



BIG GAME Preview



Spotlight on Tampa Bay

After cruising into the AFC championship with a six-game winning streak, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers punched their Super Bowl LV ticket.

The last time the team lost this season was against their upcoming opponents, the Kansas City Chiefs. The match-up on Nov. 29 concluded with a close score of 27-24, allowing Patrick Mahomes and friends to continue their championship campaign.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers haven't made a playoff appearance since the 2007 season and have failed to take the field on Super Bowl Sunday since 2003. Fortunately for the team, quarterback Tom Brady is no stranger to the big game's immense spotlight. Super Bowl LV will mark the veteran's 10th appearance. He will aim to extend his title record to seven lifetime wins.

Super Bowl LV will be the first time in NFL history that a team hosts in its home stadium. The Bucs spent their entire playoff run playing as the away team, so home-field advantage may prove to be an even bigger edge.

BRADY'S BACK ... BACK AGAIN

One of the most recurring questions entering the 2020



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season was whether Tom Brady could find success without Bill Belichick, and vice versa. The answer is clear after the New England Patriots failed to make the playoffs for the first time since the 2009 season. A few hundred miles south, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers are becoming a dominant force in

the NFC.

The other inquiry made by sport's analysts and fans regarded Brady's age. At 43, the quarterback's performance with a new team was under scrutiny. Of course, defying father time is where Tom excels. He ended the season shattering multiple Buccaneers

QB records, including:

- A record-setting 40 touchdowns, previously 33.
- Finished first place all-time amongst Bucs QBs, with a rating of 72.4.
- First QB in franchise history to throw six postseason touchdown passes. (The previous record of five existed for 45

years.)

Of course, Brady couldn't do it alone. The Buccaneers became an NFL supergroup with multiple off-season moves. They recruited dominant receivers, extended defensive player contracts, and enlisted Tom's favorite tight end, Rob Gronkowski.

Can the Chiefs Go Back to Back?

After dashing the hopes of the red-hot Buffalo Bills, Andy Reid and his Kansas City Chiefs closed out the AFC Championship with a score of 38-24.

The Bills took a controlling 9-0 lead out of the gate thanks to a few uncharacteristic mistakes by the Chiefs. However, once the nerves settled, Patrick Mahomes and his all-star stable hit big plays and never looked back.

The defending Super Bowl champions will enter the Raymond James Stadium with hopes of becoming the first back-to-back winners since the New England Patriots achieved it during the 2003-2004 seasons. The Kansas City Chiefs and Tampa Bay Buccaneers will square up in a rematch of Week 12, where the reigning champs took a 27-24 win after Mahomes threw for a whopping 462 yards.

HOW THEY GOT HERE

The Chiefs ended their regular season with the best record in the league at 14-2 and put-up double-digit victories in five of their matchups. The Kansas City roster remained much of the same from their previous Super Bowl-winning season. Contract extensions should ensure the all-pro roster will continue in the following years.



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Patrick Mahomes signed the biggest NFL contract in history after locking down a 10-year deal, worth up to \$503 million. The most targeted tight end, Travis Kelce, extended his tenure with a four-year, \$57 million contract. The Cheetah, Tyreek Hill, agreed to a three-year, \$54 million deal last year.

RECORD-BREAKING SEASON

The Kansas City Chiefs started their season breaking franchise and NFL records. After their first four games, they became the first team in history to begin their year at 4-0 during four consecutive seasons. Other milestones they clinched included:

- The franchise record of successive wins, including the playoffs at 12 straight victories.
 - They held a 12-1 record after week 14 for the first time in franchise history.
 - They finished the season undefeated on the road for a team first.
- Super Bowl LV will pit

Patrick Mahomes against Tom Brady for the fifth time in their careers. The series between the two titans is tied at 2-2. The last time the two met under playoff implications, Brady and the New England Patriots beat out the Chiefs in the AFC Championship and ultimately took the crown in Super Bowl LIII.

The Offensive Matchup

On Feb. 7, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers will take on the defending champions, the Kansas City Chiefs, at Raymond James Stadium. For the first time in NFL history, a participating team plays the big game on their home turf.

Due to COVID-19 precautions, the NFL will limit the number of fans to just 22,000, but the home-field advantage may still play a role in the outcome.

Fans and analysts will primarily focus the spotlight of the showdown on the quarterback matchup. Patrick Mahomes will represent the Chiefs with his elusive scrambling abilities and explosive arm that turns short plays into impossible touchdowns. On the other side is Super Bowl legend Tom Brady. His calculated, laser focus has already led him to an NFL-record of six big game victories.

While the QB matchup may get the most attention, each team is well balanced and shows grit on both sides of the ball.

RECEIVER MATCHUPS

The competing quarterbacks wouldn't be efficient without a stable of rockstar receivers. The Chief's target,



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Tyreek Hill, will look to expand on his 172-yard AFC Championship performance. While he didn't score against the Buffalo Bills, the receiver took second place in regular-season touchdown catches with 15. Kansas City also needs TE Travis Kelce and Mecole Hardman to perform to become back-to-back champions.

Mike Evans and Chris

Godwin are two quality targets for the home team, with Scotty Miller quickly becoming a favorite for Tom Brady. Miller outpaced Packers' Kevin King to grab a 39-yard TD with only one second left before halftime during the NFC Championship Game. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers also feature a dual-threat tight end team with Rob Gronkowski and Cameron Brate.

RUNNING GAME

The Chiefs used their first-round pick to draft Clyde Edwards-Helaire to lead their backfield. The rookie ran for 803 yards and four touchdowns in his inaugural season. Helaire shares snaps with Darrel Williams and Le'Veon Bell.

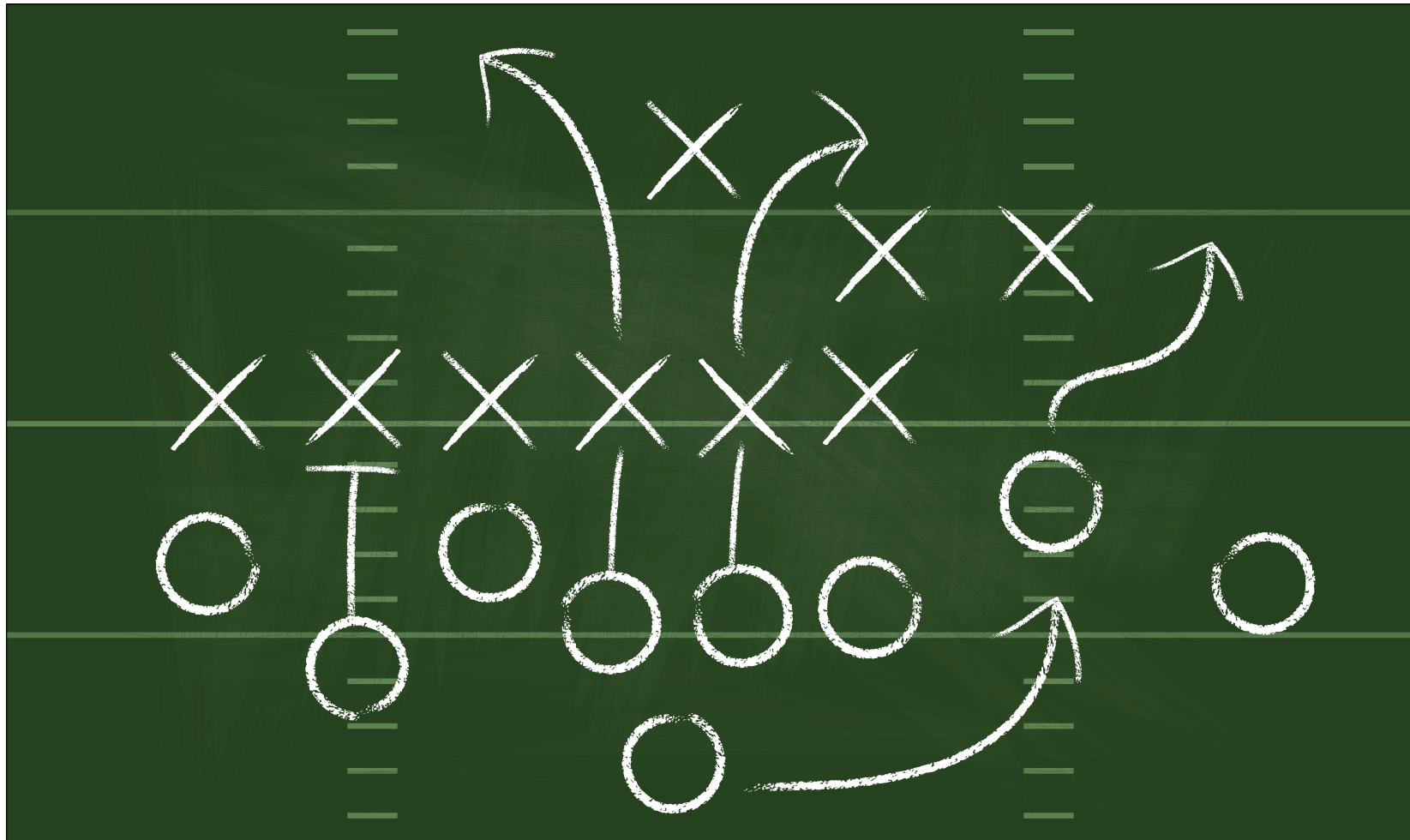
Ronaldo Jones II and Leonard Fournette lead the charge for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Jones showed a



Mahomes

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consistent start and an explosive 96-yard touchdown run against the Carolina Panthers, but he missed time due to COVID-19 reserve status. "A good one-two punch" is how head coach Bruce Arians describes the duo.



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A Tale of Two Defenses

If defenses win championships, both the Kansas City Chiefs and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers defending teams have their hands full.

Since the two eruptive offenses can change the game's course with a single play, the defensive units will be critical until the clock reaches double zeros. If the teams want to keep the point-spread manageable, each defense must pressure the elite quarterbacks and make the most of turnover opportunities.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS DEFENSE

The crew led by Steve Spagnuolo isn't always regarded as stellar since its high-flying offense gets much of the

adoration. However, the Chiefs' defensive unit features some of the league's most impressive stars.

Tyrann Mathieu led the team with six interceptions, one being a pick-six against the New England Patriots. Safety Daniel Sorensen ended the regular season with a team-high of 91 total tackles, with 68 of them contributed solo.

For the Chiefs to come out victorious, they must find a way to pressure Brady to avoid his star receivers, Godwin and Evans, from getting open downfield. Advancing on the elite quarterback

may prove challenging as the Bucs' offensive line only allowed 22 sacks to Brady during the 2020 season. Fortunately for Kansas City, their team proved reliable when preventing powerhouse offenses.

- Held Derrick Henry to only 69 rushing yards during last year's AFC Championship Game.
- Limited the elite running backs on the Cleveland Browns to just 112 yards in this year's divisional round.
- Shut out the San Francisco 49ers in the fourth quarter during Super Bowl LIV.

Spagnuolo and Tom Brady have a Super Bowl history. He was the defensive coordinator for the New York Giants when his team beat the previously undefeated New England Patriots in 2007.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS DEFENSE

The Tampa Bay D is on a hot streak in defensive scoring. During the play-offs, the team has racked up 41 non-offensive points, tying the third-most record for scoring in a single postseason. During Sunday's AFC Championship Game, the Chiefs lost their OT Eric Fisher to injury, leaving a significant hole in Patrick Mahome's offensive line.

With Jason Pierre-Paul's impressive ability to win one-on-one matchups with offensive tackles, and Shaquil Barrett's inept edge-rushing skills, the Chiefs may have difficulty holding the line. Big-man Ndamukong Suh will be making his second appearance in a Super Bowl and looks to build on his six sacks and 44 regular season tackles.



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Coaching Overview

The storyline of Patrick Mahomes vs. Tom Brady may be at the forefront of most minds. Still, the matchup between the head coaches will be just as exciting.

Andy Reid takes his Kansas City Chiefs to the home field of Bruce Arians and his Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Both coaches are familiar with the Super Bowl setting, though only one has claimed victory as head coach. Check out how the two mentors made their way to the big game after a few stops along the way.

BRUCE ARIANS

Coaching with the mindset of “no risk it, no biscuit,” Bruce Arians worked as an offensive assistant for most of his NFL coaching career. After working with teams like the Kansas City Chiefs, Cleveland Browns and

Pittsburgh Steelers, Arians was hired as the Indianapolis Colts’ offensive coordinator in 2012. Here, he would get his first taste of the head coach role when he was named the interim leader after Chuck Pagano was diagnosed with leukemia.

His success in Indy caught the Arizona Cardinals’ eye, who signed him to a four-year deal on January 17, 2013. The tremendous success he achieved during the 2015 season led to his first playoff win against the Green Bay Packers. After following up with a few mediocre seasons, Arians retired in 2017.

In 2019, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers signed him to a four-year deal. His

first season resulted in a 7-9 record. This year, the coach had a role in signing Tom Brady and leading his team to its first Super Bowl campaign since 2003.

ANDY REID

Andy Reid became the second-youngest head coach in the NFL when he accepted the role for the Philadelphia Eagles in 1999. The team would find success most seasons, making its way into the playoffs and one Super Bowl but never capturing the title. After an unimpressive 4-12 record in 2012, owner Jeffrey Lurie announced that he would not renew Reid’s contract.

The head coach would quickly rebound and sign a five-year contract with the Kansas City Chiefs in 2013. After a rocky start, the team would eventually land a Wild Card spot in the AFC playoffs in 2015, where they grabbed the franchise’s first postseason win since the 1993-94 season.

With Patrick Mahomes as the primary starter in 2018, the Kansas City Chiefs would enter the AFC Championship game two years in a row. Their second visit resulted in a Super Bowl trip and a subsequent victory over the San Francisco 49ers. The appearance made Reid one of only seven coaches who took two different franchises to the Super Bowl.

Players to Watch

The NFL couldn't have scripted a better Super Bowl matchup than pairing the defending Kansas City Chiefs with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

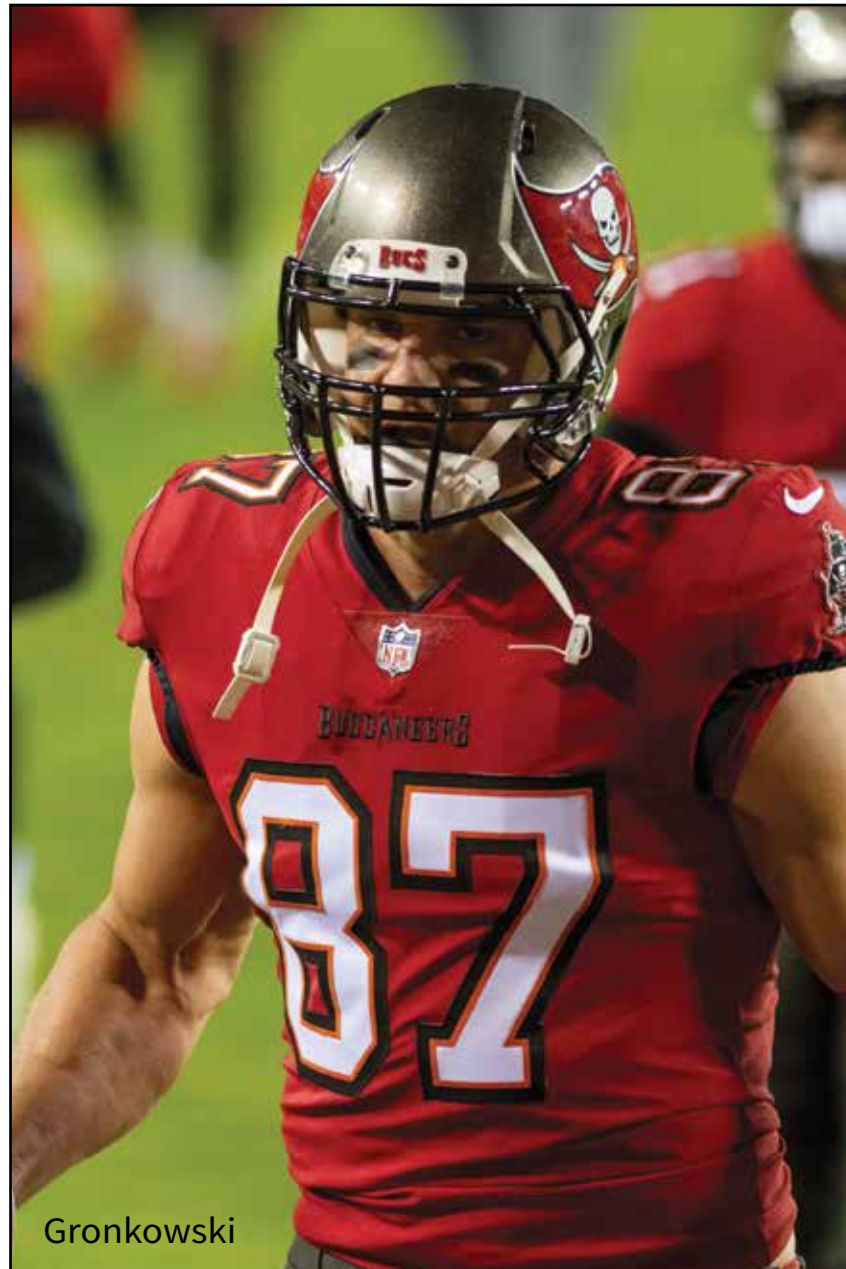
With two superstar quarterbacks, catch-of-the-week caliber wide receivers, explosive running games and fiery defensive players on each sideline, it should be a game for the history books. Keep an eye out for a few of these future hall-of-famers to potentially turn the game's tide.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS **Tyrann Mathieu**

During the NFC Championship Game, Tom Brady threw three interceptions in 36 pass attempts. The former LSU standout, the Honey Badger, will look for opportunities to turn the miscues into advantages for his team. The cornerback snagged six picks throughout the regular season and had one in the postseason versus the Cleveland Browns.

Travis Kelce

The dominant tight end had another spectacular performance in the AFC Championship Game. He set a new NFL record for the most receptions in a conference title game with 13. During his



Gronkowski

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Kelce

JEFFREY BEALL/CREATIVE COMMONS

record-breaking spectacle, Kelce racked up 118 yards and two touchdowns to seal his team's path to the Super Bowl.

Tyreek Hill

Tyreek "Cheetah" Hill had no problem with the Buccaneers during their last matchup earlier this season. The Pro Bowl-nominated wide receiver went for an incredible 269 yards and scored three touchdowns in just 13 catches.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS **Rob Gronkowski**

Fresh out of retirement, Rob Gronkowski joined his former quarterback after his free agency move to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. This season he's completed over 40 passes for 623 yards and seven touchdowns. While his performance hasn't been his best, throughout their time playing together, Brady and

Gronk have connected for a total of 12 postseason TDs, tying Joe Montana and Jerry Rice.

Jason Pierre-Paul

JPP has terrorized opposing quarterbacks throughout his 11-year career. At the age of 32, he teams with Tom Brady, who he defeated in Super Bowl XLVI, to snag a win with the New York Giants. During the NFC Championship

Game, he sacked Aaron Rodgers twice and had five tackles.

Mike Evans

Evans finished the regular season as the Buccaneers' leading receiver with 70 completions, 1006 yards and a career-high 13 touchdowns. He helped give the Bucs their 7-0 lead by completing a 15-yard red zone score on their opening drive.

Brady Chases Seventh Ring

Tom Brady (also known as the G.O.A.T., Tom Terrific, Tompa Brady, Tommy Weight Room, etc.) entered the NFL as the 199th pick in the 2000 draft for the New England Patriots.

He served as a fourth-string quarterback under Drew Bledsoe during his rookie season, but he was listed as a second-string back-up by the end of the year. In 2001, Bledsoe went down with an injury, propelling Brady into the spotlight and setting him up for a historic career.

As he enters his 10th appearance in the big game and pursues his seventh ring, check out a brief history of his Super Bowl appearances and his stellar performances from NBC Sports.

SUPER BOWL XXXVI: VS. ST. LOUIS RAMS 20-17

Brady entered his first Super Bowl facing the heavily favored St. Louis Rams. While he only completed one touchdown on an eight-yard pass, the team completed the “Miracle on Turf” and shocked the world. Down with only 1:21 remaining, Brady drove the length of the field and spiked the ball with only seven seconds left, setting up Adam Vinatieri for a 48-yard field goal.

SUPER BOWL XXXVIII: VS. CAROLINA PANTHERS 32-29

The high-scoring affair led to a record-setting 37 points scored in the fourth quarter between the two teams. Brady threw for 354 yards, three touchdowns and racked up a 100.5 rating. The quarterback performed a one-yard toss to former Patriot and current Tennessee Titan's head coach Mike Vrabel.

SUPER BOWL XXXIX: VS. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES 24-21

The third Super Bowl victory came against a team led by the current Kansas City Chiefs' head coach, Andy Reid. Brady only connected one touchdown pass for a two-yard score but finished the game with 236 yards and a rating of 110.2.

SUPER BOWL XLIX: VS. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS 28-24

After two consecutive Super Bowl losses to the New York Giants, Brady and friends came from behind to beat the Seattle Seahawks after controversial play-calling. With one minute on the clock, Seattle chose to attempt a throw in the end zone, resulting in an interception by the Patriots' Malcolm Butler that clinched the Patriots' win.

SUPER BOWL LI: VS. ATLANTA FALCONS 34-28

This game showed the true grit and never-give-up attitude Brady displays. After being down 28-3 late in the third quarter, the Patriots pulled off the most remarkable comeback in NFL history. The game concluded in overtime, with Brady throwing for 466 yards.

SUPER BOWL LIII: VS. LOS ANGELES RAMS 13-3

In the lowest-scoring Super Bowl in NFL history, Brady failed to complete a touchdown and only threw for 262 yards. However, with his sixth bowl win, he became the oldest QB to win the big game at 41-years old.

