



## NFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

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NFC-N-9 10/11/05

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## DIVISION RIVALRIES TAKE CENTER STAGE AS WEEK 6 FEATURES FAMILIAR FOES

It's the NFL's version of a sibling rivalry – the division game.

And those always-intriguing matchups take center stage in Week 6, as six of 14 games feature division opponents. And while no single factor can predict postseason fortunes, recent history is clear – if a team is to enjoy jubilation in January and February, the seeds of success are sown now, particularly in division games.

Since the current eight-division format was instituted in 2002, the six teams that advanced to the Super Bowl posted a combined division record of 29-7, for a whopping .806 winning percentage.

The Week 6 division slate:

Division	Visitor	Home
AFC North	Cleveland Browns	Baltimore Ravens
NFC North	Minnesota Vikings	Chicago Bears
NFC East	New York Giants	Dallas Cowboys
NFC South	Atlanta Falcons	New Orleans Saints
AFC East	New York Jets	Buffalo Bills
AFC West	San Diego Chargers	Oakland Raiders

Among the most anticipated division matchups is the NFC East clash between the 3-1 Giants and 3-2 Cowboys at Texas Stadium. The Cowboys enter the game on the heels of a resounding 33-10 win against another division rival, the Philadelphia Eagles, while the Giants enjoyed a Week 5 bye.

"I commended the team on a good performance," says Cowboys head coach **BILL PARCELLS**, who led the Giants to victory in Super Bowls XXI and XXV. "But I also told them to watch out, because we have another test coming. Our players know what they are facing in the Giants, like with any division opponent. The Giants have been a very prolific scoring team and will be a challenge for us. I think there will be times when any one of the teams in our division can beat any other and so I think it will be a question of who can improve the most from here on out."

New York is averaging 34 points per game and its 136 points through four games is the most by a Giants team since the 1968 squad posted 154.

The game features a pair of coaches – Parcells and **TOM COUGHLIN**, an assistant under Parcells in New York from 1988-90, who have excelled in division games. Parcells owns a 77-56-1 (.578) division mark while Coughlin is 43-31 (.581) against division opponents.

A look at the top active coaches vs. division opponents and the teams with the best winning percentage in division games since the current division alignment was instituted in 2002:

Coach	All-Time Division Record	Team	Division Record Since 2002	Playoff Berths
Mike Sherman	25-10 (.714)	Philadelphia	16-3 (.842)	3
Mike Martz	26-11 (.703)	Indianapolis	16-4 (.800)	3
Andy Reid	29-14 (.674)	New England	14-4 (.778)	2
Mike Shanahan	57-31 (.648)	Pittsburgh	14-4 (.778)	2
Marty Schottenheimer	87-48 (.644)	Green Bay	14-5 (.737)	3

Just like certain teams, certain players have a knack for stepping up against the biggest of rivals. Two such performers will be in action in division contests in Week 6 – Baltimore's **JAMAL LEWIS** and San Diego's **LA DAINIAN TOMLINSON**.

Each will try to get their team back on track this week, as the Ravens host the Browns and the Chargers head north to

Oakland to meet the Raiders. Since 2002, Lewis averages 119.9 yards per game against divisional foes while Tomlinson averages a healthy 104.7.

A look at the statistical leaders in division games since 2002:

Player	TDs	Player	Rush Yards	Player	Rec.	Player	TD Passes
Shaun Alexander	25	Jamal Lewis	2,039	Torry Holt	133	Peyton Manning	40
Clinton Portis	23	Shaun Alexander	1,905	Marvin Harrison	115	Brett Favre	39
LaDainian Tomlinson	19	Deuce McAllister	1,892	Chad Johnson	106	Daunte Culpepper	33
Priest Holmes	17	LaDainian Tomlinson	1,885	Joe Horn	104	Tom Brady	31
Jamal Lewis	16	Clinton Portis	1,881	Rod Smith	103	Donovan McNabb	30

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