have won 10 of their past 14 home openers. The **GREEN BAY PACKERS** have won six of their past nine home openers.
- **HOME SWEET HOME:** The **KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** have won 12 of their past 16 home openers. The **SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS** have won nine of their last 12 home openers, outscoring opponents 366-226 in those games. The **SAN DIEGO CHARGERS** have won eight of their past 12 home openers. The **NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** have won five of their past seven home openers.
- **ROAD WARRIORS:** The **ARIZONA CARDINALS** open the season in New York against the Giants, the 17th time in the past 18 years they have opened on the road.

HEADLINE GAMES

In the NFL, says **BILL BELICHICK**, head coach of the Super Bowl XXXIX champion New England Patriots, “every game is important. Each one matters. In this league, the most important game is the next one you play.”

With only 16 per team, he’s right. It’s just that, some weeks, some games seem to be even *more* important!

Following is a 2005 Weeks 1-17 list of “Headline Games,” but far from the only ones:

Week 1	Oakland at New England	Season kicks off in primetime with Super Bowl champions hosting Raiders.
Week 2	San Francisco at Philadelphia	Eagles WR Terrell Owens faces former team for first time.
Week 3	New York Giants at San Diego	Giants QB Eli Manning takes on team that drafted him.
Week 4	San Francisco at Arizona	Mexico hosts first NFL regular-season game outside of US.
Week 5	Washington at Denver	Clinton Portis vs. Champ Bailey – players who were traded for one another in ’04.
Week 6	Miami at Tampa Bay	Auburn teammates & 1st-round picks Ronnie Brown & Cadillac Williams go at it.
Week 7	San Diego at Philadelphia	Teams each won division last year & combined for 25 wins (Phi. 13, SD 12).
Week 8	Baltimore at Pittsburgh	Offensive Rookie of Year Roethlisberger faces Defensive Player of Year Reed.
Week 9	Indianapolis at New England	Brady & Patriots have knocked Manning & Colts from playoffs past two years.
Week 10	New England at Miami	Dolphins rookie head coach Nick Saban gets first crack at Belichick & champs
Week 11	Minnesota at Green Bay	Culpepper vs. Favre on Monday night at Lambeau Field. Does it get any better?
Week 12	Atl. at Det./Den. at Dall.	An American tradition: turkey & football.
Week 13	Tennessee at Indianapolis	McNair vs. Manning – duo shared MVP in 2003, Manning won again in 2004.
Week 14	Oakland at New York Jets	Former Marshall tandem of QB Pennington to WR Moss meet one another.
Week 15	Saturday triple-header!	TB at NE (1:30 PM ET), KC at NYG (5:00 PM ET) & Den. at Buff. (8:30 PM ET).
Week 16	Chi. at GB/Minn. at Balt.	Christmas Day doubleheader! What could be a better present than that?
Week 17	St. Louis at Dallas	Final game of year and could decide NFC playoff picture.

