

Big game leaves little appeal

**ONE
on
ONE**

with **Matt
Abbatacola**
of *WSCR 670 AM
The Score*



The New England Patriots are on the verge of an NFL first, a perfect season. Well, an NFL first since the regular season expanded to 16 games, that is. There has never been more of a foregone conclusion heading into a Super Bowl than there is this year. The Patriots will finish with a record of 19 and 0 after they defeat the New York Giants. Unless you're a New England fan, you will find no joy in a Patriots victory except that the 1972 Miami Dolphins will finally go away.

With a perfect season on the brink, why does this game offer even the biggest NFL fan such little reason to watch?

Is it the double digit spread set by the experts in Vegas? New England averaged 43 points a game after only allowing 17 points to their opponents. They are considered by many to be the best offense in NFL history, or at least have had the best offensive season by a team ever.

Tom Brady should be reason enough to cheer for the Patriots. He is the greatest quarterback to play the position. He was drafted in the sixth round and after Super Bowl XLII he will collect his fourth ring. He has never had a Hall of Fame running back behind him and the wide receiver portion of the Patriots locker room was built with a revolving door at the entrance. It truly is an incredible story. That being said, I don't like or dislike him. He doesn't have the charisma or appeal to non-Patriots fans of a Brett Favre or a John Elway.

Then there is Patriots head coach Bill Belichick. He is on a very short list as one of the greatest coaches of all-time. The only problem is that as a person he's not in the same league as he is a football coach. There was the incident of shoving a cameraman after a Patriots victory over the New York Jets. He pushed past a victorious Peyton



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Manning after the Colts defeated the Patriots in last year's AFC Championship game. His personal life made the tabloids after a messy divorce that included circumstances that brought his character into question. He has never been confused for a very likeable guy within the media. This season's incident of videotaping the Jets to gain an unfair advantage cost Belichick and the Patriots draft picks, money and the respect of many football fans. He is a hard guy to cheer for, unless you're a New England fan.

When Randy Moss, one of the most unlikeable guys in the NFL, is portrayed as a guy worth pulling for, it shows just how hard it is to root for the Patriots. That said, Moss joining the 2007 Patriots was the second greatest NFL trade of all-time. He has been the force, along with Brady, that has made

New England an unstoppable offensive unit. So what is the greatest NFL trade of all-time? Favre from Atlanta to Green Bay.

Then there is the New York factor. Who hates New York more than Chicago? The '69 Mets, the Patrick Ewing-led Knicks against Michael and Scottie during the championship years, and the Bill Parcells-coached Giants who won more championships than the Ditka-led Bears. I'm sure that Eli Manning is a nice guy but his golly-gee-aw-schucks-approach to the media makes him hard to watch. Giants head coach Tom Coughlin will most likely explode on the sideline during the game. His face gets so red that he makes Ditka's orange mug look colorless.

More so this year than any other, the events and commercials that surround the Super Bowl will be more appealing and satisfying to watch than the actual game. I will watch the game or at least the first half. I will be skipping the halftime show and most likely the second half. Why? The game will be over by halftime.

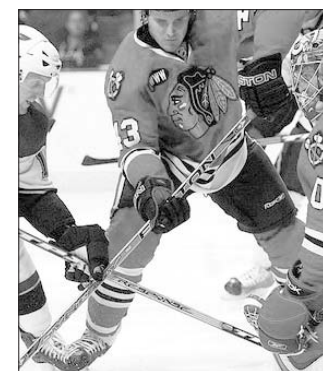
Congratulations to the Patriots, good-bye (thankfully) to the '72 Dolphins, and just think, Cubs pitchers and catchers report on Valentine's Day.



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*FEBRUARY & MARCH 2008



**Chicago
Blackhawks**

BLACKHAWKS (Hockey) Home games only

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
February 17	Colorado	Noon
February 20	Minnesota	7:30
February 27	Phoenix	7:30
March 2	Vancouver	2:00
March 5	Anaheim	7:30
March 7	San Jose	7:30
March 9	Edmonton	2:00
March 12	Carolina	7:30

STEEL (Hockey) Home games only

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
February 2	Indiana	7:30
February 3	Ohio	8:00
February 15	Sioux City	7:30
February 16	Sioux City	7:30
February 22	Tri-City	7:30
February 23	Tri-City	7:30
February 26	Waterloo	7:30
March 14	Green Bay	7:30
March 21	Waterloo	7:30
March 22	Indiana	7:30
March 28	Ohio	7:30

WOLVES (Hockey) Home games only

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
February 2	Rockford	7:00
February 9	Milwaukee	7:00
February 10	Manitoba	3:00
February 13	Houston	7:00
February 20	Manitoba	7:00
February 24	Iowa	4:00
March 1	Milwaukee	7:00
March 2	Providence	6:00
March 7	Iowa	7:30

SHAMROX (Lacross) Home games only

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
February 16	New York	7:00
February 24	Buffalo	2:00
March 1	Rochester	7:00
March 29	Minnesota	7:00

BULLS (Basketball) Home games only

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
February 12	New Orleans	7:30
February 14	Miami	7:00
February 22	Denver	7:00
February 29	Washington	7:00
March 4	Memphis	7:30
March 6	Cleveland	6:00
March 11	Utah	7:30
March 14	Philadelphia	7:30
March 18	New Jersey	7:30
March 20	San Antonio	7:00

STORM (Soccer) Home games only

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
February 2	New Jersey	7:00
February 23	Baltimore	7:00
March 8	La Raza de Monterrey	7:00
March 22	Baltimore	7:00