

**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS HEAD COACH BILL BELICHICK
PRESS CONFERENCE
January 18, 2007**

BB: We're plugging along here, just watching the Colts on third down. They're pretty impressive really. Nobody does it better than they do. Offensively, they set the standard during the regular season this year, and of course in the playoffs, defensively, they've shut two teams down to almost nothing. I'm sure that will be a big factor in the game, as it always is a very important part of the game. We'll try to put a little extra work in on that and hope we can be competitive in that area.

Q: When you look at [Tedy] Bruschi and Troy Brown's careers here, do you see a similarity in terms of what they've done here and how they've risen up as Patriots and what they've been to this franchise?

BB: Sure. They probably would have a lot more in common as a comparison than some other guys that you could name. Yes. Tough, hard-working guys that set a great example. They're great players. They set a great example for everybody else. They put the team first. They're good to coach. They're good to work with. I'm glad we have them.

Q: I would assume a big part of your preparation is to try to be third-and-manageable when you're working on third down. What is third-and-manageable?

BB: No question we're trying to do that. That's an objective for us every week. I just think that the shorter the distance, the more options you have, where you could pretty much give the ball to anybody and pick it up. Whereas, the longer the yardage, realistically, there's only so many guys that can gain, whatever formation you line up in, there's only so many guys that can gain 15 yards if that's what you need. You can't run them all down there at 20 yards deep. Whereas, you get in a third-and-one, third-and-two, third-and-three, you can hand it off, you can throw it to the backs, you can throw it to the tight ends, you can throw a quick pattern to the receivers, you can combine a deep pattern with a short pattern, throw deep depending on the coverage, or throw short if that's not there and they take it away. It just gives you more options. You still have to execute the play. No matter what you have called, you have to execute it. I think it gives you more options. It's harder to defend. Depending on what the play is, it gives the offense, or the quarterback, multiple ways to attack the defense instead of just having to run down there and throw a 20 yard pass, or count on a guy to break a couple of tackles to get the yardage.

Q: How important has Brian Daboll been to the development of the offense?

BB: Brian has done a great job for us. He's been here since I've been here and he's done a number of different things for us. He's had a number of different roles on the team. A very competent, hard-working guy. He has a good background in football. He came in here from Michigan State and was very well trained, even though he hadn't been with us, he probably knew our system better than a lot of the other new people that came in because of his background. I think he understands the game and works hard and does a good job with the players that he's coached, getting them prepared and making sure they understand, not only what we're doing, but what our opponents are doing and how to deal with it.

Q: When you have a lot of turnover at a position, does the position coach become that much more important?

BB: I think every coach is important. Every coach has got to get his players ready to play, and again, that encompasses both what we do and what our opponents do and what to anticipate and how to take advantage of the individual matchups that they have and how to take advantage of the schemes that they give us. It's important for every coach. I don't think you can say, 'It's important to have this guy be a good coach, but it really doesn't matter about somebody else.' I think it's all important.

Q: Do you think that when he's teaching these guys, because he started here as a defensive coach, that has helped him?

BB: Absolutely. No question about it. Absolutely. I think Brian understands coverages, as Josh [McDaniels] does too, for the same reason, that they've coached on the defensive side of the ball. They know what the defensive adjustments are, kind of what things you can do on defense and what things maybe you can't do or are hard to do, what adjustments are easy for a defense to make, what adjustments are hard for a defense to make, even within a certain coverage, and then how to combine those coverages based on formations or route combinations. I think they have a real good understanding of that, as does the quarterback.

Q: What did Nick [Saban] tell you about him?

BB: I'll just put it this way, Nick recommended him, which that carried a lot of weight with me.

Q: How well has Tedy played over the course of the season compared to his best playing before he had the stroke? Is he basically as good as he was before?

BB: Yes, I think Tedy is a good player. He's a good player. Like every player, some plays are better than others. I think that goes for all of us. We've all had moments that are better than others. I don't think you can exclude anybody from that group. Tedy does a great job for us in a lot of ways. He does a lot of different things. He's versatile. He's smart. He brings a great level of toughness to our team and our defense. He's a very instinctive player. There's a lot of things that he does that sometimes you really don't coach. He just makes the right decision and just does the right thing at the right time, in a split-second he has to make a decision and makes the right one. You can map out some guidelines and that type of thing for players, but there are just some plays that are just instinctive. There's a million things flying around and they have a split-second to make a decision and he usually makes the right one. Like Troy Brown does. Like [Tom] Brady does. Like a lot of players that I would throw into that category. Sometimes you could never create the exact situation that comes up for them. They just have to react to it.

Q: Can you talk about the importance that you put on situational football and how much time you spend on clock management, managing timeouts, replay and things like that?

BB: I think that's a very important part of the game. I think it comes in a lot of different phases. To me, situational football is, really, the two areas that you mentioned, 1) as it relates to clock management or game management, and 2) as it relates to one play. If you're in there for one play, whether it's third down, whether it's a punt return, whether it's a goal line play, the last play of the half, whether it's a Hail Mary, those one play situations. Knowing what you want to do in that situation and getting everybody to, first of all, recognize what the situation is, and then get everybody to do it, that's where you want to be as a football team. You start in training camp and you go through those situations and you practice them kind of generically and then through the course of the season, a lot of times add things so that you have more than one way to play a particular situation, especially if it's a fairly frequent one. Then you keep repping that, and then of course it depends on what the other teams do, and sometimes other teams don't

always do the same thing. They might have a different way of approaching that situation that you have to then adjust to. It's kind of combining all of those elements on a weekly basis, and we definitely talk about those every week. We don't necessarily practice every one of them each week, but we, maybe, over a three or four week period, we would pretty much get to everything so that all of those plays stay within the players and the team's cycle, if that makes any sense.

Q: Do you feel like your team is very well-versed on when to call timeouts and all that because of all of that preparation?

BB: I'm saying we talk about and we work on it. Is it perfect? No, it's not perfect, but we work on it on a weekly basis. Like I said, there are some things that you don't work on every single week, but over the course of three or four weeks, you hit them and some things don't come up all year, and other things might come up two or three weeks in a row. You just never know.

Q: When you talk about instincts with Troy and Tedy, do you think that as guys get older, that kind of player has a better chance of staying strong in that area?

BB: Again, I think every player has his own combination of skills. They're all different. Some players have some skills that offset others and they have strengths that offset their weaknesses. It's not the same for every player.

Q: When you look at those guys, do you see their instincts going as strong as it ever was?

BB: They're probably stronger. A good player will learn from experiences that he sees, or is taught, whether it actually happened to him or not, you could see something happen to somebody else and maybe it doesn't happen to you for another year or two, but then when it does, somehow or other, it triggers in, and you have a chance to make that decision and you make the right one. It might not even be a repeat situation for that individual player. It might be something like that happened to another player, another teammate, or it might have happened in another game, and now that applies to him.

Q: How much does playing in the dome affect the gameplan?

BB: I don't think it affects it too much. I'm not saying there aren't issues there. There's certainly crowd noise issues, and you have the speed. It's a perfect surface, a perfect situation, but we have no control over that. I don't think we would say, 'We don't want to run this pass. We don't want to run that defense.' I can't remember ever saying anything like that. Now, if you're playing in a blizzard, that's a different story.

Q: Have you ever seen such a dramatic transformation in a team's defense, specifically against the run, as the Colts have demonstrated through the regular season and through the first two games of the playoffs?

BB: I think they're basically playing the same defense that they've played all year. I think there were several comments from a couple of the Colts coaches, Coach [Ron] Meeks, Coach [Tony] Dungy, relative to the same thing, and that's what I see. I've always thought they've been a good defensive football team period. They're fast. They're quick. They have a good scheme. They're sound. They don't give up a lot of big plays. They're playing their best football right now, which I don't think that's unusual either, to see a team playing its best football at the end of the season. Just go back to last year and look at Pittsburgh. You can find a million examples of it. I don't think it's anything that's unprecedented. They're doing a great job. They have a good football team. They were what 9-0? 8-0? Whatever it was this year. People talk about

the Colts struggling. I'd like to be struggling at 9-0. I think they're a good football team. I think they do a lot of things well in all three phases of the game. That's why they are where they are, in the AFC championship game, they have the home field and they've earned it.

Q: How would you describe Tom's sideline demeanor in close game situations?

BB: Good.

Q: Anything more than good?

BB: I think it's good.

Q: What allows him to keep his cool in those situations?

BB: He's good in all situations. Tom is good in all situations. He sees the defense. He sees the field. He knows what we're trying to do. He has a good understanding of what the defense is doing. He's a good quarterback.

Q: How about those games in particular? Is it the fact that he doesn't change? Does that play into why he's successful later in the game?

BB: I think you learn more as the game goes along, hopefully you'll learn more about that game, you get more snaps than the other team, you get a better feel for what they're doing. Now sometimes the situation could be a new situation at that particular point in the game, maybe that hasn't shown up, but I think the more plays you play against the team, the more you should know about them. I think he learns from every snap.

Q: How has he progressed since you came here?

BB: I think that's been a strong point of his ever since I've coached him. Like everybody else, I think it gets better with more experience, but I think it's always been a strong point.

Q: How has it gotten better?

BB: Through experience.

Q: I remember hearing a coach saying that as he was sort of building his team that if he didn't get the center position squared away, that could hold an offense hostage. Would agree with that out and why might that be the case?

BB: I think it's an important position. I'm not saying that because I've played it -- poorly. I think it's an important position, just like middle linebacker and safety and quarterback are important positions, because they're in the middle of the formation and a lot of the communication and adjustments have to go through them. From that standpoint, I think it is important and anytime you have a strength down the middle -- running back, quarterback, center, middle linebacker, safety, those guys are involved in a lot of plays. You could run away from a corner. You can't run away from the nose guard. Your tight end is not at the point of attack on every play, but your center is. Basically, either your quarterback or running back is handling the ball on basically every play, one way or another. There's a lot about those people down the middle of the field that involves them in every play no matter what it is -- a run, pass, blitz pickup, pass route, rush, taking on a blocker, taking up space in that part of the field and doing it correctly relative to the scheme, there's just no way around it. It's every play, so consistency and dependability and execution at those positions. That's not to say corners and wide receivers and tight ends aren't

important. I'm not saying that, but I just think the nature of those positions puts them right in the middle of every single play.

Q: Were you a Colts fan growing up?

BB: I was. A Don Shula fan. Shula. [John] Unitas. I could name a lot of guys on those teams.

Q: Did it bother you at all when they moved to Indianapolis?

BB: I wasn't really a part of it, so it's not the first team that's moved a pro sports franchise. I don't really get too involved in that. There's no question that the Baltimore community supported the Baltimore Colts and they were a big part of the team. I saw a different, but similar, situation in Cleveland when the Browns moved. Some of those things happen. I think we all know what the circumstances and the reasons and explanations and all that, so I'm not going to get into all of that. Yes I was [a fan], and it was a thrill for me to be a part of the Baltimore Colts, that Jimmy [Irsay] was there, and Bob [Irsay] was the owner, and Jimmy was a little bit younger than I was. I was, I think 22, 23, whatever I was. I would say he was maybe 15, 16, 17, something like that. So he was around the team in training camp, and he was there on a regular basis, and was a part of the team as an owner's son would be at that age, I guess is what I'm saying.

Q: Obviously, your father had the biggest impact on your book coming out coach in the game, but may be growing up in Maryland and kind of that gold in the area with the Colts made the impact your football career maybe you think?

BB: Yes. Absolutely. It was awesome. The Colts, they were awesome. You had Unitas. You had [Raymond] Berry. [Jimmy] Orr. Lenny Moore, who was a great player for them. Defensively, [Gino] Marchetti and [Ordell] Braase, "Big Daddy" [Gene] Lipscomb, [Art] Donovan, [Don] Shinnick, [Bill] Pellington, Bobby Boyd, all of those guys. [David] Lee the punter. I could go down and give you the whole team if you want them. You couldn't do any better than Shula. They had their weekly TV show, "Corralling the Colts." Don would come in. He'd talk about the game and they'd interview the players, preview the next game and all of that. There were only three channels back then too. It wasn't like it is now where you get 400 cable stations. So that was a big deal. It was a big deal. And the Colts were good. My dad had some connections with Coach Shula going back to Ohio and Carl Taseff and guys like that who were on his staff that were Ohio guys. We would go to training camp and we'd usually go to one or two games per year, a lot of times when the Bears came to town because he had some friends with the Bears too, so that worked out. Unitas and [Alex] Sandusky, guys like that, worked at my dad's football camp. Coach Shula and my dad had a relationship, so when I went to the Colts, Coach Shula was one of the people that I actually knew in the National Football League just through our associations. We played the Dolphins when I was at Baltimore and all of that. And the Redskins kind of were too, but the Colts were just a little bit closer and I guess through my dad, through our family, we had a little bit more of a connection with the Colts. Then working with them, working with the Irsay family, and with Coach [Ted] Marchibroda, which was a big impact in my career. No question about it. But, sure, I remember those days as a kid. I had all of their football cards. I still remember watching the championship game in '59, watching [Alan] Ameche go and beat the Giants, I'm sure a lot of us do that are my age or older, remember that game. and that game was probably as much a part of pro football as any game.

Q: When you look back, was there a little part of you, with the kid that was still in you, that when they moved, even though you were a pro and you were in the sport, did you think 'This is just wrong,' when they moved from Baltimore?

BB: Again, it wasn't my decision. I understand how the people of Baltimore didn't want to lose the Colts, just like I understood how the people in Cleveland didn't want to lose the Browns. What all the reasons were and what all the dynamics were of why that happened between the politicians and the stadium and all of the money that's involved and all of that, I understand how that kind of stuff happens. Look, when I was with the Colts, and I've told this story before, but after my year with the Colts, when I was making 25 dollars a week, and I was sitting in there and Coach Marchibroda's office, I told him the only thing that I needed was a car, because I lived in Annapolis and our offices were in Hunt Valley, which was about an hour and 15 minutes away. I said, 'Look, all I need is a car and just a little bit of money because I can live at home. That's it.' So Ted said, 'It will be hard to get you a car and all this and that,' so he kind of said, 'Well how about four grand a year?' I said, 'That would be great. I could more than make it on four grand a year.' So then we had a meeting with Joe Thomas, and the meeting started at, I would say about 11 o'clock or maybe 11:15. Joe Thomas was the general manager at that point. That meeting lasted until about 12:45. Basically what Joe Thomas said, to make a long story short, basically what Joe Thomas said was, 'Look, when I coached with the Rams in '52, we had two coaches. Ted you have six and now you want another one here [and that will make] seven, and four grand. If Billy wants to be here next year, he can come back here in training camp like he did this year.' That's basically the way it ended. Joe says at 12:45, 'Okay, I have to go, I have to meet with...' whoever the Baltimore County executive was, 'About building a new stadium.' So he left and the meeting was at 12 o'clock. Ted and I looked at each other and said, 'Here we are. \$4,000 for me as a coach's assistant and Joe Thomas is 45 minutes late, in even leaving, for a meeting with the Baltimore County executive about building a stadium.' Ted kind of gave it one of those, 'Do you see what I'm going through?' That's really kind of the way that whole thing went. I know that Ted did all he could and Joe just wasn't going to go along with it, which he was the General Manager, so that was his prerogative. That's where it ended. So I ended up in Detroit.

Q: The night before a big game like this, typically for you, what's it like? Are you doing final preparations? Do you get some sleep?

BB: Yes, I definitely get to sleep. I think anytime you get to the end of the week, you've put in a lot of time. You've seen all the film. I don't think Saturday night I'm going to look at anything that I haven't already seen before. Again, this is a team that we played last year, we played in the middle of the season, now we're playing at the end of the season, so it's similar to the Jets scenario where you kind of get them at different points during the year. It's not like we're going back really now and looking at all 16, 18 games, because we already saw half of them. We saw them at midseason. I think at that point, to use the phrase that my dad used to use, 'The hay is in the barn.' You're confident in what you're doing. Certainly there's butterflies there, but you're confident in what you're doing and your team is confident and you just get a good night's sleep and get ready to go and play the game. I've never had a problem sleeping before a game. I've never had a problem with that. I don't know if that's good or bad, but that's the way it is.

Q: What kind of premium do you put on experience this time of year when you have a critical play and you have a choice of a guy that has maybe has a little more talent or a little more speed or a guy that you know has been there before and has the experience?

BB: I'll go back to another saying that I think would define my philosophy as a coach, 'In critical situations, think of players not plays.' I think a lot of coaches live by that motto, whether they actually want to identify it or not. Rather than run some cute play that involves a couple of guys that maybe aren't your top playmakers. I think when it comes to a critical situation, you want your best playmakers, your best players critically involved in the play. Now you might have several of those players, but I think that in critical situations, that's basically for the most part, is

the way I would want to approach it. I've heard a lot of other coaches talk about that same thing and I really think deep down inside that's probably the way most of us feel.

Q: Have you talked to Ellis Hobbs about keeping what happened on Sunday and the fall out over the course of the week from being a distraction?

BB: I talked to the players and the team on a daily basis and on a weekly basis. Those conversations stay between me and the players and me and the team. That's what a coach/player and a coach/team relationship is.

Q: Earlier this week, Bill Polian said he felt that receivers were being played a little bit physically down the field in the postseason. I'm wondering if you agree with that and if you've seen that in your experience so far?

BB: I don't have any comment on the officiating. I'm just trying to coach our team and get our team to play well. That's where my focus is.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS LOCKER ROOM QUOTES

January 18, 2007

Rosevelt Colvin, Linebacker

(On owning two UPS stores in Indianapolis)

It was a benefit of the hip injury I had in 2003. I didn't really know if I was going to be able to play football again, and there were some things that I felt like I wanted to try to take care of, which was [preparing myself for] life after football. That was one of the avenues that opened up, and my mother and my father do a tremendous job of helping me take care of [the business]. It's turned into an opportunity. Hopefully in four or five years it will be something that is very lucrative.

(On his parents' involvement in the business)

My mother goes in every single day to both the stores just to make sure everything is kosher. My father is sort of the militant disciplinarian, so if we ever have to fire anybody or give somebody time off, he is the person they have to speak with. I am very grateful not just for everything they do now, but through my whole entire childhood they have been great role models for me.

(On growing up a Colts fan)

I have a lot of memories from the old Colts teams, with Jim Harbaugh and Eric Dickerson and Jack Trudeau, back in the day, guys like that, Eugene Daniel. I think the most memorable experience was I was working one night [at the Hoosier Dome], a Monday night game against the Broncos, and I think they won like 55-10. It was a huge deal. It's definitely a part of who I am today.

(On working at the Hoosier Dome)

A deacon at my church owned a concession stand. He still does— sandwiches and snow cones and cotton candy. I was the cotton candy guy.

Artrell Hawkins, Defensive Back

(On Peyton Manning)

I think he has been one of the best quarterbacks in the league for the last --at least-- eight years. To say he is managing the game better, to me he's always managed the game well. He's always made plays. He's always been a good leader. He's out there every week. He didn't miss a game in nine years. So all these attributes add to the great person and player he is.

(On if the Patriots are confident)

The confidence we have right now just comes from the fact that we've won games when we needed to win games. The hope that we have is that we'll go in and we'll execute well this week. It doesn't have anything to do with the Colts or that we've faced them before or that they beat us the last two times or that we beat them before. It doesn't really matter in terms of Sunday's game. Sunday's game is going to be about who executes the best, who plays the hardest and who makes the most plays.

Heath Evans, Running Back

(On increased intensity for this game)

It's still football. It's preparation. It's being prepared for everything that could possibly come your way. That hasn't changed since week one for us. Bill [Belichick] gives us everything and anything we could possibly see. We're mentally, emotionally and physically prepared come Sunday, and so the preparation aspect of it is always the same.

Tully Banta-Cain, Linebacker

(On if the Colts have improved since the two teams' last meeting)

I think they are playing a lot better now that they are playing the postseason. Their running game has stepped up, their defense is playing better, every facet of their game has gotten better. We have to be clicking on all cylinders to have a chance.

Vinny Testaverde, Quarterback

(On the different coaching styles of Bill Belichick and Bill Parcells)

There isn't that much of a difference. They have different personalities, but a lot of it is the same and the way they go about the week preparing for their opponents. They both hold the players and coaches accountable for what they do. It always hasn't been this way on the teams I have played on. A lot of the responsibility falls on the quarterback when things go wrong, but [Belichick and Parcells] make sure everyone is accountable.

(On if his experience has helped Tom Brady and Matt Cassel)

I just come in and try to be the same guy every day-- work hard and try to help the young guys and if they ask questions I try to answer them the best I can. I do what they ask me to do and stay positive and just do that day after day. If that has had an effect, then that's great, but I don't know if it has.

(On how he feels about his backup role)

My preparation is the same and not much is different other than I don't get to go out there on the field and play every Sunday. Everything else during the week is the same because you have to prepare like you're going to start because you never know when you're going to be in there and, when you do [get on the field], you don't want to let the team down.

Ellis Hobbs, Cornerback

(On defending the Colts' passing offense)

Some things you can defend and some things you can't. You just have to be very precious and pick and choose your turns and, when the opportunity comes to make a play, you have to capitalize. We're not going in with the mentality that we can stop every play, however when we do get our opportunities we need to make them worthwhile.

(On Manning's comfort with his receivers)

Throwing the ball before they are even in their break, getting the ball out of his hands fast, changing and adapting to the routes, and knowing where the receivers are going if he has to scramble-- all those little things are what makes them so good.

Daniel Graham, Tight End

(On why the Colts defense is playing so well in the playoffs)

They have a spark behind them and they are riding on the wave they have going because they are playing great defense and everyone is coming together out there.

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BB: Obviously, we're back to work here on the Colts. It's an exciting opportunity for our football team. At the start of the season, and I'm going all the way back to January, February, March of the offseason program and so forth, it's every team's goal to be in this game. Right now, we're down to four teams. It's an honor for us to be one of them playing in the AFC Championship game against a team that we have the utmost respect for in the Indianapolis Colts. They were in our division for a while. We played them twice a year. It seems like they're still in our division in the way we're playing them twice a year and on a number of occasions since then. It's a team that we know well. They know us well and we have the utmost respect for them from the top of the organization, Jimmy [Irsay] to Bill Polian, Tony Dungy and his staff and the team. We know them very well. They're a very good football team from top to bottom. They're well coached. They're well organized. They have a lot of great players. They play well in every phase of the game. They certainly have a very potent offense. They can run the ball. Can throw it. Their offensive line can pass protect. We all know about their skill players. Defensively, they're very quick and active on their front seven. They're good in the secondary. They don't give up a lot of plays. They make you work for it. They can rush the passer. They can stop the run and they turn the ball over, which they certainly did a good job of against us. With Adam [Vinatieri] and [Terrence] Wilkins, they have good players on special teams. They're dangerous there. They're a poised team, an experienced team, and a very talented team. Our goal is to play our best football this week, have a good week of preparation and do everything we possibly can and put our best effort out there Sunday afternoon. That's all we're focused on. Nothing else. We know we've had a great history with this team, and it's gone in different cycles as to who has had the upper hand and how the games have gone and so forth and so on, but to me, I don't think really any of that makes any difference. It doesn't matter what happened this year, last year in some other game or in some other situation. What it comes down to is what's going to happen Sunday afternoon --these two teams and this group of players and coaches and how it all matches up on Sunday afternoon in Indianapolis. I don't really care too much about what happened in the past -- good, bad or indifferent. I'm a lot more focused on what we can do this week and how it's going to play itself out. That's kind of our outlook on the game. Like I said, we're excited to be here. We are excited to be in this game. We know it's up against a great team. The Colts have been tremendous this year in the playoffs against Kansas City. That was a dominant performance and to go in to Baltimore and win in Baltimore, obviously it's a great performance by their football team. They certainly deserve to be there. We won our wild card game, we won our divisional game on the road like they did, so I think both teams have earned their spot here, earned it with some good football and we're looking forward to playing in the championship game.

Q: [Bob] Sanders seems to have had a huge impact on their defense.

BB: Sanders is a good player. There's no question about that. Bob Sanders is a good football player, but that's no one-man band over there, by any stretch of the imagination. It's a good defensive football team. They have a good front. They're active. They're quick. Those two ends put a lot of pressure on the passer. [Cato] June, [Gary] Brackett, [Anthony] McFarland, that's a good front seven and they turn the ball over in the secondary. [Antoine] Bethea has given them good, quality play in the secondary. The corners, [Jason] David or [Marlin] Jackson, which they use both of them and use them in nickel as well. [Nick] Harper. Those guys have played well and they certainly have played well against us. It's no one-man band over there on defense. I'll tell you that. Bob Sanders is a good football player, I'm not taking anything away from him, but they have a lot more than that.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about their success against the run the last couple of weeks against both Larry Johnson and Jamal Lewis?

BB: You can talk about the run all you want. Talking about the run, it's been great. Their defense has been great. Those two teams were 3-for-22 on third down against them. They're a good defensive football team. They can play the run. They can rush the passer. They turn the ball over. They play good in the red area. They've done a good job in every phase of the game. They're strong across the board on defense. That's the bottom line. It's not just one thing or one guy or anything like that. They do a good job as a team. They play good team defense. They're sound. They don't give up many big plays, throughout the course of the season I'm talking about, they've given up very few. That's been a big part of their success as well.

Q: Can you talk about [Joseph] Addai and what you saw from him mid-year to now?

BB: I think they have good depth in the backfield. I think that Addai and [Dominic] Rhodes both are quality backs. They're quick. They're strong. They break tackles. They have good run vision. They run a lot of zone blocking schemes and those holes can come in different spots. It could be outside. It could be inside. It could cut back if everybody on the defense is at the point of attack, because the ball could hit anywhere, and those guys do a good job with their run vision of finding the seams and getting into the holes. I would say both Rhodes and Addai are very good in the passing game as well, both as receivers and in protection. They're good, all around quality backs. Whichever guy is in there, I think they can do whatever they want to do. I don't think they're worried about it. I wouldn't be worried about it either.

Q: Is there a reason why across-the-board they're better at home?

BB: They're a good football team. Ask Baltimore what they thought of them on the road. Go down there and see what the Ravens thought.

Q: Is there a reason why?

BB: They're good. They're good at home. We got beat up the last two times we played them at home. You go talk to somebody who doesn't think they're any good, but it's not going to come from here.

Q: What makes it so challenging to get [Peyton] Manning off the spot?

BB: They're good. They're good. They run the ball. They're a good pass protection team. They're good in blitz pickup. They run good routes. They get rid of the ball quickly. They do everything well. It's hard to beat the blockers. It's hard to cover the receivers and they're a good timing team in the passing game.

Q: How important is it to get him off the spot?

BB: It's important to disrupt the passing game however you can disrupt it. It's hard to do, but it's important.

Q: How have your safeties played? You've been missing [Eugene] Wilson and [Rodney] Harrison for most of the year. How would you assess the year?

BB: I think Artrell [Hawkins] and James [Sanders], and Chad [Scott] when he's been in there, that those guys have done a good job. You're right, there have been some moving parts and communication is a big part of that position. It's a big part of the defense as it relates to that

position. Those guys work hard. They've certainly improved and as they've worked together, their communication and the coordination back there in the secondary, and particularly at those positions, has gotten better.

Q: How has your kicker handled replacing Adam?

BB: Our kicker has come in and kicked well all year.

Q: How tough is it to prepare for the noise in the dome?

BB: It's always hard offensively to deal with that. You can't hear the snap count, so you have to find another way to do it. We've been on the road quite a bit this year, just like everybody else has. There's a lot of stadiums that are loud and I'm sure it will be loud in Indianapolis. It will be a challenge for us, like it always is, but we're going to have to deal with that just like we've had to deal with it other weeks on the road.

Q: Does it give their pass rushers an advantage maybe with the silent counts and everything because they get off the ball so quick?

BB: Look, they get off the ball quick no matter where you do it. When the ball moves, they move. I think it comes down to, offensively, having good execution and making sure that you do a good job with however you organize the cadence. There's a couple of different ways you can do it, but however you do it, to be able to move when the ball is snapped offensively. That's normally an advantage an offense has over the defense, is knowing when the ball is going to be snapped and you have to somehow use that to gain what minimal advantage you have before the ball is snapped, that little fraction of a second anticipation of the count that the defense hopefully doesn't have. Not that they can't anticipate it, but if they truly go on the ball, there is just a split second fraction there that the offense has an edge on them. The challenge is to maintain that. But is it hard? Yes. Sure.

Q: If you can't maintain it, is the threat of what might happen heightened with [Dwight] Freeney and [Robert] Mathis coming off the edge?

BB: Freeney. Mathis. [Raheem] Brock. McFarland. All of them.

Q: What makes Marvin Harrison so difficult to defend?

BB: He's great at everything. He's fast. He's quick. He's an excellent route runner. He has great hands. He's a good decision maker. He finds the open area. Sets up routes. He has good patience. There's really no weakness to his game.

Q: Does Rodney [Harrison] have a shot this week?

BB: We'll release the injury report after practice same as we do every Wednesday.

Q: Their run defense in the regular season wasn't very good. What has changed in the playoffs?

BB: I think they basically do the same things that they've done all year.

Q: Is there any procedure after the game that you want the players to follow?

BB: I'd say we try to handle those situations as we always have.

Q: Has Peyton Manning shown a greater willingness to check down?

BB: I think their offense has always been built around taking what the defense gives you. I think that Peyton is outstanding at doing that. If they need to run the ball, they run it. If they need to throw it to the backs, they throw it to the backs. The tight ends. The receivers. Whatever they need to do, I think they're willing to do, they're willing to take it 80 yards in 16 plays. They're willing to take it 80 yards in three plays, or two, or one. If that's what the defense gives them, if that's where the opportunities are, that's where they're going. I think you have to play good team defense and be sound across-the-board. I don't think there's anything that they can't do, or aren't willing to do, if the defense wants to give it to them, I think they're more than happy to take it.

Q: Can you talk about the evolution of [Jabar] Gaffney?

BB: Well, Jabar came in early in the season, about a quarter of the way through this season. He's worked hard. He's done a good job of learning our system, which he had a little bit of background in from Houston, terminology wise, stuff like that. I think he's a hard-working kid. He has some talent and he's had some opportunities to be productive and he's taken advantage of those.

Q: Has this been a harder year for Tom [Brady] dealing with the different receivers and trying to get everybody on the same page?

BB: I think every year has its own challenges. You can ask Tom about that. 14-4, there's certainly been other years that have come up short of that.

Q: I talked to Ted Marchibroda and told me to ask you how your defensive breakdowns are coming along. Do you ever give any thought to that, back in '75?

BB: Sure. I sure do. I worked in the closet right outside of Earl Weaver's office. I wrote down all of the films, every play was on one card, punch out the holes, but an ice pick in, drop the cards out, do the breakdowns, do probably 15 to 20 breakdowns a day for Maxie Baughan and the defensive coaches in the old Baltimore Memorial Stadium. I sure do. I remember that. I learned probably more football in that room, it was a cinderblock closet really is what it was, but I probably learned more football in that room than anyplace else I've ever been. It was like a graduate course in football.

Q: He said you wouldn't say much. You just came in and did your work.

BB: That's because I didn't know anything. It was awesome. It was an awesome year in football. With the Colts that year, we started off at Goucher College. Then we went to McDonough, and then we went to the stadium, but we didn't even practice at the stadium because the Orioles were in the World Series and we were practicing across the street at Eastern high school, pushing the don't walk button and all of that, going across the street, just like the eighth-grade team would do. But then Ted and I lived together with two other coaches, Whitey Dovell and George Boutselis, in a motel by the old Friendship Airport before it was BWI. Obviously I was the youngest and so I drove. Ted, George and Whitey talked gameplan, practice schedules and so forth. So, from when I got up in the morning at, whatever time that was, six-thirty - seven o'clock, until we finished, midnight or whatever it was, and drove back, it was football for 18 hours straight. It was great just being able to ride in the car and sit and listen to Ted and Whitey and George talk about the different aspects of the game, of the team, of all of the things that they were dealing with and to be able to absorb all of that from, I would say,

dawn to dusk, but it was a lot longer than that, it was tremendous. It was a tremendous experience. I'm deeply indebted to Ted for giving me that opportunity. There was no financial reward to it, but there was a personal and professional reward that I could never repay him for.

Q: 25 dollars per week right?

BB: Before taxes.

Q: Free room and board, and he paid for breakfast everyday, but 25 dollars a week?

BB: Free room and board, that's right. Ted bought breakfast every single day. Ted bought breakfast every day.

Q: What was your reaction to LaDainian Tomlinson's comments after the game?

BB: I have all the respect in the world for LaDainian Tomlinson and the San Diego Chargers. They're an outstanding football team. Right now, our focus is on the Indianapolis Colts.

Q: Were you surprised by the comments?

BB: Our focus is on the Colts.

Q: After the game Sunday, Tom [Brady] sort of eluded to the fact that he put so much emotional energy into that game. How much are you monitoring that this week as your team gets ready?

BB: I think that's something that I've talked to the team about the last couple of days. Now it's Wednesday and I think that's over with. We've made the adjustment coming back from the West Coast and so forth and we're onto the Colts and we're full speed ahead. Certainly they present a tremendous challenge for us and we have all we can do to get ready for them. I think everybody is in that same mindset. We came in here today and we're ready to go.

Q: Can you talk about Adam Vinatieri and how ironic it is to be facing him in this game?

BB: I have all of the respect in the world for Adam. He's a tremendous player. He's had a great year for the Colts this year. We certainly know what he's capable of doing. He's an outstanding player. They're good on special teams all the way across the board -- their kicking, their coverage units and their return units.

Q: Your defense ranked fourth in history as far as points allowed. How does it compare to some of the other defenses you may have been a part of?

BB: Again, I don't think any of that really makes any difference at this point. All of our focus is on what happens this week. That's all we really care about. It doesn't make a difference if we were first or last. Right now, it only matters how we play on Sunday. That's what we're going to try to emphasize.

Q: You've gotten to your fourth AFC title game in six years. There's only 10 guys on your roster here from the first one. How do you maintain a standard of excellence with such turnover as you've faced?

BB: Again, there's turnover on every team. When you look at those other teams that we've played, and the Colts are a good example, there's turnover there too. There's turnover on every team. Each year, each week, you take the players and the coaches, the organization and all of that and put everything you have into it and try to make your team the best that you can for that particular season. That's what we try to do. I think that's what everybody tries to do.

Q: How much of that is Scott [Pioli] and the personnel department doing a really good job of identifying players?

BB: I think Scott, the personnel department and all the people in the organization certainly deserve a lot of credit for the success that we've had. Trainers. Equipment people. Film guys. Everybody contributes. There's a lot of things that, as coaches and as players, that we need to do that we need the support people in the organization to, in some way, provide us with the opportunity to do them. I think it extends beyond the players to all of the other people in organization that contribute and there are a lot of them, too many to name here, but all of which are certainly appreciated by the football team.

Q: I know Scott for a while was on the fence between being a coach and being a personnel guy. Is there something that really lends him to the personnel side of football?

BB: I think that's where his heart is. I think that's what he enjoys. I think that he has a passion for it, for football, but for that part of it. I think that's why he does such a great job of it, because that's where his passion is.

Q: Is this something that he's particularly good at?

BB: Evaluating players.

Q: [Laughter] What areas of [Dan] Koppen's game have you seen evolve this year?

BB: I think that Dan has been a really consistent player for us since his rookie year. He does a lot of things well. I think he's had a solid performance this year. He's strong. He's physical inside. He's able to move people on the line of scrimmage. He's very smart and can direct traffic in there and makes good adjustments. For his size, he has quickness. I think he's a good player that plays at a good, consistent level.

Q: Over the years, you've used different motivational tactics for your football team. How much time do you spent trying to come up with that? How do you decide what you're going to use?

BB: I think things like that are just when you feel it's right and you feel like you have a message and it's appropriate to that particular situation, then that's when I felt most comfortable doing those things. In the end, I think that it's a lot more about the players and their execution on the field. Sometimes there's a different way to say a message instead of me standing up there and saying the same thing day after day, that if you can find another way to deliver it, sometimes it has a little bit more of an impact, or maybe somebody hears it a little bit differently, or looks at it a little bit differently rather than the same monotonous type of message. It's just something, I would say as a coach, I've always just kind of feel when it's the right time to do it, or it's the right thing that's appropriate for a particular situation, that it wouldn't be good or as good. You have in the back of your mind it something that, 'Boy that really struck a chord with me. Maybe it would strike a chord with somebody else,' but it needs to kind of be done at the right time, not

just any old random time. I think it would have less of an impact. That's just the way I look at it.

Q: Have you done anything like that this year?

BB: I think a couple of times.

Q: What was that?

BB: Most of the things that we do, we keep within the team and it's appropriate to the team's situation. I think a lot of times it gets taken out of context externally. We'll just leave it with the team.

Q: When you're playing on the road with the noise, how hard is it for the center to be in line with whatever the quarterback is doing if he's trying to change stuff? It looks hard, but is it as hard as it looks?

BB: I think it's certainly challenging, absolutely. It's definitely challenging between the quarterback, the center and the offensive line, which extends to the tight ends and the backs because a lot of times they're involved in those protections or blocking adjustments. So there's communication, and of course, the receivers, or whoever is extended from the formation, they never have a chance to hear anything, so all of that has to be done somehow visually. Somehow you have to signal, or in some way, communicate with those players so they know what to do. Sometimes they have to communicate with the quarterback if they have a question or they see something that it's a little cloudy, it's not identified as clearly as what it might be on some other looks from the defense, that that needs to be clarified as well. I think all of that is a big part of it. Certainly the center and the quarterback, just like the middle linebacker and the safety on defense, because they're in the middle of the formation, that it all kind of has to go through them and then extend to the perimeter, but each step along the way is important and if one guy misses it then you have a problem. Yes, I would say it's definitely challenging.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS LOCKER ROOM QUOTES

January 17, 2007

Artrell Hawkins, Safety

(On the Colts receivers)

That's what you want to do. You want to take their most potent weapon away, but, like I said, these guys are good. And they've been very good for a long time. Just look at their stats. I don't care who you are. I don't care if you're Deion Sanders. I don't care who you are. It's very hard to hold up against that tandem by yourself. It's just something that doesn't really happen. You don't really see it.

(On the Colts being a little off offensively in the playoffs)

What's off? They get the ball with eight minutes to go last week, [with the game] on the line, and they hold it for eight minutes. They run 12 out of 13 plays against one of the best defenses in the NFL. I don't see that as off.

(On if the mindset against the Colts is to limit the big play)

Yeah. We go in with the mindset to win the game, and you obviously want to contain not just Marvin [Harrison] and Peyton [Manning], but Reggie [Wayne] on the other side, who is in his own right a number one receiver, and Dallas Clark, who is one of the better tight ends in the game... and their running game has been coming on lately and they have played a lot more physical in the past couple of weeks than people have kind of give them credit for. So you go into the game with the mindset that you're going to compete and that when it comes down to it you just want to make the plays that count, that are going to help you win the game.

Tully Banta-Cain, Linebacker

(On getting pressure on Peyton Manning)

You just try not to get blocked as long. If we blitz, we have to get there. If we don't, the guys who are rushing have to get there. A big part of pass rushing is the coverage behind you, too. If the guys are back there covering, it makes him hold the ball. It's a team effort to get to the quarterback. Hopefully we get to him [on Sunday].

(On the Patriots having some success in November moving him off his spot)

It's Peyton Manning. There were examples in that game when it looked like we had him, and he was still able to complete the ball down field. You can never let off the gas pedal. You have to just keep coming at him. He's going to make plays. You know that. He has great weapons. He's a great quarterback. He reads the field. He reads the defense. You can't allow him to capitalize on the mistakes that we make.

(On Colts running back Joseph Addai)

He's a young, up and coming running back. He's improved. He doesn't seem like a guy who has hit that rookie wall. He is playing great in the playoffs. He can pose a lot of problems. He's fast. He can make strong cuts. He breaks tackles. Him and [Dominic] Rhodes are doing a great job.

Rosevelt Colvin, Linebacker

(On getting another opportunity to go to another Super Bowl)

A lot of guys go their whole careers not even making the playoffs. You have to appreciate the situation that you're in, make sure you understand the significance of it.

(On if the stakes get bigger in the AFC Championship)

I think you have to look at it for what it's worth. The first playoff game is the first playoff game, the second is the second, the third is the third. But each week you have the opportunity to go to the next round and the next position. [We're] playing for the AFC Championship and the

opportunity to play in the Super Bowl. For the young guys that have never been or never had a chance to experience it, make sure you're putting everything you have into it because you never know when you'll have a chance to be back in this situation.

(On keeping emotions in check)

I think the guys in this locker room are mature. They understand the situation. I think we understood what we were facing when we went out to San Diego. It was a playoff atmosphere, a playoff game. It was the chance to qualify for the AFC Championship. I think we were elated and very excited.

Ellis Hobbs, Cornerback

(On putting extra pressure on himself when playing Marvin Harrison)

You try not to. I understand the situation we're going into and the type of player he is. At the same time, you have to go out there and have confidence in yourself... keep a positive attitude the whole time and go out there and play the way you know how to, and keep doing what you [did] to get here, as far as physical football and having fun.

Larry Izzo, Linebacker/Special Teams Captain

(On the importance of special teams in the playoffs)

Field position is huge in these sorts of games. We feel that we have been improving steadily throughout the year and we need to continue to play well, cover well and return well and help our team with field position.

(On familiarity with the Colts)

They know us. We know them. It is going to come down to execution—who executes the game plan best, plays the best. It doesn't matter how familiar you are with an opponent, if you're not going to go out and executing your job it is going to be tough to win. We know we have a big, tough battle ahead of us, going on the road against a great team. They have played well all year long. It's the AFC Championship game. It is going to be a big challenge for us. We're going to have to play our A-game and hopefully get it done.

Heath Evans, Running Back

(On the Colts defense improving)

We've been watching film over the last 24 hours, and it's kind of a collective effort. You see guys making tackles. You see guys making big hits. Everyone loves to throw the name Bob Sanders around, and believe me, I give him all his due, but really as a team they have really come together.

(On the significance of the game)

We all grew up football players and now we're at a stage that very few people get to take part in. But it is business. The goal is set high around here. This one is a must win for us.

(On Tom Brady's perfect record in domes)

I think the reason he has probably been perfect is because he is so good at communication with the wide receivers and with the backs. He is so thorough in his weekly preparations that I don't want to say it makes it easy, but his preparation allows him to perform at a high level in those situations.

**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS LINEBACKER MIKE VRABEL
PRESS CONFERENCE
JANUARY 17, 2007**

Q: What challenges do the Colts present to a defense?

MV: I think the challenge is that you have to weed through a running game that's been effective lately and they do a very good job of protection. Very rarely do you see guys running free, where Peyton [Manning] is just confused. You're going to have to beat somebody, I think. You're going to have to beat them and get back there and cause pressure. You're not just going to be able to draw things up and say, 'Well, we're going to get a guy coming right up the middle untouched.'

Q: It seemed like Peyton made some big plays the first time the teams met this season.

MV: Yeah, he did. We looked at that game and you look back and think, 'Well, I didn't rush that bad personally and neither did Rosey [Colvin] or anybody else.' And then you say, 'Well, his numbers were still pretty good.' You've just got to do more. You've got to get there quicker, whether you're rushing or whether you're covering. This is a game where you're just going to have to do more and you're just going to have to play better.

Q: Why is Coach Belichick so good at game management during critical points in close games?

MV: Well, I think we've probably had plenty of those games where he's had a chance to get pretty good at it. We've played a lot of close games and we've won them. We practice them. The whole team practices them. It's just not enough to know the situation. First of all, you have to execute the play correctly. You've got to make a play and then you've got to go into, 'Well, what do I do now? Do I call timeout? Does Bill call timeout?' I think it starts with that first – making the play and then going on from there and determining whether you're going to call a timeout or whether the field goal unit is going on, whether you have to stop a team within three downs and then get the ball back for the offense.

Q: Have you worked on that from day one?

MV: Early on in training camp, as far back as I can remember being here, we have had a practice and then the next practice that follows that up is correcting what you didn't do, and then we look at situations. A lot of our practices are geared towards situational football.

Q: On a personal level, is it exciting to make it deep into the playoffs even though you've done it before?

MV: Absolutely. There are four teams that are still coming to work. It's easy to get up on Wednesday morning when you know that only four teams in the National Football League are getting up and coming to work. Everybody else is recovering and healing and having surgery and everything else. It makes it really easy to get up for work.

Q: The last two times you have played Indy, it seems like there was less hitting of their receivers at the line, but looking back at the playoff games against them, you were hitting them hard. Was that a change in game plans?

MV: I think we change the game plan each week, against Indy or against San Diego. Some of that may have to do with the rules. Looking back at some film, we're getting called for penalties.

I know personally that I got called for a couple that were close – six or seven yards downfield. But that's what they're calling. And so, if you're going to get them, you've got to get them within five yards.

Q: Have you gotten word on the officiating crew this week?

MV: I do not know who will be in Indianapolis. No. I'm not sure.

Q: What does Tedy Bruschi bring to the team?

MV: I think Tedy Bruschi gives you everything that you would want out of a captain and a middle linebacker each week. He practices banged up, he plays banged up, and he plays with a lot of heart and a lot of intensity. He is kind of the glue out there, just making the calls, getting the signals and getting the communication to the defense. That's a lot. I did that when he wasn't in there last year, so it's something that's different where you have to get used to getting the calls and getting it to everybody else and then all of a sudden you turn around and there's the offense. I know that it's not an easy job to do what he does. It's a lot better with him out there than with him not there.

Q: How much of a rivalry do you feel with the Colts?

MV: I think there's certainly a rivalry. First of all, I think that to have a rivalry, you need to play somebody more than once every two years, which we have. In the last couple of years, we've played in the regular season and playoffs almost every year. From that standpoint, there is a lot of familiarity between our players and their players. We know who the linemen are. We know who the tight ends are. Obviously we know what they've done and what they've had success with. The next part of a rivalry is that you need to have – and I'll just use Ohio State-Michigan, because I'm familiar with that – is some sort of competition. Michigan holds a slight lead over 100 years, but the series is within a handful of games. For a while [against the Colts] we had the upper hand. But certainly they have had our number the last couple of times and they're going to do everything that they can to prepare for this game, like we are.

Q: That history has been primarily at Gillette Stadium. How does that change the dynamic since this game is in the dome?

MV: It's just another road game. It's a business trip that we're going to take. They're one of two teams that didn't lose at home this year. San Diego and now the Colts. Whatever test we had last week going in there and winning that game, it's going to be a bigger test this week.

Q: When you know a team so well and they know you so well, is it harder to get ready because you're searching for that one edge that might get you the victory, or is it easier because you know each other so well?

MV: I think that we're going to come up with our game plan and they're going to come with theirs. For the most part, games are really determined on the field and this one is going to be no different. Obviously when you have a good team, combined with guys that go out there and make plays, you've got a good product. This is a game where if you don't get to Peyton, you've got to make the plays. Marvin Harrison isn't going to drop the ball. Peyton isn't going to miss a wide open receiver. Those guys are going to make the plays and to win we are going to need to do the same thing.

Q: There is no question that Coach Belichick is one of the best in the game. Does he do things differently than other coaches?

MV: I've had three head coaches in 15 years. John Cooper, then Bill Cowher and now Bill Belichick. So, certainly Bill Belichick does things differently than Bill Cowher. I don't know how he does it differently than Tony Dungy or Marty Schottenheimer. His system has worked for me personally as a player and it's worked for our team over the past six years.

Q: Is he a motivator as a coach?

MV: I don't think you have to be a great motivator in the NFL. I think the whole motivating factor is that you want to be a great player. You want to do as well as you can to support your family. I guess the motivation that he gives you comes from the fact that if you're not getting the job done, Bill will just turn find somebody else to do it. I think that's motivation enough. You know that if you're not doing your job or you get to a point in your career where they don't think you can do your job, they'll just get somebody else.

Q: When Peyton Manning is at the line going through the play call, what goes through your mind as a defensive player? Is there anything you look to pick up on?

MV: I think that over the course of the game you can try to come up with some stuff, but it's really tough to try to sit there and listen to what he's saying and then try to get it relayed and have it be right even half the time or a quarter of the time. The mindset that you have to take whenever any quarterback comes to the line of scrimmage is first to identify the formation, identify your responsibility on the play and then look for any pre-snap reads that you can, whether it's stances, formations or alignments. You don't want to make your whole focus before the snap on the quarterback because you're going to miss out on a lot of other stuff going on and you're probably going to miss out on your responsibility. He's the one who makes everything go over there, but as a defender you can't just key in on the quarterback because that's not my responsibility on every play.

Q: Is it strange to see Dan Klecko playing for the Colts and knowing that they have a weapon that was once yours?

MV: With Dan Klecko, I don't think that anyone who knows him could potentially say a bad word about him. He's a guy that in the middle of training camp, when everybody's tired and hurt and banged up, Klecko is just the same guy, making jokes and having a good time. It will be fun to see him out there. Hopefully we don't see him out there in that four-minute drill where they're trying to run the clock out. It will be certainly fun to see Klecko out there.

Q: How will it feel to see Adam Vinatieri lining up on the other side?

MV: My relationship with Adam was on the football field, so I didn't get to know him a whole lot off the field. But he's not going to miss. You're going to have to block the kick, especially playing indoors. He's never missed in the dome. We're going to have to block a kick for him to miss one.

Q: Is that fake timeout thing going to work against him?

MV: I don't think they're going to let me do that anymore. I think he's seen it enough in practice so it's not going to work anymore.

Q: You and Tedy Bruschi have been playing in games of this level of importance together since 2001. Is there ever a point where you guys think that there may not be a whole lot of opportunities left in your career to reach this level?

MV: That's a message that Bill has given us since the beginning of the year. He has coached for 32 years or however long it's been and we've been lucky and these opportunities don't come along that often. Certainly for two linebackers who are 32 or 31, or however old Tedy is, 33, we're on borrowed time already. I think that whatever opportunity we can seize and whatever chance we can seize now, it going to be good for us.

Q: Compared to the way it was with Edgerrin James, what does Joseph Addai bring to the running game that maybe James didn't?

MV: Edge was a great back for them. I really think he had that scheme down. You look at Joseph and he runs with a lot of power and fresh legs. The guy's slimmer than [Laurence] Maroney. Coming into training camp, you could see that those were legs of a 21-year-old running back. There's a lot of power and a lot of speed through the hole. Both him and [Dominic] Rhodes did a good job last week when they needed it late in the game against arguably the best defense in the league, running the ball 12 out of 13 plays and chewing up the clock and winning that game for them down the stretch.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS DEFENSIVE LINEMAN RICHARD SEYMOUR
PRESS CONFERENCE
January 17, 2007

Q: Are you tired of seeing the Indianapolis Colts so much?

RS: No, not at all. Not at all. It's a big game for us. It's the AFC Championship. One team is going to the Super Bowl and the other team is going home. There's a lot at stake.

Q: How tough is it with all the emotions from Sunday's game and going into this game with the stakes even higher? How tough is it to get everything out of your system?

RS: You know it's a new team. It's a new game plan. What happened last week, we put that behind us, it will have no bearing on this football game. The Colts are in a different outfit than the [San Diego] Chargers. We definitely have to switch gears and adjust to the team that we're playing. It is a different offensive line, different quarterback, different set of receivers. We definitely have our work cut out for us.

(On how new guys adapt to the Patriots system and the team works as a group to win)

RS: Well, I think you just have to play with the guys that you have on the field. I think you have to go out and do your job. We've always done a good job of bringing good guys into the organization. What sticks out for me is veteran leadership. I think it's a big help to our football team. I think guys come in and buy into the system that we have. You don't want to be the guy who kind of derails the whole thing. We just all collectively as a group try to come together and just try to win football games.

Q: When you played Peyton Manning in November here, it seemed like he made a number of good plays outside the pocket even when you flushed him out. Can you talk about if he is sort of growing as a player or is he presenting tougher challenges in some ways?

RS: I think when you look at the offense, you always think of Peyton Manning as a pocket passer, which he is, but he does have ability to get outside of the pocket and can make plays on the run and adlib at times. And then when you also look at the receivers they are not just standing waiting on the ball. They are still running routes and they are still moving around. Like I said, his ability to adlib and their receivers just staying alive is something that we have to aware of defensively, not just the defensive front but also the secondary, running after a so called broken play.

Q: Was that less of a problem a few years ago with Peyton Manning?

RS: Well, I think you remember the play when he broke us out of the pocket and ran that bootleg and kind of sealed the game. It was kind of an unexpected play for them to run at that time. But I think you have to be aware in all situations because like I said, they do a lot of different things offensively. You think of a team like that as primarily a passing team, but you look at them lately and they've been running the football. They ran the football against Baltimore [Ravens], one of the best defensive teams in football. We expect them to run, pass. They definitely have a balanced attack.

Q: When you get to the championship level, how hard is it when you get to that game Sunday, you have experience as a team and they do too, not to let the gremlin take over and be able to focus in on doing the job?

RS: It's a combination of both. I think you have to be aware. As a player you understand that you have an opportunity to go to the Super Bowl. You have to go out play for 60 minutes. Like I said, we are 60 minutes away not 58. We can't play 58 minutes and think we're going to get it done. It has to be 60 minutes. It's a great opportunity for us and these opportunities don't come around often. But we've been fortunate as a football team to have this opportunity several times. We are just trying to seize this opportunity again.

Q: Looking back at one of those Peyton Manning blowouts and that play where Rodney Harrison got hurt, how much does that take out of you guys?

RS: Rodney is definitely, you guys know, he is a presence in the secondary, and he brings a lot to our football team, not just on the field but also off and on the field. Losing him definitely hurt but like I said, we have guys that step in and just try to come and assume that role and take that position on. It's probably interesting again this week to see how things play out.

Q: What is like to have Teddy Bruschi back and healthy for a whole season? You talked about how important it is to have veteran leadership; do you think he is back to where he was before?

RS: Teddy is a leader. I think he is always in the right place at the right time to make plays. He is a guy you don't have to worry about. You know 'is he ready to go, is he ready to play', maybe like some of the other young guys, you know you kind of have to get them going. He is a guy who is definitely going to be there and ready to go. That's what helps, when you have more guys like that on your team, the less you are really concerned about, 'is your football team going to be ready to go or is that guy going to be ready.' I think we have a lot of guys in that category. They're ready to go. They're ready to play.

Q: You got under Willie McGinest's wing and kind of got your role as a team leader. Is there anyone that you have taken under your wing?

RS: It's always guys that you talk to often. Like I said, as far as myself on the defensive line, Ty Warren, Tully Banta Cain. There's a bunch of guys that you constantly talk to. For myself, I had the willingness to want to learn and that is the same thing I see from a lot of guys on this football team. They're hungry. You see a lot of teams where maybe they've won before, [they] kind of lose their edge or whatever the case may be. One thing that I really like about this football team is, it doesn't matter what you've done a year ago or whatever the case may be, you still have that attitude to come out and want to play well.

Q: Is it any easier to play because you have had that experience or is it as exciting because you have been here before?

RS: Oh, it's definitely exciting. I think we know how it's like. We know what to expect. At the same time you have to go and do it. Just because you've been there before and you know how to get it done, it's another thing going out and doing it. The Colts aren't going out and making it easy for us. If you want to win, you have to win in big games and that's what it is all about, playing in precious situations and having fun while you're doing it.

Q: Did you play in the game two years ago or were you still hurt?

RS: Yeah, I didn't play. I didn't play until we got to Jacksonville.

Q: How tough was it to sit there and watch that?

RS: It was definitely tough to watch but I came back in the Super Bowl and I had fresh legs.

Q: A lot of coaches struggle with game management at the end of games, calling time outs. Why is Bill Belichick so good at avoiding that?

RS: I don't know. That's a good question. He is a smart coach. I couldn't say why other coaches don't have that ability.

(On how Coach Belichick is always focused on the game)

RS: No, I think coaches, coach and players, play. We try to go out and take care of our job. I think he goes out and does a good job. That's why you don't see him all excited until the end of the game because he's always constantly thinking about the next play.

Q: When someone else or the opponent is sort of screwing that stuff up, do you guys kind of laugh or think about how that doesn't happen to you?

RS: No. Because we always say if you don't stay humble, you will crumble. We just try to enjoy it while we have it. I think that's just the way that we look at it. We don't, I know it's a cliché but we never try to get too high and never go too low on the losses. We just try to float along. Float even keel. Like I said, we are facing another good football team this week. It's for the AFC Championship, an opportunity to go to the Super Bowl.

Q: Do you feel like to some degree your defense has fallen under the radar this season? You set a franchise record for fewest points.

RS: Well, I think that's the most important step for us, points allowed. At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter how many first downs you give up, how many rushing yards, all of that stuff, for a personal reason, you never want to have a lot of yards but the most important step is keeping the other team off the scoreboard and we have done a pretty good job of that several times in my career. If we can keep the Colts off the scoreboard and our offense put up a lot of points, ultimately that's what we want.

Q: Do you feel that this defense compares favorably to the championship defenses that you have been on? Statistically it's there on the bottom line.

RS: I think we definitely have a lot of talent. But those teams, like I said, won a championship. Until we win a championship, it still remains to be seen.

Q: How about seeing Adam Vinatieri in that Colts uniform? And he could be lining up against you guys in a clutch situation again?

RS: Yeah, no question. We have a lot of respect for Adam. He is a clutch performer. Big time playmaker. We saw it again last week, 5 for 5 on field goals or whatever the case may be. I think if we could hold him to two field goals, I like our chances. You definitely don't want to see... I rather see Vinatieri than Peyton to [Marvin] Harrison, Peyton to [Reggie] Wayne, a guy running in. If Vinatieri wants to make field goals then hopefully at the end of the game we could get a block or something.

Q: Over the years has Coach Belichick changed since you've been here?

RS: Yeah, I think it's important that we always maintain that relationship. You know he's the coach and you respect him as the coach, and I'm the player and that's just the relationship. I like to keep a good business working relationship.

Q: Do you kind of have his personality? It's business as usual type thing?

RS: Well, I think it's a good thing to have, a business approach to the game and I think it always keeps you motivated to continue to go out and stay hungry, continue to go out and try to win. Like I said, even all our wins, winning the Super Bowls or whatever the case may be, I think we can float along and don't get too high on those wins and don't get too low on the losses. You know I think that's what you can maintain and float along.

Q: About Bill Belichick and his directness. Is there anything that stands out to you when he comes over and tells you what he thinks?

RS: I think we respect his approach to the game. I think he covers all the points from A to Z. When you look at a coach and say 'what's the strengths or what's the weakness?' I think he covers and doesn't leave any stones unturned in his approach to the football game. I mean no one is perfect. He makes mistakes. We all make mistakes. I think his ability not to leave any stone unturned and rectify the situation is remarkable.

**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS QUARTERBACK TOM BRADY
PRESS CONFERENCE
January 17, 2007**

Q: Do you recall your first impressions of Jabar Gaffney and Reche Caldwell?

TB: My first impressions? I don't recall them too well. I remember Jabar came in half way through the year and it was the bye week and he looked pretty much like he does right now – very good quickness, he's smart, he's experienced, he's very dependable. [He's] a lot like Reche. Reche is really... I'd say in the last five months [he's] made as much improvement as anybody in this offense. So they're two very dependable guys who have performed extremely well in the postseason and have performed well, really, late in the year. And I think that's why this offense has shown as much improvement as it has.

Q: Was there a tipping point for them?

TB: I wouldn't say there was one point. I think it's just been steady progress. There's been a bunch of work. Those guys have come to work every day and really worked hard to make those improvements. We've been healthy –knock on wood— at that position. Those guys have stayed healthy and have been out at practice, and I think any time you can put together, whatever, 110 practices, then you count the 22 games we've played this year, you can see why Reche has really progressed and why Jabar, at this point, has really taken those steps forward. The receiver position has become very much a strength of this team, and it needed to be in a game like last week where we needed to keep a back in and a tight end in to protect because of the pressure they were bringing, and [the receivers] really stepped up and made a bunch of great plays and that play to Reche at the end of the game was pretty awesome.

Q: As confident as you are in this team and this organization, was there ever a time this year that you wondered if there would be enough to get this team to this level this year?

TB: I think each year is very different and what was presented with us this year and the changes that were made to the offense, they really didn't all come about at the beginning of training camp-- we're dealing with changes throughout the year, and any time that happens, you find ways to adjust, but the important thing [is] you still try to find a way to win games and it's like win and move on. You just keep trying to improve and try to continue to put yourself in a position –like we have all year— to win those games. Much like last week-- it wasn't all perfect, but at the end we made enough great plays to win, and that's what it is going to take again this week.

Q: (On the rivalry with the Colts...)

TB: It's fun for the players. You develop very much of a rapport with [the Colts]. We've played them every single year, sometimes twice a year, and this will be another one of those years. It feels like a division opponent, going back to the days when they were in our division. These games have counted for a lot, and this one is just as big as all the rest. So it's quite a rivalry. We haven't played in that stadium in a few years. We know how tough they are at home. It's exciting, it's exciting because five and a half months of football games come down to 60 minutes of football. The team that is most prepared and goes out and executes the best this weekend will be the team that moves on and represents the conference. I know there is mutual respect on both sides. I know their players have a lot of respect for us. I know we have a lot of respect for their players and their coaches. It should be just one of those classic games.

Q: Do they play a little bit different of a defense when they are at home? A little bit faster?

TB: They've been playing pretty good. Obviously, the last few weeks they've been playing great. They're 8-0 at home. They play very well at home. They play very well on the turf. [Dwight] Freeney is fast everywhere. He was fast on our field, if you can imagine that, when it was that mud and painted dirt. [Robert] Mathis is good. All those linebackers are active and aggressive and the secondary is really playing well. Bob Sanders is on of the best is the game. So they have a bunch of very skilled defensive players, and when it is very loud in that dome I think they take advantage of that as well.

Q: Is the snap count even more important against a team like this?

TB: Oh yeah, we use a silent snap count. There's nothing coming from my mouth that they could get a jump [on] or anything like that. The silent count, which most teams use on the road now... we're 8-1 on the road, so I think sometimes we might play a little better on the road.

Q: The postgame celebration became a little bit of a story. Do you take it upon yourself as a leader to talk to the younger guys about situations like that?

TB: I think we always try to represent ourselves a certain way. That's up to Coach Belichick to talk about that with the players. I think we've tried to move on from that. We've won a bunch of meaningful games in the past. Some of it is just raw emotion. Some of it, maybe, does go a little bit too far. I think what happened, happened and we're moving on.

Q: Coach Belichick said he would rather have no other quarterback. What is your relationship like with him? Is that feeling mutual?

TB: It's very good with Coach Belichick. I think I've said before, we have the same goals. We meet at the beginning of every week and just get a feel for what he saw in the previous game and what he saw in the upcoming opponent. We do the same [on Tuesdays]. Sometimes it's all football. Sometimes we talk about other stuff. We've been doing that for four years. So it's a great relationship.

Q: What time of day to do you guys meet?

TB: In the afternoon. We meet and we discuss how last week went and how he sees this week going. As captains, the whole group of captains meet later in the week. So I always get a pretty good feel for what he is thinking and how he wants to approach the week. He is always pretty consistent with the way he thinks and the way he reacts to the team and the way he coaches. I think that is a great thing from a player's perspective because he is so consistent, he's never up and down, he's just always kind of the same. Whether we win or lose, we always have to do things better. We always did a few things good. There's no coach I'd rather play for. I hope that never happens.

Q: How long does a meeting like that usually last?

TB: It depends. It can go from an hour to two hours.

Q: How much does having a defensive coach as head coach help you?

TB: A bunch. As it initially started, what happened was [Coach Belichick] used to come in and basically coach... when Charlie [Weis] was here, Charlie would go in... The quarterbacks would

get a lot of the game plan stuff and the scouting report on Tuesday nights. So when Charlie would go in to address the team and basically give the team the same information on Wednesday morning, we just didn't feel like as quarterbacks we needed to be in there to go over it a second time. It was kind of redundant. So Charlie would go address the offense and we'd stay in the quarterback's room and Coach Belichick would come in and we'd start talking through coverages. He would break down all the coverages that the other team ran and how the team runs the coverages and how the defensive coordinator calls the games, because he has so much familiarity with all of those things. As that began to change and coach Belichick got caught up more in the defense, we had to find other ways to get that time in. So we would still try to do the coverages, he wouldn't coach coverages any more, but he would say, 'Why don't you come in on Tuesday and we'll go over some stuff.' That's just kind of the way it evolved and that's kind of the way it is now. Now we talk more probably about defensive personnel and stuff like that more so than coverages because Josh [McDaniels], coaching defense for as long as he did, he goes over the coverages with us now. We still get that redundant scouting report, but I can't find a way to get myself out of that meeting anymore.

Q: What's your relationship with Peyton [Manning], and is it fun for you to go up against a quarterback of that caliber?

TB: Yeah. We have a great relationship. We talked the other day. I think very highly of him as a player, as a person. [He's a] tremendous quarterback [and] tremendous leader. I see him play, he's always looking at other quarterbacks and how they play and I respect the way that he prepares and how he leads his team. He's a terrific competitor. He always gives that team a chance to win. It's always fun to go up against him.

Q: Do you feel like you have to be at your best when you're playing a quarterback like Manning?

TB: Of course, yeah. You know that you have to go in there and play your best game because you believe Peyton is going to, as he [has] the last few times we've played him. He's played great.

Q: Being the competitor he is, can you imagine how much pressure there is to get that monkey off his back?

TB: I have no idea.

Q: Why does Bob Sanders make such a big impact on the Colts' defense?

TB: I think he's very consistent, he's very tough, he's physical, he tackles well. You don't ever see him miss tackles. He's always in the right spot. He makes plays in the pass game and the run game. He's very competitive. I think he sets the tone for that defense. He and [Dwight] Freeney and Cato [June] are the big three there, but those other guys can all play too. Jason David is playing extremely well. The rookie, [Antoine] Bethea, is playing really well. Nick Harper had a big interception last week. They've put Rob Morris in there. [Gary] Brackett, he's been consistent. Booger McFarland is playing well. They've got a whole team full of guys that are athletic and fast.

Q: (On the Colts not playing as well when Sanders is out...)

TB: He's one of the best players in the league. You put him into a defense, and they play extremely well.

**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS TIGHT END DANIEL GRAHAM
PRESS CONFERENCE
January 17, 2007**

(On the team's success on the road this year and what it takes to win on another team's field)

DG: We know this year Coach [Belichick] has prepared us and against this team we know on the road that we have to bring the energy ourselves. I think with road games as a team we... I'm not going to say we don't bond here at home, but on the road there is something different when you have to bring your own energy to the game. We have to do that again this week. It is going to be another hostile environment, so we have to bring our 'A' game and be prepared to bring our own energy this week.

(On the growth of the offense throughout the year and how it is different than previous years)

DG: Earlier in the year we had a lot of new guys in the system, rookies that were going to be additions to the system and it took a while for them to get used to what we do here with this offense. They had to see how things are operated, the chemistry and timing with everything. It has been a slow process, but they have caught on well throughout the season. Everybody has just been getting better every week.

(On whether there was ever a time during the season when he expressed doubt that the offense would be able to get where they needed to be)

DG: No, not really. I knew that it was going to take time with new faces. Everybody has to learn the system. We have been there before and learned the new system and it is not the easiest system to learn. Just to get used to the timing and chemistry with Tom Brady, as far as the receivers. Like I said, it was a slow process but it is peaking and coming around when we needed it the most.

(On the recent play of Bob Sanders in the secondary)

DG: Bob Sanders has made a lot of good plays for that defense. He is someone we have to account for every time we snap the ball. He is a guy that can disrupt, as well as other guys on the team. He is playing very well right now. He is someone who can disrupt our offense, so we have to account for him.

(On whether you can scheme against him in the run game)

DG: I think it is hard to draw up because he is not in the box all the time. You might be drawing up a play to block him when he is back in the secondary in coverage. It is going to be tough, but every play we are looking for him. We have to identify where he is at.

(On Coach Belichick's personality in the locker room)

DG: There is a different side. Everybody outside of the locker room has no idea about his other side. He is a funny person if you know him inside the locker room. He is a person that cares even though he really doesn't show it. He is someone that cares.

(On Coach Belichick's knowledge of the game)

DG: There are a lot of things that he sees that we don't see. He knows this game in and out. That is one thing that I really noticed when I first got here. You really can't put anything past him.

(On whether there is a rivalry between the Patriots and Colts)

DG: In my mind, I think there is a rivalry there. There is not too much love lost between the two teams. Every time we play, it is always a physical game. It is always a good game when we play each other.

(On how the matchup is different this year with the game being played in Indianapolis)

DG: I think everything changes. We have a new team this year. This team we have this year, is nothing like the ones in the past. Their team is different as well. We are on the road this week. We know it is going to be a hostile environment there. We have to play collective and stick together has one this week.

(On what has led to the Indianapolis defense improving)

DG: The defense has improved a lot. You really can't just say one player has made a difference. Everybody throughout their whole defense stepped up, especially now in the playoffs they have stepped up and are playing a lot better as a team.

(On the play of Dwight Freeney)

DG: I really don't think indoors and outdoors has that much to do with it. He is a good player regardless if he is inside and outside. You are still going to have to block him off the edge. He is a quick player. He makes a lot of plays. He is at home this week too. It is going to be real difficult for us. We have a tough job ahead of us. We will be prepared for it.

(On his recent role in the passing game in addition to his role as a blocker)

DG: When I have the opportunity to make some plays and get my number called, I've tried to step up and make those plays. I know I don't get too many of those balls thrown my way, so I try to take the best advantage of the balls thrown my way.

(On whether the offense feeds off the great play of the defense)

DG: It helps our offense out. We just see our defense out there playing hard and it motivates us to go out there and do our part and go out there and put points on the board.

(On what role the Patriots offense has in limiting the Colts offense)

DG: It is hard stopping them. I'm not going to say you are always going to stop them. I know we will slow them down. I know as an offense we are going to do what we can to keep the balls out of their hands, so they don't have the opportunities to make the plays.

(On the similarities between Bob Sanders and Rodney Harrison)

DG: When he [Bob Sanders] comes in for that defense, he is just a different sparkplug for that defense and gets everyone going. He is someone who can disrupt an offense, just like Rodney [Harrison] can. I think there are similarities between the two.

(On the number of Peyton Manning commercials he has seen)

DG: It seems like every commercial I see is a Peyton Manning commercial. There are an endless number of commercials with him.

(On his favorite Peyton Manning commercial)

DG: No, I don't have a favorite.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS HEAD COACH BILL BELICHICK 2006-07 SEASON QUOTES

[ON QUARTERBACK TOM BRADY]

12/15/06

Believe me, I've said many times, there's no quarterback that I'd rather have than Tom Brady. I have tremendous respect for Tom and what he does and how he does it. There's no issue there.

12/14/06

I think Tom is one of the most consistent players that I've ever coached. He works hard every week. There's no ups and downs with him. He really goes through his preparations to the letter. He never leaves a stone unturned. He has questions everyday and questions at the end of the week trying to clear up or get a little bit more insider information on whatever issues come up during the week. When we get together at different points in the week, which we do, but we always get together at the end of the week. There are a lot of things that we talk about at that point that have come up earlier in the week and it's just kind of a follow-up or further clarification, just taking those preparations right up to the very end and just trying to do more. Again, I think he approaches...I've been with him in preseason games, I've been with him in playoff games and championship games and it's the same for every game. One game is no different than the next. So I think that anytime a player prepares like that and has skill like Tom has, then there's probably going to be a lot more good plays and good games than there are bad and that's the way it's been with him.

[ON QUARTERBACK MATT CASSEL]

12/28/06

Q: What improvements have you seen in Matt Cassel as a quarterback from the final game last year to the final game this year?

BB: He's made a big jump. He's made a big jump, understanding of our offense, understanding of our system, understanding the defenses, opposing defenses and how he reads them, reads them better and has a much better understanding of what we're doing and how to adjust to our plays and what to do when he sees something and how to manage it and how to adjust it. He can read the defenses. He's much more accurate and is much quicker, just understanding and seeing what's going on even when they give him some hard looks and move a lot of guys around. He can sort that out. He does a good job with that. I think his accuracy and throwing mechanics and technique have improved. I would say the biggest thing has been his overall, not only understanding, but I would say comprehension of the game on both sides of the ball, offensively and defensively.

I think in Matt's case, there's been a good level of consistency, what he's done on the practice field and how that's transferred over to the game, when he's had the opportunity to play, whether it's in preseason or even in limited snaps in the regular season, there's a good level of consistency there. So you're kind of seeing the same guy no matter what view you take there.

[ON QUARTERBACK VINNY TESTAVERDE]

12/29/06

Q: Now that he's been here a few weeks, what kind of impact has Vinny Testaverde had? How has it been having him around?

BB: It's been good. It's been good. I think that Vinny has done well. He still makes some remarkable throws in practice. He really does. He can throw the ball. He still moves pretty well. He moves really well, really, for his age and his experience. I think he's picked up things well. It's been good to have him. I think he's been a very positive influence on everybody -- the team, the quarterbacks, the offense. He has a maturity and experience level and a confidence about him that is not overbearing, but it's sincere and it's solid. I think everybody feels it. I think everybody has confidence in what Vinny can do when he steps into the huddle and calls a play, whether it's running the scout team or whatever, that everybody feels competent in him and he's shown that he can go out there and make solid plays and perform well in what he's been asked to do.

He's had an outstanding career. I think he's shown that he can be a complete player. Earlier in his career he had some 100 yard rushing games. He was a tremendous athlete. His durability has been pretty remarkable. He's obviously put up some big passing numbers. Some great comebacks. Been on some really good football teams. His career kind of got off to, from a win/loss standpoint, a slow start. I think he's shown that he's a winning quarterback and can play at a high level and can lead his team to a lot of success. He's done that.

[ON WIDE RECEIVER TROY BROWN]

10/18/06

Q. Can you comment on Troy Brown's performance? One week he is playing defense for you and then this week a leading receiver.

BB: Yes. Returning punts. Troy is amazing. He kind of splits up the week in practice and meeting times. He does the offensive stuff and then he comes over and does the defensive stuff. He is ready to go on everything. But that is the guy you just count on. It doesn't matter what it is, offense, defense, special teams. You know, I am always happy to see him, as I said, because I think if anybody deserves it, it's him. The work he does, as hard as he works and as competitive as he is and as tough as he is, you love to see things work out for a guy like that. He's a great team player.

[ON WIDE RECEIVER JABAR GAFFNEY]

12/18/06

Jabar, that was a good addition for us. That was a guy that earlier in the year we had a number of people that were playing different spots and really trying to make progress in those particular positions and Gaff was able to come in and through his experience and kind of understanding the passing game and a little bit of the terminology background that he had in Houston, really was able to pick things up very quickly and learn every receiver spot and a couple of times he got in practice where we were caught a little short with depth at those positions and Brian [Daboll]

would toss him in there, 'Go to Z on this play. Go to F on that play. I want you over at X at this play,' just to see how he was picking it up and he makes very few mistakes. He knows assignments and he understands passing concepts and what to do against different coverages, kind of when to settle down, when to stair-step, when to come back, when to fade away from the ball and things like that. I think he's a guy that the quarterbacks like to throw to. As a coach, you really appreciate some of the decision making that he exhibits in the passing game, like Troy, like Kevin Faulk, guys like that that kind of do the right thing to help the play out even though sometimes it's not exactly the way it's diagramed or the way you think it's going to unfold. It happens a little bit differently and they usually make the right decisions on what to do in that situation.

[ON WIDE RECEIVER RECHE CALDWELL]

12/1/06

Reche has worked hard. He's a hard-working kid. There's no doubt about his work ethic. It's very good. He's done a lot of things all year really. He's been, all the way through training camp, a playmaker in camp on the field, whether it be in practice or in games. He's shown up making plays a lot and I think, obviously, the more that a quarterback and a receiver work together, the better it is. It isn't like it took months for it to happen. I can remember seeing it out there in training camp a lot of practices. We had a hard time defensively covering him.

[ON RUNNING BACK COREY DILLON]

12/6/06

I think Corey has good stamina. He's been pretty durable for us. The red area, those are tough yards. The secondary is close to the line of scrimmage. It's hard to take them out of the play because they're not going anywhere. You have to deal with them. I think that is one of Corey's strengths. He is a strong, physical runner and he runs with power and can churn out and get that extra yard or two after contact.

[ON RUNNING BACK LAURENCE MARONEY]

1/4/07

Q: What type of dimension has [Laurence] Maroney added to the offense this year?

BB: I think that Laurence has done a good job in all areas that he's played in. There's still a lot of room for improvement. He's helped us in the kicking game. He's helped us offensively in the passing game, the running game, pass protection. I think he is able to do what we need him to do.

I think that all of our backs have been pretty productive there. Laurence has, no question. Corey [Dillon]. Kevin [Faulk]. They've all gotten some yards after contact. That's an important part for any player who has the ball.

Q: How has he progressed in pass protection?

BB: Good. Good. He made a lot of progress in the spring camps and in training camp I think that's probably where he made the biggest jump.

11/2/06

Q: What skills does [Laurence] Maroney have that makes him an effective kickoff returner?

BB: Pretty much the same skills that any good running back would have - the ability to read blocks, see holes and somehow gain extra yardage when he has the ball. Whether that's with quickness, or speed, or power, or a combination of those things, which I would say he has a combination of those skills. It's hard being able to read the blocks and find the seams and set blocks up and that type of thing. But, it's nice to have guys returning kicks that have any of those skills - speed, quickness, power, run vision, the more the better naturally.

[BB ON RUNNING BACK COMBINATIONS]

12/6/06

Q: How have you been approaching games with the running backs? Do you go in with a set idea of, 'I want to try get him x amount of touches, and him y amount?'

BB: It has been a combination of things. I would say that sometimes it's just rotating players by series. Other times it's by certain formations. It's usually not by play. Like, we want this guy in for that play and that guy in for this play. It's more by personnel groupings. I think it's worked out in a fairly balanced way for Kevin, Laurence and Corey. It's not like anybody is sitting there charting and saying, 'Okay, this guy has caught three balls and now we have to throw them to somebody else and this guy has carried five times and this guy has only carried once.' We just kind of do what we do. I think it's just kind of turned out that way. It's a combination of those things. Sometimes it's just by series. Other times it's by personnel grouping and sometimes it's a combination of the two.

[ON WIDE RECEIVER TROY BROWN]

1/4/07

Q: I think I saw a quote that Troy Brown epitomizes what you want in a football player. Can you explain why?

BB: I'd say the three most important things for any football player, and Troy exemplifies them, is being well-prepared, which includes physical and mental conditioning, working hard and putting the team first. Any player who does that is a good team member. I don't care what position they play or how many years they've been in the league or anything else. Players that are tough, smart and dependable, which he is, those are the qualities that are desirable for any player that a coach has on his team, especially this team.

[ON RUNNING BACK KEVIN FAULK]

11/29/06

Kevin, first of all, he brings a great attitude and a great approach to the game. He is very professional, well-prepared, smart kid, he can play a lot of different position, do a lot of different things. Returns. He handles a lot of different blitz assignments in the passing game. Routes. He's a good change of pace runner. He's a very versatile guy that can help us and do a lot of different things for us. We have a lot of confidence in him. He's a playmaker. We like to see the ball in his hands. He's very professional and, again, he has a lot of roles and a lot of assignments. He works hard at them and he's a very dependable player and he doesn't make very many mistakes. He's a smart football player on the field. He knows the situations. If it's third-and-four, if you throw it to him, you can pretty much count on him to be able to get the yardage, or a third-and-seven. He kind of knows what you need and what he needs to do to get it.

[ON WIDE RECEIVER TROY BROWN AND RUNNING BACK KEVIN FAULK]

12/1/06

Q: Do you see any similarities between the careers of Troy Brown and Kevin Faulk?

BB: Sure. I think there are a lot of similarities between those two players. They have some similar skills. They have good hands. They're quick. They're very intelligent players. They have good football instincts. Real, real good instincts - where to go, how to make adjustments, particularly in the passing game, but with the ball in his hands, Troy as a punt returner and Kevin as a running back. They're smart players, they're also very instinctive players. They have a great work ethic. Both very team oriented, unselfish guys, very versatile and can do a lot of different things. Some of the things that they do the same, like return punts and return kicks and catch the ball and things like that. Yes, there is a lot of similarity is between those two players.

Q: The probably both have had moments in their career where it looked like they wouldn't have had this kind of longevity. They've had a lot to overcome.

BB: I think that's another thing that they both have in common is they both have a lot of mental toughness. They're both tough, physically tough, and they're both mentally tough. They are well-prepared. They both work really hard. Like I said, they're great team players. Nobody supports their teammates better than those two guys, the other receivers, the other running backs or just their teammates in general. Those guys are great leaders, both of them. They're outstanding leaders by the way they perform their job, approach their job and the way they're supportive of their teammates. They are two of the best on our team and two of the best that I've been around.

[ON GUARD STEVE NEAL]

1/12/07

Q: How did Steve Neal come to your attention?

BB: He was a world-class wrestler and he decided not to wrestle anymore. When he did that, his name came to us through a couple of different contacts, that he would be interested in playing football, and he played it in junior high school. It was over the summer, so we worked him out over the summer. Physically, he had a good workout. He was a good looking athlete and could run and had really natural size. There are some guys that put on a lot of weight through lifting and strengthening and all of that. Steve is just a big, strong kid. Not that he doesn't lift weights and all that, but he has a lot of natural size and strength too. We saw that there were some things to like. He's a smart kid. He has a really good work ethic, which we knew that from this training and experience as a wrestler, just his competitiveness and his toughness and his work ethic and all that. He just had a long way to go as a football player. That's kind of how it got started.

[ON WIDE RECEIVERS COACH BRIAN DABOLL]

1/10/07

Q: Has Brian Daboll done an exemplary job with [the receivers]?

BB: Yeah, he sure has. Again, I talked about the receivers coming in here, but he's the guy that's meeting with them and working with them and showing them extra film and taking extra time with each guy. Like any position, each guy has his own strengths and weaknesses, things that he does well or has his own individual techniques, or maneuvers, or whatever and Brian has done a great job of incorporating those into the overall system and refining some things that need a little more work, including the running game. He's done a great job.

[ON ASST. HEAD COACH/OFFENSIVE LINE COACH DANTE SCARNECCHIA]

11/30/06

I think he's a great coach and he's pretty much coached every position on the team. When I was here in '96, he was on the defensive side. It was Romeo [Crennel] and Al [Groh] and Dante and I. We worked on the defensive side of the ball. He's coached special teams. He's coached offense. He's coached a lot of different positions. He's a smart guy. He understands the game. He has a lot of flexibility. He's a very good fundamental and instructional teacher on fine points and individual coaching points. He also does a great job of understanding the big picture and total scheme and how different plays can or can't be applicable for different situations. Obviously he has a lot of experience and is a guy whose voice is always heard with a great deal of respect, whether it's from a player or a coach or anybody. It doesn't matter who it is. He's seen a lot. He's been through a lot. He's experienced a lot. He's very fair and I think he has a good perspective on, like I said, the little things and all of the big things and all the stuff in between. I'm glad he's on this staff. He's made a big contribution to our football team over the years.

I think he could coach anybody who's willing to be coached. I think he's improved any player who has made the effort to work hard and listen to his instruction has improved. A couple haven't and they didn't improve. There's some who have. I think if the player wants to get better, then he has a good coach who can help him get better. If the guy doesn't want to get better, I don't think he's going to get any better.

Like I said, I think Dante is fair. He loves his players and his players love him. I think there's a lot of mutual respect there. It's like you have kids. Sometimes you have to discipline them. You have to yell at them. It doesn't mean you don't love them. It doesn't mean that they don't love you. Sometimes that's what you need to do. Dante was in the Marines. What do you expect?

[ON THE DEFENSIVE LINE]

1/11/07

Q: You used three first round picks on defensive linemen. When you look at the way these guys have played this year, is this kind of what you envisioned as a best case scenario?

BB: I think when you take a player, you want him to be productive in your system. It just kind of worked out that way with those three guys. We definitely thought they were good players, given where we took them. They were all a couple of pretty high first round picks really, even Vince [Wilfork]. We certainly thought a lot of them to take them where we did. The fact that they are playing together and complementing each other and work well in their different roles and combinations out there, that's certainly to our benefit. I can't sit here and tell you that's exactly the way we knew it was going to go, because I think there's always a degree of development with young players as to how they're going to work in your system. I think that they do, they complement each other well and they work together well. They bring a lot of leadership as well as good play. They bring a lot of leadership to the football team and a lot of consistency too.

[ON DEFENSIVE END RICHARD SEYMOUR]

12/20/06

Q: Can you talk about Richard Seymour making it to the Pro Bowl?

BB: Well, Richard, that's five straight Pro Bowls. I think his play speaks for itself. Last week was a good example. The play he made in the first quarter on the inception was kind of a typical Richard Seymour play -- a big guy who can get his hands up, he took the ball. It shows a lot of athleticism to turn around and find it and make that play kind of over his shoulder. We have defensive backs and linebackers, and the gets thrown to them and hits them right in the hands and we don't catch it and just bat it up in the air. I think that Richard is a guy that is a force out there in every phase of the game. Runs to him. Runs away from him. In the passing game. He's a versatile player. He's blocked kicks for us. He's one of our captains, so I think he's a guy that's obviously well respected on his team, both on and off the field. He's a smart guy. He's an experienced player and he's made a lot of big plays for us...I'm glad we have [him].

[ON DEFENSIVE LINEMAN TY WARREN]

12/4/06

I think that was a huge point of emphasis for Ty in the offseason this year and it's been all season long, about refining his pass rush techniques and utilizing his strengths as a pass rusher and making sure that he does the things that he does best the most often and also how to use his techniques to get himself the best opportunity within our scheme within our framework of defense. A player that plays the position that he does, when you're an end in a 3-4 defense, if an outside linebacker is coming to your side, then you're really becoming an inside rusher, kind of like a three technique. If the rush is coming from the other side, then you really become like a 4-3 defensive end and you're an outside rusher. At that position, sometimes you're an outside guy. Sometimes you're an inside guy, because a 4-3 end or a 4-3 tackle, it's usually just one or the other. It gives you an opportunity to have different rush opportunities and therefore different techniques to go with it. Those were big point of emphasis for Ty in the offseason. He worked very hard at them and has continued to do so during the season. I think his pass rushing techniques have improved significantly. Not that his run techniques haven't, but I think that they were something that came a little bit quicker to him and something that probably he put more...because he wasn't involved in as many passing situations in his first and second year. That has increased as the years have gone through and he's gotten better at it. They've kind of gone hand in hand.

I think that's one of Ty's real strengths as a player is that when you give him something to work on, he really works at it and that doesn't mean at the expense of what he does well. Like, 'I'm not going to play the run, I'm just going to rush the passer.' It's not that. It's, 'When it's a pass, I'm going to utilize my pass rush techniques and when it's a run, I'm going to play my run techniques.' He's done a good job of trying to really focus and work on the areas that you ask him to improve in. Again, the thing I like about it is it hasn't come at the expense of other things that he is doing well. It hasn't been a tradeoff. It's just been a steady improvement.

[ON LINEBACKER MIKE VRABEL]

1/11/07

Q: How tough is [Mike] Vrabel?

BB: He's pretty tough. Mike is a pretty tough kid, physically and mentally. He's a hard-nosed football player. He's always been like that. College. Pittsburgh. Here. I think he's the old-school type of kid.

Q: Being this is the second time around, how has he done making the move back inside?

BB: I think it was easier the second time around. At least he had been through it all and experienced some of the harder plays that you get in there, plays like bootlegs and play action and some of the misdirection runs and stuff like that, they're a problem even if you're an experienced linebacker, but when you're moving in there and you're getting the regular stuff down and then you start getting the misdirection and play action passes and bootlegs and stuff like that, that makes it harder. At least he's been through it. He's experienced those plays and it comes back to him. Still, it's a transition. I'm not saying that. I think having done it once we've gotten some of that stuff out of the way.

[ON LINEBACKER ROSEVELT COLVIN]

11/22/06

I think he's a good player. I think he's a really good player. I think he's having a really good year. I think he's done a really good for us. He does a lot of things well. He rushes well. He covers well. He plays the run. He's a smart player and hardly makes any mistakes. I think he's a real solid guy, very professional, well prepared, works well with his teammates, whether it be the ends or the inside linebackers or the safeties at times in different combinations or different coverages and that kind of thing. He's very good and very aware of those things. Again, I didn't really have a lot of experience with him, but having worked with him, he does a real good job in all those areas. He has a nice combination, really, of the coverage background in Chicago and his rush background in college, when he was basically a defensive end, for a guy to have that kind of experience in coverage and in the rush, he understands all of the different concepts that could come up and when they apply. Whereas sometimes some players are a little heavier in one area or another. He has a good balance and has a really good understanding of all of the concepts in the game.

[ON CORNERBACK ASANTE SAMUEL]

1/3/07

I think Asante has had a solid year for us, all the way through, going all the way back to training camp. I think that's an important part of it, is the preseason and the training camp leading up to the season, that's where a player builds his fundamentals and techniques...I think Asante has done a good job of that. He works well with his safeties, when they have combination coverages, knowing where your help is, and how to use it and that type of thing. He's a smart player. He's instinctive. He has good ball skills. I think a lot of those things play into it. I think it's hard for a player just to come in at the end of a year and do everything right without all of the fundamentals that go into that position because it's a long play from a technique standpoint. Just like the quarterback, it's a longer play. It's not like lining up this far away from a guy.

[ON SAFETY ARTRELL HAWKINS]

1/12/07

Q: A couple of weeks ago, you were asked about players that you picked up in the middle of the season that went on to be impact players. Does Artrell [Hawkins] fall into that category?

BB: Definitely. Absolutely. He came in a tough situation last year. He came in as a corner and then we moved him to safety. I think that was something that Dean [Pees] kind of saw and suggested. As it turned out, it was a great move, both for him and us. There were a couple of times where he had to go back outside as a corner, kind of in an emergency situation, but I think that he's had a good season this year inside. At this point in his career anyway, I can't speak to when he came out, because he did play corner and played it very competitively in this league, but at this point in his career, I think that safety is probably his best position. He's done a great job for us and he's made the transition, I've had a few guys that have done it, but I think he's

done it about as well as anybody has, going back to Everson Walls and guys like that along the way that have gone from outside to inside.

1/11/07

Artrell has done a great job us all year. He missed a couple of games earlier in the season, but he's done a great job for us all year. He's very professional. He works hard. He communicates well. There is no player that puts in any more time than he does in terms of preparation and studying film. He's here early in the morning. He sometimes stays later than the coaches do. He puts in a lot of time and he's on top of it...he's done a really good job for us. I'm glad we have him.

[ON DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR DEAN PEES]

1/5/07

Dean has done a great job. I've known Dean for quite a while. He's had a big impact on us here. He really has a great command of the whole defensive system from the nose guard to the free safety and all the way in between. He's very knowledgeable, well-prepared, a real thorough guy. I really enjoy working with him. He's done an outstanding job for us.

[ON KICKER STEPHEN GOSTKOWSKI]

12/18/06

Q: Do you sense that Stephen [Gostkowski] is getting more comfortable, just on a daily basis of being in the NFL?

BB: Yes, sure. I think for a young player, each game is a learning experience, provided they approach it the right way, which I think that Stephen does, it's a positive experience and it's something that you can continue to build off of, both for this year and career-wise. He's kicked well for us this year, not perfectly, as no player has played perfectly, but he's done a good job all year. I think he's had a good level of consistency both on place kicks and kickoffs. He's made a couple of tackles for us. He's had a solid year.

Q: Does that cause your confidence to grow with him as his kicks continue to sail through the uprights?

BB: Sure. I was confident in preseason when he made all of those kicks. Every time he's had a chance to kick, for the most part, he's done a pretty good job. I'm not saying it's perfect, but it's been pretty good. So yes, I confidence in him. I definitely have confidence in him and deservedly so. He's kicked consistently

Q: You said yesterday that you have confidence in your kicker or he wouldn't be on the roster. Is there a difference in how you would set up for a game-winning field goal for an untested kicker like him?

BB: No, not this one.

Q: Why is that?

BB: Because I have confidence in him. So I think if I sent him out there to do the job, he's going to do it. I can't talk hypothetically about if I was a kicker how I would manage the game. I'm not the kicker, so I don't know. Or, if you were the kicker, I couldn't tell you what I would do in that situation because I haven't seen you kick. I'm just telling you that the kickers that I have, I have confidence in Stephen [Gostkowski], whatever the situation is that we would want to kick in, I have confidence that he would kick well, kickoff, kick field goals, whatever his assignment would be. I think he is a player that can do what we are going to ask him to do or I wouldn't put him out there.

[ON THE PATRIOTS TRAINING STAFF]

1/11/07

Q: How about the training staff and the job they've done this year just getting guys ready to play?

BB: It's good. It's a good group. Jim [Whalen] has done a great job, and his two assistants, Joe [Van Allen] and Dave [Granito], they're awesome. I think everybody in the organization has a lot of respect for that group. They work hard. They're very knowledgeable. They're up to date on the latest stuff. We utilize a lot of different resources in terms of treating players. Each guy kind of has his own area that he's probably, I don't want say specialty, because they all do everything, but some guys really work in certain areas, with certain players, or certain injuries, and that type of thing. I think they do an awesome job. They get them back out there quick. They keep them as healthy as they can. I think all of the players and coaches and the people in the organization have an awful lot of respect for that group, the hours that they put in and the knowledge that they have.