

EMPTYWHEEL'S FAMOUS FOOTBALL TRASH TALK THREAD* - DIVISION PLAYOFF EDITION

We are now down to genuine pro football. No more Cinderellas; the teams that ought to be here are here. No more "best of the rest" discussions, no more silly BCS games without the best teams playing. Three out of the four games are being played outdoors, where football is meant to be played. Hoosiers, I'm talking about you; you got to toughen up, if you can't plant your butts outside for three hours to watch Peyton and the Colts, you aren't real fans. Time to get down and dirty.

Pats and Jags – The Asterisk Bowl! The Jags seemed a lot tougher before they wimped out and took down their website asterisk on the Pats. Thats it, they are toast. Belichick was already going to use the asterisk bit, now he and the Pats are going to flat out disrespect the Jags as a bunch of wusses. For the Jags, DT John Henderson has a touchy hammy, but will play and LB Mike Peterson has a bad paw and is doubtful. The Pats don't even have any injuries to report; uh oh, 16-0 and they are fully healthy. The Jags are a very good team, are well coached, and earned their way here; but they are done now. Buh bye.

Pack and Seagulls – Jonathan Livingston Seahawk is flying in to TitleTown. Prodigal sons Holmgren and Hasselbeck return to that from which they came. A couple of weeks ago, I would have told you Seattle wouldn't get out of the wildcard matchup. Last week, it was close, but I thought the Skins would eke out a win. Give em credit though, the Seahawks are playing well, and Holmgren is a good coach. I have to admit, I am more than a little worried. However, Brett Favre is loose and ready. Favre is always ready for some football; he is a 38 year old kid on a

playground. I think its different this time though, because he has already indicated he is coming back, so he is not worried about it being his last game and he believes in the kids around him, and they believe in him. Ryan Grant looks like a real find at running back and his style is perfect for this kind of field and this time of year. Injury report: For the Pack, CB Charles Woodson and TE Greg Jennings are slightly nicked at the toe and groin respectively, but are good to go. For the Gulls, WR Deon Branch and DE Pat Kerney are questionable and Shaun Alexander (wrist), DJ Hackett (ankle) and Matt Hasselbeck (bunch of stuff) are probable. Phred what do you think? Man is that a stupid question! Favre forevah baby! The kid with the graying stubble leads the way and takes the day. GO PACK GO!

Bolts at Colts – LT is one great running back. Antonio Gates is a fantastic tight end, but he is hurt; doesn't look like he will play and if he does, he is really hobbled. For the Colts, wideouts Marvin Harrison and Anthony Gonzales are both returning from injuries but appear ready to go. The Chargers had to reach deep to muster up 17 points and scrape out a win at home versus the Titans, a scrappy team for sure, but far short of the Colts. Peyton Manning, his flock of receivers, Bob Sanders and the Indy D are just too much to overcome. Sorry randiego, the Colts cakewalk.

Gents at the Boys – No, I am not talking about GOP Congressmen at the House Page Dorm. Its the New York Football Gents at the Dallas Cowboys, you know, America's team, but only because Texans think Texas is the only state in the union. This is a tough game to pick. The Cowboys seem like a far superior team, but they have been fairly iffy lately. Maybe they are all spending to much time watching Romeo and Jessica on Entertainment Tonight or something. I understand that the Boys have some receiver that has a sprained ankle; whatever his name is, I expect he will be running wild through the Giants secondary, which is wounded with Sam Madison so hobbled he is unlikely to play.

Plaxico Buress is likely to play, but is not in good shape with his ankle. I really really don't know which way this one will go, but here's the call: Upset Special – Eli's coming, the Boys are left in a heap.

The much coveted "Emptywheel Shiny Hubcap Award" for last week went to CTuttle, pontificating prognosticator extraordinaire. Who will step up to the plate this weekend? Who you taking? Why? The tundra is frozen and the beer is cold; time to get it on!

* What? You thought there wouldn't be an asterisk? Heh heh, of course there's gonna be an asterisk! Bill Bell wasn't cheating; he is just the AV nerd from school, that ran the overhead projector for Ms. Peach, who never grew up. He likes film; get over it, his team went 16-0.

UPDATE: From the desk of Miss Manners. That would be EW. I think all those weeks of picking the Jags have her spooked, because she isn't projecting the cocky air of confidence appropriate of a hard core Pats fan. Cowboy up sister, you might have the best team in NFL history! Marcy, from the comments:

Looks like there's decent weather in Foxboro (40s tomorrow, probably 30s by game time); had it been snowy and colder, I might have gone with the Jags, but luckily, I can root for the Pats, particularly now that their honor has been slighted. Just for old time's sake—if they lose it'll be Rodney Roids' fault.

I'm with all of you: Bob Sanders will eat Phillip Rivers for breakfast (particularly with Gates in dodgy shape, if he even plays), and with a full receiver corps, the Colts are back in business.

Gotta root for the Packers. Yes, the Squawks looked great last weekend. But Hasselback has a bruised thigh. You can't bring a bruised thigh into Lambeau

and expect to walk out of there!!!

Ah, da 'Boys. I keep rooting against the G-Men and getting burned. But if T.O plays, I still gotta go with da 'Boys. Though geez—who'd a thunk that we'd be saying that Eli looks better than Romo? This will be close, and probably the most interesting game of the weekend (though I think the Jags will make the Pats interesting, too).