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NFL-POST-3 1/16/07

FINAL STEP TO SOUTH FLORIDA! SAINTS CONFRONT BEARS, PATRIOTS TAKE ON COLTS IN CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

"Two wins away from having a ring on my finger for the rest of my life."

That's what quarterback **REX GROSSMAN** exulted after leading the Chicago Bears to victory last Sunday. And that's where every player on the four teams competing this weekend in the AFC and NFC Championship Games find themselves – one win away from Super Bowl XLI in South Florida on February 4 and another victory away from wearing a Super Bowl championship ring "for the rest of their lives."

The four teams going for those "two wins":

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

3:00 PM ET New Orleans Saints (11-6) at Chicago Bears (14-3) (FOX-TV)

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

6:30 PM ET New England Patriots (14-4) at Indianapolis Colts (14-4) (CBS-TV)

The 2006 playoffs through the first two rounds have been the **most competitive since the NFL went to the 12-team format in 1990**. The average margin of victory in the eight Wild Card and Divisional games was 7.3 points per game. That is the lowest point margin since 1990. The previous low was a 9.8-point average in 2003.

The AFC-NFC Championship lineup is an impressive one:

- New England plays in its third championship game in the past four years. Indianapolis plays in its second in that span.
- The combined winning percentage of the championship teams is .757 (53-17).
- They are a resilient bunch. They come off a Divisional Playoff weekend in which all four games were decided by a total of 18 points – the fewest since the divisional round began in 1970. Three of the four games were decided by three points or less – the first time ever in the Divisionals.
- The top two passing offenses of 2006 are featured, led by the two starting Pro Bowl quarterbacks – New Orleans, No. 1 (**DREW BREES**) and Indianapolis, No. 2 (**PEYTON MANNING**).
- The Saints are a resurrected team. In addition to going from "worst to first" in their division, winning it one year after finishing in last place the year before, they are the first team in history to go to a championship game after losing 13 or more games the year before.

A rundown of the AFC and NFC Championship Games:

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME FACTOID

DUNGY & SMITH A FIRST: An NFL milestone will be reached in this Sunday's championship games.

Two of the four head coaches – **TONY DUNGY** of Indianapolis and **LOVIE SMITH** -- are African-Americans. It will mark the first time in championship game history that African-American head coaches led two of the four teams involved. African-American head coaches in AFC-NFC Championship Games: Dungy (1999, 2003), **DENNIS GREEN** (1998, 2000) and **ART SHELL** (1990). No African-American head coach has coached in a Super Bowl.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS (11-6) at CHICAGO BEARS (14-3) (Sunday, 3:00 PM ET, FOX)
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STORYLINE: Top two seeds go at it

And that's just the way the No. 1 Bears want it. "This is the matchup we wanted," says Chicago **CB NATHAN VASHER**. "It's great for us, great for TV, everything. We wanted to see the highest-seeded team and beat the best."

It's January at Soldier Field, so the running game should play a big part in this one. Both teams come equipped with RB tandems. The Saints bring in "the big guy," as Bears **LB BRIAN URLACHER** calls him – 6-1, 232-pound **DEUCE MC ALLISTER** – and fleet rookie **REGGIE BUSH**. The pile-moving McAllister rumbled for a Saints playoff-record 143 yards and two TDs in the Divisional. Bush produced some spectacular moves, including a four-yard TD scamper and a 25-yard run that set up a field goal.

The Bears have their own ground-eating tandem in **THOMAS JONES** and **CEDRIC BENSON**, the second-year runner who has been worked into the rotation more and more recently. The two combined for 1,857 yards this year and 111 yards (with two Jones TDs) in the Divisionals.

New Orleans – 6-2 on the road this season – arrives with the league's No. 1 offense, controlled by the '06 passing yardage leader **DREW BREES** (4,418). His key targets have been **WRs MARQUES COLSTON** and **DEVERY HENDERSON**, but the Bears also will have to keep an eye on **TE BILLY MILLER**, who, after 129 yards this season, led Saints receivers last Saturday with 64 yards.

And for all the attention Chicago **QB REX GROSSMAN** has received – "he's taken us to 14 wins," says head coach **LOVIE SMITH** -- one stat is overlooked. Grossman's seven games of 100.0 passer ratings tied **PEYTON MANNING** for second most this year in the NFL behind St. Louis' **MARC BULGER** with eight.

Grossman's WR targets are as potent as New Orleans' – **BERNARD BERRIAN** (105 yards in the Divisional with a 68-yard TD catch) and **MUHSIN MUHAMMAD**.

Championship tidbit: Saints **RB REGGIE BUSH** can become the fourth Heisman Trophy winner to play in a Super Bowl in his rookie year, following **RB MIKE GARRETT**, Kansas City, 1966 season; **RB TONY DORSETT**, Dallas, 1977; and **RB RON DAYNE**, NY Giants, 2000. Only Dorsett won a Super Bowl ring.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS (14-4) at INDIANAPOLIS COLTS (14-4) (Sunday, 6:30 PM ET, CBS)

STORYLINE: Here we go again!

For the third time in the past four years, the former AFC East rivals – with identical records -- will meet in the playoffs. The game also marks the seventh time since realignment in 2002 that the clubs have met, including for the second time this season (27-20 Colts win on November 5). Overall leader during that span? The Patriots, 4-2, including both playoff meetings (2003 AFC Championship and 2004 AFC Divisional).

What does the Colts quarterback who has started all those games (vs. New England's **TOM BRADY**) have to say about Sunday's opponent? "The Patriots," says **PEYTON MANNING** simply, "are as great a team as there is...ever."

But the Colts have two things going for them right off: they have won the past two meetings, so they know the winners of three of the past five Super Bowls are not invincible...and they finally have a home playoff game against New England. It will be the first AFC Championship contested in a dome.

The meeting will be one full of great positional matchups.

There's Brady vs. Manning – pitting two of the most-recognized NFL quarterbacks, and the most successful since realignment in 2002. Manning has won 60 regular-season games since 2002, the most in that span, with Brady at No. 2 with 59. But Brady also comes equipped with a 12-1 playoff record and three Super Bowl titles.

Then there's the combo running backs. New England has basically split time between **COREY DILLON** and rookie **LAURENCE MARONEY** the whole year. Colts **RB DOMINIC RHODES** started every game, but **JOSEPH ADDAI** became the first rookie in history to rush for 1,000 yards without starting a regular-season game.

Next comes the well-known/getting-to-be-well-known wide receivers. Indy's **MARVIN HARRISON** and **REGGIE WAYNE** turned in their usual 1,000-yard seasons. New Patriots **JABAR GAFFNEY** and **RECHE CALDWELL** have really come on in the playoffs, with 18 (1 TD) and 12 catches (1 TD), respectively.

Finally, there's the big question: can the reenergized Colts defense, which finished 32nd against the rush this season, yet

has allowed only 44 and 83 rush yards in two playoff games, replicate this performance against Dillon/Maroney?

Championship tidbit: Patriots **QB TOM BRADY** has six game-winning drives in the fourth quarter or overtime in the playoffs since he became a starter in 2001 – the most of any quarterback in that time.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE 2006 PLAYOFFS

(Home team in CAPS)

WILD CARD WEEKEND

AFC: INDIANAPOLIS 23, Kansas City 8, January 6

NFC: SEATTLE 21, Dallas 20, January 6

AFC: NEW ENGLAND 37, N.Y. Jets 16, January 7

NFC: PHILADELPHIA 23, N.Y. Giants 20, January 7

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

AFC: Indianapolis 15, BALTIMORE 6, January 13

NFC: NEW ORLEANS 27, Philadelphia 24, January 13

NFC: CHICAGO 27, Seattle 24 (OT), January 14

AFC: New England 24, SAN DIEGO 21, January 14

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sunday, January 21:

NFC: New Orleans Saints (11-6) at Chicago Bears (14-3), 3:00 PM ET (FOX)

AFC: New England Patriots (14-4) at Indianapolis Colts (14-4), 6:30 PM ET (CBS)

SUPER BOWL XLI: Sunday, February 4 at Dolphin Stadium in South Florida, 6:30 PM ET (CBS)

PRO BOWL: Saturday, February 10 at Aloha Stadium, Honolulu, Hawaii, 6:00 PM ET (CBS)

2006 AFC Division Standings

AFC East												
Team	Overall Record	Head to Head	Division Record	Common Games Record	Conf Record	Strength of Victory (Wins)	Strength of Schedule (Wins)	Conf PF + PA Rank	Overall PF + PA Rank	Common Game Net Pts	Overall Net Pts	TD
y-New England	12-4-0		4-2-0	0-0-0	8-4-0	.469 (90)	.496 (127)	5	9	0	148	22
x-New York Jets	10-6-0		4-2-0	0-0-0	7-5-0	.400 (64)	.469 (120)	16	24	0	21	1
Buffalo	7-9-0		3-3-0	0-0-0	5-7-0	.446 (50)	.574 (147)	20	33	0	-11	-2
Miami	6-10-0		1-5-0	0-0-0	3-9-0	.531 (51)	.543 (139)	18	34	0	-23	-5
AFC North												
Team	Overall Record	Head to Head	Division Record	Common Games Record	Conf Record	Strength of Victory (Wins)	Strength of Schedule (Wins)	Conf PF + PA Rank	Overall PF + PA Rank	Common Game Net Pts	Overall Net Pts	TD
Yz-Baltimore	13-3-0		5-1-0	0-0-0	10-2-0	.447 (93)	.461 (118)	7	13	0	152	17
Cincinnati	8-8-0	1	4-2-0	0-0-0	6-6-0	.453 (58)	.535 (137)	15	25	0	42	3
Pittsburgh	8-8-0	1	3-3-0	0-0-0	5-7-0	.414 (53)	.496 (127)	15	23	0	38	6
Cleveland	4-12-0		0-6-0	0-0-0	3-9-0	.438 (28)	.535 (137)	28	52	0	-118	15
AFC South												
Team	Overall Record	Head to Head	Division Record	Common Games Record	Conf Record	Strength of Victory (Wins)	Strength of Schedule (Wins)	Conf PF + PA Rank	Overall PF + PA Rank	Common Game Net Pts	Overall Net Pts	TD
y-Indianapolis	12-4-0		3-3-0	0-0-0	9-3-0	.505 (97)	.500 (128)	16	25	0	67	9
Tennessee	8-8-0	1	4-2-0	0-0-0	5-7-0	.484 (62)	.570 (146)	25	47	0	-76	10
Jacksonville	8-8-0	1	2-4-0	0-0-0	5-7-0	.555 (71)	.531 (136)	8	13	0	97	10
Houston	6-10-0		3-3-0	0-0-0	6-6-0	.417 (40)	.504	28	53	0	-99	-

							(129)				12	
AFC West												
Team	Overall Record	Head to Head	Division Record	Common Games Record	Conf Record	Strength of Victory (Wins)	Strength of Schedule (Wins)	Conf PF + PA Rank	Overall PF + PA Rank	Common Game Net Pts	Overall Net Pts	TD
*yz-San Diego	14-2-0	1	5-1-0	0-0-0	10-2-0	.424 (95)	.457 (117)	7	8	0	189	26
x-Kansas City	9-7-0		4-2-0	0-0-0	5-7-0	.444 (64)	.492 (126)	17	26	0	16	3
Denver	9-7-0		3-3-0	0-0-0	8-4-0	.438 (63)	.531 (136)	17	25	0	14	5
Oakland	2-14-0		0-6-0	0-0-0	1-11-0	.406 (13)	.555 (142)	28	50	0	-164	-18

2006 NFC Division Standings

NFC East												
Team	Overall Record	Head to Head	Division Record	Common Games Record	Conf Record	Strength of Victory (Wins)	Strength of Schedule (Wins)	Conf PF + PA Rank	Overall PF + PA Rank	Common Game Net Pts	Overall Net Pts	TD
y-Philadelphia	10-6-0		5-1-0	0-0-0	9-3-0	.450 (72)	.477 (122)	9	21	0	70	13
x-Dallas	9-7-0		2-4-0	0-0-0	6-6-0	.438 (63)	.457 (117)	10	24	0	75	12
x-New York Giants	8-8-0		4-2-0	0-0-0	7-5-0	.422 (54)	.520 (133)	16	35	0	-7	-1
Washington	5-11-0		1-5-0	0-0-0	3-9-0	.513 (41)	.512 (131)	21	47	0	-69	-7
NFC North												
Team	Overall Record	Head to Head	Division Record	Common Games Record	Conf Record	Strength of Victory (Wins)	Strength of Schedule (Wins)	Conf PF + PA Rank	Overall PF + PA Rank	Common Game Net Pts	Overall Net Pts	TD
*yz-Chicago	13-3-0		5-1-0	0-0-0	11-1-0	.404 (84)	.430 (110)	2	5	0	172	18
Green Bay	8-8-0		5-1-0	0-0-0	7-5-0	.383 (49)	.500 (128)	22	47	0	-65	-9
Minnesota	6-10-0		2-4-0	0-0-0	6-6-0	.344 (33)	.488 (125)	18	40	0	-45	0
Detroit	3-13-0		0-6-0	0-0-0	2-10-0	.479 (23)	.523 (134)	25	51	0	-93	-13
NFC South												
Team	Overall Record	Head to Head	Division Record	Common Games Record	Conf Record	Strength of Victory (Wins)	Strength of Schedule (Wins)	Conf PF + PA Rank	Overall PF + PA Rank	Common Game Net Pts	Overall Net Pts	TD
Yz-New Orleans	10-6-0		4-2-0	0-0-0	9-3-0	.425 (68)	.461 (118)	6	18	0	91	9
Carolina	8-8-0		5-1-0	0-0-0	6-6-0	.469 (60)	.473 (121)	17	35	0	-35	-5
Atlanta	7-9-0		3-3-0	0-0-0	5-7-0	.375 (42)	.457 (117)	18	40	0	-36	-5
Tampa Bay	4-12-0		0-6-0	0-0-0	2-10-0	.422 (27)	.535 (137)	25	52	0	-142	-18

NFC West												
Team	Overall Record	Head to Head	Division Record	Common Games Record	Conf Record	Strength of Victory (Wins)	Strength of Schedule (Wins)	Conf PF + PA Rank	Overall PF + PA Rank	Common Game Net Pts	Overall Net Pts	TD
y-Seattle	9-7-0		3-3-0	0-0-0	7-5-0	.382 (55)	.453 (116)	14	33	0	-6	-2
St. Louis	8-8-0		2-4-0	0-0-0	6-6-0	.352 (45)	.465 (119)	18	38	0	-14	-7
San Francisco	7-9-0		3-3-0	0-0-0	5-7-0	.411 (46)	.500 (128)	28	56	0	-114	16
Arizona	5-11-0		4-2-0	0-0-0	5-7-0	.425 (34)	.500 (128)	22	48	0	-75	-9

x-clinched playoff berth
 y-clinched division title
 z-clinched first-round bye
 *-clinched home-field advantage



AFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
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NEW ENGLAND AT INDIANAPOLIS IN AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS – AFC EAST (14-4) AT INDIANAPOLIS COLTS – AFC SOUTH (14-4)

SERIES

	PATRIOTS	COLTS
LEADER	41-26 (RS); 2-0 (PS)	
STREAKS	6 of past 8	
COACHES VS. OPP.	Belichick: 9-5	Dungy: 4-4
COACHES PLAYOFF RECORD	13-2	7-8
VS. COMMON OPP.	NE: 8-3 (Buf. 2-0, Cin. 1-0, Den. 1-0, Hou. 1-0, Jax. 1-0, Mia. 1-1, NYJ 1-1, Ten. 1-0) Ind.: 8-3 (Buf. 1-0, Cin. 1-0, Den. 1-0, Hou. 1-1, Jax. 1-1, Mia. 1-0, NYJ 1-0, Ten. 1-1)	
PLAYOFF RECORD	19-11	15-16
LAST WEEK	W 24-21 at Chargers	W 15-6 at Ravens
LAST GAME	11/5/06: Colts 27 at Patriots 20. Indianapolis QB Peyton Manning throws for 326 yards & 2 TDs. Colts defense has 4 INTs & limits New England to 188 total net yards.	
LAST GAME AT SITE	11/7/05: Colts 40, Patriots 21. Indianapolis scores on 7 of 1st 8 possessions of game. Colts QB Peyton Manning throws for 321 yards & 3 TDs.	
LAST PLAYOFF	1/16/05: Patriots 20, Colts 3. New England QB Tom Brady throws 5-yard TD to WR David Givens & runs for another as Patriots advance to AFC Championship.	
BROADCAST	CBS (6:30 PM ET): Jim Nantz, Phil Simms, Solomon Wilcotts & Steve Tasker (Field reporters). Westwood One Radio: Marv Albert, Sam Wyche, John Dockery (Field reporter). SIRIUS: 124 (Westwood); 181 (Spanish); 125 (NE), 123 (Ind.).	

'06 STAT LEADERS

PASSING	Brady: 319-516-3,529 (3C)-24 (3C)-12-87.9	Manning: 362-557-4,397 (1C)-31 (1L)-9-101.0 (1L)
RUSHING	Dillon: 199-812-4.1-13 (T3C)	Addai (R): 226-1,081-4.8-7
RECEIVING	Caldwell: 61-760-12.5-4	Harrison: 95 (2C)-1,366 (2L)-14.4-12 (1C)
OFFENSE	335.6	379.4 (1C)
TAKE/GIVE	+8 (3C)	+7
DEFENSE	294.4	332.3
SACKS	Colvin: 8.5	Mathis: 9.5
INTs	Samuel: 10 (T1L)	Harper, June: 3
PR	Faulk: 10.6	Wilkins: 9.2
KOR	Maroney (R): 28.0 (2L)	Wilkins: 24.5
PUNTING	Sauerbrun: 40.8	Smith: 44.4 (3C)
KICKING	Gostkowski (R): 103 (43/44 PAT; 20/26 FG)	Vinatieri: 113 (38/38 PAT; 25/28 FG)

NOTES

TEAMS MEET in AFC Championship Game for 2nd time in past 4 years & for 3rd time in postseason play. New England is 2-0 against Colts in postseason. This marks 1st time in AFC history that neither top seed has advanced to conference title game as Indianapolis is 3rd seed & New England is 4th. Since 1970, home teams are 47-25 (.653) in conference championship games.

PATRIOTS: Team is 5-0 all-time in Conference Championship games since 1970...Among NFL teams w/ at least 10 playoff

games played, NE has 2nd-highest win pct. of .633 (19-11)...Head coach **BILL BELICHICK** is 13-2 (.867) in career playoff games, 2nd-best win pct. all-time behind **HOFer VINCE LOMBARDI** (9-1, .900)...**QB TOM BRADY** is 12-1 (.923) in career playoff starts, including 3-0 in Super Bowl. Brady is 1st QB in NFL history to win 12 of his 1st 13 playoff games. Brady has 100+ passer rating in 4 of last 6 playoff games – all 4 were wins. Brady has TD pass in 11 consec. playoff games, 3rd-longest such streak in NFL history (**BRETT FAVRE**, 16; **HOFer DAN MARINO** 13). Brady has started 13 postseason games & has thrown 0 INTs in 8 of those contests. Only **HOFer JOE MONTANA** has more postseason starts w/ 0 INTs (9 of 23 career playoff starts). Brady threw 51 times last week vs. SD, making NE 1st team to pass 50+ times in non-OT postseason game & win (26 previous times resulted in a loss). In two career postseason games indoors, Brady is 2-0 w/ 48 of 75 passing for 499 yards & 4 TDs vs. 1 INT (95.4 passer rating)...**RB COREY DILLON** has 3 career postseason rushing TDs for NE, 2 shy of franchise record held by **CURTIS MARTIN** (5). NE is 36-8 (.818) in games he's played & 1-4 (.200) in games he has missed since he joined team in 2004. **RB KEVIN FAULK** has played in 13 career playoff games, most by RB in team history...**WR JABAR GAFFNEY** has 18 catches for 207 yards in two playoff games this season, including 1st two career 100-yard playoff receiving games, after finishing '06 regular season w/ 11 receptions for 142 yards. **WR RECHE CALDWELL** led team with career-high 65 receptions in regular season...**CB ASANTE SMAUEL** (10) tied for NFL lead in INTs in regular season & has INT in 3 of last 4 playoff games, 2 resulting in TDs. Samuel is 1st player in NFL history to score postseason TDs on interceptions in consecutive seasons. **S RODNEY HARRISON** is only player in history w/ 25+ sacks (28.5) & 30+ INTs...Rookie **K STEPHEN GOSTKOWSKI** is 6 of 6 in FG tries in 2 career playoff games. Gostkowski became 1st rookie to kick a 4th-quarter game-winning FG in postseason since former Baltimore Colts **K JIM O'BRIEN** defeated the Dallas Cowboys on last-second FG in Super Bowl V.

COLTS: Team advances to AFC Championship Game for 3rd time in past 12 years. Colts are 2nd AFC team & 6th team overall since 1970 to advance to conference title game with 4,000-yard passer (**QB PEYTON MANNING**, 4,397), 1,000-yard rusher (rookie **RB JOSEPH ADDAI**, 1,081) & 2 1,000-yard receivers (**WR MARVIN HARRISON**, 1,366; **WR REGGIE WAYNE**, 1,310). Team is 1st No. 3 seed to host conference title game since 3rd-seeded Washington Redskins hosted 5th-seeded Minnesota Vikings in 1987. Over past 35 years, Redskins were only other team to hosted postseason game after road playoff game in previous week. Colts (12-4, 2006; 14-2, 2005; 12-4, 2004; 12-4, 2003) join Dallas (1992-95) as only NFL teams to win 12+ games in 4 consecutive seasons. Defense has allowed just 14 points total in 1st 2 playoff games...Head coach **TONY DUNGY** aims to join **HOFer MIKE DITKA & TOM FLORES** as 3rd person to win Super Bowl as player & head coach. Dungy has led his teams to playoffs in 8 consecutive seasons...In 2 career playoff games vs. NE, Manning has thrown 42+ passes in each contest, including a career-postseason high 47 times in 2003 AFC Championship. Manning owns 5-6 (.455) career record in postseason & looks to advance to his 1st Super Bowl. Manning has posted passer rating of 90.0+ in 3 of last 4 vs. NE. In 5 career games at home vs. NE, has passed for 1,345 yards with 12 TDs & 3 INTs for 99.8 passer rating...Addai is 7th rookie running back in AFC history to rush for over 1,000 yards & lead his team to conference title game & 1st since **JAMAL LEWIS** in 2000. He led all rookies w/ 1,081 rush yds, averaging 4.8 yds per carry w/ 7 rush TDs. Addai finished with 48 rushing yds & 1 TD in regular-season game vs. NE in 2006 mtg...Harrison has 10+ TD catches in NFL-record 8 consecutive seasons. Manning & Harrison have connected for 106 TD receptions – most in NFL history by any tandem. Harrison has nine 10+ reception games in 18 career matchups vs. NE & has 7 100-yard receiving games, including past 2. He finished with 145 yds receiving & 2 TDs in Week 9 victory at NE. Wayne has 15 receptions for 214 rec. yds in last 2 regular-season games vs. NE...**DE DWIGHT FREENEY** has 4.0 sacks in his last 4 postseason games. **S ANTOINE BETHEA** has 2 INTs in his 1st 2 playoff games...**K ADAM VINATIERI** has made 34 playoff FGs, most in NFL postseason history. He has scored in 19 consecutive postseason games, tied for 1st on NFL's all-time list with **HOFer GEORGE BLANDA**. Vinatieri booted 5 FGs last week at Bal., becoming 1st player to kick 5 FGs in 2 postseason games in a career (2003 AFC Championship Game vs. Ind.).

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NFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

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NFC-N-22 1/16/07

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
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NEW ORLEANS AT CHICAGO IN NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS – NFC SOUTH (11-6) AT CHICAGO BEARS – NFC NORTH (14-3)

SERIES

	SAINTS	BEARS
LEADER	Series tied 11-11 (RS); 0-1 (PS)	
STREAKS	3 of past 4	
COACHES VS. OPP.	Payton: 0-0	Smith: 1-0
COACHES PLAYOFF RECORD	1-0	1-1
VS. COMMON OPP.	NO: 5-0 (GB 1-0, NYG 1-0, SF 1-0, TB 2-0) Chi.: 4-1 (GB 1-1, NYG 1-0, SF 1-0, TB 1-0)	
PLAYOFF RECORD	2-5	15-16
LAST WEEK	W 27-24 vs. Eagles	W 27-24 vs. Seahawks (OT)
LAST GAME	11/6/05: Bears 20 at Saints 17 (Baton Rouge). Chicago K Robbie Gould connects from 28 yards with 6 seconds remaining. Bears QB Kyle Orton throws for 137 yards & 1 TD.	
LAST GAME AT SITE	9/22/02: Bears 23 at Saints 29. New Orleans QB Aaron Brooks passes for 3 TDs & rushes for another as Saints overcome 20-point deficit to beat Chicago.	
LAST PLAYOFF	1/6/91: Saints 6 at Bears 16. Chicago RB Neal Anderson runs for 102 yards. Bears' defense intercepts 3 New Orleans passes.	
BROADCAST	FOX (2:00 PM CT): Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Pam Oliver & Chris Myers (Field reporters). Westwood One Radio: Dave Sims, Bob Trumpy, Kevin Kiley, (Field reporter). SIRIUS: 124 (Westwood); 181 (Spanish); 125 (NO); 123 (Chi.).	

'06 STAT LEADERS

PASSING	Brees: 356-554-4,418 (1L)-26 (1C)-11-96.2 (1C)	Grossman: 262-480-3,193-23-20-73.9
RUSHING	McAllister: 244-1,057-4.3-10 (3C)	Jones: 296-1,210-4.1-6
RECEIVING	Bush (R) (RB): 88-742-8.4-2	Muhammad: 60-863-14.4-5
OFFENSE	391.5 (1L)	324.9
TAKE/GIVE	-4	+8 (2C)
DEFENSE	307.3	294.1 (1C)
SACKS	W. Smith: 10.5	Anderson (R): 12.0
INTs	4 tied: 2	R. Manning, Tillman: 5
PR	Bush (R): 7.7	Hester (R): 12.8 (1C)
KOR	Lewis: 24.7	Hester (R): 26.4 (1C)
PUNTING	Weatherford (R): 43.8	Maynard: 44.2
KICKING	Carney: 115 (46/47 PAT; 23/25 FG)	Gould: 143 (1L) (47/47 PAT; 32/36 FG)

NOTES

GAME FEATURES NFC's top 2 seeds. Bears (No. 1) won NFC North & Saints (No. 2) won NFC South...Teams meet in playoffs for 2nd time – Bears defeated Saints 16-6 at Soldier Field on 1/6/91.

SAINTS: Play in 1st Championship Game in team history. Head coach **SEAN PAYTON** was named AP Coach of Year.

Club has 10-3 (.769) mark in conference, including last week's win over Eagles. Saints are 1st team in NFL history to reach Championship Game year after finishing with 13 or more losses...All-Star **QB DREW BREES** set team records with 4,418 yards & 96.2 passer rating. Had 8 300-yard games, including 510-yard performance. In 2 career playoff games, Brees has 99.0 passer rating with 3 TDs vs. 1 INT, 562 yards & 68.9 comp. pct. (51 of 74). Offense led NFL with 65 plays of 20+ yards. Team tied for 1st with 16 pass TDs of 20+ yards & 18 total offensive TDs of 20+ yards...**RB DEUCE MC ALLISTER** led club with 1,057 rushing yards, his 4th 1,000-yard season in past 5 years. Last week, McAllister rushed for team-postseason record 143 yards & scored 2 TDs (1 rush, 1 rec.). McAllister is 3rd player in NFL history to rush for 140+ yards & score rush & rec. TD in playoff game. Last player to accomplish feat was **TONY DORSETT** (12/28/80). McAllister rushed for 116 yards in last meeting (10/12/03). Rookie **RB REGGIE BUSH** had team-best 88 receptions, most in NFL history for rookie RB. Former Saint **CHAD MORTON** holds NFL record for most catches in postseason by rookie RB with 15. Bush recorded 2 100-yard receiving games & 100-yard rushing game in season's final month. Scored on 4-yard rush TD in 1st playoff game. **T JAMMAL BROWN** was selected to start in his 1st Pro Bowl... **WR MARQUES COLSTON** led team with 1,038 yards & is 1st player drafted in 7th round or later to record 1,000 yards in rookie season & had team-best 8 TDs. **WR DEVERY HENDERSON** led NFL with 23.3 yards-per-catch avg. (32-745). **WR JOE HORN** has 4 TD catches in past 4 games vs. Bears...Pro Bowl **DE WILL SMITH** led team with career-best 10.5 sacks. **DE CHARLES GRANT** has recorded sack in 6 games this year & Saints have posted 6-0 mark. Has 2.0 sacks & 2 FFs in past 2 vs. Chi. **LB SCOTT FUJITA** had 1 INT in only game vs. Bears (12/28/03 w/ KC). **CB FRED THOMAS** had INT in last meeting...

BEARS: Team has won 9 NFL championships, most among 2006 playoff participants. Club makes 24th postseason appearance, tied for 4th-most in NFL history. Head coach **LOVIE SMITH** earned 1st career playoff victory last weekend. Smith has guided team to wins in 24 of past 30 games, including playoffs. Smith is 1st head coach to lead Bears to consecutive division titles since **MIKE DITKA**. Club posted 12-1 (.923) conference record this season, including playoffs...Team placed NFC-best 7 players on Pro Bowl team, most by franchise since club had 7 All-Stars in 1986: **ST BRENDON AYANBADEJO** (1st), **LB LANCE BRIGGS** (2nd), **K ROBBIE GOULD** (1st), **DT TOMMIE HARRIS** (2nd), rookie **CB-KR-PR DEVIN HESTER** (1st), **C OLIN KREUTZ** (6th) & **LB BRIAN URLACHER** (6th)...**QB REX GROSSMAN's** 282 yards passing vs. Seahawks was 2nd highest total in franchise playoff history (**SID LUCKMAN**, 286 vs. Wash., 12/26/43). Grossman has won 17 of 1st 23 career starts & is 14-3 (.824) in past 17...**RB THOMAS JONES** became 1st Bears RB to register 2 rushing TDs (9, 7) in playoff game since HOFer **WALTER PAYTON** in 1979 Wild Card game vs. Eagles. Led club with 1,210 yards, his 2nd consecutive 1,200-yard season. Jones is 1st Bear since Payton to post back-to-back 1,200-yard seasons. In past 15 when Jones has more than 20 attempts, club is 14-1 (.933) ...**WR BERNARD BERRIAN's** 68 yard TD reception last weekend was 2nd longest playoff reception in club annals (**WILLIE GAULT**, 75t, at Wash., 12/30/84). **WR MUHSIN MUHAMMAD** has posted career (192, 9/13/98) and 3rd highest (179, 12/5/04) single-game receiving totals vs. Saints. Has 2 100-yard games in postseason career. LB Urlacher is 1st Bear LB since HOFer **MIKE SINGLETARY** (10) to be named to 6 Pro Bowls. **DE MARK ANDERSON** led rookies with 12.0 sacks & set club rookie record. CB-KR-PR Hester set NFL record with 6 return TDs in season, including 108-yard return of missed field goal to tie longest play in NFL history. **CB RICKY MANNING JR.'s** 5 career postseason interceptions currently stands 3rd among active players (**RODNEY HARRISON & TY LAW**, 6)...K Gould's 49-yard OT game-winner ranks as 2nd longest such FG in NFL Playoff history (**GARY ANDERSON** at Hou., 12/31/89). Set team record with 32 FGs, converting 88.9 pct. & leading NFL with 143 points.

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