



NFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

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TURKEY DAY TRADITION: THANKSGIVING FOOTBALL HIGHLIGHTS WEEK 12 ACTION

To many, it represents the quintessential American holiday, synonymous with family, food and football. And for NFL fans everywhere, what a day it promises to be.

Week 12 in the NFL kicks off with the traditional Thanksgiving Day matchups in Detroit and Dallas and concludes with a must-see Monday-nighter in Indianapolis between the NFL's only undefeated team, the 10-0 Colts, and a club that seeks to change that distinction, the Pittsburgh Steelers.

It all begins in the Motor City – site two months from now of Super Bowl XL -- where the always-tough-on-Thanksgiving Lions host the Atlanta Falcons (6-4) at Ford Field. Detroit (4-6) looks to rebound after dropping a 20-7 decision to the Cowboys in Dallas last week and owns a 33-30-2 (.523) record on Thanksgiving Day, including wins in 10 of its past 16 Turkey Day games.

"We're looking forward to it," says Lions head coach and Michigan native **STEVE MARIUCCI**. "We always enjoy playing on Thanksgiving in front of our home crowd. It's special. It's a big game for us, we need it, and it's important for our opponent as well. We can't wait."

And for that opponent, it's an entirely new experience. The Falcons are making their Thanksgiving debut, which means the humongous national television audience (FOX, 12:30 PM ET) will be entertained by the exploits of Atlanta quarterback **MICHAEL VICK**. Vick has had a history of starring on the biggest stages in his young career, winning his playoff debut in Green Bay in the 2002 Wild Card round and then on Kickoff Weekend this year when he took his team to a win over Philadelphia in his initial appearance on *Monday Night Football*.

"The Thanksgiving Day games are special," says Falcons head coach **JIM MORA**. "They're just different. There's pageantry and a festive feeling. Our guys are excited about it. We haven't done this before. Everyone's watching."

Thanksgiving has been the backdrop for phenomenal performances through the years, including **ERNIE NEVERS'** NFL-record six touchdowns for the Chicago Cardinals on November 28, 1929 in a 40-6 win over the cross-town rival Bears.

A look at various single-game NFL Thanksgiving Day records:

| Category | Number | Player | Team | Date | Opponent | Score |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|------------------|
| Most TDs | 6* | Ernie Nevers | Chi. Cardinals | November 28, 1929 | Chi. Bears | Chi. Cards, 40-6 |
| Most Passing Yards | 455 | Troy Aikman | Dallas | November 26, 1998 | Minnesota | Min, 46-36 |
| Most Rushing Yards | 273 | O.J. Simpson | Buffalo | November 25, 1976 | Detroit | Det, 27-14 |
| Most Receptions | 12 | Brett Perriman | Detroit | November 23, 1995 | Minnesota | Det, 44-38 |
| | 12 | Marvin Harrison | Indianapolis | November 25, 2004 | Detroit | Ind, 41-9 |
| Most Rec. Yards | 303 | Jim Benton | Clev. Rams | November 22, 1945 | Detroit | Clev, 28-21 |

* NFL record

Meanwhile in Dallas, the second half of the doubleheader (CBS, 4:15 PM ET) will be a contest pitting teams that have combined to win 15 of 20 games – the AFC West-leading 8-2 Denver Broncos and the NFC East co-leading Cowboys, who share the top spot in the division with the New York Giants at 7-3.

Both teams enter the game on a high note, as Dallas defeated Detroit in Week 11 while the Broncos earned a 27-0 home victory over the New York Jets.

Dallas is a tough opponent for any Thanksgiving visitor, posting a 23-13-1 (.635) record on the day. Its first Thanksgiving game was against the Cleveland Browns on November 24, 1966, a 26-14 Cowboys win. The Broncos have a 2-6 Thanksgiving record and make their first appearance on the holiday since earning a 26-24 win over the Cowboys in 2001.

