

**January 19, 2007**



**An Interview With:**

## **INDIANAPOLIS COLTS**

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Of all your touchdown passes, is there one that stands above all the rest and can you talk about compared to Tom Brady the two Pro Bowl receivers that you've played with that it has got to make your job a little easier?**

PEYTON MANNING: Playing quarterback is a tough job, no matter what team you're playing for. But obviously there hasn't been a day that has gone by that I haven't been thankful to call Marvin Harrison and Reggie Wayne teammates. They're special players and every accolade they've received they deserve because they work hard. Their work ethic is second to none. I can't think of one particular touchdown that I've thrown to Marvin -- maybe one that stands out was my first one. It was actually in a preseason game we were playing out in Seattle. I'm pretty wide-eyed and pretty nervous. On the third play of the game the headphones go down. The call doesn't come in, so kind of panicked and nervous so I just kind of called a basic three step drop, the most basic play you have, and Marvin catches it and runs 50 yards for a touchdown. I said, 'This NFL isn't all that hard.' That was kind of a special one.

But both those guys, like I said, real thankful we call them teammates.

**Q. What have you learned from the two previous playoff games against New England?**

PEYTON MANNING: Well, obviously we've had quite a history with these guys and really since Coach Dungy has been here, it's been the seventh time we've played them. I think every game has its own identity, its own story and certain plays have kind of decided the outcome of the game.

So I think in a lot of ways the past games are somewhat irrelevant to this year's game. Obviously the more relevant game is the game we played earlier in the season because it's this year's players and it's the 2006 team.

So as you think back and recap all the games, usually just the team that executes better is the team that's won the game.

**Q. Peyton, you usually are a routine guy, you talk to us on Wednesdays. Today you're talking to us on a Friday. What's your routine been like this year? Has it been difficult, out of sorts in any way?**

PEYTON MANNING: Actually it's been a good routine, good week. Usually I talk once a week to the media. And so I was kind of encouraged that Friday was the day when more people would be here, be more convenient. So basically what I usually do on Fridays during this time, which is studying tape and getting some medical treatment, I kind of did that on Wednesday.

So I've been able to keep my normal routine and also I wanted to be able to dress up and look good for you, be here. A lot of contributing factors.

But it's been an exciting week. Obviously to be one of four teams playing this weekend, Coach Dungy talks about just to take advantage of the opportunity, but also to enjoy all that's going on because it's an exciting time to be playing football and we're looking forward to Sunday.

**Q. Peyton, you've been here before facing the Patriots in the post season. On your checklist, talk about maybe some of the items that you feel that you really do have to take care of in terms of dotting the Is and crossing the Ts as you prepare to take on this team this week?**

PEYTON MANNING: Well, I think it's a lot

of the basic fundamentals of football that you would want to do against any team and any game that you want to win. But maybe more so versus these guys because they're so sound in what they do defensively, very rarely have I ever seen anybody that's running wide open because of the busted coverage or what-not. They're very sound in their techniques and fundamentals so that's where you have to be great as well. Play solid quarterback play. Solid play from all the skilled positions from the offensive line but it's going to take a great team effort on Sunday. All three phases defense, offense, the special teams are going to do need to do their part and we've had a good week of practice and hopefully we can take it to the playing field Sunday.

**Q. Peyton, all your teammates say that all the talk on the outside about the past playoff failures doesn't bother you. What is it about your personality that allows it not to bother you?**

PEYTON MANNING: I wouldn't say it didn't bother me. The past playoff games that we've lost versus those guys, hey, they're there. They're part of history. There's nothing we can do to change the outcome of those games. And I don't think no matter what happens from here on out into the future you're still going to be disappointed about those games that we've lost in the playoffs.

But I think one thing this team has been able to do is to bounce back from the ending of the season the year before. And that really starts, Bob, in the month of March when the off season lifting program starts. Coach Dungy gives us a date March 24th boom everybody is there. Everybody is lifting, working out, participating in the voluntary workouts and that's really all we've known to do, is to just keep working hard, keep trying to become a better football team and it's paid some dividends for us this year.

It's been an up and down type of season. We started out high and we were pretty low after the Jacksonville game. But throughout it all Coach Dungy has been the same. He's been preaching to keep working hard, to keep doing the things we've been teaching you and good things will happen.

And that's what's happened so far.

**Q. Peyton, Coach Dungy described it as poetic justice that you guys have to go**

**through the Patriots to get to the Super Bowl that you'll have to face off again with Tom Brady, do you agree with that assessment?**

PEYTON MANNING: I think it's a great rivalry. It's been an outstanding series over the past couple of years. I think it's rare that you find this kind of rivalry in a non-division situation, because the Patriots obviously used to be a division opponent and we played them twice a year in the old AFC East and it's really been almost like that the past number of years because of playing them once in the regular season and usually once in the playoffs.

So it's going to be a great ball game Sunday. I know it's a game that a lot of other people are looking forward to watch. But I think all the players playing in it are looking forward to playing in it as well.

**Q. Peyton, with all the talk about these big game situations for yourself, do you filter out the talk, the chatter about how you will play, how you have played? Do you let it in, how do you deal with that?**

PEYTON MANNING: I just really try to concentrate on doing my job. And the game is big enough itself and I really just try to concentrate on that. My week has been -- I've had a good week of preparation, plenty of film to study against these guys and I've tried to go through my normal week of preparation.

So as far as all the outside factors and defining moments in the past history of this series, like I said, there's enough right there in the actual Xs and Os of the football game to think about and focus on. That's really what I've tried to focus on all week. And I haven't tried to make the game any bigger than it is.

Believe me it's a big game and a game that we worked real hard to get here and prepared real hard this week and one we want to win, and to me that's enough to focus on and that's plenty to keep your mind on.

**Q. Peyton, could you talk about Tony's coaching style and the impact his personality has on the team?**

PEYTON MANNING: Well, I think what you see with Coach Dungy on the sidelines is really, is very accurate. He's very calm in the first quarter and he has that same calm look on his face in the fourth quarter when it's fourth and one and

we have to go for it to try to win the game or to try to get back into the game. And I think that calming presence really resonates with the rest of the team, especially our young players.

And we have a very young football team. So he talks about being calm in the high pressure situations and being able to do your job in the high pressure situations.

So his personality and his demeanor, people see how calm he is and how focused he is in the beginning of the game, end of the game that allows everybody else to have that same type of attitude and allows us to execute in the high pressure situations.

**Q. Peyton, earlier in the week Coach Dungy said that quarterbacks are ultimately judged by whether they win Super Bowls and he referenced [Bart] Starr and [Terry] Bradshaw and [Brett] Favre, et cetera. Given that definition, how do you judge your post season career as of now?**

PEYTON MANNING: Well, I don't know if that definition is the tell-all definition or the lone definition of a quarterback. Hey, I can't change what's happened in the past and the facts are what they are.

We have a tremendous opportunity this year in this playoff run and it's a run we'd like to keep going and continue.

People talk about the legacy, it's kind of a deep word for me here as a quarterback getting ready to play a playoff game and I really haven't taken much time or really any time to analyze that and all the things that have been kind of stories with this week. I really just focused on the game and the task at hand. Believe me, this Patriots defense is plenty to think about and plenty to keep your mind focused on.

**Q. Peyton, this is just a kind of a follow-up to that question. Do you feel the pressure grow on yourself as your career advances and do you feel the clock ticking?**

PEYTON MANNING: Certainly you feel the clock ticking. I think with free agency and with injuries especially when you see it firsthand, when you see Edgerrin James get injured or you see Edgerrin James go to another team or you lose good players like David Thornton and Ken Dilger and Marcus Pollard not only great teammates but friends as well and you realize when you have an opportunity you certainly want to take advantage of

it and I think you hear this term all the time with you the days of building or playing for next year are long over with and even Coach Dungy mentioned I think from the 2003 team we played these guys last. There's only 18 players still on that team. And nothing will change what happened in that game.

There's 35 guys not on this team anymore, and so you're disappointed that you didn't take advantage of the opportunity right then with that team. But this is a different team and we have an opportunity now one we want to take advantage of.

But certainly you're definitely living in the moment, and sure the more you play the longer you play going into your ninth year you realize you probably won't get as many opportunities and when you have one you want to be able to take advantage of it.

**Q. Peyton, what would it mean to get Tony past this week to the Super Bowl for all he's done with the organization, how close he's come and then obviously what he had to go through last year?**

PEYTON MANNING: I can't speak for what Coach Dungy went through last year. I don't think anybody can. We've tried to be here to support him as players. He's coming out here in a minute and he can answer any type of questions that you have.

But I think everybody is in it together. That's what Coach Dungy talks about. We have maybe four or five guys that have won a Super Bowl. Coach Dungy as a player. Vinatieri, McFarland. A couple of other guys that aren't coming to mind. But everybody is kind of in the same boat here. And sure when you get close and the opportunity knocks, gets exciting and you start to taste it and it's something that you want to go out and try to achieve. So I think everybody is just trying to win for each other as opposed to one particular player, one particular coach. This whole team is kind of in this same boat.

**Q. Peyton, do you see that this team has sort of been built for this moment? I mean with the quick striking possibilities on offense, with Joe [Addai] in the smaller quicker defensive ends, the idea it's built to play indoors, it's built to play in this kind of game?**

PEYTON MANNING: I've never looked at it that way. And I guess the people in charge of

building this team have been Coach Dungy and Bill Polian and Jim Irsay, and I've never been aware of what the true theme, what they were trying to do as far as where we were playing and the surface and the weather. I think you try to get good football players on your team. And that's what we've been accustomed to around here.

We've had good players. We've lost some really good football players. We've added more good players and the players that have been here for the core of the period have gotten better every year, like Marvin Harrison or Reggie Wayne and Jeff Saturday and Tarik Glenn and it's been an honor to call all of those guys teammates. I think to win in this league it's important to have good football players and I've been lucky to call a lot of those guys teammates.

**Q. In the past years you've, a factor that always came up for you guys whether it was a poor defense or sometimes bad luck or the Patriots, this year everything has come together at the right time and you haven't played very well in those two playoff games so do you feel you have to carry the team on your shoulder because of the way you played those two games?**

PEYTON MANNING: I just feel I need to do my part. I think it's important that I play the quarterback position well on Sunday and it's different ways to define that. But obviously I want to make good decisions with the football. I want to protect the ball 100 percent and keep our defense out of tough situations. When the opportunity rises to try to help my team get into the end zone. We had to settle for five field goals last week, which was enough to win. But it's hard to count on that every single time.

So we like to score more touchdowns. So I want to do my job well. That's what I've tried to do every game I've played, to perform my position at a high level in order to help my team win and that's kind of been my motto. That's kind of what my coaches have coached me to do and I think that will be important this Sunday.

**Q. Peyton, before Super Bowl I, the late Buck Buchanan of the Kansas City Chiefs wanting to gain all the insights he could about the Green Bay Packers bought Vince Lombardi's book, Run to Daylight and poured over it by the hour. I wondered if you tried the**

**same thing about reading the book about Belichick?**

PEYTON MANNING: I didn't read it this week.

(Laughter)

I've not read the book, but I know some members of our organization have. And I think your scouts and your management system, they're always trying to look to better their team and find ways to learn knowledge of your opponent.

So I think the game on Sunday, it's about the coaches and players. But I think it will ultimately be decided by the players. And I've had a lot of -- I think it's never been an accurate way to phrase, they say this guy versus Belichick. Last week you heard about Philip Rivers versus Belichick. I just don't know, I don't know if that makes quite great sense to me.

I've even heard Coach Belichick say one time, I'm not going to be out there making any tackles. And believe me, I probably wish he was out there making tackles as opposed to Vrabel and Bruschi and all these other great players that they have, because those are the guys that keep my mind on them. Because they execute Coach Belichick's or Coach Pees' system to a T. It's been a general philosophy system through the past number of years.

But it's those players that make it work, all the way across the board from Seymour. The list goes on and on. They've just got a great group of players and obviously they're well coached and he's just an outstanding coach and there's no secret as to why they've been so successful because of their great coaching and their great players.

**Q. Peyton, is there any part of you that wishes it were not the Patriots in front of you again in the playoffs, or do you sort of appreciate the idea that for the Colts to finally get to the Super Bowl it's sort of appropriate that you're going to have to go through New England to do it?**

PEYTON MANNING: Once again, that's pretty -- I don't know what the word is, but I guess that makes for a good story and all of the past history and all the side stories.

But, hey, you don't have a choice who you're going to play. Once the seeding comes out, you kind of know who you're going to play in the opener, and then you sort of look at it and you say



I think this team will win.

But I, like probably most players or anybody that knows football, you know, assume that the Patriots would beat the Jets in the first game and then you look going out to San Diego, I think they'll beat San Diego.

So I kind of had a pretty good idea that they would be in this game, and I was really focused on just trying to get us there and to get us to do this part.

As far as you know who you're playing, I'm sure it wouldn't have totally bothered me if we would have been playing Oakland in this game.

(Laughter)

I think they do have the first pick this year. But like I said, common sense tells you that you're probably going to be playing a great football team like New England. And they did a great job taking care of their business the first two weeks.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

If you have a question for **Reggie Wayne**, please raise your hand.

**Q. Reggie, your dome, playing at home, those fans can make it brutal for opposing teams. Can you talk about what kind of atmosphere you expect Sunday and what kind of difference that can make in the final outcome?**

REGGIE WAYNE: I think as a team we all think it's going to be electrifying. We are truly blessed to have the opportunity to play at home. We've been pretty strong at home all year, and just like the fans are, we're expecting a great game against a great opponent. And it will be a great show to look at.

**Q. In the last two games you scored 67 points, and I know this year earlier in the season you and Marvin both had great games. What's working offensively for you right now against them?**

REGGIE WAYNE: It's nothing different. It's just us protecting the ball not going out making mental mistakes. We know the team that has the most mistakes is probably going to be the team that loses, normally.

We're just doing our thing. Coach Dungy always talks about just do what we do, and that's pretty much what we've been doing.

**Q. Reggie, can you talk about the style of play of the Patriots cornerbacks and the comments coming from your general manager, Bill Polian as he's trying to maybe encourage the officials to understand how maybe they bumped the receivers beyond that five-yard boundary?**

REGGIE WAYNE: New England is going to do what they do as well. Corners are going to play football. It's a contact sport. They're doing what they're taught to do. I just have to fight through whatever they do.

It doesn't bother me. I like contact anyway. So I can't worry about all that. I've got enough stuff to worry about on my end before worrying about how many flags the officials throw. As long as we go out, play Colts football, not put it in the hands of the officials, everything will be fine.

**Q. Reggie, when you hear the criticism that Peyton can't win the big one or the big game, what's your reaction?**

REGGIE WAYNE: I wouldn't know anything about that. I played in a lot of games that I felt like was big games and he's come through. Who decides what's the big game, you know what I'm saying?

Look, we've got the opportunity right now where we can seize this moment. If we take care of the ball and do what we normally have been doing all year we shouldn't have a problem. Hopefully we can make it to the big game. But for the main point is what determines what the big game is? So that might be a question you might want to ask Peyton.

**Q. Reggie, what would it mean to get Coach Dungy to the Super Bowl considering what he's meant to this organization, how close he's come?**

REGGIE WAYNE: It will be huge. Coach Dungy is like a father figure. You kind of sit back and you don't want to let him down. And it's just like what Peyton was talking about, so much he's went through last year. I kind of went through the same thing this year. You kind of want to dedicate the season to your troubles. But as far as Coach Dungy, I think he deserves it. I think Peyton deserves it. I think the city deserves it.

Like I said, it's a chance for us to seize the moment and hopefully we can take care of business and make it happen.

**Q. Reggie, how do you treat what's got to be the biggest game of your career as just another game? Or can you treat it as just another game?**

REGGIE WAYNE: I think if you put too much pressure on yourself and you treat it like it's the biggest game ever, then you will struggle. But if you just stay relaxed and have everything come to you as it's been coming all year, all your life, then you'll be fine.

We've been doing a pretty good job of just staying focused, not letting the outsider distract us or whatever. Just playing football. That's how we'll go into this game as well.

**Q. Reggie, couple of players and Coach Dungy have all talked about the fact it's almost fitting that it's poetic justice you have to get through New England that Peyton has to get through Tom to reach the Super Bowl. How fitting do you think it is? How appropriate?**

REGGIE WAYNE: I'm just glad I'm here. We have laid the foundation how we wanted to – these are the cards that we were dealt. It really didn't matter who we played. We just have to still go out there and play football. But just playing against New England, it's going to be another good game. Those guys they pretty much have a dynasty going. So you just don't want to be another part of that dynasty, so you just want to go out there, do what you can to get a W on your side.

**Q. Reggie, you made the Pro Bowl this year so obviously I'm sure you're very glad about that, and yet it came in a season in which you went through some very trying times personally. How would you just categorize the season and how are you going to look back on this year?**

REGGIE WAYNE: Look at the season as a tough one personally for me, but at the same time it's unfinished.

We have the opportunity to go somewhere where a lot of guys on this team have never been. Me personally, I've never been part of a team that's won a championship. I've won some individual accolades but never as a team.

So this is a chance for me to have something for the first time in my life as well. There's a lot of talk I made the Pro Bowl and all that. To be honest, I really haven't enjoyed being

part of the Pro Bowl, because we still have unfinished business to take care of.

So hopefully we can take care of our business and get to Miami and take care of business there and then I can enjoy the Pro Bowl. But until then, you know, we've still got some football to play.

**Q. Reggie, you talk about Coach Dungy and his coaching style and the impact his personality has on the team?**

REGGIE WAYNE: Coach Dungy, like I said, he's like a father figure. He's not an in your face, rah-rah guy. That's fine. When Coach Dungy talks, he means business. He's a man that's strong, and he always pinpoints on doing the little things and just taking care of those little things and doing them the right way. You never want to put him nor the Colts out there for something negative, because he's so nice to us all.

So this is a chance to, for him to cap off something in his career as well, being part of the championship and being able to coach one. So you want to help be part of that as well. So like I've been saying we have a chance to make something happen and hopefully we'll take care of business.

## DWIGHT FREENEY

**Q. Dwight, with your New England roots, you certainly can appreciate how important it was for the Red Sox to get through the Yankees to get to the World Series. Is it the as similar you having to get through the Patriots, Peyton having to get through Tom to get there?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: I would say I think it's just -- like the guys have been saying, it's like the cards are dealt. I guess if you want to look at it and look at it real closely and try and try to analyze it, I guess you could say every team has their nemesis and team that they have to pass and they have to beat.

Now, I'm not going to sit here and say the Patriots have been that for us for the last couple of years. I mean, prior to last year we really struggled. But remember the year before we played the Jets, lost to them and New England and lost to Pittsburgh and whatever.

There's a lot of teams. It's just all about finishing off.

**Q. Dwight, can you talk about a couple of things that you guys have been doing defensively the last couple of games that maybe you weren't doing in the regular season?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: I think the big thing is just making plays. Opportunities to make plays and making them. No brand-new defenses. No new anything. It's just about attitude. Guys going out there, playing hard, and making those plays when the opportunity presents itself. So hopefully that continues come Sunday.

**Q. Dwight, one of the knocks on this team has been that it's soft and it's a finesse team, speed team. With the way you've played in the playoffs and particularly with the drive that Baltimore had, do you think you changed that perception?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: If we did, we did. If we didn't, we didn't. At the end of the day it's about 11 guys going out there to play ball. It's amazing how words get thrown around, soft. What makes a team soft? If a guy is not in the hole and no one is there and they run for 80 yards, does that make you soft or is it the guy didn't do the responsibility.

There's a lot of things that play into the game of football. And it's so easy to call a team soft. You see a run defense average, things that don't really matter. It's all about guys making sure they're in the position to make the plays and making them.

**Q. Looks like this team offensively and defensively has been built to play indoors, played regular games, Houston, good weather. Do you think this team is made built to play for a game like this quicker smaller, attacking?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: At the end of the day I would say that doesn't matter. Our team is just constructed how it is and we just have to do what we have to do regardless of who we're playing where we're playing. No excuses, if we had to play outside, if we had to play in San Diego. So at the end of the day, you know, us being built for a particular game or a particular anything, I wouldn't say that.

**Q. Dwight, after the Baltimore game you inferred accurately how in the playoffs when the team has lost, the defense really**

**hasn't given up a lot of points. Does that give you confidence that basically in recent years, even when you had problems, the defense has done its job in the post season?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: Like I've been saying all year, everybody wants to like to bring up the stats of the year, what you haven't done. You guys are the worst defense ever against the run, while stats start over or you don't carry over stats from the regular season, so it's playoff time and we've been playing pretty well. So, I mean, as far as what we can't do and all that and our first game was against the Chiefs and we played very well. The next game was against Baltimore. We played very well. So we hope to continue that and have success.

**Q. Dwight, wonder if you could talk about Tony's coaching style and the impact his personality has on the team?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: I think the big thing with Coach Dungy is that he's so calm. Even in -- I guess you could say in the worst moments. But, I mean, when everybody else is frantic and running around like what do we have to do next all you have to do is look at Coach. Coach is calm. And I think that kind of trickles down throughout the team.

So that's the biggest thing that I see when I see Coach. And during the game, fourth quarter, game on the line, you know look into his eyes. It's like all right we got this. He's got a confident look.

**Q. During the season, you had to rely on the offense and now in the playoff, it's the opposite. How do you feel about the way Peyton Manning has been playing these last two games and do you feel any pressure for getting this team to the next level because of the way you're playing?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: At the end of the day, it's a team. It's a team game. You have different phases of the game. You have special teams. You have offense you have defense. So to point out one guy, this, that, what he hasn't done, I mean, you have 11 guys on the field at one time.

So it's about 11 guys doing their job. So as far as Peyton, Peyton has done a great job. We're here. He's done what he had to do to get us here.

As far as the best statistic game and

having the biggest stats and four and five touchdowns you're not going to have it all throughout the season, playoffs what have you. I think he's done a great job and we just have to continue that success.

**Q. Dwight, a lot of people around the country are routing for Coach Dungy to get there. What would it mean to the team to get him there?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: Basically I think it would mean a lot to the team. Just the fact that his coaching style, the way he treats all the guys around the locker room. Does such a good job with everybody. Not just a good coach, a good man. Definitely you would want to, if you had to say okay you want to win it for someone, definitely would be Tony.

But also like I said it's also for the city, and for us, a lot of guys on the coaching staff who haven't won. It's kind of for everyone.

**Q. Do you think that Tony doesn't get enough credit, though, for being a tactician, for being an help intellectual coach? Coach Belichick has books written about him and people call him a genius, do you think that Tony doesn't get enough credit?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: I guess I would say that. But at the end of the day, I guess the media and everybody else kind of gives you credit when they want to give you credit and kind of not when they don't want to.

It's kind of a funny thing. But Tony has done a great job every place he's been he's turned teams around. He comes up with great schemes and kind of lets the players be the type of player they can be.

It's not always okay draw a line here, you go here, like a bunch of robots. We kind of go out there and do the same thing and get better at it. So I think he should get probably a lot more credit for what he does as a mind in the game.

**Q. Dwight, again playing at home, does it enhance your game when you've got the crowd noise? Jonathan Ogden said maybe you're a half-step quicker at home. Do you feel you're more effective, you and Robert, when you're playing at home?**

DWIGHT FREENEY: Obviously any defense, any defensive lineman will say home, it's

a whole other level. Adrenalin, everything is based on attitude, adrenalin, crowd noise.

So regardless of us, us being quick fast guys or if it was somebody else who wasn't a quick fast guy, you know on another team, you definitely want to play home because you've got that 12th man behind you. And that does sometimes give the offense some problems. They have to work on different things, silent count. Sometimes they might not jump on time, sometimes they will. Sometimes they may jump off sides. It brings up a little advantage for the defense. At the end of the day it doesn't matter where or what, we have to go out and perform, whether it be at home or away.

## TONY DUNGY

**Q. A lot of people around the country are rooting for you on Sunday for a lot of reasons. Do you feel that and what would it mean for you to finally get to the Super Bowl?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: Well, I do appreciate that. I have had a lot of calls and a lot of well wishes from people I've worked with in the past, that type of thing. Definitely appreciate that.

But the big thing is for our team, for our organization, for our city. And that's what we're looking for. It's a big challenge. We want to get there. It would be fantastic first time since the team's been here in Indianapolis, and that's more what we're wired into.

**Q. Tony, before last Sunday, had you made any kind of preparations for possibly facing the Chargers this week, and if you hadn't, were you tempted to?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: No, that's one of the things I've learned over the years, going back to working for Coach (Chuck) Noll, you can never tell how things are going to go. If you have to start preparing, that's one thing. But we gave the coaches off Sunday. We said we wouldn't even know until 8:00 who we would be playing. So we just went home, watched the game as fans and when we knew who we were playing we came in on Monday morning and started to prepare.

**Q. Tony, in New England, Tom Brady has gone through a collection of receivers in his career. None of them Pro Bowlers, I don't think [Note: WR Troy Brown made Pro Bowl in 2001]. You had the same thing in Tampa, just**



**trying to find the Pro Bowl receiver to help you out. Can you talk about here having a pair of Pro Bowl receivers, what a luxury that is and how much that helps you as a head coach?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: It does, any time you can have continuity, and since before I got here, I guess 2001, when Reggie came, having the same guys, same quarterback, same system, same receivers, they just get better and better.

And they have. We haven't changed too much. Those guys have grown as players. Marvin has been tremendous. Reggie has gotten better every year. And I think the fact that continuity is there it makes such a big difference in the passing game and it's something that we were definitely blessed to have.

**Q. Tony, this is along the lines of the last question. Reggie once said "who dreams of being the other guy?" With all due respect to Marvin, do you just think it's this season that people are fully beginning to appreciate what Reggie brings to your team?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: Reggie Wayne has been an excellent player for us for a number of years, his stats have gotten better every year and more balls every year and I think Peyton has become more comfortable with a lot of our receivers over the last three years. And the years those guys had a couple years back when they each had the thousand yards and 10 touchdowns, that's ideally what you want. But Reggie has been tremendous and I believe this year just starting to get the accolades and the notice from the public.

But he's been a very good receiver for us for the last probably three years.

**Q. Tony, what do you think about how coaches are labeled? Some coaches are labeled geniuses, tacticians, and others are labeled as players' coaches, motivators, those things? What do you think of labeling? Is it overly simplistic and does it shortchange people that have more going on than people think at least?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: No, I think you're always going to get labeled the way you're perceived and whatever style is, if you win, then that label seems to be good. And if you lose, the same label can be bad. And it maybe is not even necessarily true. But that's the way you're perceived. The big thing is if you win then everything is pretty much fine.

And I've never really worried too much about that and how you're labeled, as long as you're winning.

**Q. Tony, pardon the nuts-and-bolts question, but how are you guys health-wise? Joseph, and has Cato June passed his neuro test?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: We're in really very good, say probably the best we've been health-wise. We held Rob Morris out of practice today. But he's going to play and is doing fine. Everyone else is ready to go. We probably don't have a physical decision on our team. Cato June is fine and practiced all week. Joseph Addai is fine and practiced all week so I think we're ready to go.

**Q. Tony, over in the other conference your friend and former colleague Lovie Smith is one game away from the Super Bowl as well. What aspects of Lovie do you tribute the Bears' success?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: Lovie is a tremendous coach. Great knowledge of the game. A way of instilling confidence in his players. That's what I see in the Bears. We played them two years ago, and you could see the system coming in place. And now they're doing the same things, they're just doing it with so much more confidence and that's how he always was in Tampa. He quietly instilled confidence in our guys. They played hard. They play extremely hard, and they play like they expect to win, and I think that's what a good coach does.

**Q. Tony, your players always talk about your calm exterior, even in the worst moments. What does your interior look like?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: I heard those guys talking about that. Believe me, that's something that's come along lately. I haven't always been like that. As a matter of fact, my high school teammates kind of laugh when people describe me as calm and under control and that kind of thing. Because I wasn't always that way. Part of it is learning. My dad always talked to me about trying to figure out how to make things better, not worrying about what happened in the past.

I think some of it is just Christian maturity and growing as a person and not being as caught up in things you can't control. But most of it is just

trying to give my team the sense that I'm thinking about the next play and trying to get them in the right situation and that I'm not losing my mind over there. And I guess judging from their comments it's working a little bit.

**Q. Tony, with all the stats that were hanging over the head of your run defense -- right in the middle -- all the stats that were hanging over the head of your run defense towards the end of season, Dwight was talking about how none of it carries over. Is there a psychological benefit to these guys knowing that they're starting fresh again?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: We always look at it that way. And I tell the team a lot that what happened last week has no bearing on what's going to happen this Sunday. So you look at the tape. You make the corrections, but you don't assume if you play great and you shut down a team that you're automatically going to do that next week and vice versa. We saw some of the problems that we had. We addressed them.

There were some things that took a while to get straightened out but every week is different every week we went in thinking we'll play well. Some weeks we didn't play as well as we like. But I don't think we ever got to the point where we said, oh, we're not a very good team, we're not a very good defense. It was always when we get things the way we need them we'll be fine.

**Q. Tony, with so much pressure, have you talked to your guys about finding ways to relax during the course of the week?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: We haven't, that's something we'll talk about tomorrow morning from our meeting time and our walk-through. Then it's going to be a long 36 hours and hopefully the guys will relax. But that's what this is all about. And that's what we've talked about. It's not necessarily taking your game to another level when you get to the playoffs or you get to the championship game, but it's being able to do what you've done for 16 weeks and do it when the stakes are really high and the teams that can relax and play it like it's a normal game, even though it's not, that's who is going to be successful.

And we've had some playoff experience now in these last five years. We've been in the championship game once. The game, it's a game of great magnitude. But I think we'll have some

guys that can relax and come out and play the way we're capable of.

**Q. Coach, when people talk about the playoff games you've had trouble in, they always want to look at Peyton's statistics, but going along with that Marvin has had some trouble. Only two touchdowns I think in 12 games. How important is it for him to have a good start to the game and as a follow-up will we ever see him at a podium like this or a room like this.**

COACH TONY DUNGY: I think when we went to Foxborough in '03 and Marvin went and did a great job. He's not a guy that likes to do it. So whether you'll ever see him again, I'm not sure. But we need everybody, and depending on how the game goes, we've had some games where we've won and Marvin hasn't caught many balls. We've had games that we've lost and he's had big days. So it's not just this guy has to get going, that guy has to get going.

We have to play well as a team and I think that's the way we all look at it.

**Q. Tony, talking about the experience of playing in this game and winning a game like this, how much do you think that helps a team that have been in games like this and been in Super Bowls?**

COACH TONY DUNGY: It's a help. I know when I got to Pittsburgh and we got to the playoffs, the guys were very zeroed in during practice, and as a rookie, as a young guy, I was watching them and you just felt good about it because everybody else felt good. And the veteran guys showed you the way to play. So I think it definitely does help. You can see it in New England's play. When they get in games in touch situations they're down eight points in San Diego. I doubt there was any panic on the sideline, because the young guys watched the veterans who knew how to handle it. So there is an advantage to being there, but every game is different. Every year is different. Every team is different. This is our '06 team and it's not the '05 or '04 or '03 team.