



GILLETTE STADIUM
FOXBOROUGH
2:05 P.M.
CBS

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS



NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



SUNDAY, FEB. 4 5:30 P.M. MINNEAPOLIS



MINNESOTA VIKINGS

LINCOLN FINANCIAL FIELD
PHILADELPHIA
5:40 P.M.
FOX



PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Brady's hand making headlines

FOXBOROUGH, MASS. (AP) — Tom Brady is staying mum on his status for the AFC championship game after suffering a right-hand injury earlier in the week.

Brady said a bit contentiously only "We'll see" at a news conference Friday when asked whether he would play in Sunday's AFC title game.

The quarterback wore red gloves and responded to several other questions about how much he practiced or how he sustained the injury by saying "I'm not talking about that."

Brady was a limited participant in practice Wednesday. He sat out practice Thursday and wore a glove on his injured hand. He usually only wears a glove on his non-throwing hand.

Brady appeared on the Patriots' weekly injury report several times during the latter half of this season with injuries to both his Achilles tendon and his left shoulder.

The four-time Super Bowl MVP has never missed a playoff start during his 18-year career.

James Clark photo

Rob Gronkowski is a match-up nightmare. The All-Pro tight end led the Patriots in yards and touchdowns this season.

and Malik Jackson (97) could add to Brady's discomfort; Brady's biggest dislike is not being able to set himself to throw.

Trying to keep that pass rush honest will be the most underrated O-line in the game, paced by LT Nate Solder (77) and C David Andrews (60).

White has been super reliable in past postseasons, but Lewis has become the primary running back.

Jacksonville's cocky secondary features All-Pro CB Jalen Ramsey (20) and solid A.J. Bouye (21), and two castoff safeties who have been solid, Barry Church (42) and Tashaun Gipson (39). They will unquestionably be challenged by Brady's receiving group.

WHEN THE JAGUARS (12-6) HAVE THE BALL

That impressive performance in Pittsburgh very likely will be needed

for the Jaguars to have a chance. That means QB Blake Bortles (5) must get time from his blockers, led by C Brandon Linder (65) and rookie LT Cam Robinson (74), who is big and nasty and plays with an edge, against a spoty pass rush. New England doesn't have any studs in the front seven, but everyone is effective.

Jacksonville will look to run with stud rookie Leonard Fournette (27) and valuable backup T.J. Yeldon (24). The Patriots held Tennessee, a decent run team, to 65 yards. The Jags, though, led the league in rushing yardage, and Bortles is a threat to run.

Jaguars receivers Marqise Lee (11) and Allen Hurns (88) can be a dangerous pair — Lee is vastly improved — and with the Patriots likely to try to take Fournette out of the game, how those two manage against an inconsistent secondary will be a key. In the playoffs, however, New England's DBs, particularly S Devin McCourty (32) and CB Malcolm Butler (21) tend to step up big time.

Jacob Dodd photo

If the Jaguars offense struggles, punt returner Jayden Mickens will be counted on to make big special-teams plays.

James Clark photo

Stefon Diggs is the toast of Minnesota after his game-winning catch last week against the Saints. The Vikings will need more from their big-play receiver against the stout Eagle defense.

Vikings, Eagles win with the 'D'

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — One team has a suffocating defense. The other has the NFL's No. 1 unit.

Defense should win at least the NFC championship.

Two of the league's elite defenses go at it Sunday when the Philadelphia Eagles (14-3) host the Minnesota Vikings (14-3) in the conference title game.

"They have a great defense, we have a great defense," Eagles linebacker Nigel Bradham said. "Whoever is most complete will win."

The Vikings allowed the fewest yards (275.9) and fewest points (15.8) per game. The Eagles were fourth in yards allowed (306.5) and fourth in points (18.4).

May the best defense reach the Super Bowl.

Photo courtesy of Eagles.com

Nick Foles will be the target of the NFL's best defense Sunday.

Eagles, led by DT Fletcher Cox (91), were stingier against the ground game.

WHEN THE EAGLES (14-3) HAVE THE BALL:

The Vikings have the NFL's top-ranked defense overall, with splits of second against the rush and the pass. It is led by cornerback Xavier Rhodes (29) and safety Harrison Smith (22), both All-Pro, and a terrific line featuring end Everson Griffen (97).

Philly's challenges include protecting QB Nick Foles (9), who's not nearly as creative or elusive as Carson Wentz was. Foles needs time to connect with the likes of WRs Alshon Jeffery (17), Nelson Agholor (13) and TE Zach Ertz (86). The Eagles have a deep backfield, though the way they use Jay Ajayi (36), LeGarrette Blount (29) and Corey Clement (30) can be confounding.

If they get room to run, it will be because All-Pro center Jason Kelce (62) and RT Lane Johnson (65) won against that impressive D-line on the other side.

Foles comes off a strong performance that should silence the doubters. He also is facing a better defense — the best D — this week.

THE MATCHUP

WHEN THE VIKINGS (14-3) HAVE THE BALL

Watch out for Stefon Diggs (14) on a desperation pass!

Seriously, Vikings receivers are more dangerous than given credit for. Indeed, that's also true for Philadelphia's wideouts.

Diggs, breakout star Adam Thielen (19), Jarius Wright (17) and even journeyman Michael Floyd (18) can make plays, though the big confrontations will be Thielen and Diggs against CBs Jalen Mills (31) and Ronald Darby (41). These matchups favor QB Case Keenum (7), who has gone from undistinguished fill-in to standout clutch passer.

The passing game will be a key for the Vikings, who will want to get TE Kyle Rudolph (82) involved early. The Vikes rank seventh in rushing yardage gained this season — Latavius Murray (25) led the way with 842 yards and eight touchdowns, and was backed by Jerick McKinnon (21). The

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