
A Passing Fantasy Issue 176

NFLBP Player Newsletter 2007 Preseason

ed Robert Crowther

Thanks to Peter for his contribution this time.
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Or email at 'gameplan@crowther.info'. Unfortunately, with the departure of most of the 'old guard' from NFLBP the newsletter is going to get a good deal more sporadic this season. I'll still get a few issues out now and again but won't be doing it to any regular schedule, and the focus will be on getting a printed copy of the newsletter to Danny rather than getting one emailed every turn (not least because the email list is now drastically reduced!). If you want to discuss Gameplan with other coaches have a look at the Yahoo! Group:

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/gameplan>

RAVENOUS (The View From Baltimore) **Peter Kneil**

Superbowl review

Congratulations to the Rams for winning, but it looks like they had to survive a 4th quarter fightback by the Raiders. The Rams narrowly won the first half, twice scoring TDs while the Raiders could only manage a couple of FGs. The score at half-time was 16-6 to the Rams. Defences were on top in the 3rd quarter, as neither team could score, but the Raiders finished strongly with 10 points in the 4th, but a Rams FG was enough to separate the two sides.

It seems that turnovers played a big part as the Raiders managed 25 first downs compared to 14 for the Rams. The Raiders threw 2 interceptions and lost a fumble while the Rams had no turnovers. The Raiders also comfortably outgained the Rams yardage wise, although the Rams did rush for a 49 yard TD.

A great effort by the Raiders but the Rams complete the perfect season in Martyn's last

game in charge.

2007 Preview

Unfortunately BP will be a weaker league next season due to the loss of 3 top coaches, as Martyn, Darren & Goz have left the Rams, Bengals & Packers respectively. This should leave the Giants in charge of the NFC, although even uncoached the Rams will be very hard to beat, as Martyn is sure to have left a solid plan in place. With no Darren at the helm of the Bengals, I should have a great chance to win the AFC Central but the Browns will push me all the way. Even if we're successful, this year's conquerors, the Raiders will be waiting for us in the playoffs, and they will fancy their chances of going one better this year.

SUPERBOWL REVIEW

1st Quarter

A sack saw the Rams go three and out on their first possession, but the Raiders handed the ball right back to them with a fumble on their first play from scrimmage. Handed the ball inside the Oakland twenty, the Rams still made heavy going of it and had to settle for a field goal. The Raiders took the ensuing kickoff and drove the length of the field until they faltered in sight of the goal line, failing to convert a 3rd and 1 at the St Louis 4 and being forced to settle for a field goal themselves. The Rams went to the ground in a big way and managed to exploit the blitzing Oakland defense with a trap block for a 49 yard touch-down, then missed the PAT to keep the game interesting. The Raiders' next drive got off to a poor start as a holding penalty was followed by a sack to leave them facing 3rd and 27 at their own three yard line, but, despite the St Louis defense being ready for it, they completed the long pass to get the first down as time expired in the first quarter.

2nd Quarter

The Raiders didn't take full advantage of their

great escape and the drive petered out near midfield. The punt went for a touchback and the Rams began their most impressive drive of the game. A mixture of short and long passing with inside and outside runs saw them march 80 yards in ten plays for the touchdown without even being forced to convert the third down. Oakland got the ball back and were looking to make a quick impression on the thirteen point lead, but disaster struck on the second play of the drive as an unwise long pass into a deep zone was picked off and St Louis got the ball back on their own 38. At first it looked like the Rams were going to strike a killer blow but the Raiders' defense stiffened just on the edge of field goal range and forced a punt which was touched back. With the two minute warning approaching the Oakland offense moved quickly down the field but faltered as they reached the redzone and were forced into kicking a 35 yard field goal with 34 seconds left. St Louis got the ball back but did little more than run out the clock.

3rd Quarter

Oakland started the second half in good form, driving 56 yards in ten plays to get in field goal range before two consecutive sacks saw them pushed right back out again and they were forced to punt. St Louis went three and out and the next Oakland drive went to midfield before another ill advised pass into a deep zone was picked off. Again St Louis were forced to go three and out and Oakland got the ball back on their own 20 with less than four minutes to go in the third quarter and still trailing by 10. Once again the Raiders' offense moved quickly down the field and, eight plays and 78 yards later they were second and goal at the St Louis two yard line as the third quarter ended.

4th Quarter

The first play of the fourth quarter saw Oakland stuffed on an inside run for a loss of two, and the run on third down was pulled short at the St Louis one yard line. Oakland settled for a field goal to bring the lead down to seven points. The Rams offense came to life following the kickoff, getting their first FD of the second half on the first play and following that up with two more to get into field goal range. The Raiders' defense stiffened on third and

short and St Louis were forced to settle for a field goal to put their lead back to ten. A short kickoff and a solid return saw the Raiders in good field position to start their next drive and they took full advantage going 60 yards in three minutes to get their first touchdown of the game, and narrow the gap to three points, with just under four and a half minutes left on the clock. Oakland needed the ball back quickly and a crucial play on third and one came up just before the two minute warning, the St Louis quarterback managed to get two yards and give the Rams another set of downs. The Raiders did stop the next third and one but getting the ball back with only 11 seconds on the clock left them needing a miracle and they finished the game going backwards.

Aftermath

Coach Crowther was disappointed with the result - "Twice we failed to get the ball in the endzone from inside their five yard line and had to settle for field goals, that failure was the difference in the end. We played well but made too many mistakes." However, he attempted to be magnanimous in defeat - "Coach Williams has been a tremendous asset to the Rams and to the NFLBP, for his efforts over the years he maybe deserved a good result in his last game."