

NFL PRESS BOX NOTES – WEEK 9

SCORING UP! Continuing a trend of recent years, scoring has increased as the season progresses. An average of 43.6 points per game has been scored over the past four weeks compared to 39.6 points per game in the season's first four weeks.

SUNDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: This Sunday night, the undefeated Indianapolis Colts (7-0) will seek to join the 1929-31 Green Bay Packers as the only teams in history to start consecutive seasons at 8-0. The Colts travel to New England to play the Patriots.

The game will feature two of the five winningest head coach-quarterback combinations since 1970. Colts quarterback **PEYTON MANNING** and head coach **TONY DUNGY** lead the category with a .775 winning percentage. Patriots quarterback **TOM BRADY** and head coach **BILL BELICHICK** rank fourth with a .750 percentage.

The top five winning percentages by a coach-quarterback combination since 1970 (minimum 50 games):

| QUARTERBACK/HEAD COACH | TEAM | W-L | PCT. |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Peyton Manning/Tony Dungy</i> | <i>Indianapolis *</i> | <i>55-16</i> | <i>.775</i> |
| Ken Stabler/John Madden | Oakland | 60-19-1 | .756 |
| Jim McMahon/Mike Ditka | Chicago | 46-15 | .754 |
| <i>Tom Brady/Bill Belichick</i> | <i>New England *</i> | <i>64-21</i> | <i>.753</i> |
| Jake Plummer/Mike Shanahan | Denver * | 37-13 | .740 |

* Active

VICTORIES 'R US: The Colts are not the only team vying for continued perfection this week. The Chicago Bears (7-0) seek to join Green Bay (1929-31, 1962) as the only clubs in history to start four seasons at 8-0. The Bears earned the mark in 1934, 1942 and in 1985 when they won Super Bowl XX.

If Indianapolis and Chicago both earn 8-0 marks this weekend, they will become only the fourth pair of teams in history to start 8-0 in the same season:

| SEASON | TEAMS |
|--------------------|---|
| 1931 | Green Bay Packers and Portsmouth Spartans |
| 1934 | Chicago Bears and Detroit Lions |
| 1990 | New York Giants and San Francisco 49ers |
| | |
| <i>2006</i> | <i>Chicago Bears and Indianapolis Colts (both 7-0)</i> |

NO PLACE LIKE HOME: Recently, the Bears have enjoyed success at home. They have won their past 10 consecutive home games -- the longest active streak in the NFL -- and have outscored opponents by 122 points (152 to 30) in their first four home games this season -- an average of 30.5 points per game.

If the Bears can outscore visiting Miami by 17 points this Sunday, they will achieve the largest point differential through any club's first five home games since 1970.

Following are the largest point differentials through a team's first five home games since 1970:

| SEASON | TEAM | POINT DIFFERENTIAL |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1973 | Dallas Cowboys | 138 |
| 1991 | Washington Redskins | 130 |
| 1976 | Denver Broncos | 128 |
| 1984 | Seattle Seahawks | 124 |
| 1999 | St. Louis Rams | 123 |
| | | |
| <i>*2006</i> | <i>Chicago Bears</i> | <i>122</i> |

* Through four home games

WINNING MARKS: Heading into the ninth week of the season, three teams – the Houston Texans (2-5), New Orleans Saints (5-2) and New York Jets (4-4) – have already equaled or surpassed their win totals of last year. Two more teams – the Baltimore Ravens (5-2) and Green Bay Packers (3-4) – can accomplish the feat this weekend.

If the Ravens and Packers do so, it will mark only the third time in 20 years that five teams have equaled or surpassed their previous season's win total through nine weeks.

Following are the most teams to equal/surpass their previous season's win total after nine weeks since 1986:

| YEA R | NUMBER OF TEAMS |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 2001 | 7 |
| 2004 | 6 |
| 1992 | 5 |
| | |
| 2006 | 3 * |

* Through eight weeks

THREE'S COMPANY: Through the first eight weeks of the season, 28.9 percent (33 of 114) of games have been decided by three points or less, a 4.8 percent increase at this point in the season from five years ago.

If games in this category continue to occur with the same frequency through the rest of the season, 2006 will mark the highest percentage of games decided by this margin since 1970.

The percentage of games decided by three points or less after eight weeks in the past five seasons:

| YEAR | PERCENT OF GAMES DECIDED BY THREE POINTS OR LESS AFTER EIGHT WEEKS |
|-------------|--|
| 2006 | 28.9 (33 of 114) |
| 2005 | 25.9 (30 of 116) |
| 2004 | 19.8 (23 of 116) |
| 2003 | 21.6 (25 of 116) |
| 2002 | 24.1 (28 of 116) |

TIKI TIME: This Sunday, New York Giants running back **TIKI BARBER** can reach an NFL milestone. With 9,502 career rushing yards and 4,960 receiving yards, Barber needs 40 receiving yards to join **MARCUS ALLEN** and **MARSHALL FAULK** as the only players in history to reach 9,000 rushing and 5,000 receiving yards.

In addition, Barber, who will play in his 146th career game, can reach the milestone in the second fewest games of the three players.

The fewest games to 9,000 rushing and 5,000 receiving yards:

| PLAYER | RUSH YDS. | RECEIVING YDS. | GAMES |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|------------|
| Marshall Faulk | 12,279 | 6,875 | 119 |
| Marcus Allen | 12,243 | 5,411 | 187 |
| | | | |
| Tiki Barber | 9,502 | 4,960 | 145 |

SUPER FOES: Last week, the Oakland Raiders defeated the Super Bowl XL champion Pittsburgh Steelers 20-13. This Monday, they will face the NFC defending champion Seattle Seahawks.

The game will mark the ninth time since 1990 that a team has faced the previous season's Super Bowl opponents in consecutive weeks. If the Raiders are victorious, they will be the first of those teams to win both meetings.

The teams to play the previous season's Super Bowl opponents in consecutive weeks since 1990:

| TEAM/YEAR | RESULTS | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Chicago Bears, 2002 | L vs. New England | L at St. Louis |
| Atlanta Falcons, 1996 | L at Dallas | L vs. Pittsburgh |
| Buffalo Bills, 1996 | L at Pittsburgh | W vs. Dallas |
| Green Bay Packers, 1994 | L at Buffalo | L at Dallas |
| Houston Oilers, 1994 | L at Dallas | L vs. Buffalo |
| New York Jets, 1993 | L vs. Dallas | L at Buffalo |
| Philadelphia Eagles, 1993 | L at Dallas | L vs. Buffalo |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Pittsburgh Steelers, 1990 | W at Denver | L at San Francisco |
| | | |
| <i>Oakland Raiders, 2006</i> | <i>W vs. Pittsburgh</i> | <i>??? at Seattle</i> |