



NFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

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NFC-N-9 10/17/06

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OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

In life, success comes to those who seek opportunities and make the most of those chances. The same holds true in the National Football League.

Statistics show that in the NFL, teams with positive turnover ratios have a significantly higher probability of winning. Since 2000, clubs with more takeaways than giveaways have a combined 1,035-269-1 (.793) record.

"Turnovers play a big role in football," says NFL Network analyst **DICK VERMEIL**, who compiled a 120-109 (.524) record and two Super Bowl appearances during his 15-year NFL career (Philadelphia, St. Louis, Kansas City). "When I was coaching, turnovers were something I would emphasize, emphasize some more, and then keep emphasizing. On the field, in the meeting room, in training camp, in minicamp. All the time. We always stressed the importance of ball security and taking the ball away.

"I used to put up charts detailing the numbers every week. When you stress the importance of turnovers, the players understand. I used to hear players on the sidelines saying 'Hey, we're +1.' They knew exactly what the turnover differential was. And they knew their chances of winning the game were better."

A breakdown of teams' records within varying degrees of turnover ratio and the total for clubs with a positive differential:

SEASON	+1	+2	+3 OR MORE	TOTAL	WIN PCT.
2000	59-26	50-6	62-9	171-41	.807
2001	41-34	46-15	55-7	142-56	.717
2002	57-22-1	60-12	57-4	174-38-1	.819
2003	53-29	52-7	61-4	166-40	.806
2004	57-29	44-8	61-4	162-41	.798
2005	67-26	44-11	50-3	161-40	.801
2006	24-8	20-4	15-1	59-13	.819
TOTAL	358-174-1	316-63	361-32	1,035-269-1	.793

Chicago Bears defensive coordinator **RON RIVERA** knows the effect a turnover can have on the outcome of a game.

"Forcing a turnover is an impact play," he says. "It gets your offense back on the field and it swings momentum."

Swinging the momentum further into your favor is scoring points off those turnovers. This season, the three teams to score at least 50 points off turnovers have compiled a 13-4 (.765) record.

TEAM	POINTS OFF TURNOVERS	TAKEAWAYS	RECORD
Chicago Bears	64	17	6-0
Dallas Cowboys	52	10	3-2
Philadelphia Eagles	52	13	4-2

"To me, the game is about turnovers," says Bears head coach **LOVIE SMITH**, whose team leads the league with 64 points off turnovers en route to a perfect 6-0 record. "Our No. 1 goal defensively is to score on each play. From there, we talk about getting turnovers. That's what we preach. We practice it each day, stripping the ball, scoring after we get it. We have guys who have a knack for doing it."

Philadelphia Eagles head coach **ANDY REID** agrees. The Eagles have scored 52 points off turnovers this season, tied with the Dallas Cowboys for the second most in the NFL.

"Turnovers can be demoralizing to the opposing team, especially when points are scored as a result of them," says Reid. "It can be a real momentum swing during the course of the game."