



## MONDAY NIGHT NOTES

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CONTACT: STEVE ALIC (212 450 2066)

### LET'S GET IT ON! COLTS VS. PATS ON MONDAY NIGHT

For the Indianapolis Colts, defeated by New England in the playoffs two years running and four times overall in the past two seasons, the three-time Super Bowl-champion Patriots represent many things – none of them good. They are the mountain that grows taller as you climb it and the road that stretches longer as you drive it.

But so far in 2005, the Colts' road has been smooth sailing. They are the only team in the NFL to go undefeated, compiling their best start ever, 7-0.

They face a big challenge to that record this Monday night (ABC, 9:00 PM ET) when they travel to Foxborough, Massachusetts – as they have done the past three times they have played the Pats (and will even do next year) – to face their nemesis, New England. The game has been termed "The Duel" between quarterbacks **PEYTON MANNING** of the Colts and **TOM BRADY** of the Patriots on the front cover of this week's *Sports Illustrated*.

"One reason we've gotten off to a good start is because we have taken every opponent one game at a time," says Manning, who has played a large role in helping the Colts reach an NFL-best road record of 21-7 (.750) since 2002. "If we would have been thinking about this game since Week 1, we would not be 7-0 at this point."

Yes, running back **EDGERRIN JAMES** leads the NFL in rushing (801), scrimmage yards (973) and first downs (57). And, yes, Manning holds the NFL's No. 2 completion percentage (68.1), stands third in passer rating (98.4), and has been protected better than any QB in the league (five sacks allowed). But defense is the difference in the 2005 Colts versus former editions. A look at the one-year defensive difference in Indy through seven games:

SEASON	YDS ALLOWED (RANK)	PTS ALLOWED (RANK)	SACKS (RANK)
2005	277.9 (4)	11.0 (1)	26 (1)
2004	418.7 (32)	25.4 (29)	15 (17T)

The Colts' defense, built on speed and toughness, is paced up front by ends **ROBERT MATHIS** and **DWIGHT FREENEY**, the NFL's only teammates to each reside in the league's top 10 in sacks. Mathis is tied for the NFL lead (8.0) while Freenev is tied for eighth-most (6.0). Third-year linebacker **CATO JUNE** is second in the NFL with five interceptions and is on his way to challenging the league's single-season record for INTs by a linebacker (eight).

New England, AFC East leaders at 4-3, aims for its first set of consecutive victories this season. Great patriot moments atop of horses are not exclusive to **PAUL REVERE**. New England has had more success against the Colts (41-24, .631) than any other team that the club has faced at least 10 times. Since the start of the 1994 season, New England is 14-4 (.778) against Indianapolis.

New England's **DEION BRANCH** (40) and **DAVID GIVENS** (38) comprise the AFC's only wide receiver tandem with 38 or more catches apiece, while quarterback Brady (93.8) is on pace for the best passer rating of his career and is third in the league in passing yards (2,020). The return of linebacker **TEDY BRUSCHI** has helped fortify the Patriots' defense, while kicker **ADAM VINATIERI** has made 21 consecutive fourth-quarter field goals dating back to December 2002.

Plus, this is the time of year – post-November 1 – when the Patriots normally begin their own "Midnight Ride" – a journey that in recent times has ended with confetti and posing with the Lombardi Trophy seconds after the Super Bowl.

A look at the Patriots' recent history of success after November 1 (\* Super Bowl champion):

SEASON	BEFORE NOV. 1	AFTER NOV. 1	TOTALS
2001	3-4	11-1	*14-5
2002	3-4	6-3	9-7
2003	6-2	11-0	*17-2
2004	6-1	11-1	*17-2
2005	4-3	0-0	4-3
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>22-14 (.611)</b>	<b>39-5 (.886)</b>	<b>61-19</b>

## **MONDAY NIGHT MUSINGS – INDIANAPOLIS COLTS AT NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS**

### **IZZO PAYS TRIBUTE TO HIS DAD & THE TROOPS**

- Earlier this year, New England Patriots linebacker **LARRY IZZO** and Atlanta Falcons running back **WARRICK DUNN** took part in an NFL-sponsored USO tour to visit U.S. troops in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan, where they helped open the Pat Tillman USO Center.

"It was an unbelievable journey for me with memories that will stay with me forever," says Izzo. "I made a promise to our troops that I would never forget them, fulfilling a commitment I had made in my dad's memory."

To start delivering on that promise, Izzo organized an event entitled "A Benefit for Our Troops and Their Families" in Boston on October 24. Members of the Patriots were on hand to perform their best karaoke and mingle with the fans with proceeds going to the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, Operation Ensuring Christmas, the USO of New England, and Fallen Patriot.

"This event," says three-time All-Star Izzo, "was to benefit families of the American troops who have died in combat, and those American veterans left disabled as a result of their military service in Iraq and Afghanistan."

"My father, **LARRY, SR.**, graduated from West Point in 1967 and retired as a full colonel in 1990 after 23 years in the military. He died on October 25, 2003. As a tribute to him and the influence he had on my life, I have always wanted to do something to help the families of our American troops."

Dunn was unable to attend the event because the Falcons hosted the Jets that Monday night with the nine-year veteran rushing for 155 yards in Atlanta's 27-14 win. However, Dunn, the 2004 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year, served as an inspiration for Izzo's idea.

"Seeing how Warrick experienced something, saw a need and went out and acted upon it – building homes and furnishing them for single mothers – inspired me to do what we're doing," says Izzo. "It comes down to wanting to do something and then actually taking action and doing it. It shows how one person can not only have a positive influence on the people they are helping, but also be an inspiration to others who want to help as well."

**-- MNF --**

### **PEYTON HONORED BY VOLS**

- Football fans have become accustomed to seeing quarterback **PEYTON MANNING** breaking NFL records in his Indianapolis Colts No. 18 jersey. However, before becoming the first pick in the 1998 NFL Draft, Manning was breaking records at the University of Tennessee wearing No. 16.

Last weekend while the Colts enjoyed their bye, Manning traveled to Knoxville where the No. 16 he wore as a Volunteer was retired by the school.

"It's a special honor for me," says the two-time NFL MVP. "It's a nice tribute. This is one of the biggest honors I have ever received."

Before the pregame ceremony, Manning joined Tennessee head coach **PHILLIP FULMER** on the Vol Walk, traveling down Peyton Manning Pass and into Neyland Stadium.

"It was exciting for Peyton and for our program," says Fulmer. "It's great for our fans, administration and everybody concerned to have the chance to honor one of the greats from the past. To have been a part of the ceremony is really special."

Manning, who set 42 records during his college career, is the second player this season (**REGGIE WHITE**, No. 92) to have his number retired in a new process established by the university.

"I feel one of the most significant honors a player can have in his sport is to have his number retired," says Manning. "I will always cherish this."

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