

NFL GameDay

Week 22 – Super Bowl XLVI

FIRST QUARTER

IN **THIS** FOOTBALL GAME, THE PATRIOTS HAD DEFERRED TO THE GIANTS, WHO CONTROLLED THE BALL FOR THE OPENING 6 MINUTES OF PLAY.

BUT THE POSSESSION WAS EXTINGUISHED BY THE PATRIOTS PASS RUSH.

THE GIANTS FIRST PUNT PINNED NEW ENGLAND AT ITS OWN 6 YARD LINE.

ELI MANNING BROKE PHIL SIMM’S SUPER BOWL RECORD BY COMPLETING HIS FIRST NINE PASSES.

PUNISHING RUNS BY THE NEW YORK BACKS PROPELLED A DRIVE DEEP INTO NEW ENGLAND TERRITORY.

AHMAD BRADSHAW’S 24 YARD RUN WAS THE LONGEST PLAY OF THE HALF, BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT PLAY OF THIS DRIVE WAS **ANOTHER** COSTLY PATRIOTS MISTAKE.

NEW YORK’S FRONT FOUR WAS READY TO ATTACK TOM BRADY.

BRADY WAS WELL-PROTECTED, AS A PATRIOTS OFFENSE THAT HAD TOUCHED THE BALL JUST ONE TIME DURING THE FIRST 11 AND ½ MINUTES FINALLY TOOK FLIGHT.

WES WELKER WAS THE CATALYST FOR A 60 YARD MARCH THAT BLED INTO THE SECOND QUARTER.

STEPHEN GOSTOWSKI CAPPED THE DRIVE WITH A 29 YARD FIELD GOAL THAT SIGNALLED THAT THE THREE-TIME WORLD CHAMPIONS HAD SETTLED DOWN.

SECOND QUARTER

BEFORE THE GAME, EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT ROB GRONKOWSKI'S INJURED LEFT ANKLE, AND THE GIANTS CONTINUED THE CONVERSATION INTO THE SECOND QUARTER.

GRONKOWSKI LED THE PATRIOTS IN RECEIVING PLAYS OF 20 OR MORE YARDS DURING THE REGULAR SEASON; WITHOUT HIM AS A DEEP THREAT, THE PATRIOTS OFFENSE LIMPED THROUGH THE FIRST HALF.

NEW YORK HAD A 19 MINUTES TO SIX ADVANTAGE IN TIME OF POSSESSION, AND IT KEPT TOM BRADY WHERE THEY WANTED HIM: ON THE BENCH.

BUT NEITHER OF THEIR SECOND QUARTER DRIVES ENDED WITH POINTS.

WITH 4 MINUTES LEFT IN THE FIRST HALF, STEVE WEATHERFORD AGAIN PINNED NEW ENGLAND TO ITS GOAL LINE.

SOMEHOW, IT DOESN'T FEEL AS RISKY WHEN YOUR QUARTERBACK HAS 3 RINGS.

THE PATRIOTS MOUNTED A 14 PLAY DRIVE, WITH TIGHT END AARON HERNANDEZ CONTRIBUTING 4 RECEPTIONS.

THE WISDOM OF NEW ENGLAND DEFERRING WAS NOW APPARENT: THE PATRIOTS WERE DRIVING LATE IN THE FIRST HALF AND WOULD GET THE BALL TO START THE SECOND HALF.

THIRD QUARTER

IN A GAME FULL OF DÉJÀ VU, THE PATRIOTS BEGAN THE SECOND HALF THE WAY THEY ENDED THE FIRST, WITH A SUSTAINED DRIVE. THIS ONE STARTED WITH THEIR LONGEST PLAY FROM SCIRMMAGE, A 21 YARD COMPLETION TO CHAD OCHOCINCO.

THESE TWO GREAT TEAMS KNOW EACH OTHER VERY WELL, AND PLAY WITH A SIMILAR STYLE.

THE FAMILIARITY CAN BREED CONTEMPT. THE SIMILARITY MADE FOR EVENLY MATCHED, COMPELLING FOOTBALL.

TWICE IN THE THIRD QUARTER, NEW YORK WAS FORCED TO SETTLE FOR FIELD GOALS.

AS THE FOURTH QUARTER STARTED, THE PATRIOTS BEGAN WHAT LOOKED LIKE ANOTHER METHODICAL MARCH DOWNFIELD.

FOURTH QUARTER

WINNING THIS GAME WOULD REQUIRE A LOT OF MUSCLE AND A LITTLE BIT OF LUCK.

TWICE IN THE SECOND HALF THE GIANTS RECOVERED THEIR OWN FUMBLE. // BUT THEY COULD NOT CAPITALIZE ON THE GAME'S ONLY TURNOVER.

CLINGING TO A TWO-POINT LEAD THE PATRIOTS MOUNTED ANOTHER LONG DRIVE.

BRADY HAD HIS EYES ON THE PRIZE.

THE PATRIOTS WERE FORCED TO PUNT.

AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE IN LUCAS OIL STADIUM BELIEVED IN MARIO MANNINGHAM: HIS MOTHER AND HIS QUARTERBACK.

THE PATRIOTS CHALLENGED, BUT REPLAYS CONFIRMED THE RULING: MARIO MANNINGHAM HAD MADE THE BIGGEST PLAY OF SUPER BOWL 46.

WITH LESS THAN 4 MINUTES IN THE GAME, MANNINGHAM HAD IGNITED THE GIANTS OFFENSE.

JUST OVER 1 MINUTE REMAINED, AND THE QUESTION WAS NOT *IF* THE GIANTS WERE GOING TO SCORE, BUT HOW AND WHEN.

AS HE HANDED THE BALL TO BRADSHAW, MANNING SHOUTED TO HIS RUNNING BACK NOT TO SCORE; HE WAS A MOMENT TOO LATE.

THE RELUCTANT TOUCHDOWN' COULD NOT OBSCURE THE BIGGER PICTURE: ELI MANNING HAD AGAIN DELIVERED A LAST-MINUTE TOUCHDOWN IN THE SUPER BOWL.

THE PATRIOTS MOVED THE BALL TO MIDFIELD. WITH 5 SECONDS LEFT, *//* BRADY HAD ONE MORE SNAP.

MANNING BECAME JUST THE 5TH TWO-TIME SUPER BOWL MVP. BUT ELI IS FAR FROM THE ONLY GIANT WHOSE FINGERPRINTS MARK THIS CHAMPIONSHIP.