

Welcome to the long awaited 177th issue of A Passing Fantasy. It's unlikely I'll get another newsletter produced this season, but, if you wanted to send me a contribution anyway, email me at gameplan@crowther.info. Now, on with the playoff previews.

Cleveland Browns at Oakland Raiders

Week 11 meeting: Cleveland 8 at Oakland 24.

Raiders offense: 1st, Run offense: 12th, Pass offense: 1st.

Browns defense: 4th, Run defense: 4th, Pass defense: 8th.

The Raiders have lived off big plays all season and it was no different in week eleven - a couple of big plays were responsible for most of the Oakland points. If Cleveland can avoid giving up the long one they have a good chance of keeping the Raiders to a low score.

A Passing Fantasy Issue 177 2007 Season, Divisional Round

Editor: Rob Crowther

Browns offense: 3rd, Run offense: 3rd,
Pass offense: 9th.

Raiders defense: 3rd, Run defense: 1st,
Pass defense: 20th.

The strength of the Browns offense clashes directly with the strength of the Raider defense. Cleveland were almost completely shut down in week eleven, they need to make some plays through the air to haveeeee a chance.

Baltimore Ravens at New England Patriots

Week 3 meeting: Baltimore 28 at New England 31

Patriots offense: 7th, Run offense: 24th,
Pass offense: 2nd.

Ravens defense: 1st, Run defense: 2nd,
Pass defense: 5th.

New England depend almost completely on the passing game to score points. In week three the Ravens did an OK job for three quarters but let themselves down in the fourth - I expect them to do a better job this time.

Ravens offense: 5th, Run offense: 6th,
Pass offense: 5th.

Patriots defense: 11th, Run defense: 3rd,
Pass defense: 21st.

Baltimore have the best balanced offense in the playoffs while the Patriots have one of the weaker defenses. However, New England do a good job of not giving up the big plays, and when they force offenses onto long drives they get turnovers - second most in the AFC this season. The Patriots' best chance of winning is to force



turnovers and capitalize on them.

Prediction: Ravens by 7.

Philadelphia Eagles at Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Week 11 meeting: Eagles 16 at Bucs 48

Bucs offense: 2nd, Run offense: 1st, Pass offense: 20th.

Eagles defense: 13th, Run defense: 7th, Pass defense: 19th.

Philadelphia's defensive strengths match up with the Tampa offense, but it seems like they're not quite good enough for it to do any good. It's unlikely the Bucs will rack up 48 points again, but they should have little difficulty moving the ball.

Eagles offense: 12th, Run offense: 14th, Pass offense: 14th.

Bucs defense: 8th, Run defense: 15th, Pass defense: 3rd.

Like the other side of the ball, it seems the Eagles aren't quite good enough to match up. They got something going through the air in week eleven, but it's tempting to believe that was the result of a couple of lucky plays rather than something they can exploit here.

Prediction: Bucs by 17

New York Giants at Carolina Panthers

Week 13 meeting: Giants 11 at Panthers 14

Panthers offense: 13th, Run offense: 21st, Pass offense: 4th.

Giants defense: 16th, Run defense: 18th, Pass defense: 10th.

A average offense against an average defense, mistakes will probably be the difference. Carolina should keep trying to run the ball, but they key for them will be avoiding interceptions.

Giants offense: 10th, Run offense: 4th, Pass offense: 19th.

Panthers defense: 2nd, Run defense: 8th, Pass defense: 2nd.

Carolina have an excellent defense, but are better against the pass than the run. In week thirteen the Giants were able to rack up over two hundred yards on the ground but didn't manage to get in the endzone. A bit more decisiveness in the redzone is required.

Prediction: Giants by 1

Draft Highlights

Two blue chip quarterbacks sat undrafted at the end of the first round as the entire league seemed entirely satisfied with their incumbent starters. The top two picks were, unusually, a tight end followed by an offensive lineman. There was then a run on running backs as the Bills and Packers picked up the best athletes to be taken in the first round. The Broncos selected the first defensive player, a linebacker, with the fifth pick. Every team managed to pick up a player with at least three strengths in the first round, and there are only the two five strength QBs left with more than two strengths. On the face of it this should be a case of the rich getting richer as few of the teams in the top half of the draft are going to gain any advantage over those in the bottom half.