

NFL GameDay

Week 18

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS @ CINCINNATI BENGALS

THE CHALLENGE FOR SAFETY ERIC WEDDLE AND THE CHARGERS / WAS SLOWING A BENGALS ATTACK THAT AVERAGED 41 POINTS OVER ITS FINAL FIVE HOME GAMES.

THIS SEASON, ANDY DALTON SET CAREER HIGHS IN PASSING YARDS AND TOUCHDOWNS, AND HE LED THE BENGALS TO A 10 TO 7 HALFTIME LEAD.

THE BENGALS WOULD FINISH WITH MORE FIRST DOWNS AND MORE TOTAL YARDS THAN THE CHARGERS. BUT ALSO, MORE CRITICAL MISTAKES.

DALTON HAD STRUGGLED IN HIS FIRST TWO PLAYOFF APPEARANCES, AND WAS TRYING TO AVOID FALLING TO 0 AND 3 IN THE POSTSEASON. IN THE SECOND HALF, HE WAS SACKED THREE TIMES. / AND CONSTANT PRESSURE FORCED HIM OUT OF RHYTHM, AND OFF HIS MARK.

WHILE FOUR TURNOVERS BURIED THE BENGALS / THE CHARGERS CONTINUED THEIR UNLIKELY RISE, AND THE TEAM THAT WAS ONCE FIVE AND 7 RAN AWAY WITH ITS FIFTH STRAIGHT WIN.

D 44-38 WITH LESS THAN 5 MINUTES TO PLAY AND WHILE ALEX SMITH PLAYED GREAT, LUCK PUT ON A PERFORMANCE FOR THE AGES.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS @ GREEN BAY PACKERS

THE 49ERS LOOKED LIKE THEY'D SHRUG OFF THE PACKERS WITH LITTLE TROUBLE.

EVEN THOUGH THEY DOMINATED THE FIRST QUARTER, ALL THEY COULD MANAGE WAS TWO FIELD GOALS.

THE REST OF THE GAME WAS A BACK AND FORTH AFFAIR.

COLIN KAEPERNICKS 4TH QUARTER TOUCHDOWN PASS TO VERNON DAVIS GAVE THE 49ERS A 20-17 LEAD.

ALTHOUGH RANDALL COBB PUT HIS TEAM INTO POSITION TO TAKE THE LEAD, THE PACKERS WERE FORCED TO SETTLE FOR A GAME TYING FIELD GOAL.

IN THE PLAYOFFS YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'LL BE THROWN AT YOU, BUT YOU'D BETTER BE READY.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS @ PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

THE ICONIC IMAGE ATOP THE ART MUSEUM IS ROCKY. BUT IT'S NOT "THE MAN IN TRUNKS" BUT "THE MEN IN PADS" WHO HAVE CAPTURED PHILADELPHIA'S HEART.

FOR LINEBACKER CONNER BARWIN (PAUSE), (THEN FAST)ALL-PRO TIGHT END JIMMY GRAHAM WASN'T MUCH OF A FACTOR. BECAUSE GRAHAM IS A BETTER RECEIVER THAN BLOCKER, HE WASN'T ON THE FIELD MUCH.

THE SAINTS PLAN WAS TO RUN THE BALL (PAUSE) AND THEY DID ALL GAME LONG.

IT WAS TEXAS-TOUGH GOING FOR WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL ALUMS NICK FOLES AND DREW BREES...ESPECIALLY FOR THE SAINTS NUMBER 9 WHO THREW 2 FIRST HALF INTERCEPTIONS.

IN A GAME FEATURING 2 OF THE NFL'S MOST EXPLOSIVE OFFENSES, THE EAGLES LED JUST 7 TO 6 AT HALFTIME.

ON THEIR FIRST DRIVE OF THE 3RD QUARTER, THE SAINTS STAYED ON THE GROUND... TO SET UP THE PLAY ACTION PASS.

IT WAS THE EAGLES WHO SUFFERED THE BIGGEST SELF-INFLICTED WOUND...A DROPPED 3RD DOWN PASS BY RILEY COOPER THAT WOULD HAVE KEPT A DRIVE ALIVE DEEP IN SAINTS TERRITORY.

A 27 YARD CATCH BY TIGHT END BENJAMIN WATSON HELPED THE SAINTS BUILT A 20 TO 7 LEAD.

DESEAN JACKSON HAD MADE NO BIG PLAYS BUT WHEN CORNERBACK KEENAN LEWIS WAS FORCED FROM THE GAME, THE EAGLES FOUGHT THEIR WAY BACK.

PHILADELPHIA'S LONGEST GAIN OF THE NIGHT WAS ON A 40 YARD PASS INTERFERENCE CALL DRAWN BY JACKSON AND THE EAGLES REGAINED THE LEAD.

LESS THAN 5 MINUTES REMAINED. WOULD THE EAGLES MAKE A MIGHTY DEFENSIVE STAND OR WOULD BREES LEAD A DRAMATIC COMEBACK? NEITHER...BECAUSE A LONG DARREN SPROLES KICKOFF RETURN AND A 15 YARD HORSE COLLAR PENALTY SET NEW ORLEANS UP AT THE EAGLES 48 YARD LINE.

THE SAINTS FINISHED THE GAME THE WAY THEY STARTED IT. THEY USED POWER RUNS TO SLOWLY DRAIN ALL OF THE EAGLES' TIME OUTS...ALL BUT THE FINAL THREE SECONDS OFF THE CLOCK...AND PHILADELPHIA'S PLAYOFF HOPES.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS @ INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

KANSAS CITY HAD NOT WON A PLAYOFF GAME IN 20 YEARS // AND IF THEY WERE GOING TO WIN AGAINST THE COLTS, THE CHIEFS WOULD HAVE TO DO IT WITHOUT JAMAAL CHARLES, WHO THEY LOST ON THEIR OPENING POSSESSION.

IN 2013, THE COLTS HAD JUST 14 TURNOVERS, THE FEWEST IN THE NFL. ON SATURDAY THEY TURNED THE BALL OVER 4 TIMES IN 40 MINUTES.

ANDREW LUCK FORGOT FAST, AND THE COLTS GAVE THE CHIEFS SOMETHING THEY'LL SADLY REMEMBER.

IN THE 3RD QUARTER, INDIANAPOLIS CHIPPED AWAY AT KANSAS CITY'S 28 POINT LEAD.

GREAT COMEBACKS NEED TALENT, SKILL AND RESILIENCE; ...AND A LITTLE LUCK.