

**Coach Tom Coughlin**  
**January 10, 2007**

**Opening Statement**

Good afternoon, guys. I haven't had a chance to visit with you since the game the other day. I just want to say that following the loss to the Philadelphia Eagles – a really hard-fought game, a game that we had an opportunity to win – I felt very strongly about that. I told you that I had expressed feelings to the team. I was proud of the team and the way in which they had battled, in the way in which they had stuck together and in the way in which we had come through some adversity in Washington to get ourselves – to have the opportunity to be in the playoffs. (I'm) disappointed certainly in the loss to the Eagles in the playoffs. (I'm) disappointed in our 8-8 season, wishing that it would have been better, but nevertheless recognizing that we have been in the playoffs two years in a row. It was a very emotional time – hard-fought game, the conclusion of a season, sitting here even now just three days removed...But having had an opportunity, as procedures do follow, to sit and talk with ownership, I'm certainly very appreciative and very grateful to Jonathan Tisch and John Mara for the opportunity to sit and visit with them, and for their support. We've had a couple of days of very healthy, productive meetings which allowed, as (is) normal at the end of the season, an opportunity to answer questions, express our thoughts for moving forward, for improving our football team. And really everything that we talked about was about getting the New York Giants better – being better and improving so that we could move forward. And everything that was said in those meetings was addressed according to those lines.

**Q: John Mara and Jonathan Tisch told us before they made their decision, they wanted to hear your plan for making this better. Did you go in assured that you were going to come back another year, or were you at all worried about what was going to happen?**

A: I really never worried about – as I told you on a couple of occasions – I never really worried about my job as such. I worried about the next opponent. I spent all of my time trying to work with our staff and our players, trying to find a way to win, and I really don't look at time spent in that fashion – worrying about my future – as time well-spent. I really did not. I felt that we worked very hard as a staff and as a group this year. It certainly wasn't what we expected it to be, but going into the meetings, I felt they were end of the year meetings that gave me a chance to be with ownership and still didn't have any feeling that I was not going to be retained.

**Q: Have you made any decisions about assistant coaches?**

A: The process is on-going. We evaluate everything. I'm in the process of doing that now. I've expressed some things of concern as we've gone forward in our meetings, and they're continuing. You'll know as soon as those decisions are final.

**Q: The owners said that part of those meetings were to discuss your visions of the future and how this team is going to get better. What are the main points that you pointed out to them?**

A: I think it's broad in scope, but one is my belief that Eli (Manning) will improve. He is the quarterback of the future, and that certainly we have work to do there in consistency, in offensive point production, along those lines, but I'm very confident that we will achieve in that area. I think you realize that the picture is brighter than it was when I first came on board, with the two playoff appearances. The competitive nature of our league is a most difficult one. I do think that improvement is in the offing. I think we get some of these people back, we add a strong draft class, we add a few quality people in terms of the opportunities extended to us in free agency. I think we move forward, and so everything that we talk about is all about improving our football team and they go from, again, reevaluating everything, assessing the injury situation and so on and so forth. I realize the questions and the answers are somewhat broad in nature, but they have to be right now.

**Q: When you first took over, you talked about having a team that played smart, was more disciplined and having fewer injuries. Do you feel that that's something that has to improve?**

A: Well, I always do. I think we weren't the least penalized team, for example, in the NFC East. I think we were second by one penalty. I think that that certainly can always improve. I think that the injury situation, all you can do is continue to research that. I thought that our guys maintained a great level of focus, even through the injuries. We never used it as an excuse or developed any kind of a mentality along those lines. We continue to put forth with – The players that were on our team went forth and played as hard as they could, and that's the mentality that you're after. It would be a wonderful thing if somehow, some way we could devise in our game that no one was hurt, but that's unrealistic so we'll continue to research and try to understand how these things occur and do a better job of trying to prevent them, but the nature of the game is such.

**Q: The two owners did say that they would at least discuss or get your opinions or impressions about their general manager search. The fact that you're in place now before the new GM comes into play --does that concern you at all, that you don't have a GM there now who is already on board with your retention?**

A: Let me say this: I had a wonderful relationship with Ernie Accorsi, and Ernie Accorsi and John Mara and Jonathan Tisch and Mr. Mara and Mr. Tisch were the people that brought me here. I had full confidence in Ernie and in the personnel staff that's here. I do have full confidence in John Mara and Jonathan Tisch that the right person will be selected. We all know that in this day and age you have to work hand-in-hand to see things exactly the same way – what the needs are, how we're going to go about accomplishing those needs. I have every confidence that when the decision is made as to who the general manager is, it will be someone that will certainly share my thoughts along those lines. But also, we all worked – It's great to have to be able to surround

yourself with professionals, with people who can be on the same page trying to accomplish the same thing, which is trying to make our team better.

**Q: Jay Feely on Monday pretty honestly expressed his disappointment in the fact that there were a number of players on the team in the locker room that refused to buy into and refused to follow your leadership and what you preached to the team. I'm wondering if you perceived that, and if that in fact was the case, how inhibiting was it to you in what you had to do?**

A: I think, although I'm not sure what Jay said, but you always have your challenges and you always have players that you have to try to make them understand what your thinking is and why it is. I think the first question that was asked in the conference here was about discipline and about focus and about a team that can really control themselves and their emotions on the field, because if you don't, the smallest of errors can cost you a football game at this level and you can't afford that. That's all we really preach and that's all that we try to do. We talk about team, we talk about a team that controls its emotions and does the right thing at the right time on the field, obviously gives great effort and has superior preparation. It's an on-going process and I'm not sure what Jay is referring to, but it's very important in our game at this level with the parity in our league that everyone understand exactly what we're talking about and is in complete agreement with what is necessary for us to win.

**Q: Were John Mara and Jonathan Tisch supportive of you from the start of your meetings this week, and what does their commitment mean to you?**

A: They were very, very good. They were very supportive, they were intense in their desire to find out what our thinking was and what our thoughts were in wrapping up this season and moving forward. I appreciated very much, the way that the meetings were conducted, and the fact that at the conclusion on the meetings that the questions had been answered. I was, as I said before, grateful, and still am, for their support.

**Q: Do you feel you need to change at all, and do you think that players will notice anything different about you starting next season?**

A: I think I have changed, to be honest with you, and I will continue to do that because I think you have to grow and you have to study the circumstances and continue to improve, if you will, every year. I don't think – No two teams are ever the same and I don't think your approach can be the same with any two teams that are back-to-back teams. I think the players understand what is important to me, and I think that the more that we get to experience one another, the better off we are.

**Q: Do you think they can expect a softer, kinder Tom Coughlin?**

A: I don't know about...I've tried to be understanding and I've tried to make them aware of obviously the fact that I am concerned about each and every one of them in more ways

than just in football. You don't get a lot of time to sit during the course of the season and do that, and I hope to be able to catch up on some of that in the off-season.

**Q: Given the fact that you're losing the franchise-leading rusher and your Hall of Fame defensive end will be a year older next year, how difficult will your job be to get this team back to the playoffs?**

A: You understand that about our business. Tiki (Barber)'s decision to retire is one that, while it saddens us, it's a part of our game. Michael (Strahan) will be back. He will be healthy. The process of improvement is always one where you have to be able to go out and bring players in that can help you, and that cycle begins right away. It's difficult for every team, and every team basically starts the same here in the off-season. We realize what has to be accomplished. We look at our team very closely and we'd like to make some decisions along the way here that will improve us, but it's no different than any other team.

**Q: How do you rate Eli Manning's progression, and do you believe ultimately your success or failure at the Giants will be measured by his growth?**

A: I think that our success will be measured by our team and what our team is able to accomplish on the field. I think that everyone has to improve. Everyone has to play better, to get better, and certainly I think Eli would agree with that. And the process continues. It's a continual attempt to try to improve yourself. Even some of the great players, the greatest players in the game always – I've heard them say that the challenge is with yourself. I think it's an on-going thing. Eli is coming out of his third year, going into his fourth year and I think that there's no question that we will have a very productive off-season in terms of, again, his improvement.

**Q: In your first year, there were players who took swipes at you anonymously. Last year, not so much because of the successful season, but down the stretch here there were a couple of those. How sure are you that next year that won't happen again, and that these guys are on the same page with you?**

A: I think it's, again, trying to point out the importance of family and remaining together, and if there is someone who has something on their mind that the door is open, and this is where it starts. There, for whatever reason, has been a process where people have gone to the media with questions about things that should remain in-house and should remain within family, not on the outside. I think that the players, they understood my explanation about that and why I thought it was so important for our team and our franchise, and I think we're making progress along those lines.

**Q: The owners said that you received a one-year contract extension. Did you want a longer extension, and does a one-year extension, in your mind, basically mean a "make good" year for next year?**

A: I think every year that you take the field is a year in which you put everything that you have into doing the best job you possibly can and winning. I don't think very many of us think very far beyond just the season that's at hand. I would even have preferred that that – I realize you need that information, but that to me is something that's a private matter, when you start to talk about contract(s). My focus is on right now and the upcoming season.

**Q: In terms of your staff, are you going to be the sole evaluator over these next few stages--**

A: --Yes, I am.--

**Q: -- In deciding exactly what happens, then, to the rest of your coaching staff, will you be getting any input from anybody in the organization on that?**

A: Obviously if I chose to bounce some things off, I have people that I can do that with. That's the nature of the business, and of course, that's the prerogative of ownership. But it's been stated very clearly to me that those decisions are mine.

**Q: You've talked about your unhappiness with players speaking out in the press. Is there something to be said – sort of like addition by subtraction – by removing a veteran element who is not afraid of speaking out in the press and having a more uniform team?**

A: I don't think of it in that way at all. It's our team, and it's a message to our team, period.

**Q: Was there anything that came up in the conversations with John Mara and Jonathan Tisch over the last couple of days that they asked you to do something that you felt at the time might be unacceptable and that could get in the way of you returning?**

A: No.

**Q: You obviously had success in making Tiki Barber a better football player. Why do you think, to date, you haven't had the same success with Eli Manning?**

A: I just think that it's an on-going process, and there was one particular issue that Tiki was able to understand immediately. He was very open-minded about it. He was an outstanding runner, if you will, when I came here, but the issue was the idea of trying to help him with ball security, and we were able to do that. He worked the entire off-season on it and he made it a part of his body – he made the ball a part of his body. He put the ball in such a position where the opponent could not get to it and he lived by that religiously, even when it was not comfortable for him. With Eli, it's a process. You have a young guy that has the responsibility, if you will, of the ball on every snap. Whether it be the decisions that have to be made with regard to the fronts, the blitzes, the

coverages, even as far as putting us in the right position from a run-standpoint, he's done an exceptional job of that. There are things which happen in the game that, one play you may master in the face of a blitz and the next play you may not. It's a process that we're continuing to work on, and I have great faith that he recognizes what it is we need to improve upon and he will work at it. It's not a question of him not doing what we ask him to do. He's completely reliable and dependable in those areas, and we have to get better. That's all.

**Q: Did you ask anything of management in return, in terms of were you satisfied with the personnel that you had, in terms of the players? Was there anything on your mind?**

A: Those things remain private. There are always discussions about all phases of job-responsibility and we covered any number of subjects, but nothing that wasn't discussed to make us better and nothing that wasn't well-received.

**Q: Do you expect Tim Lewis to be back as your defensive coordinator?**

A: We're in the position here where we're talking about our entire operation and our evaluation throughout the course of this week. We'll consider all of those things.

**Q: Have you spoken to any of the assistants yet?**

A: No, no I have not. I had a staff meeting – I've had staff meetings – but those discussions will be going forward.

**Q: Would you admit that at least the defensive side needs to improve substantially over the next –**

A: I think we need to improve in every area. I don't think it's just defense. I think improvement has to be...I mentioned earlier to you that, for example, we didn't score enough points. I think that everything needs to be evaluated and looked at and put in a position where we can improve.

**Q: You said you're confident that whoever becomes the general manager, you'll be able to work with him. Were you asked at all on any input on that, especially with the in-house candidates?**

A: You know what? We never really talked in any great detail about any of that. The idea of working together was expressed, but not to the point where it had to do with any individual.

## **Eli Manning, Jan. 8, 2007**

As an offense we just didn't execute enough at times and score when we got down into the red zone. I've got to find a way to be more consistent, find a way to make more completions and move the ball. We would get stuck in too many third and long situations because we're not getting completions on first and second downs. That's when you get stuck in a long day. We've got to find a way to get completions.

### **Will this become your team next year with Tiki gone?**

Yeah. I'm looking forward to next year and continuing to get better. I think we can get better as an offense and as a team. Obviously you can't replace Tiki. We're going to have someone try and step up into that role and a few guys. We'll see what that's going to be like. We're going to miss him, but I'm going to have to step up my game, other guys are going to have to step up. We're going to have to find a way to move the ball and be a better offense than we were this year.

### **Do you feel like this was a season of missed opportunities?**

We had a lot of talent. We went through a lot. We had a lot of injuries. On offense, losing Amani Toomer. He was one of the leaders in receptions earlier in the year and with touchdowns and big plays for us. You lose him and it hurts, but guys played well for us, with Plaxico and Shockey. They played well and made some big plays, but we just didn't execute well enough down the stretch. We played and we're in games. We tied up, we just couldn't find ways to win games in the end. That's what it came down to. Sometimes you've got to make plays earlier in the game. It comes from getting touchdowns instead of field goals. Little things. And that's what we didn't do.

### **Do you think Coughlin took too much heat for your season?**

We had a tough situation that happened this year and I think he dealt with it fine. He did his job. You lose guys on defense, you lose some guys on offense, you play a tough schedule. It has the opportunity for a long season. We got off to a great start, playing well. All of a sudden things kind of started going down hill for us. You lose some guys. We played some tight games. We just didn't have enough to win the close games in the fourth quarter. Early on and last year we were able to win those games. We were able to fight back in the fourth quarter and do those things. Early in the season we were able to fight back. We still fought, we just didn't have enough power to get those wins.

### **Did Coughlin lose control of this team?**

He didn't lose control. We still fought. We played hard. We still competed. We just didn't have the power to win those tight games in the fourth quarter. It's disappointing. A lot of times, that's how you play. You play—you get this game to the fourth quarter. You get yourself a shot and that's where you have to win. Most times that's the case. We did a decent job and we fought. We made plays in the fourth. We just couldn't hold on to win the game.

**Do you have faith in Coughlin?**

You've got to have faith in your coaches. Obviously you've got to have faith in your teammates and yourself. Coach is going to put you in the right position, but it's our job to go out there and make plays and compete and not have mistakes. Move the ball and get down there. You're going to call your play and sometimes the defense calls the right defense and you've got to step up and play beyond the play and make some plays on your own and do those things. You've actually got to make the plays that are there and that's our responsibility as players, to make those plays.

**Would you be shocked if he's not here next year?**

I don't know what's going to happen. I hope he's back. I think with the players we have and we get some guys back, add some new guys, we can excel and get better.

**What about Gilbride? Do you give him a vote of confidence?**

I think the guys were getting comfortable. We need to improve. We need to be more disciplined in some areas. Coming from me and to the receivers and everybody. We're on the same page, but getting it exact. You can't have the little mistakes or little things that make a difference. Just getting everything perfect. That's what it takes to be a successful offense. You have to be perfect. You can't accept mistakes and the little faults and the 'my bads' on that play. That's what costs you first downs and games. We have to get better.

**Re: working with the receivers in the offseason**

A lot of it, it's not based on the offseason. It's based on doing it in practice and training camp and minicamp. That's when you get together. That's when you run your plays. You go versus the defense and see different looks. In the offseason you get your timing down. You run your curls and outs and those types of things. You get better, but you get experience and different looks when you're running versus defenders and running versus different defenses. That's where you get on the same page. That's where you have to make decisions and the right ones. That's where you have to improve and get guys healthy. We have to get guys here and in the right mindset.

**What do you expect to do this offseason?**

The same thing. I'll take a few weeks off, but then come back and look at the film and see where I need to improve, where I need to improve as a quarterback and as a player. I've got to improve my whole game. You never stop improving. You never stop learning and studying. I never will. I've still got a lot to learn. I'm going to continue to work hard. Hopefully everybody else will do the same and see where we can improve.

**What are you going to miss most about Tiki?**

Just his playmaking. He's a guy who shows up and makes big plays every game. He's a guy you can count on and get the ball in his hands and something special happens. He shows up and competes.

**Tiki Barber, Jan. 8, 2006**

**Did you change your mind?**

No.

**What are your emotions?**

There's not a lot of sadness. I'm happy that I had the run that I had. I'm thankful for it and I take a lot of pride in what I accomplished as a New York Giant. My life will go on and Giant life will go on. It's not the end of the world, by any stretch of the imagination. I'll be missed here and I'll miss the guys here.

**Do you feel frustrated today?**

Frustrated as I always am when I lose, particularly on the stage that we were on. But that's football. Give the Eagles credit. We weren't good enough. That is what it is.

**If you're asked in one of your new roles in the next two or three weeks, whether Tom should be back-**

I won't be asked that question in one of my new roles, because my next role for the next couple months is just being a dad. I'm sure my kids don't even know Tom's name. They asked me this morning, 'You lost, daddy. Why are you going to work today?' They understand it, surprisingly, more than I thought they would.

**How do you see this offense moving on without you?**

Just like any offense moves on when anyone leaves. The NFL is about who's on the field and who's playing at a specific time. Just because I'm not here doesn't mean that Brandon (Jacobs), James Sims, who I think is going to be a good guy coming up, and whoever else they bring in here is not going to get the job done.

**Are you surprised at the career you had as an every down running back?**

You know, it's a testament to resilience. I always wanted success and expected it. Circumstances shined favorably for me. I got some good coaching. I got some great lessons in resiliency and sticking to my guns. Ten years down the road, I am what I am and I'm proud of it. I really am.

**Will walking off this field in that NFC Championship game be the highlight of your career?**

Absolutely, it was. There were a lot of great games over the years. It's too complex to put my finger on which one will be the most memorable. Getting to the Super Bowl was definitely a great accomplishment. Playing the way I did last season in light of the tragedies that were going on with Wellington and Bob passing away was another. But there's just too many. There is a myriad of them, and I think I share them with a lot of guys in this locker room, a lot of the coaching staff, and particularly the fans that have watched me for ten years.

**Re: this team moving forward**

It's hard to say. There's a lot of uncertainty. There's a lot of turnover that will happen. I don't know. I haven't had significant enough conversations with the people really in the know to know.

**Since the middle of October when you first announced your retirement, has there been any moment where you reconsidered?**

No. I have no regrets for making the decision or how it came out. It happened. You don't write things and script them. It just happened. This decision has been in my head for years now. And you guys have been, I think, aware of that. I've alluded to it plenty of times. This was just the right time for me. And I know it personally. It may not appear that way by how I played this year, but I'm ready to go on and do something else. And I'm excited about it, I really am. I'm not going to regret not being a football player anymore.

**Having nearly 400 yards in your last two games, that doesn't make you reconsider.**

That's what my job has been and always will be—to perform when the pressure situations are in front of us. Again, it's something I can be proud of.

**How satisfied are you to walk away with your health?**

That's the most important thing. To go out on my own terms and to be healthy and to be proud of what I've accomplished in ten years is something that you can't put a value on. I'm lucky. Lucky, but I think I've made some of that luck myself.

**How healthy are you?**

Pretty good. Last year I was beat up. I felt like I couldn't do another year. This year I feel pretty good. My knees are stable. The bone spurs that I've been ignoring for three years in my right knee didn't bother me too much. My shoulders are intact. I feel good. I feel healthy. Ready for one more game, which is the Pro Bowl with my brother.

**So, there's no reason to expect that when you're 50...**

I don't think so. I had a conversation with Barry Word—a UVA grad that played at Kansas City, about two months ago. He said it gets worse. You stop working out as hard. Your strength that supports your joints and etc. just isn't there anymore. Then it starts to hurt.

**What do you think you'll weigh in six months?**

I'll look like my brother. Seriously, I gained 20 pounds to do a different position than he did. Now, I guess we're kind of similar.

**Tiki, the greatest player in basketball came back. Do you think in August, last week, if there's a playoff team that has an injury to their RB...**

Basketball is different than football. You guys know that well. It's a year long thing now. It's not just something you can turn on and off. It's preparation as far as physical and mentally getting yourself ready. At 32 and at that point I won't have that desire at all.

**Was your initial intention to stand here today and say ‘I’m retiring’?**

No. Not at all.

**How would it have played out?**

I think it would have happened quietly. But I’m glad it happened the way it did, because the stories were written all throughout the year—some of them good, some of them bad, but they were written and people got a chance to express their opinion. And now that the season is over, I got a chance to say a goodbye. Not mostly to my fans and the teammates, but to you guys and to those who have covered me, and it means a lot to me.

**Is Tom the right guy to lead this team?**

It’s not my decision. I’m going to go have a conversation with John Mara, I’m sure, in the next few days. I’ll have a discussion with Jonathan Tisch and we’ll see. My input is just an opinion. This organization has a lot of tough decisions to make and we’ll see where that goes.

**Do you ever see yourself getting back to football?**

As a general manager? No.

**In another role.**

Maybe. That’s something down the line. There are other things that I’m excited to explore right now. They don’t hire young general managers. I couldn’t even be president yet, if I wanted to.

**Did John and Jonathan request a meeting with you or did you volunteer?**

Well Jonathan Tisch is very close with me and we’ll talk about things because that’s what friends do. And John Mara obviously wants to see me with the season ending and this being the final game. Again, it’s a way to just go recollect and wrap up ten years, and I’m sure discuss some of the future of the team.

**Has anyone tried to talk you out of it? Will John Mara try?**

John jokes about it. He comes by in passing and says, ‘You sure you don’t want one more year? Just give me one more.’ I think people are aware and are okay with my decision. No one’s really tried to talk me out of it.

**When do you expect to clean out your locker?**

Not today. That’s for sure. I’ve got too much junk.

**When do you expect to make an announcement about your next job?**

It will probably be a few weeks. There are some things that we need to vet out still and get in order, and then we’ll decide. It’s not important to do right now.

**You expect to take three months off?**

It will be mid-April before I actually go to work. Wherever we decide to go, I’ll immerse myself. But it’s not anything that’s in the near future.

**So you won't be showing up at the Super Bowl with the NFL Network?**

No. My wife wants to take an extra couple of days in Hawaii, so she wants to go early.

**Do you know who you're going to work for, but you're ironing out the details?**

Not really. Sort of, but not really. The decision, it's right there on the precipice. In the next couple of weeks we'll know for certainty.

**If it's ABC News and sports, is it ok with you to be doing sports as well as news.**

It will be a hybrid. The sports side will be similar to what the news side will be. It's not going to be trying to pick games and diagnose situations. Because I don't know, just like you guys don't really know. Unless you're on the team, you don't know. It's tough to do that. So it will be more telling stories. It will be more getting in depth things. Not just football, everything.

**So if five years from now, if you're doing as much sports as news, that's not a failure of your goals?**

No. My direction is certain. The goal is not defined yet. Again, I was a business major who played football. This is something that happened to me that I enjoy, I'm good at and I'm excited to get involved in. But, again, I still need some time to work out what I want to be when I grow up.

**What's the most disappointing point of your career?**

It's probably San Francisco. I mean, that game—we really thought we had a chance that season. After what was a great first three quarters against San Francisco, we let it slip away. We knew we were going to go play Tampa who we thought we could beat because we had a good running game. That was their fault. And we never got that chance and Tampa subsequently went on and won the Super Bowl, which again, was a proud moment for me because it was my brother. But I wish it would have been me instead.

**Are you going to tell the AFC guys to take it easy on you?**

What, in the Pro Bowl? Sean Payton called me the other day. He said, 'If we don't get to the Super Bowl and I'm the Pro Bowl coach, I'm going to work your ass off.' I said I'm coming to practice and the game with a Mai Tai. No, I don't expect it to be too vigorous.

**Your first Pro Bowl, weren't you slightly annoyed at how much they used you?**

You don't know your first Pro Bowl. You play like it's a regular season game and then people start looking at you, saying, 'What the hell is wrong with you? Slow down.' It just worked out that way. It's fine.

**Wasn't there an issue with a Cincinnati defender?**

No, that was my fault because I tried to jump. I can't remember who it was. I remember that now. I was upended on my head.

**You spent 15 years answering questions and you're probably going to spend the next 15 asking them, is that going to be an interesting transition?**

It will be. In some ways, I've stepped across that line over the past four or five years, and it is interesting. It's challenging in a completely different way to try to determine the psyche and the meaning of what people are saying. But I think I'll enjoy it. I enjoy people. I like interacting and making relationships. I think it will serve me well.

**So you learned something from us?**

Of course, I did. I definitely did. I have the utmost respect for you guys, having to come over here and deal with us pains in the asses every day. Some of you guys trying to get the true gist of a story which oftentimes is not clear—oftentimes it's purposely vague. It's a tough job. I know that. I respect what you guys do.

**2012, are you planning for your presidential run?**

That's not enough gratification.

**As long as you've been here your teammates have perceived you being close to us.**

**Has that sometimes caused you problems?**

Not really. I think my teammates respect me because of who I am as a person and what I've done as a player. That's something that's meaningful to me. All these guys, I'm going to miss, just like they're going to miss me.

**Coach Tom Coughlin**  
**January 5, 2007**

**Q: Are you ready to play the game?**

A: Well, it's been a nice week (with) kind of a fun feel to the week. The players have worked hard and prepared well, and we're really looking forward to it.

**Q: How do they feel about this second chance they're getting? They can make all of the last six weeks go away with one big win this week.**

A: That's the second season idea. That's exactly what it is and I think we're excited about that, too.

**RE: Jeremy Shockey**

A: I think Jeremy has made good progress.

**Q: How important is it to have him out there playing, not just for his ability, but for the emotion he brings to this team?**

A: It's important to have all of our players ready to go and with Jeremy, he brings that extra vitality and enthusiasm part of it. It will mean a lot to our players in the huddle to have him.

**Q: Is he ready to go? Will he play on Sunday?**

A: We'll see.

**Q: Obviously it's a road game, but do you get the sense this is a big football weekend for New York football fans?**

A: It's a big football weekend for us, I know that. It's an exciting time and we're looking forward to it, as I said.

**Q: This is a different team, but you won the last two games you've played in Philadelphia. How important is that going into Sunday?**

A: You have to remind the players that the last two times we've been there we've won games in overtime. That's obviously a positive for us to be reflecting on.

**Q: You said yesterday there would be a restriction on Jeremy if he practiced. What kind of restriction does he have?**

A: You said that. I said we'd bring him back to practice, we'd put him in practice, we'd see how he's doing, we don't give him a lot of plays the first time and we increase the number of plays the second time, and we've done that all week.

**RE: Having a unified team**

A: I've been trying to portray that all along. It's been others who have talked about it being anything but that and I think, obviously, having had the opportunity to complete one season and start another one is another positive step in bringing the group together.

**Q: What is the benefit for David Diehl getting more practice time at left tackle? You've talked about his versatility in the past, but just talk about what he has been able to do for you.**

A: He's had another week of practice. He's had another opportunity. He's had a whole week of study. He knows how (good) the people are he's going against and he's had that extra time. He's used it well.

**Q: With Tiki Barber running the ball so well last week, can you draw a connection that maybe the running game is a little bit better with Diehl on that side?**

A: Well, if you look at the game and watch the film, there was positive yardage over there with the run.

**Q: I think there may be a perception outside of the clubhouse that this team spoke a lot this year about different topics. Do you think that as that talk has died down the team has come together a little bit more?**

A: I think the team has been together, as far as I was concerned, throughout all of those hard times. I wouldn't even comment on that.

**Q: Do you think the fact that the team made it to the playoffs despite the injuries and the turmoil brings the team closer together or that they use that as motivation?**

A: Any time you're involved in an opportunity to go to the second season, it's very motivating.

**Q: Having faced the Eagles in two different guises this year – one with Donovan McNabb and one with Jeff Garcia – how much does that help, having seen this team recently with Garcia?**

A: Well, having just played them a couple of weeks ago, obviously we've had an opportunity to see him and he's playing very well.

**Q: But the fact that it's fresh in your mind, the way they're going to play –**

A: It's going to be fresh in your mind anyway. You're going to study enough to make it fresh in your mind, (but) certainly there is recall.

**RE: R.J. Cobbs**

A: He's been very impressive in our practices. He's worked hard. He's been in multiple roles, as far as assignments go. We just felt that he was a kid who could hopefully help us, not only as the fourth corner, but on special teams.

**Coach Tom Coughlin**  
**January 4, 2007**

**Q: What is the progress report on Jeremy Shockey and Rich Seubert?**

A: Rich practiced yesterday and today and he seemed to come back today pretty strong. He didn't miss any snaps. Jeremy, we worked in as best we could. And he did well with the opportunities that he had and hopefully tomorrow will be even more progress.

**Q: Do you get the sense from your team with the way they prepared this week that they're ready for this challenge?**

A: They're excited. Today was a good practice. We had good energy (and) good focus.

**Q: Was the plan all along to work Shockey in slowly or was he just not healthy enough to go as far as the plan?**

A: The plan is to work him, as he's coming back, a certain amount just to make sure that he can progress the next day. I don't want any setbacks.

**Q: Do you still need to see him in practice before you make a decision on Sunday?**

A: Not necessarily, no.

**Q: Talk a little bit about what Eli Manning learned in the last outing against this team and how he handled it?**

A: Well, we've had two outings and in both outings there (has) been pressure. In the game in Philadelphia, of course, the maximum pressure even on the last play, which he reacted very well to – (he) threw the touchdown pass in that situation. The last play here – well, what I call the last play, the 29-22 play – he saw the pressure coming. He thought he could work on the left side rather than right into the teeth of the pressure. He got hit and the ball was obviously tipped for an interception that went for a touchdown. (I was) not so pleased with that one, but certainly they always dial up a lot of things for the quarterback to have to deal with and he's done a good job of dealing with it.

**Q: Win or lose, do you think the way he performs in this game will go a long way in determining –**

A: I think every game that we play he learns and he grows. He's very aware of what is done properly (and) what isn't, and (is) always trying to improve on that and certainly he's spending a lot of time and focus (on that) this week.

**Q: Do you think the pressure causes the mistakes sometimes or –**

A: Well, it depends on time, obviously. It's always that way. It's just like anything else in life. If you can do things according to the rhythm that you've established, then things work to your advantage. If you have to hurry, if there's something that forces you to react, especially if what you think is going to transpire or happen as a result of what the opponent has done and it's done on time, you can still handle it well, you just have to speed the tempo up a bit. But if something goes awry, then you have an issue because all of a sudden you have the ball and you have pressure. You're trying to find someplace to go and sometimes there isn't anyplace to go.

**Q: Can your team play that smart, turnover-free game, or does Philadelphia force you sometimes—**

A: Well, we just did that pretty well against a team that pressures an awful lot, and in our division there's a lot of pressure, so it's a constant. Every team in the league incorporates that now. It's more (often) than not and you spend an awful lot of time on that, but it still comes down to athlete against athlete on occasion.

**Q: You said at some point this season that you prefer to have a team that doesn't talk as much and performs on the field. Because of that, do you like the way your team has not responded to the trash-talking this week?**

A: I just think it's about the game. It's not about what's said, it's about how you play the game and if that's the case with our guys, that's a nice lesson we're learning.

**Q: Did you like on Saturday that Manning was looking more deliberately for guys other than Plaxico Burrell down the field? I know those things are designed, but...**

A: Yeah, it's normally the way things are designed. Sometimes with what occurs when you think Plax is getting the ball is that there's a situation or a pressure and it comes in a certain way and the ball goes to him. The ball does get spread around and that's a good thing.

**Q: Do you take exception to the fact that they've said they're the more together team?**

A: I don't know what they're saying. Quite frankly, I'm more concerned with our team. Our team has done a good job of staying together and that's a fact.

**Eli Manning**  
**January 4, 2007**

**Q: How are you feeling?**

A: I feel good.

**Q: What's your response to the guys in Philadelphia talking about rattling you?**

A: I don't read the papers, honestly, before a game. A lot of people are going to say things. The only thing that matters is what happens on the field, so I don't pay attention to anything. I don't read into anything or worry about that. My focus is on getting prepared to play Philly. We've done some good things against them (and) they've done some good things, also. They're a talented defense. They give you a lot of different looks and different things. We have a good plan, so we just have to go out there and execute it well.

**Q: How much does the last game against Philadelphia stand out in your mind vs. the first one, or is it a combination of the two?**

A: It's a combination of both of the games. You look at what they did. We did some good things against them in the last game. We had some good plays, we just had too many bad plays. We have four turnovers and that's the difference in the game. We've been able to hit some big plays on them. We've been able to move the ball decently against them. We have to look at what we've done well and just try to eliminate the mistakes and try to get touchdowns when we get down in the green zone – something we didn't really do last time. We haven't played poorly against them. We just have to eliminate a few of the mistakes and figure out a way to play good football and win the game.

**Q: How much of an advantage would it be to get Jeremy Shockey back against a team that is so heavy on blitzing?**

A: Obviously we hope Shockey can get back. He's a talented player, one of our weapons. (He) has a lot of catches this year and makes big plays for us. You definitely want your better players and your starting tight end to be out there on the field with you.

**Q: Because both teams know each other well, how much of a chess match does this game become?**

A: Obviously, they're going to have a new plan. They're going to have some new blitzes and some different things. We don't change our offense a whole lot (and) they don't change their defense a whole lot. They have their blitzes that they do, they have their looks that they do. They'll have a few new things they'll get into, but we have to look at what they've done in the past and be prepared for that. And then once they give us some new looks and do some different things, we have to go on the sideline and talk about that and how we're going to attack that. It's a combination of everything, but obviously we just have to go in there...They're going to win some plays. They have talented players. They do a good job of disguising things. They're going to come out with a blitz and they're going to win that play but you have to make sure that if they guess right and we guess wrong or had a bad play, the worst you get is a throwaway or a sack. You don't let

them take that and get a turnover, get a fumble, get an interception. You don't make a bad play into a worse play by doing that. They'll win their plays, but we have to win our plays, also.

**Q: How have the Giants' fans been so far this season?**

A: Giants fans have been great. We were playing well and everybody was behind us. We went through a streak where we weren't playing great football and that's just part of the game. They've been behind us and they've supported us.

**Q: In what ways have you become a better quarterback this season?**

A: I'm just trying to continue to try to manage the game, make smart decisions, get our team in a situation to win games in the fourth quarter and try to win them there. We've been able to do it a few times, sometimes we haven't. That's a part of growing up. You're not going to win every game, you're not going to make every play, but I'm trying to get better at that and, again, put our team in a situation to win at the end. Hopefully we can make the plays to do that.

**Q: We talked a lot in the off-season and the preseason about all of the work you put in. Do you feel like you made the strides you wanted to this season?**

A: I've made some strides. I've played well at times and haven't (at others). We've lost some players and some different things have happened, but I have to just continue to improve. You never stop learning in this game. You never stop improving on fundamentals and different things. My goal is to get ready for Philly this week, have a great plan and go out there and execute it to the best of my ability.

**Q: Given what has been said throughout the season and the magnitude of this game, do you feel more pressure than you've ever felt going into a game as a pro?**

A: No. I'm looking forward to the opportunity. I don't think of it as pressure. I look at it as a great experience. We're in the playoffs. We're playing against a rival team, in Philadelphia, a team we've already played twice this year and both of them came down to the last few minutes of the game and a tight situation. I think it's exciting and I'm looking forward to the game.

**Q: This is your second post-season game. How much can you draw from last year's game?**

A: Last season was disappointing. We didn't play well – I didn't play well – but I think I've had 16 more games to learn and get better and just continue learning the game of football. Whether it's a playoff game or a regular season game, you go in there with the same philosophy that you have to play smart football, you have to make first downs, you can't turn the ball over and make those kinds of mistakes. Obviously we've learned from

last year and that situation, but I've also learned from every game I've played this year and how you have to play to try to win games.

**Q: Talk about your relationship with Tim Hasselbeck and what it's meant to you off the field.**

A: Tim and I have a great relationship. He works hard. We prepare together every week and between Tim and Jared Lorenzen, we watch films, we go over things – our game plan—and we talk a lot. On the sideline he's been helpful. (The) two other quarterbacks have been great in my learning curve and just continuing to have someone to talk to and go over the game plan (with).

**Q: This is the second week with Kevin Gilbride running the show on offense. Do you feel or sense a difference now that you've had some experience with him?**

A: I think for the most part our game plan is similar. Obviously there's a few changes, but that's just preparing for a team you've played twice and you make adjustments. But I feel very comfortable with him. I think he's comfortable in the play-calling. Obviously last week just having him getting used to calling plays and getting personnel and everything called out and going through that was good, just to get a little practice and for us going through that. I feel comfortable with him and I think he knows what he's doing, but again, a lot of it is just dependent on the players and going and executing the plays called.

**Q: So many people on the outside are focusing on the negatives. On the inside, what do you think is the most positive thing at this point in the season?**

A: That we made it to the playoffs. Honestly, at first, at the start of the season we're 6-2, everything was looking positive and we went through a tough point, but we didn't give up. We won the games that we had to win to get into the playoffs. We didn't do it easily. We struggled at times, but we did what we had to do to get here. A lot of people (are) saying whether we deserve to be here or not. Well, we obviously won more games than a lot of other teams. We played a tough schedule. You look at every team that we played – The teams that we lost to are in the playoffs. We played a lot of good teams and we fought hard and lost some tough games, but we're here. Now we have an opportunity to make our point and try to win some games.

**Q: Now that you're in, what gives you the most confidence that you're going to win for awhile?**

A: That we've played a lot of tough teams. We've played great opponents. We know what it's like and know what to expect against quality teams. We've won some, we've lost some, but for the most part we've gotten in to the end of the games. When you get the playoff games, that's where it's going to be won. Obviously you have to play well in the first three quarters, but hopefully you go into the fourth quarter where you have a shot

and it's going to be who makes the big plays and who makes the mistakes, and who gives your team a chance to win the game.

**Q: What is the weirdest or strangest thing you've seen in Philadelphia, either fan to another fan or fan to a player?**

A: I haven't seen anything strange – No (stranger) than any other game. It should be a hostile crowd and it should be a great atmosphere for a football game.

**Q: When Tiki Barber gets the amount of touches he got last week, how much does that ease the burden on you and how much do you think that improves your chances?**

A: Obviously if we can run the ball, that'll be helpful. Any offense works better when you run it effectively. You just get better at first- and second-down production, where you get into third down situations where you can throw it, you can run it...The defense is in a bind where you can get into your offense. Some of their blitzes – if they come with their crazy blitzes you can get the ball out of your hands quickly, get the ball to people and let them get first downs, where if you're not running well you get stuck in some longer third-down possibilities where it's tougher to convert first down. They have a good rush, they come with their blitzes and even if you get the ball out of your hands, you're short of the first down. Obviously if we can get Tiki involved in the game – get him touches, and if we're able to run the ball well, it greatly improves our offense.

**Q: There's been a change in the offensive coordinator already and there could be a change in the head coach after this season. Does this team feel it needs to rally for the coach?**

A: We're looking forward to this opportunity. We're in the playoffs and we want to win for everybody. We want to win for the team and all of our players and coaches. Everybody has put a lot of hard work into the season and dedication. We're going to go out and give it our best shot. Hopefully we can go out there and just execute our game plan. Our coaches have worked hard and everybody is on the same page. It's just a matter of going out there and doing it on the field.

#### **Carlos Emmons, Jan. 4**

##### **Last time you had a tough time stopping their run game**

We changed a few things up. We recognize what went wrong that game. We're going to be ready for them. We're not really dwelling on last game. In this league, what somebody else did in another game or against somebody else, has nothing to do with you. So we're not looking at last game, as far as what they did. We're looking at this week.

**Doesn't it stick in your mind though?**

It doesn't stick in my mind. The season goes back and forth. They had a good day rushing the ball. What you're all not really researching is that they led the league all year in yards per rush. They just didn't run the ball. They had a great rushing game, they just didn't use it, because it wasn't what they did. I think when Donovan went out they wanted to balance things up to help Garcia and not put all the pressure on him, and it worked for them. So they run the ball on everybody. It's not like they just ran the ball on us and all of a sudden a great messiah came out there and came up with a way to run the ball. They've done it all year.

**Most teams haven't run the ball on you like that**

No, because we've played the run well. They just had a good day. But, like I said, that game has nothing to do with this one.

**Shaun O'Hara, Jan. 4**

We're in the playoffs. We're not going to sit here and dwell on our record. All that matters is that we have a big road game in Philly and we're excited to play it. This is what we live for. This is why we work all season long: to get to the playoffs. We've accomplished that and now it's an opportunity to move forward.

**What gives you that confidence?**

I think probably the biggest thing is that we can put the regular season behind us. It doesn't matter whether we were 8-8 or 10-6, we're in the situation we are now and it's all about being positive.

**How much more intense can it get than this, a playoff game with Philly?**

Well, I feel like we've had a lot of playoff games this year. It was stated before, we've had the toughest schedule in the NFL. So every week was a battle. Every week was a big game. I think that was all in preparation for a week like this.

**Can you draw any confidence from Week 2?**

Yeah, but I think really we get our confidence from just executing and knowing if we execute and do our jobs that things will be okay. And we didn't execute in the first half of that game, but we did in the second half.

**Does this become the ultimate chess match?**

I don't think it's going to come down to too many complications. I think it's going to come down to one thing, execution. They know what we're doing, we know what they're doing. It's going to be who's going to actually do their job better and who's going to make the plays.

**Re: pressure/blitz**

Pressure, it's two-fold. Either they're going to make a big play or we're going to make a big play. They brought pressure on us the last play of the game down there and we

threw it Plaxico for a big score. Sometimes you welcome pressure because it provides opportunities for big plays.

**Re: confidence in Eli**

Unfortunately you guys don't get to spend every day with him. And you guys don't get to know what type of person he is, what type of competitor he is. All you guys see is your thirty minutes a couple times a week and how he is on Sunday. But we know what type of competitor he is and I have the utmost confidence in Eli and I know that he wants to win.

**The trash talking is coming from Philly. Does that fire you up?**

It makes lunchtime interesting, but once the game starts, I don't think it really matters.

**Sam Madison, Jan. 4**

We have to continue to progress on the things we did in the Washington game and carry it over into this one.

**Does it help having seen Garcia already?**

Yeah, but pretty much the scheme is still the same. You look at him and you go and look at some earlier games, he and Donovan pretty much did the same thing. You had Donovan in the backfield, he uses his feet to get out of the mix and make something happen on the throw. Fast forward about four, five, six games and you're like, 'Is that Donovan? No, that's Garcia.' So they pretty much do the same thing. Garcia's been hot. He's been finding the open man and his players have been helping him make plays.

**Does Westbrook become the focal point?**

Westbrook is very (much) the focal point of this team. He's rushed for a thousand yards. He's been one of those thousand yard rushers for a number of years. He never got the accolades he deserves. He deserves a lot of them. He makes their offense move. He makes their football team move. They have a lot of good players at wide receiver, tight end, all around. You have to worry about everybody because Garcia doesn't really care who he throws the football to, as long as they catch it and turn it up and make first downs.

**Is it that easy to put aside everything that went wrong this season and have the confidence to get it done?**

Yes. I think you have to put everything aside. There are a lot of other teams that feel that they should be in the playoffs. But they're not and we're in. We can't worry about what they think about. We have to worry about what we're doing. All the bad things that happened to us, we still have the opportunity to get to our destiny. That's how guys have to look at it. You have to take that approach. Don't worry about what our record is because we don't have a record right now. It's 0-0. We're starting over.

**Antonio Pierce, Jan. 4**

**Are you worried about the rookie starters on this defense hitting the wall?**

No, because those guys have been in all season with us. Kiwanuka's been playing since week seven or eight. Barry's been starting for 16 games. I'm not worried about that at all. I think those guys have been—never through a playoff game, of course—but they've seen a lot of guys and of course they've seen the guys we play this week. So I'm not worried about that at all.

**Rich Seubert, Jan. 4**

**Is it a fluke that the last two times you've played them you've gotten hurt?**

Yeah. I don't know what it is. If you watch any game, every other play there's 'oh look at that guy. That guy could have gotten hurt. Or this guy could have got it, this guy's knee could have got it.' So that's football. I don't worry. I don't even think about it. The first time, some guy stepped on my leg. What are you going to do? This time, I don't know what really happened. But I'm fine. That's football.

**Are you surprised by Diehl? Moving out to left tackle is not easy.**

No, it's not. It's really hard to do. Dave is a heck of a ball player. He moved out there last week and he played well. I'm sure he's got couple plays that he wants back, like everybody else does, but I thought he played well out there. Everybody played good last week. When you win, you play good.

**When you block well, do you have confidence in Eli doing his job?**

Yeah, it's our job to make Eli look good. If we give him time, he can do whatever he wants to do. We're just going to go out there and give him all the time he needs, and hopefully he does what he needs to do.

**Do the things that Trotter says make any difference to you?**

Honest to God, I don't know what he said. It's Philadelphia and New York. Our team against their team. I'm not even going to get into it. We'll play on Sunday and see what happens.

**Coach Tom Coughlin**  
**January 3, 2007**

**Opening statement:**

Good morning. I had an opportunity to address our team this morning, yesterday as well, about the significance and importance of being in the playoffs, about the second season, about the fact that the Philadelphia Eagles are a very good football team. They're in our division. We know them very well (and) they know us very well. These games are always extremely physical. Our experience this year has been kind of a back and forth experience with us going to Philadelphia and winning early and them coming here and winning late. What I did was spend a lot of time with our team this morning talking about this most recent game, because it was only a couple of weeks ago, and having an opportunity to talk about much of what I said to them Monday following that game and trying to come to some conclusions on how that game might have been turned in our favor. It's an exciting week. The energy is high, but we have good presence. I think we have an attitude and obviously we have a lot to prove. Obviously we're the underdog. Those things all are very real. They're something we can grasp. We look forward to the opportunity to play in the game. I think we'll have both feet on the ground. We know it will be a very physical game. That's what these NFC East, excuse me, playoff games are, and we look forward to that.

**Q: What are your practice plans for Jeremy Shockey and Rich Seubert?**

A: Seubert will practice today, Shockey will be on the side and will hopefully we able to work tomorrow. We'll see.

**Q: Is Shockey's ankle a lot better?**

A: The swelling is down considerably from what it was last week. He improves each day. We're just going to have to see about that.

**Q: I assume he wants to play pretty badly. Has he said anything to you about, 'Coach, put me in?'**

A: He wants to play very badly, yeah. I appreciate that question. That brought me right back down a little bit. Now my adrenaline is a little bit under control.

**Q: The defense couldn't stop Philadelphia in the last game when it needed to. Is that something where you feel like your were close, or do there need to be more adjustments there?**

A: There has to be more adjustments made, obviously, and there has to be – There were mistakes that were made that have to be corrected. But you know, in the final analysis, with 2:57 to play, it's 29-22 and we have the ball at the 20-yard line. I'm probably not the only one – maybe I am the only one – but I'm thinking this game is going to

overtime. Despite that, that's part of the message this morning. It was a back and forth game. There were mistakes made on both sides of the ball. I could give you a whole litany of things that I saw again, which if you look at your notes following the game, you'll know exactly what I would have said to them today. But the fact of the matter is again, regardless of what it was, there was plenty of time for us and we were in position.

**Q: Is the fact that you've won in Philadelphia already this season something you'll remind the team of?**

A: Throughout the course of the week we'll talk about that. We briefly touched on it yesterday, but again, being on the road and having some success on the road, we have experienced that this year, to a certain extent. Again, it is the playoffs. It is a road game, but we're excited about the opportunity.

**Q: This might have been the case anyway, but especially given Tiki Barber's game in Washington, will you expect them to jam the box and put the game on Eli Manning, and what makes you confident he will be able to handle that?**

A: Well, I think he will, and I think that will be part of our preparation, obviously. With the Eagles it's always a pressure game. They're going to come – you know that. That's their style. That's their M.O., and we have to be very much aware of that and of course be at our best under those pressure situations. I hope we have that kind of a week of practice and have some – we have to have diversity in our attack, there's no doubt. (We have to) get the ball spread around some, take our chances down the field, as we will. Last week we did have some success into the pressure with the run game and I'm sure that's being evaluated right now.

**Q: Do you think last year's playoff game weighs on Eli at all?**

A: I don't think (so). We've referred to that only in terms of our approach and the intensity with which we practice, the speed with which we practice. I think each individual will look at their part in that. Obviously the conclusion has been made and we've made the statement – and the players have made the statement: we certainly don't want that kind of a feeling ever again.

**Q: What does it mean to you and your defense to have a healthy Antonio Pierce on the field for these playoffs as opposed to last season when he was hurt?**

A: Obviously it's a guy we very much need in the middle directing traffic. (He's a) very, very competitive guy who we can count on to be a solidifier, if you will, on the field. The fact that he's there is a huge plus. We just have to play better. We have to play better and I think I mentioned to you the other day that when we made some of the stops in the first half the other night, that was a real plus for our entire team. I think our team fed off those moments and hopefully we'll have more of those.

**Q: When you talk to Tim Lewis about your defensive approach, and that you have no pressure with four guys in there. I know you don't want to give up the big plays, but does something have to change there?**

A: Well, you do and it's not that we don't bring people. But when you bring people somebody has to get home. Your whole idea is to get people isolated where there's no help and then someone has to come free, and that's basically what has to happen. There are many occasions where we're bringing five or bringing six, but we're not getting home and it's giving the quarterback all kinds of time back there. Obviously this would have to change.

**Q: Can you be confident at all this defense can contain Jeff Garcia?**

A: When you look at their offensive team, they're a very productive offensive team. There's a certain amount of that, but I just looked at the game – the most recent game – and the games that have followed, and I look at that and say to myself how could this have been changed? What could be different about this? It's kind of the same thing I did with the coaches this week. The very first time I met with them, I had the key plays of the game and I had already gone back to the post-game analysis and looked at it and presented to them once again, what could we have done different(ly) to change these situations around? I think that's where we are right now. It's, as you know, it's a chess game and a cat-and-mouse thing and you hit some and you don't hit some, but you'd like to think we could hit a bit more than we did the last time we played.

**Q: It's rare that a team can go far in the playoffs without a productive quarterback. What do you think Eli took out of last year's game and based on how he's played in the last month, do you think he can step it up?**

A: I do. I really do, and I think you're a few plays away from, even the other night, of having a big night. I think it's not fair totally to put it just on the quarterback. I think we could have helped him a lot, in terms of our patterns and route-running, the pressure situations with people dragging on our backs and things of that nature, creating separation. I think that has to happen a little bit more and I think certainly we have to make decisive decisions and get the ball with accuracy to people who are open. So I think all of those things prevail. I think he's constantly aware of that. We had a discussion yesterday about this preparation and going into this game and so-forth, and the Philadelphia game a couple of weeks ago. I'm very, very confident he will have an exceptional week and that he knows exactly what it's going to take to win, because we've obviously been there before with this team. If you'll remember, even in Philadelphia he stepped up into pressure and made a great throw to win that game. Hopefully we'll be able to do that again.

**Q: Even though the playoff game from last year was not a positive experience, can he benefit from—**

A: Yes. Yes, he can. He can look at that, he can draw from it. He can...Just his thoughts about it. I wouldn't send him back looking at that game for obvious reasons – nor any of us. But he can draw upon that and we've referenced that this morning.

**Q: The Eagles are obviously feeling very good, maybe even invincible, coming into the playoffs on the streak they've had. Is that a higher motivation than coming in as an underdog?**

A: I think that whatever their position is, they've earned it. They've won five in a row. They are the NFC East champions. They're a good football team and they deserve that spot. But that doesn't take anything away from our team and the games we've had against them and the competitive nature of these games, and the competitive nature of the individuals as they prepare for this game. They have many good football players in Philadelphia. We have many good football players here.

**Q: Which injury led you to put Corey Webster on IR?**

A: The combination. It was the combination.

**Q: Did he tear or break anything on the hip?**

A: No, no. It's a continuous issue that he's had (that) again refocused or resurfaced the other day. The doctors made the decision that he couldn't be at his best out on the field and so the decision was made to go ahead and begin to move towards the procedure.

**Q: If Seubert plays at guard and I assume David Diehl would be at left tackle, is that your best five guys?**

A: We're going to have to see how Rich is. Rich has not played in awhile. I thought Grey (Reugamer) played well the other night. We're fortunate enough to have the two guys. I think that we'll see throughout the course of the week how Rich is going to come back from a practice and whether or not he's able to turn around and go right again. So we'll just judge that as we go.

**Q: What about Diehl at left tackle? It looked like he did a good job the other night.**

A: Very much so. He played well the other night. He's going to play against a very, very competitive, outstanding player again this week. He's just going to have to draw upon that experience and whatever help we can give him.

**Q: With the Eagles you always hear the phrase "Jim Johnson defense". What is a Jim Johnson defense in your mind?**

A: Well, it's an aggressive defensive style. There's always something new and different for you. You might play a game and have, for example, 15 or 16 pressures in that game (and have) 10 of them – 10 different types. There's not any one specific thing that you

can zoom in on. It's just the pressure package, but it's also an aggressive defensive front (that) plays very well, for example, on the goal line (and) plays very well in short-yardage. So I think that they've overcome some things – the Kearsse injury, obviously. They have played a lot of close games that they were able to win once Garcia got in the games and got his feet on the ground. You saw that (when) Garcia came into the Tennessee game and really had an awful lot of yardage. They just couldn't overcome a big lead. The next week it was the Indianapolis experience and they didn't win that one, but from that point on they've played well and he's played well.

### **Antonio Pierce, Jan. 3**

#### **How much are you itching to get out there after missing last year's playoff game?**

I'm very excited. It's my first playoff game. It's a good playoff game to play, against the Eagles, a team that you're familiar with, a division foe and somebody that you play twice a year.

#### **After the way you guys have played the last couple of weeks, what makes you think it's going to suddenly come together?**

There's no reason that it should come together. You look at the way the Eagles are playing. Five-game winning streak, quarterback playing great, running back, defense playing well. So we've got our hands full. We just hope to give them a good game.

#### **So how are you guys going to win on Sunday if they've got all that going for them?**

I don't know. We just hope that we can play a good game and see what happens.

#### **How would you rank the Eagles compared to all your rivals?**

The last two, three years, probably number one, to be honest. For one, they were division champs for what, four or five straight years. Then we won it. Now they won it back again. You can tell it's the top two teams in the NFC East, so we're facing them at their place and they're champs again, so hopefully we can do something to dethrone them a little bit.

#### **What are you expecting from the fans down there?**

Boos. We love boos, and that's how we've been playing at all year. With the media here and with all of our critics. We like it that way, better than anything else.

#### **Did you guys make some mental mistakes last game against Philly that allowed them to run up the middle?**

It's a little bit of both. They have good players over there. They have a running back that should be in the Pro Bowl. They've got a big offensive line. Probably biggest in the league, I think. They make plays. It's one of those things where, not just me, but everybody in our defense has to play better. The way they've been playing, it doesn't seem anybody has been doing well against them the last five games. Like I said, hopefully we can go in there and slow these guys down somewhat.

**Is there any feeling in this locker room that you guys could be on an upswing?**

I mean, we're hoping so, but the way things look with the Eagles, it doesn't look good for us. Like I said, we're going in hoping we can give them a great little challenge and see how the chips fall.

**You seem very pessimistic right now. Why is that?**

That's the way the season has been all the way with the media. We've got everybody picked against us, so we're just going to go with that theme and stay with it.

**So you feel like if you say you might not win, you might come out on top?**

I'm just giving you the facts. The Eagles are on a five-game winning streak, top five offense, defense making plays, sacking the quarterback, pressuring the quarterback. I mean they didn't even play their starters last week, so you're talking about a group that's fresh and energized and feels that they're on their way back to the Super Bowl.

**Re: last year's playoff game**

It was my first opportunity last year to actually be on a team that was in the playoffs. The team we had last year was playing well, was on a roll. It killed me to watch our guys struggle the whole game against the run and the offense struggling against their defense. Hopefully we can turn things around a little bit.

**Jeremy Shockey, Jan. 3**

**How do you feel?**

I feel better than I did a week ago. It feels sore. Progressing and I'm going to take it one day at a time.

**How much do you want to play on Sunday?**

I want to play every Sunday. I felt bad I couldn't play last (week). It's the nature of this sport, getting hurt. You have to deal with the injuries. It's the one thing I don't deal with very well. It's getting better every day and hopefully I'll be able to do something this week.

**Being a playoff game against the Eagles, does that increase your desire to get out there?**

Whoever we face, it's always about us in here. It's about being smart with your body and stuff. Obviously, last week I wanted to play really bad and I felt bad about it. I'm doing everything I can to get back into it.

**Talk about what this Giants-Eagles matchup means**

This is definitely a game that's got some significance. It's always a battle. These guys won the division this year. They are the champs of our division. We give them all the respect in the world. They've got great players. It's really not about them. It's about us. Us playing well together and giving ourselves a chance to win. That's what we're going to do this week.

**Coach said you were very persuasive this morning when you talked to him. What did you say?**

I did everything last week I could to make that game. You lose and you're out. I want to be with that team. I felt bad not making that trip. So I want to do everything I can this week, I told him, to get back and to push it. We'll see how it feels and get an early signal in the week and just move from there.

**Plaxico Burress:**

**Q: Do you look forward to a second chance after last year's playoff game?**

A: Just getting to the playoffs is an honor. We're not really concerned about last year. We know playing Philadelphia for the third time is probably going to be a harder game than the first two, because it's the playoffs and with the added adrenalin and knowing the game is going to be a lot faster. We know each other very well. Probably the team that is the most physical and doesn't make mistakes is going to win this football game.

**Q: Why have you personally had success against Philadelphia (both 100-yard games this season were against the Eagles)?**

A: It's just the way they play. They confuse you as a receiver and they try to give the quarterback different looks and bait him into making throws. You just have to trust yourself, run your routes at full speed and make the plays. Everybody knows they're a pressure football team. We made some plays into their pressure and that's something we need to continue doing.

**Re: Games vs. Eagles**

A: It's always a physical game. A lot of trash-talking. There's always a lot of hard hitting. We don't like each other. I noticed that my first time last year playing against those guys. It's one of those games that each team gets jacked up for. Both cities don't like each other. Our fans don't like their fans and their fans definitely don't like ours. It's just one of those games...it puts a smile on the face of all the fans.

**Q: Re: Playing in Lincoln Financial Field**

A: It's probably the toughest arena to play in. I've played in some difficult places. That's probably one of the top two or three places to go out and play and get a win. Their crowd gets into it. As a receiver you have to look in at the ball to come off the line and their defense thrives on knowing their corners can get quick jams off you based on the crowd noise, knowing you have to look at the ball and not look at the defense. They feed off of that.

**Carlos Emmons:**

**Q: On losing six of the last eight games.**

A: We're 0-0, so I don't know what losing streak you're talking about. It's a different season.

**Q: How different are the Eagles with Jeff Garcia playing quarterback?**

A: They're more balanced now, so I think that takes a lot of the pressure off of him, because they're running the ball so well. He's not asked to make all the plays. But because the running game is working so well, their play action and their bootlegs and things such as those are working a lot better because teams have to try to really defend the run.

**Q: How can you suddenly come together when you haven't played well?**

A: We have to. We have no choice. It's not a thing where you can say if it doesn't come together this week, we come back and regroup next week. Now you either step up or you go home. You can really see what somebody's made of in a game like this.

**Q: Is your preparation different for this game?**

A: It's going to be one of those games where they know what we do and we know what they do. It's man on man. Let's step up and see who's going to play.

**Shaun O'Hara:**

**Q: The Eagles are a 7-point favorite. Are they the better team right now?**

A: I think anything you say right now is just speculation. They have a better record than us, but I think it's all about who shows up on Sunday.

**Re: Different records in the second half of the season?**

A: I think that's more of a mental thing. If that helps them and gives them an edge, then fine. But I don't think it's anything we're focused on.

**Q: How does everyone come together for Sunday's game?**

A: I think that's what the playoffs do to you. We're here and we're not going to apologize for being in the playoffs to anybody. Now we understand where we are. Our past doesn't matter now.

**Q: How exciting is Giants-Eagles?**

A: It's always exciting. Last year we had to go down there to win the division. And of course, they won the division this year. You throw all of those components into this game and the fact that it's a playoff game, it doesn't get any bigger and better than this.

**Q: How important is it for Manning to step up?**

A: It's more important for all of us to step up. It's not on Eli, it's not just on Tiki. It's on us as a team. That's the mentality we have to have. We can't just back and say, 'Go get 'em Tiki', or 'Go get 'em Eli.' We've got to all do our jobs.

## **Tiki Barber, Jan. 2**

### **Re: being the underdog**

It's nice to be the underdog. You get to fly under the radar a little bit. Have some extra motivation. Everybody's always talking about respect—how can we attain it individually and as a team. As the underdog, that plays heavily into your gameplan and your motivation for the week.

### **Is it nice to have a second season?**

Of course it is. This game is about getting to the playoffs. However we got here, we're here. We're not sorry about it. We did some bad things along the way, but we did some good things last weekend. That needs to carry over if we expect to carry on.

### **Do you see something in this club right now?**

I think it's the same thing we've always seen in this team. It's a resiliency. We fight hard, no matter what's going on. Sometimes it doesn't play out that way because we make mistakes and get discouraged. I think we play hard and that's the most important thing.

### **What did you notice about the flow of the playcalling?**

Kevin is not only great at telling us what we do wrong, but telling us what we do well. And he took a lot of input from us on Saturday night. Particularly on the run game, when I would see things or recognize things. Our line would see things. We could suggest things to him and he'd come back to the play or adjust it in whatever way we need to, and it was real productive for us. Obviously it was, and it was integral in helping us win.

### **How long did it take you to get over last year's playoff loss?**

All year really. All offseason. It was the driving force to come back strong this season. Now we're here again. It's funny after the game last year, after the game to Carolina, it was tough to think about going an entire year or season to get back to this point again, and here we are with another opportunity, and hopefully we can take advantage of it.

### **What things need to change leading up to this playoff game?**

It's a different level of play. You go from preseason to the regular season and it is the big jump. The jump is even higher as you go from the regular season to the playoffs. So much is at stake because you realize that there are no more. If you lose, you come home, pack your bags and you're done. So there needs to be better urgency and better attention to what it takes to win.

### **Every game is a new opportunity for you to extend your career. Are you looking forward to continue playing?**

Of course. I hope I keep expanding on my career and having career days on my last game. That would be nice. Especially the rivalry that Philadelphia has always presented us. Being on the road and being in the playoffs, there's tons of incentive to be extra motivated for this weekend.

**What's the difference in Eli between the games he plays well and the games where he has a harder time?**

I'm not sure what the difference is. But when we support around him better, we get wins. It's hard being a quarterback in this league, especially when you struggle, because then they start coming after you. We expected Washington to come after us, but we handled it early and they got away from it. But we know that Philly's going to come after us, as they always have in the history of our rivalry. And we need to do the best we can to support Eli so that he can get an opportunity to make plays.

**They're going to be focused on shutting you down.**

That's going to give us opportunities to throw the ball downfield. Plaxico and Tim Carter have to rise to another level. And I think they're capable of doing that. It's exciting for those guys. Obviously the run game has been our strength. Last week it was. We expect eight, nine guys in the box, but we're going to try to be successful anyway.

**Did you ever think 234 yards in a game like that was possible?**

It just happens when good things are working. A lot of people have alluded to the fact that the Redskins were poor tacklers. But if you look at the tape, we were better at executing. The first touchdown run, Bob Whitfield blocked two guys. Finn blocked it as good as he can. Snee came to the hole as clean as possible. On the first 55-yard run we schemed it on the sidelines and handled the blitz that they brought. I made one guy miss and it was a shot to the end zone. Plaxico beat me down field to block the remaining guy in the end zone. So it wasn't that they were tackling poor. I think people are trying to take credit away from our effort. It was us playing to a higher level. Above the x's and o's and making the big plays that we need to win. And that's what we hadn't done the previous six or seven weeks.

**Re: Philadelphia's defense**

Jim Johnson is very aware of our strengths and weaknesses. They've played us two times a year, every year. But we know them intimately as well. It's like a chess match. Just clash all the pieces together and see what happens.

**Are you impressed by Philadelphia's win streak?**

I am. It's a credit to Andy Reid with some of the injury turmoil that they had going on there. People would assume that they would falter, but they rose to occasion. That's a testament to everyone in that organization. Starting from the head coach on down.

**Do you expect that their game plan will be to stack the box to try and stop you?**

Probably. That's what they've said. But you can't ever know until the actual first few series and you get to diagnose a little bit what their plan is. But that's what we expect. Especially after what we did last week in the run game.

**Your last two trips to the playoffs have resulted in losses. Does that stick with you at all?**

Of course it does. It forces you to think about the importance of every snap and when that game changing play is going to come. You can't have complacency at all when the second season starts. And I think we all have to be aware of that.

**Re: the eagles blitz**

They're going to blitz. They may not blitz, but force us into more one on one situations and see if we make plays. We don't know exactly, but we'll find out. We're excited for the challenge.

**Can Eli handle that?**

Eli can handle anything. It's just a matter of us protecting him and keeping him confident, so he's not getting hit and not feeling pressure.

**Eli Manning, Jan. 2**

**Does the last game with Philly still stick with you?**

No. I think we had a shot. We kept it close. We had a chance to win it in the fourth quarter, we just didn't come through and they made the play that changed the game, that won the game. It was a great opportunity, we just had some bad plays and some turnovers last game. We have to eliminate those things and play good football.

**What have you learned from your struggles this season?**

You've got to play the whole season. This game, it's easy to turn things around. It can fall for you as quickly as it goes well. We struggled, but we found a way to hang in there and win some big games and make it into the playoffs. Now everything gets washed away. It doesn't matter what your record is now, or what's happened. It is a new season and we've got to find ways to win games.

**What's the biggest thing you need to change? Is it closing out games?**

Yeah, I think so. I think a lot of opportunities—we've had chances to win, we just haven't played our best football in the fourth quarter. When we had a lead, we couldn't hold on to it. We couldn't make up enough ground. So a lot of these games are going to come down to the fourth quarter and that's when we've got to make the big plays. We've got to have the big stops, we've got to get the turnovers, we've got to get the touchdowns. We were able to do that versus Washington. Get some key touchdowns in the fourth quarter. We got a key stop by our defense at the end. We've got to find ways to keep fighting and keep yourself in the game. Play smart football and just make the plays in the fourth quarter to win the games.

**Re: the philly blitz**

We have to see what their game plan's going to be. The two times that we have played them, they've blitzed us pretty good. The deal with that, is there's going to be sometimes where they're going to get some sacks, get to the quarterback. That also gives us an opportunity for some big plays. We've hit some big plays on them in the past. That's

going to be our mentality. They're going to bring it. We've got to do a good job blocking it up, get the ball down the field.

**They've done a good job of stopping Tiki. Do you think you have to run the ball effectively?**

Definitely. We're going to have to establish the run game. That helps you get into better second and third down situations. If you get stuck in third and long versus Philadelphia, it's going to be a long day. They can do all their blitzes. They can disguise and get into their packages where you have to throw some hots and short stuff.

But if you get into third and threes, third and twos, it limits what they do. If they do blitz, you can just get the ball out of your hands quick and get first downs. So that's going to be our gameplan. To have good first and second down production, whether it's running the ball or throwing it. So hopefully we can get Tiki started and run the ball well.

**Can this team go out and play smart football and not turn the ball over?**

I think so. I think we've had some good games where we haven't turned the ball over really. Against Philly last time we had four turnovers. Two of them were off tipped balls. Two interceptions. That's called football. Hopefully we get some breaks. We want to try to secure the ball and play smart. We have to play our best football if we expect to win this game.

**What's your mental state when you hear that they think they can rattle you by blitzing you?**

It's fine. If teams want to blitz, it puts our receivers one on one and we feel that we've got the best matchup. You just got to know your protections. Everyone up front has to do a great job of protecting and giving us time to hit some plays down the field. The first game they blitzed us and did a good job for a while and then we finally hit some big plays on it. The last game, we had some chances, they blitzed and they had a couple of big plays. We've got to eliminate that and make sure if they do come with a blitz, the best thing they get is a throw away or a sack. Not get turnovers or mistakes.

**What's your mental state?**

It's fine. Like I said, it gives us a good opportunity for one on one coverage and some big plays.

**Are you embracing the underdog role?**

It's fine. It doesn't matter if we're favored or the underdog or what the situation is. It's all going to be settled on Sunday and we're looking forward to the opportunity.

**What did you learn from the playoff loss last year?**

You've just got to get to the point where if things start off bad or start off slow, you can't try to force things. You can't try to make things happen. That's when mistakes happen. We were still in the game in the third quarter. We hadn't done anything offensively, but we hadn't made any mistakes. We were only down ten points. Then you get frustrated, you've got to start making plays. That's when bad things start happening. You've got to

stay within yourself, within the game plan. Play smart football. Hopefully you catch a break somewhere and get things going.

**How many times did you go back and watch that Carolina game?**

I watched it a few times last offseason. Just checked it out to see what went wrong, what happened. You definitely learn from every game you play.

**How did the change in playcalling translate to you in the game on Saturday?**

I think we had a good gameplan. Washington was coming with some different blitzes and stuff. We just kind of went to a more effective passing game. Add more guys in there where it didn't matter where their blitz was coming from, we should be protected. We had a lot of single high coverage where we could hit some passes. I thought coach did a good job of preparing us and also the guys executed the game plan really well. We stuck with what was working well, hit some big plays and Tiki had some big runs for the win.