**Team Notes week 4 2016 Fantasy Football**

By Bob Harris

**Arizona Cardinals**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's Josh Weinfuss framed it, "It didn't matter that the Arizona Cardinals practiced in the morning or flew into Buffalo on Friday.

"By time they rubbed the sleep out of their eyes Sunday afternoon -- Sunday morning back in Phoenix -- the Cardinals were facing an insurmountable deficit. It was amplified by an inefficient offense that gained a total of 2 yards through its first five series -- all three-and-outs. ..."

We call that a slow start.

Weinfuss went on to suggest that two bad starts is a coincidence. Three, however, is a trend. And in order for the Cardinals to keep their playoff hopes -- not to mention a shot at the Super Bowl -- it's a problem they need to fix starting against Los Angeles next week.

In Sunday's 33-18 loss to the Bills, the Cardinals punted on their first five series. The offense was stagnant until Arizona put together a 17-play drive that took 9 minutes, 34 seconds to complete. But even then, the offense wasn't rolling like it did last season.

In a Week 1 loss to New England, Arizona punted on its first three series. Last week, despite recovering to blow out Tampa Bay, Arizona punted on its first two.

To place the blame on one individual or one unit wouldn't be just. Quarterback [**Carson Palmer**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16055/carson-palmer/), who had four interceptions, bounced two passes to [**John Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20470/john-brown/) and nearly had another picked off. The offensive line struggled to hold an overhyped Bills defense playing for its head coach's job.

Add in too many deep passes -- the trademark of head coach Bruce Arians' offense -- that have become predictable and easy to defend, along with a running game that couldn't get going, and it left the Cardinals' offense in a state of disarray.

By time the Cardinals finally got on the board, the first half was almost over and they managed to cut the margin to 17-7. Playing from behind isn't the strong suit of this offense.

Palmer presses. He throws into coverage. He's trying to make something happen, but everyone in the stadium knows what's coming. Yet there was a glimmer of what the offense could be. With the pressure of a loss mounting, the Cards executed a picture-perfect drive late in the third quarter. Palmer completed five middle-distance throws in a row, setting up a 22-yard touchdown run by [**David Johnson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18251/david-johnson/), who was the team's lone offensive bright spot with two touchdowns (19 carries for 83 yards).

"We talked about getting off to a fast start," coach Bruce Arians said. "This is the slowest one we've had in four years offensively.

"We did a poor job of running routes, finding guys, getting open and protecting the quarterback."

One of the first steps to solving their problems? Figure out common issues across the first three games. An analytical, methodical approach could narrow Arizona's focus in a week's time.

But according to Weinfuss, there's a problem the Cardinals are facing, at least publicly: Despite Arians blaming third-down conversions or Fitzgerald calling a lot of Arizona's offensive problems "self-inflicted," there's also a feeling the Cardinals haven't pinpointed the issue.

It was clear throughout the locker room that the frustration is starting to mount.

Palmer said, "We need to find a way to improve."

Fitzgerald said, "It's not OK. It's not OK to be in this position."

The cross-country trip and an early start -- in Arizona time -- wasn't an excuse, Arians said.

"No, that's bulls---," he said.

To paint the broader picture as to why the Cardinals finished their first five drives with two total yards will require film study.

But there are some easy takeaways.

"Obviously, not having a first down in the first 20 minutes of the game, that's not good," Fitzgerald said.

And Palmer needs to protect the football.

Palmer had not thrown a pick through two games this season, but he now has 12 INTs in the Cardinals' last seven games. He had nine in the previous 14 games.

Arians was asked if all four interceptions were Palmer's fault. "He threw 'em all, they're all on him," Arians said, before adding later, "He was taking chances to try and get us back in the game. Up until those plays, he played pretty solid. ..."

Other notes of interest. ... As NFL.com's Matt Harmon notes, after two weeks of low usage and single-digit catch outings, Sunday offered a sign of optimism for [**John Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20470/john-brown/). He played 57 percent of the snaps, well ahead of[**Jaron Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20857/jaron-brown/) and tied [**Michael Floyd**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19017/michael-floyd/) for second on the team in targets behind Fitzgerald. He hauled in six of his 11 targets for 70 yards and finally looked like the [**John Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20470/john-brown/) of old. Brown's usage should continue to trend upward as he gets further away from the dreadful offseason concussions which cost him "way too much time" according to Arians.

Meanwhile, Floyd was cleared on the sideline for a concussion after coming down hard on his head on a failed pass attempt, but he reported to the team's facility on Monday morning complaining of headaches and the team placed him into the league's concussion protocol.

"We just want to be very safe with him," Arians said.

Healthy aside, there are those -- most notably Arizona Republic staffer Kent Somers -- who believe Jaron Brown should " play more." And he should get the nod over Floyd, who has been among the more disappointing players in the early going of this season. ...

Tight end [**Troy Niklas**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20511/troy-niklas/) suffered what Arians described as a severe wrist injury and he was placed on injured reserve Tuesday. Niklas was running third among the groups' three tight ends, with [**Jermaine Gresham**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18340/jermaine-gresham/) and[**Darren Fells**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20934/darren-fells/) getting the majority of the snaps.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Carson Palmer, Drew Stanton   
**RBs:** David Johnson, Chris Johnson, Andre Ellington, Stepfan Taylor   
**WRs:** Larry Fitzgerald, John Brown, Michael Floyd, Jaron Brown, J.J. Nelson   
**TEs:** Darren Fells, Troy Niklas, Jermaine Gresham

**Atlanta Falcons**

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As ESPN.com's Vaughn McClure pointed out, no production from [**Julio Jones**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18630/julio-jones/) was no worry for the Falcons.

Not when [**Tevin Coleman**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20967/tevin-coleman/) is scoring a trio of touchdowns. Not when [**Devonta Freeman**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20391/devonta-freeman/) is flinging defenders to the ground with vicious stiff-arms. Not when [**Matt Ryan**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17975/matt-ryan/) is using his feet to extend plays, like he did on an 18-yard gain for a first down in the fourth quarter.

If Monday night's 45-32 win over the rival New Orleans Saints proved anything, it was how dangerous the Atlanta offense can be. It might be lethal enough to help the 2-1 Falcons, now atop the NFC South, contend with the three-time defending division champion Carolina Panthers (1-2), who visit the Georgia Dome this Sunday.

The defense is another story, however.

The Falcons put up 28 first-half points Monday night despite Jones, their top threat and one of the league's elite receivers, not even catching a pass in the half. They scored on five consecutive possessions following a first-drive punt, all before Jones hauled in his first catch with 5 minutes, 58 seconds remaining in the third quarter. Jones finished with one catch for 16 yards.

The running back combination of Freeman and Coleman continued to evolve into a thing of beauty, with somewhat of a role reversal. The explosive Coleman was the one with the tough yards on touchdown runs of 6, 2 and 2 yards, while the typically physical Freeman showed tremendous bursts all night, including breaking off a 36-yard run that helped set up one of Coleman's 2-yard scores. Freeman posted 152 yards on 14 carries, the first time he has eclipsed the 100-yard mark this season.

And one week after Ryan spread the ball around to nine different receivers in a 35-28 win over the Raiders, he connected with seven different targets other than Jones in the first half alone. Coming into the game, offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan said spreading the ball around will only help Jones get more quality catches in the long run.

Ryan was the first to say that the Falcons have the potential to score 30 points per game. Well, the Falcons have scored 30-plus points in both their wins.

Why is it so important for the offense to keep flowing? The defense still can't stop anybody. Although rookie linebacker Deion Jones, a New Orleans native, picked off a deflected [**Drew Brees**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/10002/drew-brees/) pass and returned it 90 yards for a touchdown, it was far from a strong effort by the defense. The Falcons continue to give up explosive plays and not get enough pressure on the quarterback.

But as McClure suggested, if the offense continues to do its part, the Falcons just might find success anyhow. And from a fantasy perspective, the more the Falcons are playing keep up, the happier we'll all be. ...

Other notes of interest. ... Ryan appeared to hurt his thumb in the second half, but the QB brushed it off as no big deal.

Ryan received medical attention on the sideline after being sacked by Nick Fairley in the fourth quarter. When Ryan returned to the game, he was wearing a glove on his left hand.

"I took a hit on it in the game, but I'm fine," Ryan told McClure after the game. "Put a glove on just to make sure I'd get a good grip afterwards. But I'm fine. I feel pretty good."

Ryan hasn't missed a game because of injury since the 2009 season, when he was sidelined with turf toe.

The Falcons have a quick turnaround with Sunday's NFC South showdown with the Carolina Panthers at the Georgia Dome. Ryan's status will be worth monitoring to see if he's limited at all in practice.

When asked about Ryan's thumb, head coach [**Dan Quinn**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20943/dan-quinn/) said, "I wasn't told anything about that."

"I'm good," Ryan said on his weekly radio show on 680 The Fan, via the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "It just got banged up kind of in the pocket. I wanted to make sure so I threw a glove on there so I could have a good grip, but I feel good this morning.

"I'm good to go. I'll be ready to go out to practice on Wednesday."

Quinn said wide receiver [**Mohamed Sanu**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19069/mohamed-sanu/) suffered a shoulder injury and wanted to return in the second half but couldn't. Sanu wasn't practicing Wednesday.

Early reports are both men will be ready to go this weekend, but I'll be following up on Ryan and Sanu when Late-Breaking Updates crank up early Thursday.

Worth noting: Coleman (ankle) was limited Wednesday while Jones was on the practice field after being listed as questionable with ankle and calf injuries, respectively, the last two weeks.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Matt Ryan, Matt Schaub   
**RBs:** Devonta Freeman, Tevin Coleman, Terron Ward   
**WRs:** Julio Jones, Mohamed Sanu, Justin Hardy, Eric Weems, Taylor Gabriel   
**TEs:** Jacob Tamme, Austin Hooper, Levine Toilolo, Joshua Perkins

**Baltimore Ravens**

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The Ravens are alone atop the AFC North for the first time in 707 days. Baltimore is one of five undefeated teams in the NFL.

But according to ESPN.com's Jamison Hensley, the Ravens know they're an imperfect 3-0. Baltimore players believe they have far from played up to their potential in beating three teams that are a combined 1-8 by a total of 13 points.

"You're not going to be able to get away with this when you're playing really, really good teams in January," [**Joe Flacco**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17978/joe-flacco/) said after the Ravens' 19-17 win over the Jaguars on Sunday.

The Ravens managed just one touchdown against the Buffalo Bills. They fell behind 20-2 in the first quarter against the winless Cleveland Browns. They turned the ball over three times in the fourth quarter (two Flacco interceptions and a [**Devin Hester**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17807/devin-hester/) muffed punt) before rallying to beat the winless Jaguars.

Of the undefeated teams, the Ravens' victories have come against opponents with the worst combined record. Baltimore's biggest test will come Sunday, when the Ravens play host to the Oakland Raiders (2-1).

Head coach John Harbaugh said last week that he isn't one to put style points on wins. Turns out that's a wise approach. In Jacksonville, the offense scored one touchdown and managed 283 yards of total offense. Flacco threw multiple interceptions for the second straight week. Running backs [**Justin Forsett**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18058/justin-forsett/) and [**Terrance West**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20395/terrance-west/)combined for 65 yards. Baltimore was flagged for eight penalties. The punt team gave up a 42-yard return.

"This was an ugly win, and that seems to be our M.O. so far this season," tight end [**Dennis Pitta**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18387/dennis-pitta/) said.

Flacco believes the hiccups on offense will go away when his timing with his receivers improves. Many of his top targets -- [**Steve Smith**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17841/steve-smith/) Sr., [**Dennis Pitta**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18387/dennis-pitta/) and [**Breshad Perriman**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21014/breshad-perriman/) -- missed most of training camp and the preseason while recovering from injuries.

"At some point, we might see that we're building up, building up and building up, and all of a sudden it turns over very quickly. That's kind of what I'm looking for," Flacco said. "It's for us to turn over very quickly and for us to explode as an offense and really take off. You don't want to have to be winning these games the way we are."

Other notes of interest. ... Flacco set a Ravens record by completing 21 straight passes against the Jaguars. He broke his own team record of 14, which he set against Denver in November 2009. His streak ended Sunday on a deep pass to [**Mike Wallace**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18193/mike-wallace/) in the end zone in the third quarter.

"I have to get on him for that," Flacco joked.

After starting the game 1-of-5 passing, Flacco connected on his last 17 passes of the first half. He threw for 141 yards in the first half and also leads the team with 13 rushing yards, which included a seven-yard touchdown run.

"He's capable of that," Pitta said. "He's an accurate passer, decisive and knows what to do with the ball. Twenty-something completions in a row doesn't really surprise us."

Meanwhile, as NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich pointed out, for the third week in a row, the Ravens backfield was "atrocious." [**Justin Forsett**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18058/justin-forsett/) and [**Terrance West**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20395/terrance-west/) split the workload again, and neither managed more than 53 total yards. Neither running back has posted a double-digit fantasy outing yet this season, nor has either made a real case to deserve a bigger workload going forward.

[**Javorius Allen**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20976/javorius-allen/) was inactive for the third straight week. Allen, a fourth-round pick from USC in 2015, took over the starting job last season when Forsett went down with a season-ending injury. The Ravens opted to carry more receivers in the first three games and Allen has been a healthy scratch, despite the team's struggles with the running game.

Asked on Wednesday whether Ravens have thought about starting West over Forset, Harbaugh didn't answer it directly but said, "More than changes, it's about seeking to improve."

The good news? NFL Network's Ian Rapoport reports that rookie [**Kenneth Dixon**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22147/kenneth-dixon/) (knee) is ready to return to practice. It doesn't mean he'll jump right into the linuep, but he'll certainly get an opportunity once he's back up to full speed. With that in mind, Rapoport advised his Twitter followers that Week 5 is the realistic target for Dixon's return. ...

I'll be watching his progress in coming days. ...

According to NFL.com's Matt Harmon, [**Steve Smith**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17841/steve-smith/) continues to look more comfortable each and every week. He still played on only 60 percent of the snaps, but led the team in targets. His average depth of target was just 5.6 on Sunday and only 7.5 for the season. Harmon explained that indicates he is clearly Flacco's security blanket, and there's plenty of value in that. Through two weeks it has become apparent that Smith and [**Dennis Pitta**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18387/dennis-pitta/) are the top-two targets in this passing game.

As the Sports Xchange notes, [**Justin Tucker**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19702/justin-tucker/) once again saved the day for Baltimore. Tucker made four field goals from 43, 42, 37 and 54 yards that proved to be the difference as the offense struggled in the red zone.

Also worth noting: The Ravens have 10 blocked kicks (punts, field goals or PATs) since 2014, the most in the NFL.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Joe Flacco, Ryan Mallett   
**RBs:** Justin Forsett, Terrance West, Javorius Allen, Kenneth Dixon, Lorenzo Taliaferro   
**WRs:** Steve Smith, Mike Wallace, Kamar Aiken, Breshad Perriman, Chris Moore   
**TEs:** Crockett Gillmore, Maxx Williams, Dennis Pitta

**Buffalo Bills**

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As ESPN.com's Mike Rodak understated, head coach Rex Ryan raised eyebrows across Buffalo when he boldly declared last week that the Super Bowl-contending Arizona Cardinals were "exactly" the team the reeling Buffalo Bills needed to play after an 0-2 start.

Now Ryan will be opening eyes across the country.

The Bills' beleaguered coach and his team made a statement Sunday by defeating the Cardinals 33-18 in a mostly dominant defensive performance that cools down Ryan's blazing-hot seat and puts the Bills back on the map.

Was it perfect? No, but the Bills didn't need it to be. They were desperate for a win to help save a season that seemed destined for failure if they were to drop to 0-3, with a date with the New England Patriots in Gillette Stadium next on the schedule.

Without [**Sammy Watkins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20441/sammy-watkins/), who couldn't play because of lingering foot soreness exacerbated by having that limb stepped on during practice, the Bills' offense found a way to move the ball under new offensive coordinator Anthony Lynn. [**LeSean McCoy**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18187/lesean-mccoy/)'s 110 yards on 17 carries -- including two touchdown runs -- were a big reason for the success, as were 76 rushing yards added by [**Tyrod Taylor**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18580/tyrod-taylor/).

Taylor ran for 49 yards on a single play in the first quarter, a franchise record for a quarterback, and added a 20-yard touchdown scamper in the third quarter. He continued to raise red flags as a passer, completing only 14 of 25 passes for 119 yards and one interception. But overall, the offense's performance was enough to win Sunday -- even though it wasn't a night-and-day difference from how it had fared under former coordinator Greg Roman.

The defense, on the other hand, stole the show. Cardinals QB [**Carson Palmer**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16055/carson-palmer/) appeared rattled from pressure generated by Rex Ryan's defense, which sacked Palmer three times and hit him seven times overall. He one-hopped several throws to open receivers and met resistance in top Bills cornerback Stephon Gilmore, whose two fourth-quarter interceptions put a bow on his bounce-back day after a terrible outing in Week 2 against the New York Jets.

Stopped for three-and-outs on each of their first five possessions -- and gaining a net of only 2 yards over that stretch -- the Cardinals dug themselves too deep of a hole against the Bills' defense to recover in Sunday's game.

It might be too early to say that the Bills, and Ryan, are back. But after a start to a season that Ryan called as challenging as he can remember in his head-coaching career, Sunday was a welcomed respite from the storm clouds that were brewing over Buffalo.

Other notes of interest. ... Lynn's most notable tweak of the Bills offense involved taking the reins off Taylor's running ability. After being limited to just 36 yards rushing in his first two games, Taylor's 76 yards against the Cardinals were just three short of the single-game franchise record for quarterbacks he set last season.

Taylor's 49-yard run was the longest by a quarterback in team history and he also scored on a 20-yard run.

"One of the best things he can do is he can run the ball," McCoy said. "Why wouldn't you not have him using his legs?"

The same could be said of McCoy.

In fact, the Bills had 175 rush yards before contact Sunday, the most by any team in a game this season and more than the Bills had in their first two games of the season combined (114). It is also the most rush yards before contact allowed by the Cardinals since Week 14 of 2012 (Seahawks, 214).

Eighty of McCoy's season-high 110 rush yards came before contact, his second most in a game since joining the Bills prior to last season. Taylor had 75 rushing yards before contact, the most by any quarterback in a game this season. That includes the 49-yard keeper on a zone read where he was untouched.

The normally tight-lipped Bill Belichick was less so when discussing the challenging Bills rushing attack.

"McCoy is as good as it gets," Belichick told reporters in a conference call. "The production that he has had is outstanding."

The Bills rank eighth in the NFL in rushing yardage (359 total, 119.7 per game) through three games.

Meanwhile, Ryan had no update on the status of Watkins, who did not play after a teammate stepped on his surgically repaired left foot during a walk-through this week. Starting left tackle Cordy Glenn missed his second straight game after aggravating an injury to his left ankle.

Watkins' injury bears watching, and if he's shut down for the next few weeks, the Bills are going to have a tough time on offense. For instance, if Watkins can't play against New England, it seems quite likely that Belichick will do everything he can to take away McCoy and force Taylor to beat the Patriots through the air, knowing that's probably not going to happen.

According to NFL Network's Mike Garafolo, the issue for Watkins is pain management. He was expected to test the foot on Wednesday or Thursday, but he wasn't on the field Wednesday. ...

Receiver [**Greg Salas**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18641/greg-salas/) did not play because of a groin injury that left the offense severely shorthanded at wide receiver. [**Robert Woods**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19908/robert-woods/) led the Bills with six catches for 51 yards, though his 24-yarder in the second quarter would not have counted had the Cardinals challenged it.

Tight end [**Charles Clay**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18681/charles-clay/) has been slowed by a sore knee and he had no catches on two targets. He didn't practice Wednesday. ...

Salas and fellow wideout [**Marquise Goodwin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19920/marquise-goodwin/) were limited participants.

More on Watkins, Salas, Goodwin and Clay via Late-Breaking Update as the week progresses. ...

And finally. ... [**Reggie Bush**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17595/reggie-bush/) was active and healthy but never entered the game against the Cardinals. Instead, the Bills turned to [**Mike Gillislee**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19868/mike-gillislee/) and rookie fifth-round pick [**Jonathan Williams**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22149/jonathan-williams/) to take a total of six carries behind[**LeSean McCoy**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18187/lesean-mccoy/).

Bush's disappearance from the offense is a development that would seemingly put the veteran's job in jeopardy when the Bills must clear two 53-man roster spots when defensive tackle Marcell Dareus and offensive tackle Seantrel Henderson return from four-game substance-abuse suspensions next week.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Tyrod Taylor, E.J. Manuel, Cardale Jones   
**RBs:** LeSean McCoy, Reggie Bush, Mike Gillislee, Jonathan Williams, Dan Vitale   
**WRs:** Sammy Watkins, Robert Woods, Marquise Goodwin, Greg Salas, Walt Powell   
**TEs:** Charles Clay, Jim Dray, Nick O'Leary

**Carolina Panthers**

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As ESPN.com's David Newton noted, the Panthers' 22-10 loss Sunday to the Vikings was filled with the kinds of mistakes, penalties and overall poor play that aren't characteristic of a team with hopes of returning to the Super Bowl.

The Panthers actually started fast, jumping to a 10-0 lead with 5:20 left in the first quarter on a 3-yard touchdown run by quarterback [**Cam Newton**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18573/cam-newton/).

But then the wheels fell off. Newton was sacked in the end zone for a safety.

Then he suffered an ankle injury that forced him to leave for one play. At that point, the NFL MVP had completed all six of his pass attempts. He completed only 15 of his next 29, with three interceptions.

"[We were] running the football extremely well, keeping them off balance, and then all of a sudden, you know, after the safety it was good riddance,' Newton said.

It wasn't just Newton and the offense that collapsed. The Vikings returned a punt 54 yards for a touchdown to cut the lead to 10-8 at halftime despite being outgained 205 yards to 34.

Then the wheels really fell off. The pressure the Panthers were getting on [**Sam Bradford**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18337/sam-bradford/) in the first half disappeared, and the quarterback making only his second start for the Vikings began picking the defense part.

An offense that averaged more than 40 points in the last seven home games -- one so explosive a week ago against the San Francisco 49ers that wide receiver [**Kelvin Benjamin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20444/kelvin-benjamin/) said it could have put up 60 were it not for mistakes -- was a shell of itself.

Benjamin, who had a team-best 13 catches for 199 yards entering Sunday, didn't have a catch. He he had more penalties (2) than he did targets (1), with a block in the back on the second costing Carolina a 56-yard touchdown by [**Fozzy Whittaker**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19423/fozzy-whittaker/) that would have made it 17-2 early in the second quarter.

Newton sounded confused when asked why his primary target had no catches and was targeted only once.

"For him not to have any touches is, you know, really baffling and wowing," he said.

The last time Benjamin went without a catch was his 2012 season at Florida State when he didn't have a target or a catch against South Florida in Week 5. His worst game statistically in the NFL prior to having no catches on one target on Sunday was the final week of his 2014 rookie season. He had one catch on five targets for nine yards against Atlanta.

According to NFL.com, the return of Xavier Rhodes was a big factor as Minnesota's physical cornerbacks allowed zero catches to both Benjamin and fellow starting receiver [**Devin Funchess**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21086/devin-funchess/).

Meanwhile, the Panthers were penalized 10 times for 65 yards against Minnesota. Carolina has committed 26 penalties for 215 yards in three games. It had only 16 for 114 yards after three games last season.

Turnovers have been equally damaging. Newton had three interceptions on Sunday to give him five for the season. He had only two after three games in 2015. The Panthers didn't have a lost fumble in the first three games last season. They have three in 2016.

Those are the kinds of mistakes that will make the Panthers vulnerable this week in Atlanta and against other less talented teams moving forward.

"It's hard to play offense that way,' [**Greg Olsen**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17830/greg-olsen/) said. "That was kind of the story of our day.'

Other notes of interest. ... The one target for Benjamin is something that Panthers offensive coordinator Mike Shula said can't become a permanent one.

"Yeah, we've got to find a way to get him the ball more. That starts with me," Shula said, via the team's website. "But we've got to make sure we're doing it in a way that we're not just trying to force him the ball. … That's our job — to continue to get our playmakers opportunities. They rolled to him at times but they also had some one-on-ones. But just because teams roll to a receiver doesn't mean you still can't get it to him. We just weren't good enough yesterday."

Any attempts to get Benjamin the ball will be more successful if there's actually time for Newton to throw the ball in his direction and there may have been more work for the wideout on Sunday if not for the eight sacks that Carolina allowed to the Vikings.

In fact, Newton was pressured on 17 dropbacks Sunday (under duress or sacked), tied for his most in a regular-season game (2012 Week 10 vs Broncos). He was pressured 21 times in Super Bowl 50. In the 11 games where the Panthers have allowed Newton to be pressured on at least 14 dropbacks, Carolina is now 0-11 (including playoffs).

In a few related notes. ... Wideout [**Philly Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20493/philly-brown/) had four receptions Sunday, his most in a regular-season game since he had seven against the Steelers in 2014. Tight end [**Ed Dickson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18353/ed-dickson/) had his first reception since the Panthers' Divisional Round win over the Seahawks in January 2016. ...

With [**Jonathan Stewart**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17977/jonathan-stewart/) out at least a couple weeks with a hamstring strain, [**Cameron Artis-Payne**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20979/cameron-artis-payne/) filled in with 47 yards on 12 carries. [**Fozzy Whittaker**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19423/fozzy-whittaker/), who ran for 100 yards in Week 2, managed 22 yards on five carries. The Panthers needed a late scramble by Newton to get to 105 rushing yards for the day, extending their NFL-best streak to 30 straight games with at least 100 yards rushing.

This week, even with a favorable matchup against the Falcons, NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich advised his readers "it's tough to advocate using either Artis-Payne or Whittaker in fantasy as this will likely continue to be a split backfield for as long as Stewart is out."

And finally, kicker [**Graham Gano**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18320/graham-gano/) (456) passed WR [**Steve Smith**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17841/steve-smith/) (454) for second-most points scored in franchise history. Kicker [**John Kasay**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/2704/john-kasay/) (1,482) is the Panthers' all-time leading scorer.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Cam Newton, Derek Anderson, Joe Webb   
**RBs:** Cameron Artis-Payne, Fozzy Whittaker, Mike Tolbert, Jonathan Stewart   
**WRs:** Kelvin Benjamin, Devin Funchess, Ted Ginn, Philly Brown, Brenton Bersin, Damiere Byrd   
**TEs:** Greg Olsen, Ed Dickson, Scott Simonson

**Chicago Bears**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

According to ESPN.com's Jeff Dickerson, "After 20-plus months on the job, Chicago Bears coach John Fox's ship is sinking fast. ..."

And of course, the hopes of fantasy owners are sinking right along with this ship.

The latest setback, Sunday night's 31-17 loss to the Dallas Cowboys at ATT Stadium, puts Fox's overall record at 6-13 (3-11 against the NFC) since he arrived in town on the heels of a successful four-year stint in Denver. Now the franchise has endured back-to-back winless Septembers for the second time in franchise history. 997-98) has the NFL's charter

Dickerson went on to suggest, the whole point of this season was to raise expectations for 2017. The Bears, internally, felt good enough to win eight or nine games, maybe even sneak into the playoffs this year. Riding that mythical momentum, the Bears wanted fans to believe the team could make a serious run next fall.

That will be an uphill climb.

At 0-3, the Bears have fallen way off the pace in the NFC North, behind the Minnesota Vikings (3-0) and Green Bay Packers (2-1). And don't scoff at next week's opponent, the Detroit Lions (1-2), who have beaten the Bears six straight times.

Since Lovie Smith got axed by former general manager Phil Emery, the Bears are 0-6 against the Lions, yet another sign of how badly the franchise has slipped.

The Bears entered Week 3 banged up, no doubt. [**Jay Cutler**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17599/jay-cutler/), Eddie Goldman and Danny Trevathan were key losses. So you can blame bad health -- a running theme under Fox -- but every team suffers injuries.

Of greater concern is their lack of competitiveness in the first half, when the Cowboys built a 24-3 lead.

According to Dickerson, Fox's most redeeming quality last year is that his team usually played hard. That doesn't appear to be the case so far this season.

Need motivation? How about Monday night's nationally televised embarrassment at the hands of [**Carson Wentz**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22099/carson-wentz/)and the Philadelphia Eagles. The Bears should've been furious all week.

Instead, the Bears looked shell-shocked from the opening kickoff. Cowboys quarterback [**Dak Prescott**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22103/dak-prescott/), whom the Bears had three opportunities to draft in the fourth round, calmly marched Dallas' offense up and down the field.

The vibe improved slightly in the second half, but the game was already out of reach.

During parts of the game, the defense couldn't stop anyone. There isn't an elite-pass rusher within a country mile of Halas Hall.

The bigger concern from a fantasy perspective is the offense -- Cutler or no Cutler -- s stagnant under new coordinator Dowell Loggains.

The Bears rank last in the NFC in scoring at 15 points a game.

As NFL.com suggested, [**Brian Hoyer**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18268/brian-hoyer/) is serviceable as Cutler's replacement, but without a sturdy line and a healthy stable of backs, he will struggle against tougher pass rushes.

Meanwhile, [**Jeremy Langford**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20975/jeremy-langford/) is expected to miss four to six weeks with a sprained ankle, a source told ESPN's Adam Schefter.

Fox had already confirmed that Langford sprained an ankle, but he did not provide a timetable for his return.

Langford wore a walking boot on his right foot in the ATT Stadium visitors' locker room after the game.

Rookie fifth-round pick [**Jordan Howard**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22148/jordan-howard/) replaced Langford and rushed for 45 yards on nine carries, plus he caught four balls for 47 yards.

The Bears on Wednesday will reevaluate running back [**Ka'Deem Carey**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20393/ka), who sat out Week 3 with a hamstring injury. Chicago also recently signed tailback/returner Raheem Mostert after Carey got hurt.

Health of the other backs notwithstanding, expect Howard's role to grow with each week. The Bears will not ignore Howard, especially with Langford off to a slow start, even before the injury.

"He's done a really good job since he's been here," guard Kyle Long said of Howard. "We've got a bunch of good backs. We just have to block for them. You give them an inch and they'll take a mile."

"I felt pretty good getting a lot of playing time and getting a lot of work," Howard said. "I definitely feel comfortable, because I try to take advantage of all the reps I get. Since I've been here, the other backs and veterans, they've been keeping me up and catching me up to speed. ..."

The Bears have added former Lions running back [**Joique Bell**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18421/joique-bell/), but Howard should definitely be rostered if he's not already owned in your league. ...

Other notes of interest. ... As NFL.com's Matt Harmon noted this week, the expectation was that Hoyer would start and lock-in on [**Alshon Jeffery**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19050/alshon-jeffery/). Instead, that honor seemed to go to [**Kevin White**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21013/kevin-white/). The second-year player saw more targets in this game than he did in his first two games combined. But Harmon added that White didn't look like the dominant force he was in college. It didn't help matters that several of those 14 targets weren't catchable in the slightest. ...

Cutler (thumb) was inactive Sunday night and is day-to-day, according to Fox. His right thumb was in a soft cast on the sidelines of the game against Dallas.

But Cutler took a step forward in his recovery on Wednesday when he was a limited participant in the team’s first practice session of the week. Patrick Finley of the Chicago Sun-Times reports that Cutler was not wearing a brace on his thumb during the portion of the practice open to the media.

Jeffery (knee) was limited Wednesday; Carey did not practice.

I'll have more as the week progresses. Keep an eye on the Late-Breaking News section.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Brian Hoyer, Jay Cutler   
**RBs:** Jordan Howard, Ka'Deem Carey, Joique Bell, Raheem Mostert, Jeremy Langford   
**WRs:** Alshon Jeffery, Kevin White, Eddie Royal, Deonte Thompson, Marquess Wilson, Josh Bellamy, Cameron Meredith   
**TEs:** Zach Miller, Greg Scruggs, Logan Paulsen

**Cincinnati Bengals**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's Katherine Terrell noted on Sunday, the Bengals had their chances.

If the season continues the way it has the past two weeks, the Bengals (1-2, 0-1 AFC North) likely will look back at key moments and bemoan what could have been.

After a 29-17 loss to the Broncos on Sunday, they'll certainly do that a few times. But the Bengals can't dwell on their missed opportunities against Denver with the Dolphins coming to town on Thursday night.

The film will likely show a few cringe-inducing moments though.

Aside from nine Bengals penalties for 69 yards and four touchdowns from inexperienced Broncos quarterback[**Trevor Siemian**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21979/trevor-siemian/), there was the muffed punt by [**Adam Jones**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17800/adam-jones/) at the end of the first quarter that led to a turnover and a Broncos touchdown just plays later.

There were the almost-plays, and with 4:17 left, the Bengals, down 29-17, essentially sealed their own fate after Dalton was picked off by Will Parks. The Bengals got the ball back, but their final possession ended with two more sacks and a turnover on downs.

The loss likely left Cincinnati with the same bitter taste it had after a 24-16 loss to the Steelers last week, which ended with the officials ruling that [**Tyler Boyd**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22270/tyler-boyd/) fumbled late in the game as they tried to make up an eight-point deficit in the final minute.

The loss was made worse by the fact that their offensive game plan to silence Broncos linebacker Von Miller was working well for most of the game. Miller, the current NFL sacks leader this season, did not have a sack until the last minute.

Part of the Bengals' success against Miller was an early commitment to the run game -- something Cincinnati hadn't done well for the first two weeks of the season. If they wouldn't pass the ball, Miller would have fewer opportunities to make an impact.

[**Jeremy Hill**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20390/jeremy-hill/) had one of his best games in recent memory, rushing for 97 yards and two touchdowns on 17 carries. Hill jump-started the offense with a 65-yard rush down the sideline on the Bengals' first drive, capped off by a 3-yard touchdown on the next play.

Altogether, Hill had 11 rushes for 85 yards and two touchdowns in the first half Sunday, including a 50-yard touchdown run on the Bengals' opening drive. The Bengals went away from the running game in the second half, calling designed runs on 21 percent of plays after calling for rushes on 58 percent of their first-half plays.

Indeed, with the exception of a series of contested catches by [**A.J. Green**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18629/a.j.-green/), the offense went to sleep thereafter. Cincinnati gained 11 yards on eight designed rushes after halftime.

But the fact that Hill gashed the heart of Denver's defense for more rushing yards on the opening drive (65) than the Bengals had managed in either of the first two games, is encouraging for fantasy owners.

It's safe to say the reignited run game couldn't have come at a better time for the Bengals with the struggling Dolphins coming to town Thursday night. The Dolphins have one of the worst rushing defenses in the league.

The Bengals will also get suspended linebacker Vontaze Burfict back for the first time in the regular season. He sat out the first three games for repeated violations of player safety.

Whether they'll have tight end [**Tyler Eifert**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19958/tyler-eifert/) back is a different story. Eifert, who has been recovering slowly from an offseason ankle injury, returned to practice last week but was inactive on Sunday. Head coach Marvin Lewis said Eifert will play a limited role upon his return as he gets back into playing shape.

It probably won't be Thursday night, however.

Eifert is officially listed as doubtful for the Dolphins game.

Eifert said, via Mike Garafolo of NFL Media, that he is "still working through some things" while stressing the need for "patience" and "trusting the process" that will get him back into the lineup without risking further injury that will keep him from helping the Bengals improve on their 1-2 start. The belief is he would have been ready if this had been a Sunday game.

Eifert will now have 10 days before the team heads to Dallas to face the Cowboys in Week 5.

I'll have more on Eifert when Late-Breaking Update commence early Thursday morning. ...

Other notes of interest. ... As NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich pointed out this week, it definitely feels like Hill and[**Giovani Bernard**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19856/giovani-bernard/) are alternating weeks in terms of which guy is the best option in fantasy.

Week 1 was a Hill game, Week 2 Bernard dominated, and Week 3 was another Hill game.

But Franciscovich further noted that in the fourth quarter with the Bengals trailing, Hill didn't get a single carry and Bernard racked up 20 receiving yards in garbage time. Bernard's usage seems like it will rely on game script going forward -- in games that the Bengals are trailing he will see more work. ...

Green took Sunday's loss personally. His key drop on third down stalled an important drive in the second half at a juncture when the final result was still in flux.

"It's going to bother me all year," said Green, who also admitted to missing an assignment on the previous play.

Green became a father earlier in the week when his wife, Miranda, gave birth to their first child, Easton. He wasn't the only member of the offense that was out of sync on Sunday against one of the NFL's top-ranked defenses, but Green owned up to his mistakes.

"I pride myself on not dropping balls," he said. "I know it's going to happen. But, I can't drop a ball like that in a crucial moment."

Green finished with eight catches for 77 yards.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Andy Dalton, AJ McCarron, Jeff Driskel   
**RBs:** Jeremy Hill, Giovani Bernard, Cedric Peerman, Rex Burkhead   
**WRs:** A.J. Green, Brandon LaFell, Tyler Boyd, James Wright, Cody Core, Alex Erickson   
**TEs:** Tyler Eifert, Ryan Hewitt, Tyler Kroft, C.J. Uzomah

**Cleveland Browns**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's Pat McManamon noted, Sunday's was a painful loss -- a frequent occurrence for the Browns. A missed field goal on the last play of the game cost the Browns what would have been an uplifting win.

That Miami won in overtime 30-24, though, does not diminish what Hue Jackson did with an undermanned team against an opponent favored by 10. With the way things have gone for this team, the easy thing would be to criticize a loss. But in this case, the Browns deserve credit.

And their attitude seemed to come from their coach.

"It's the best coaching staff I've ever played for," said [**Terrelle Pryor**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19770/terrelle-pryor/), who had 200 total yards and a touchdown playing receiver, running back and quarterback.

"That's Hue's specialty," receiver [**Andrew Hawkins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18968/andrew-hawkins/) said. "That's the coaching staff's specialty, is to give us the opportunity to win. We should have won the football game. We felt we put [ourselves] in the position to win and we didn't get it done.

"But at the same time, a lot of people didn't give us that opportunity. That's how good this football staff is."

Unlike many coaches who go into a shell with a rookie starting and with so many injuries, Jackson went at it. He designed a game plan that included Pryor making a huge contribution at different positions, and that allowed [**Cody Kessler**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22113/cody-kessler/) to throw for 244 yards.

Kessler played under control and seemed to have an excellent grasp of the offense. Pryor was everywhere, catching eight passes for 144 yards, running for 21 and a touchdown and throwing for 35.

According to the NFL, Pryor became the first player to have at least 120 receiving yards, at least 30 passing yards, and at least 20 rushing yards in a single game since Hall of Famer Frank Gifford did it on December 6, 1959.

Still, it wasn't enough.

Kessler started rough -- he had a delay of game on his first play then fumbled after being sacked on third down -- but he was able, with the considerable help of Pryor, to guide the Browns back from a 24-13 deficit to a 24-24 tie and send the game to overtime. Had [**Cody Parkey**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20898/cody-parkey/) been able to hit a 46-yard field goal on the last play before overtime, Kessler would have walked out a winner.

Kessler completed 21 of 33 passes for 244 yards, with no touchdowns or interceptions. His rating: 85.9.

Kessler's play and approach helped calm a turbulent position. The Browns started [**Robert Griffin III**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19007/robert-griffin-iii/), [**Josh McCown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/14001/josh-mccown/)and Kessler over the first three games. Griffin is out for about 10 weeks with a shoulder injury and McCown is week to week with a broken collarbone, so it's likely Kessler will start against the Redskins.

For the Browns, in a season that has started 0-3 and been plagued by injuries, Kessler starting two games in a row is a step. That he'll do it after earning his teammates' praise makes the step a little more important. ...

Worth noting. ... The Browns aren't kicking Parkey to the side just yet.

Parkey missed three field goals, including the above-mentioned 46-yarder that forced overtime. He was making his debut for the Browns after [**Patrick Murray**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20897/patrick-murray/) injured his left knee in practice on Friday and was placed on injured reserve.

Despite the inaccuracy, Jackson said the team does not have any immediate plans to replace Parkey.

Parkey took full responsibility for the three misses. He didn't get a chance to practice with long snapper Charley Hughlett or holder Britton Colquitt until a few hours before kickoff.

Jackson said it's easy to fault Parkey, but there are numerous variables that go into a kick.

"Well, everybody says, that's the kicker's job," Jackson said. "It is his job, but normally a guy has a job, he's been around him employer a little bit, he's been around his teammates a little bit. It was tough circumstances. If he would've made it, we'd be celebrating right now. But he didn't. And I think it's unfair just to dump it all on him."

Jackson denied a report the Browns signed Parkey instead of former Chicago Bears kicker [**Robbie Gould**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16429/robbie-gould/) because he was cheaper to sign.

Other notes of interest. ... The Browns had success running the ball in Miami and hope to continue that in Washington. They rushed 32 times for a 169 yards a 5.3 average and unlike last week, when [**Isaiah Crowell**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20407/isaiah-crowell/) scored on an 85-yard run, there were no long gallops to skew the average. The strong running game takes heat off Kessler.

"It was just (that) we had to get out there and play together as a team and get our stuff together," Crowell said. "All the plays that we wanted to run, we just had to go out there and play as a team."

The Browns now have 434 yards rushing after three games, which projects to 2,315 yards for the season. They rushed for 1,529 yards last year.

This was [**Duke Johnson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20968/duke-johnson/)'s best game of the season with 81 yards on 15 touches, but Crowell going up against a Redskins defense that just gave up 157 total yards and two rushing touchdowns to Giants running backs on Sunday continues to look like the better play. ...

Crowell (knee) was limited in Wednesday's practice. I'll be following up via Late-Breaking Updates as needed. ...

[**Corey Coleman**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22265/corey-coleman/) missed Sunday's game with a broken hand. He'll be out at least another month. [**Andrew Hawkins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18968/andrew-hawkins/)started in Coleman's place. ...

CB Joe Haden was inactive against the Dolphins because of a groin injury. He was injured in practice on Friday. Tramon Williams started at left cornerback in place of Haden and made two tackles. He suffered a sprained shoulder. His status for the game against the Redskins Sunday is uncertain.

And finally. ... New right guard Alvin Bailey was arrested early Monday morning on suspicion of operating a vehicle while impaired. The Browns said they spoke with Bailey to "express our displeasure and extreme disappointment." Bailey moved into the starting lineup last week after John Greco slid to center and replaced Cam Erving, who sustained a bruised lung.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Cody Kessler, Charlie Whitehurst, Josh McCown   
**RBs:** Duke Johnson, Isaiah Crowell, Glenn Winston, Terrell Watson, George Atkinson   
**WRs:** Corey Coleman, Terrelle Pryor, Ricardo Louis, Andrew Hawkins, Rashard Higgins, Jordan Payton, Josh Gordon   
**TEs:** Gary Barnidge, Randall Telfer, Seth DeValve

**Dallas Cowboys**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

The breaking news early Wednesday afternoon sounds ominous on the surface -- even as the Cowboys try to downplay it.

[**Dez Bryant**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18342/dez-bryant/) is dealing with a hairline fracture to his right knee and is considered day-to-day, head coach Jason Garrett told reporters on a conference call Wednesday.

Garrett added he's hopeful Bryant will play against the San Francisco 49ers.

Bryant twisted the knee while being tackled on Sunday night against the Bears, leaving temporarily before returning to the game. On Tuesday, owner Jerry Jones said that, to his knowledge, Bryant hadn’t undergone an MRI on his knee. Apparently he has at some point and it revealed the fracture.

According to NFL Network's Ian Rapoport, there is no sprained MCL -- as originally reported. Just the hairline fracture, prompting Rapoport to tweet Bryant "could play this week. It could be three weeks."

Bryant is currently on crutches. How he responds to treatment will be part of the equation in figuring out how soon he plays.

The other part of the equation, as Profootballtalk.com's Mike Florio suggests, is whether and to what extent he’ll risk further injury by playing.

I'll be following Bryant's status closely in coming days; watch the Late-Breaking Updates section for more. ...

Also on the injury front, Jones said that left guard La'El Collins has not had surgery on his injured big toe and will "see if he can work through this" without having an operation. Ronald Leary will take over for Collins in the starting lineup. ...

Meanwhile, the game is not too big for [**Dak Prescott**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22103/dak-prescott/). The rookie quarterback is showing that he can play in the NFL and is not awed by the moment.

Prescott said he feels as if he belongs on this stage even if it is supposedly just on the interim basis until starter[**Tony Romo**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16154/tony-romo/) returns from a fractured bone in his back.

In case you missed it, Dallas went 1-11 without [**Tony Romo**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16154/tony-romo/) last season. The Cowboys are 2-1 this season after Prescott on Sunday became the first Cowboys backup quarterback to win at AT&T Stadium since [**Jon Kitna**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/4496/jon-kitna/) in 2010.

Romo will miss at least three more games while a compression fracture in his back heals.

"He has an even-keeled personality," head coach Jason Garrett said Monday of Prescott. "He has great poise and composure as a person, and he is a very serious-minded guy in terms of his preparation, so he focuses on the right things."

Prescott has gotten better with each game. He has not thrown an interception in three games, a span of 99 passes. That is the second-longest streak in NFL history behind the current 102-pass stretch by the Philadelphia Eagles'[**Carson Wentz**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22099/carson-wentz/).

Prescott ranks 12th in passer rating at 93.3, completing 66.7 percent of his passes for 767 yards with one touchdown and no interceptions. The Cowboys ranked eighth in total offense and 10th in scoring before the Monday night game.

"It's challenging, because we haven't just simply run the football," Garrett said. "He's done a lot of really good things throwing the football in each of the three games. He's made a lot of big plays for us. He's handled those situations well, and he's been in some challenging situations.

"We haven't just put the handcuffs on him, if you will. We just let him play, and he's done a good job handling that work. He's seen a lot of different fronts, a lot of different covers, a lot of different pressures. The guys who can process that and see what they need to see and go through the progressions and make good decisions are the ones who play best regardless of how old you are and how many games you've played."

While Prescott and the Cowboys have made it clear that the job belongs to Romo once the veteran returns to health, Prescott's play allows the team time to be patient with Romo's rehab.

A strong rushing attack should continue to aid in that regard.

As NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich noted, [**Ezekiel Elliott**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22143/ezekiel-elliott/) had the best game of his short career against the Bears. He rushed for 140 yards - more than any other running back in Week 3 -- marking his first 100-yard rushing game and salted away a Cowboys' win with 13 touches in the fourth quarter.

Unfortunately for his fantasy owners, Elliott lost touchdowns on three different occasions as Prescott, [**Lance Dunbar**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19360/lance-dunbar/)and [**Alfred Morris**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19408/alfred-morris/) each scored rushing touchdowns.

His fantasy owners will take production he generated but one or two of those touchdowns would have been nice.

All that aside, Elliott remains in position for a massive workload each and every week. He'll enjoy a soft matchup against the 49ers in Week 4 and will be a locked in RB1 yet again. ...

Other notes of interest. ... After seeing 14 targets in Week 1, [**Jason Witten**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16089/jason-witten/) has just six in the last two games.

As NFL.com's Matt Harmon notes, the offense flows through Bryant and [**Cole Beasley**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19782/cole-beasley/). Harmon added: "We should no longer be waiting to write off Beasley. It's clear that Prescott values him as a safety blanket. We should expect him to continue to see targets the rest of the way.

Perhaps even more targets if Bryant can't go this week.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Dak Prescott, Mark Sanchez, Tony Romo   
**RBs:** Ezekiel Elliott, Alfred Morris, Lance Dunbar, Darius Jackson, Darren McFadden   
**WRs:** Dez Bryant, Terrance Williams, Cole Beasley, Brice Butler, Lucky Whitehead   
**TEs:** Jason Witten, Gavin Escobar, Geoff Swaim

**Denver Broncos**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's Jeff Legwold pointed out, maybe the Broncos thought [**Emmanuel Sanders**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18356/emmanuel-sanders/) and [**Demaryius Thomas**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18341/demaryius-thomas/) were right.

The Broncos wide receivers made some rare ripples in the pond this past week when they said they needed the ball more. Sanders went as far as to say the Broncos needed to take a look at the play calling if "things don't work."

The Broncos looked at Sanders and Thomas plenty Sunday, with both going over 100 yards receiving, and appeared to take a long look at the play calling as well in a 29-17 win over the Cincinnati Bengals in Paul Brown Stadium.

Quarterback [**Trevor Siemian**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21979/trevor-siemian/), obviously, was also prominent in the game plan in the first road start of his career. IN fact, Siemian had the best game by a Broncos quarterback in two years - since Manning was running the show - as Denver stayed unbeaten with a 29-17 win over the Bengals on Sunday. He threw four touchdown passes - Manning was the last Bronco to do that - and passed for 312 yards.

Best of all, he was nearly perfect under the most intense pressure, going completing 11 of 12 passes while leading Denver to a pair of fourth-quarter touchdowns.

Siemian was especially dialed-in with Sanders in the early going, as seven of first 13 completions went to him. Sanders also caught both of Siemian's touchdown passes in the first half. Siemian closed the deal with a 55-yard touchdown pass to Thomas in the game's closing minutes.

The 100-yard receiving games were the first this season for Sanders and Thomas, and they came against a Bengals defense that came in ranked last in the league in run defense.

The Broncos sported a bevy of three-, four- and even five-wide-receiver looks on the day with Siemian in the shotgun and throwing in several short-yardage situations. It all meant that by the end of the third quarter, the Broncos had run the ball just 13 times for 40 yards, and Siemian, who led a scoring drive just before halftime as well as a 13-play affair in the fourth quarter, threw four touchdown passes overall.

Siemian, who has lived on the edge at times with several near interceptions this season, did so again Sunday. The Bengals missed two chances to intercept Siemian on a Broncos scoring drive just before halftime. One time was on a wobbly popup after Siemian's arm was hit on the throw.

But Bengals defenders, including linebacker Rey Maualuga, collided as the ball fell to the turf. Bengals safety Shawn Williams dropped a potential interception on the same drive only to see the Broncos turn that into a touchdown six plays later.

In terms of predictions for Sanders and Thomas going forward, NFL.com's Matt Harmon believes it will come down to whether the matchup will dictate the offense opening up. This week's faceoff with the Buccaneers, who bring a strong front-seven and weaker secondary to the table, looks like another one of those spots. ...

Siemian was named AFC Offensive Player of the Week for his performance in Cincy. ...

For the record, Siemian, a seventh-round pick last season, is the seventh Broncos quarterback to win his first three starts - [**Brock Osweiler**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19088/brock-osweiler/) also did it last season. The club record is a 6-0 start, by Craig Morton in 1977 and Kyle Orton in 2009. Head coach Gary Kubiak showed faith in Siemian by letting him air it out when the Bengals clamped down on Denver's running game. ...

Other notes of interest. ... - There were no turnovers, but the Broncos were forced to go away from the ground game early as the Bengals crowded the box and dared Siemian to throw. The gamble backfired for the Bengals, but the combined production of just 45 yards on 18 carries for [**C.J. Anderson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19896/c.j.-anderson/) and [**Devontae Booker**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22146/devontae-booker/) was easily a season-low.

Tight end [**Virgil Green**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18678/virgil-green/) did not travel for Sunday's game because of a calf injury suffered last week against the Colts. Green is considered "day-to-day" and could return to practice this week -- although he wasn't on the field for Wednesday's session.

Second year man [**Jeff Heuerman**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21088/jeff-heuerman/) made his regular-season debut in Green's absence Sunday and caught a 29-yard pass in the fourth quarter down the seam for his first career reception. Heuerman missed the 2015 season because of a torn ACL and was sidelined for most of the preseason because of a hamstring injury.

Other injury notes of interest. ... According to the Sports Xchange, OT Russell Okung left for 17 snaps Sunday because of a lower back issue. Okung departed late in the first quarter, but returned late in the second quarter. Michael Schofield took his place at left tackle. RT Ty Sambrailo started at right tackle in place of the injured Donald Stephenson, and struggled, allowing a sack. It was Sambrailo's first game-time work since he tore his labrum while playing left tackle in Week 3 of the 2015 season.

Stephenson could be back at practice this week after not traveling to Cincinnati because of a calf injury. Stephenson is "day-to-day" from the injury he suffered in the first quarter of the Week 2 win over the Colts.

Safety T.J. Ward missed three plays because of a stinger, but returned and had the deflection that led to a Will Parks interception that helped seal the win.

ILB [**Brandon Marshall**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17646/brandon-marshall/) was treated on the field during the Broncos' final defensive series, but was uninjured. Kubiak said that Marshall was "tired," citing his high workload, which was greater than that of any other linebacker on the roster Sunday. Marshall took a knee during the national anthem for the third consecutive week. He is the only Bronco to have taken a knee for the anthem this season.

S Justin Simmons sat out Sunday's game to recover from a wrist fracture he suffered the previous week. Simmons played through the injury in Week 2 and practiced with a cast, but the Broncos opted to hold him out after re-signing Shiloh Keo earlier in the week.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Trevor Siemian, Paxton Lynch, Austin Davis   
**RBs:** C.J. Anderson, Devontae Booker, Kapri Bibbs   
**WRs:** Demaryius Thomas, Emmanuel Sanders, Cody Latimer, Bennie Fowler, Jordan Norwood, Jordan Taylor   
**TEs:** Virgil Green, Jeff Heuerman, John Phillips

**Detroit Lions**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As the Sports Xchange suggested this week, [**Calvin Johnson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17816/calvin-johnson/)'s legacy as one of the most dominant wide receivers in NFL history is safe, but the Detroit Lions haven't missed Megatron as much as many thought.

[**Marvin Jones**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19079/marvin-jones/), who signed with the Lions as a free agent days after Johnson retired in March, leads the NFL with 408 yards receiving through three games and has been one of the few bright spots in the team's disappointing 1-2 start.

In Sunday's 34-27 loss to the Green Bay Packers, Jones caught six passes for a career-high 205 yards and two touchdowns. He leads the NFL at 22.7 yards per catch.

Jones picked the Lions over a number of suitors in free agency because of the chance to play a more prominent role than the one he had been cast in his first four years of his career with the Cincinnati Bengals.

The Lions' clear No. 1 receiver ahead of [**Golden Tate**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18352/golden-tate/), Jones never had more than 65 catches or 816 yards in Cincinnati.

"I just knew it was a great opportunity and we have the great players in place to do something big," Jones said. "The feeling of me being a part of something big and guiding the team to win games, obviously we didn't do that the past couple weeks, but I still think that this might be the most talented team that I've been a part of. And you see it out there and we just have to put it all together. That means start fast. So we need to start fast and just continue to progress."

Jones has opened eyes so far this year with his deep-ball ability and body control. He's made a number of twisting, toe-tapping catches along the sideline, and on Sunday he scored on passes of 73 and 35 yards from [**Matthew Stafford**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18171/matthew-stafford/).

He said his mindset on deep balls is "that I'm going to win 100 percent of the time," and so far this year that's been the case.

Thanks in large part to Jones, Stafford threw for a season-high 385 yards and three touchdowns to keep Sunday's blowout from skidding completely off the rails. Stafford wasn't particularly sharp early, and he was sacked three times in the fourth quarter.

For what it's worth, NFL.com's Matt Harmon advised readers on Monday that for all intents and purposes, Jones and [**Eric Ebron**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20509/eric-ebron/) are the top two receivers in this offense, as they are the only two working downfield.

Indeed, as ESPN Stats & Information noted, all six of Jones' receptions Sunday came on passes thrown 15 or more yards downfield. Jones joined [**Antonio Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18410/antonio-brown/) and [**John Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20470/john-brown/) as the only players in the last two seasons with six such receptions in a game. Stafford was 6-of-7 targeting Jones 15 or more yards downfield Sunday, and 1-of-4 targeting all others.

Harmon went on to point out that Tate averages 7.2 yards per reception this year and has yet to haul in a deep target. Harmon added that Tate is "far closer to [**Theo Riddick**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19897/theo-riddick/) in terms of usage than he is to Jones."

Meanwhile, in their first game without [**Ameer Abdullah**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20970/ameer-abdullah/), the Lions managed just 50 yards rushing on 23 carries.

Riddick (10 carries, 9 yards) didn't take well to an expanded role as the Lions' lead back, and his struggles were especially pronounced in the first quarter. [**Dwayne Washington**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22174/dwayne-washington/) showed some life in limited work (10 carries, 38 yards), but neither the offensive line nor the tight ends were much help blocking.

All that said, Washington's role seems likely to expand in coming weeks. ...

Also of great fantasy interest here, as noted by ESPN.com's Michael Rothstein: The one thing to really understand from the Lions' loss to Green Bay is that Detroit is in real trouble defensively as long as defensive end Ezekiel Ansah and linebacker DeAndre Levy are out of the lineup, especially as the Lions travel to Chicago this week. The Bears' offense isn't as explosive as Green Bay's, but it has to remain a concern.

ESPN reported Sunday that Ansah will miss this week's game as he seeks a second opinion on his sprained right ankle, and the Detroit Free Press reported that Levy likely will miss his third straight game this week with a quad injury.

In addition to giving up 31 first-half points to the Packers, Detroit didn't force a punt until the fourth quarter, and they have just one takeaway on defense this year

Again, from a fantasy perspective, anything that forces an offense to play keep-up is a positive. Expect more of that going forward for the Lions. ...

Also on the injury front. ... Ebron was not on the practice field Wednesday

Other notes of interest. ... According to the Sports Xchange, [**Andre Roberts**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18360/andre-roberts/) is safe as the Lions' primary return man for now.

Head coach Jim Caldwell said he still feels comfortable with Roberts handling the bulk of the return duties, though the Lions have done little of note in that department thus far. Roberts is averaging just 20 yards on kickoff returns and 7.6 yards per punt return, and the Lions were unable to overcome consistently poor field position against the Packers.

"I think in a number of different situations there we need to block better, give the guy a little bit more of a crack to go," Caldwell said. "There were a couple situations where, you turn one guy loose in this league on a punt return or a kickoff return, that guy's going to make the play. And we were not as effective as we should have been in a couple of those situations. We need a little bit more out of them."

Washington, who returned a kick for a touchdown in the preseason, is the Lions' other option on kick returns, and Tate is the team's backup punt returner. The Lions rank 15th in kick returns (20.9 yards per return) and 22nd in punt returns (7.9) as a team.

And finally. ... The Lions have signed wide receiver [**Aaron Dobson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19915/aaron-dobson/) again after waiving him last week.

Dobson appeared in eight games last season for New England and finished with 13 receptions for 141 yards.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Matthew Stafford, Dan Orlovsky   
**RBs:** Theo Riddick, Dwayne Washington, Zach Zenner, Ameer Abdullah   
**WRs:** Marvin Jones, Golden Tate, Anquan Boldin, Andre Roberts, Aaron Dobson   
**TEs:** Eric Ebron, Matthew Mulligan, Cole Wick, Brandon Pettigrew

**Green Bay Packers**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As head coach Mike McCarthy excused his players late Monday afternoon for the start of their bye week, sentiments about having the break so soon on their schedule were mixed.

As the Associated Press notes, the passing game appears to be on better footing after a big first half by [**Aaron Rodgers**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16314/aaron-rodgers/) and his receivers in the 34-27 win over the Detroit Lions on Sunday. So disrupting that momentum after two shaky outings to start the season wasn't desired.

But Green Bay's pass defense might need some work, so the long layoff after only three games could be in the Packers' favor.

Especially when injuries to several key players left the defense short-handed against the Lions.

McCarthy agreed the team's earliest bye week since 2013 — not long ago, of course — when the Packers also took a week off after just three games, comes at a good time

"It's early, it's different, but I think it's obvious we need it," McCarthy said Monday. The coach added the team won't be back together until next Monday, when Green Bay starts to prepare for a Sunday night matchup Oct. 9 against the New York Giants at Lambeau Field.

And when the players return for what will be a long haul of playing 13 straight weeks until New Year's Day to end the regular season, McCarthy is hopeful his team will be close to full strength again.

The defense played without four injured starters Sunday.

Linebacker Clay Matthews (ankle/hamstring) and safety Morgan Burnett (groin) were injured in the Week 2 loss at unbeaten NFC North leader Minnesota. Veteran nose tackle Letroy Guion went out with a knee injury early in that game and is sidelined indefinitely.

Cornerback Sam Shields has been out since suffering a concussion in the season-opening win at Jacksonville.

Versatile defensive end/linebacker Datone Jones also was out Sunday with a knee injury, though he felt he could have played.

"I just think, overall, it helps our team just get back healthy," Jones said about the bye week.

While the Packers shut down the Lions rushing attack, the shaky play of their pass defense is cause for concern going into the bye, however. Lions quarterback [**Matthew Stafford**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18171/matthew-stafford/) exploited Green Bay's depleted secondary for 385 passing yards, including a career-high 205 yards and two touchdowns by receiver [**Marvin Jones**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19079/marvin-jones/) Jr.

The Packers have allowed an average of 307.3 yards through the air, fifth worst in the league.

"The back end, they'll get it together," Daniels said. "Those guys have a lot of pride, and I'm looking forward to watching those young guys grow, too, because we have a lot of young guys out there."

One thing that should stop -- at least for now, are the questions surrounding Rodgers.

As ESPN.com's Rob Demovsky suggested, one of the most dominant first halves of Rodgers' career should quiet things down for a couple of weeks. Rodgers became the first quarterback to throw four touchdown passes in the first half of an NFL game this season.

Through two games, Rodgers had completed just 57.1 percent of his passes, averaged 5.9 yards per pass attempt and had a passer rating of 82.6.

He rectified that in the first quarter alone. Rodgers finished the game 15-fo-24 passing for 205 yards and the four touchdowns without a turnover. His lofty passer rating of 129.3 snapped a dubious streak of 14 games without an efficiency mark of at least 100, which started Nov. 1 last season.

He didn't throw a touchdown after his four in the first half, during which [**Jordy Nelson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17985/jordy-nelson/) made all six of his catches for 101 yards and two touchdowns.

Nelson caught 85.7 percent of the targets that went his way and owned a near-30 percent share of the team targets. According to NFL.com's Matt Harmon, Nelson's average depth of target (11.7) leveled out a balanced number after checking in at a lowly 5.3 in Week 1 and a deeper 13.7 in Week 2. It's safe to say Nelson is all the way back.

Of course, there will be things to nitpick between now and the Packers' next game on Oct. 9 against the New York Giants.

The Packers' only points of the second half came via a 46-yard [**Mason Crosby**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17892/mason-crosby/) field goal. The Packers scored on their first five possessions (four touchdowns and a field goal) but their second-half drive chart looked like this: field goal, punt, punt, end of game.

Meanwhile, tight end [**Jared Cook**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18196/jared-cook/) is expected to miss some time with a high ankle sprain.

Although there's been no official word from the team and the Packers are on their bye this week, a high ankle sprain usually takes several weeks to heal, so it's unlikely that he'd be on the field when they return in Week 5 against the Giants.

Cook was seen in the Packers' locker room on crutches and wearing a protective boot.

Through three games, Cook is fourth on the team with six catches.

While Cook is out, [**Richard Rodgers**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20519/richard-rodgers/) and [**Justin Perillo**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21914/justin-perillo/) will get more playing time at tight end.

The Packers also lost fullback [**Aaron Ripkowski**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20997/aaron-ripkowski/) (back) in the first half, leaving them with only two available running backs -- [**Eddie Lacy**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19857/eddie-lacy/) and [**James Starks**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18383/james-starks/).

A few final notes here. ... [**Eddie Lacy**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19857/eddie-lacy/) had his best game of the season thus far against a banged-up Lions defense. As NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich noted, Lacy had a handful of impressive runs, rumbling his way to 105 total yards and 6.1 yards per carry. But in a game where the Packers put up 34 points, Lacy failed to reach the end zone.

[**James Starks**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18383/james-starks/) played little and was dropped for a one-yard loss in his only rushing attempt. That was the same outcome for receiver [**Ty Montgomery**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21028/ty-montgomery/), when he lined up in the backfield for a few plays.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Aaron Rodgers, Brett Hundley, Joe Callahan   
**RBs:** Eddie Lacy, James Starks, Brandon Burks   
**WRs:** Jordy Nelson, Randall Cobb, Davante Adams, Jared Abbrederis, Ty Montgomery, Trevor Davis, Jeff Janis   
**TEs:** Richard Rodgers, Jared Cook, Justin Perillo

**Houston Texans**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

The Texans won't dwell on their 27-0 loss to the New England Patriots.

Sure, it was embarrassing and unexpected to get dominated like they were. But they know they'll have to get over it quickly to avoid it carrying over into their next game.

'We've got Tennessee, a division game, coming up, so we've got to get our head screwed on right,' said Houston nose tackle and former Patriot Vince Wilfork. 'We want to win every game. Unfortunately that doesn't happen a lot, so you move forward. That is what we have to do now.'

Head coach Bill O'Brien isn't worried about his team bouncing back from the shutout.

'We have a resilient bunch of guys,' he said. 'They know that it's only the third game of the season and they're going to work very, very hard to correct the mistakes, and they're going to work very hard on Tennessee.'

Although he doesn't want his team to wallow in what happened against the Patriots, O'Brien and his coaching staff will study film to try and figure out how things went so wrong.

'You have to think about how you're going to correct your mistakes, the players' mistakes, and learn from it and then move on,' he said. 'You can't just bury the tape and then move on to Tennessee.'

Turnovers are likely to be a focus.

As ESPN.com's Sarah Barshop pointed out, through the first two weeks of the season, [**Brock Osweiler**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19088/brock-osweiler/) was able to overcome an early turnover and lead the Texans to a victory.

Against the Patriots, Osweiler couldn't bounce back from his interception early in the second quarter, and the Texans never got going on offense.

Osweiler averaged just 4.8 yards per attempt, finishing the game 24-for-41 for 196 yards and the interception. His 60.6 passer rating was the lowest of his career among his 10 starts.

"I think any time an offense struggles with developing a rhythm, struggles with scoring points, I think the first thing you have to examine is the quarterback," Osweiler said. "I'll take the blame for this one.

"Any time a team doesn't score points, it's on me."

The Texans' offense never found a rhythm, and Osweiler looked overmatched against the Patriots' defense. Osweiler's biggest mistake of the night came in the second quarter, when he was looking for wide receiver[**DeAndre Hopkins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19904/deandre-hopkins/) across the middle.

Osweiler has four interceptions in three games, and for the third time this season, the interception came when he was targeting Hopkins.

"There are no excuses for the interception," Osweiler said. "My job is to protect the football and score points and lead this offense on drives to score points. The bottom line is that I didn't do that tonight."

O'Brien said he thought the Patriots had "good coverage" against Osweiler, and reiterated for the second week in a row that he was not concerned with Osweiler's interceptions, and that it's something they will go over in the film room.

"It looked like on that one he probably tried to force it," O'Brien said of Osweiler's pick against New England. "He is just trying to make a play."

Osweiler said one of the reasons why the Patriots were so successful against him is that they played a lot of two-high defense to take away plays down the field.

"They were very aware of our receiving threats, and they weren't going to let us throw the ball down the field," Osweiler said.

Along with signing Osweiler to a four-year, $72 million contract in March, the Texans also added help on offense with running back [**Lamar Miller**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19066/lamar-miller/) and by drafting receiver [**Will Fuller**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22268/will-fuller/) in the first round. While Houston was unable to take advantage of their new offensive weapons in New England, O'Brien said he didn't think he was too conservative with the play calling.

"Some of those things, when we are running on third down, we feel like we have a pretty good look to run the ball against," O'Brien said. "It just didn't work out as good as we thought it would go, and they played well.

"They played really well and we did not play well."

But, at the end of the day, the Texans were outplayed on national television, and Osweiler says he knows he has to perform better.

"They didn't do anything tonight that we weren't expecting," Osweiler said. "I need to play better so I can give this team an opportunity to win ball games like this."

Worth noting, Miller is averaging 28 touches a game. In his three games with the Texans, Miller has 269 rushing yards on 74 carries, and 10 catches for 52 yards.

Though Miller is averaging nearly 90 rushing yards per game, he is averaging just 3.6 yards per carry. He is yet to have a huge, explosive run and doesn't have a touchdown yet; his longest rush this season is for 15 yards.

Against New England, Miller had 21 attempts for 80 yards and four catches for 27 yards, although he had 16 carries for just 49 yards in the first half. O'Brien is happy with how the team has used Miller so far.

Bottom line: Miller continues to get enough volume to keep him in your lineups, but at some point Miller needs to start maximizing his potential. ...

Other notes of interest. ... Rookie receiver [**Braxton Miller**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22269/braxton-miller/) missed the Patriots game with a hamstring injury but it isn't regarded as a long-term problem. Tight end [**Stephen Anderson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22355/stephen-anderson/) suffered a hamstring injury that he called "mild."

J.J. Watt has re-injured his back and the Houston Texans expect the star defensive end to be sidelined until at least December, and possibly the entire season.

Watt missed training camp and Houston's four preseason games after surgery in July to repair a herniated disk in his back. He started each of the team's three regular-season games and got hurt again Thursday against the Patriots.

It's unclear if the injury will require surgery, but the Texans placed Watt on injured reserve Wednesday.

It's a major blow for Houston, which selected Watt with the 11th overall pick in the 2011 draft. Watt has played 83 consecutive games for the Texans despite various injuries, including torn core muscles and a broken hand last season.

The team signed veteran defensive end Antonio Smith to a one-year deal to help cover for Watt's loss.

Smith, 34, played for the Texans from 2009-13. He played in all 16 games as a backup for the Broncos last season.

Smith has 47 career sacks in 173 career games, 133 starts. He entered the league as a fifth-round pick of the Cardinals in 2004.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Brock Osweiler, Tom Savage, Brandon Weeden   
**RBs:** Lamar Miller, Alfred Blue, Tyler Ervin, Jonathan Grimes   
**WRs:** DeAndre Hopkins, Jaelen Strong, Will Fuller, Braxton Miller, Keith Mumphery   
**TEs:** C.J. Fiedorowicz, Ryan Griffin, Stephen Anderson

**Indianapolis Colts**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

The Colts barely -- by 77 seconds, to be exact -- avoided falling to 0-3 for the first time with quarterback [**Andrew Luck**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19006/andrew-luck/). T.Y. Hilton barely broke free from cornerback Jason Verrett's tackle on the 63-yard game-winning touchdown reception against the Chargers last Sunday.

As ESPN.com's Mike Wells suggested, the game -- and arguably the Colts' season -- looked bleak when Luck and the offense took the field at their own 17-yard line down two points with a little more than two minutes remaining. It took a completion to Hilton on fourth down deep in their own end of the field to extend the drive.

Two plays later, Luck completed the quick pass to Hilton, who did the rest.

The Colts badly needed this victory. An 0-3 start would have made it nearly impossible for them to make the playoffs and would have caused questions to swirl about owner Jim Irsay's decision to retain head coach Chuck Pagano and general manager Ryan Grigson.

Luck's turnover problem would be a hot topic too.

The Colts were in position to give all of that some breathing room late in the first half against the Chargers. They had the ball and were marching down the field with the opportunity to go up at least 10 points when Luck was swarmed by a handful of Chargers defenders, and Jatavis Brown stripped the ball from him. Caraun Reid scooped up the loose ball and returned it 61 yards for a touchdown to tie the score 13-13.

This came after Luck threw an interception earlier in the game. Luck has now committed four turnovers -- two interceptions and two fumbles -- in three games.

But when it was all done Sunday, he finished 24-of-37 for 331 yards and a game-winning touchdown to Hilton, who had eight receptions for 174 yards. In his last three home games, Luck has completed 76-of-120 passes (63.3 percent) for 968 yards with seven touchdowns and one interception for a 104.4 passer rating.

Luck completed 13 straight passes after throwing the interception Sunday.

Now, with a short week to prepare for Sunday's road trip London and a matchup against AFC South rival Jacksonville, Pagano and company are just glad to get a win on the books.

"There's nothing like winning, it's just what the doctor ordered," Pagano admitted after the Chargers game.

Worth noting. ... The Colts defense held San Diego to 37 net rushing yards, which is the lowest total allowed dating back to Nov. 8, 2015 against Denver (35 yards). It's only the third game in the last seven years Indianapolis' defense has held an opponent to under 37 net rushing yards.

Meanwhile, overlooked with Hilton's breakout performance and Luck's turnovers, is the way the Colts spent the first part of Sunday's win feeding [**Frank Gore**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16327/frank-gore/) out of the backfield, and the 33-year-old running back responded by finding the creases to run through.

Gore, who is trying to become the first Colts running back to rush for at least 100 yards since Week 15 of the 2012 season (a drought of 53 straight regular-season games, if you're counting), had 82 yards and a touchdown on 21 carries in the victory.

Last season, Gore rushed for at least 80 yards four times, with the high being 98 yards. During the first half against the Chargers, it looked he was on his way to having his first 100-yard rushing game since Week 17 of the 2014 season, when he was with the San Francisco 49ers. Gore had 13 rushes for 70 yards (5.4 yards a carry) during the first 30 minutes. The stage was set for him to join [**Vick Ballard**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19142/vick-ballard/) as the only two players rush for 100 yards since the Colts selected [**Andrew Luck**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19006/andrew-luck/) in 2012.

But Gore had only eight carries for 12 yards in the second half.

What the Colts' first-half performance proved is that they are capable of running the ball when they're not having to play catch-up from an early deficit. The fact that he was on the field for 66 percent of the offensive snaps worked in Gore's favor. [**Robert Turbin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19095/robert-turbin/) fell into the end zone for the second straight week, but NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich isn't buying Turbin yet as a fantasy asset as anything more than a Gore handcuff.

That being the case, I'll remind you the Jaguars are 20th in the NFL (109.7 yards) in stopping the run. ...

For the record, the Colts will be treating the London trip like a Thursday night game.

"All of our departments have been over there a couple times and logistically found out hotels, buses, the trip to Wembley (Stadium). All that stuff. It's an undertaking obviously and it's going to be a short turnaround for us," the coach said.

"It's like playing a Thursday game for us even though we have a week and we are playing on a Sunday. A week goes fast. We will come in Tuesday and that will be like a Wednesday and then the next thing you know we will be on a plane. It's going to be a heck of a challenge. ..."

Also of interest. ... According to NFL.com's Matt Harmon, with [**Donte Moncrief**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20446/donte-moncrief/) out the Colts dialed back their three wide receiver sets (25 plays) and increased their use of two tight end groupings (30 plays). [**Phillip Dorsett**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21017/phillip-dorsett/)'s snap share checked in at 89 percent, which was barely up from his 84 percent in Week 2, and well behind Moncrief's 97 percent in Week 1.

But, Harmon added, tight end [**Jack Doyle**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19976/jack-doyle/)'s snap share continued its upward trend from 56 percent in Week 1, to 62 percent last week and culminating in 75 percent this week. "For at least while Moncrief is on the shelf," Harmon wrote, "Doyle remains a major cog in this offense."

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Andrew Luck, Scott Tolzien, Stephen Morris   
**RBs:** Frank Gore, Robert Turbin, Josh Ferguson, Jordan Todman   
**WRs:** TY Hilton, Phillip Dorsett, Quan Bray, Devin Street, Donte Moncrief   
**TEs:** Dwayne Allen, Erik Swoope, Jack Doyle

**Jacksonville Jaguars**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As the team's official website framed it: "The Jaguars were better. No debating that.

"By any account, what happened Sunday was yards – even miles – better than what happened a week before. But there were a couple of critical exceptions."

One exception was that the Jaguars did not win and winning was what they had to do Sunday.

Jaguars.com's John Oehser went on to explain the other exception is more important.

That exception is quarterback [**Blake Bortles**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20360/blake-bortles/), who did not play better in a 19-17 loss to the Ravens Sunday afternoon than he did a week before in one-sidedly memorable loss to San Diego.

Bortles is struggling right now. He's struggling in a big way.

And because Bortles is the player expected to be winning games rather than losing them – and because he is the quarterback around whom this team is being built – the Bortles Is Struggling Story is the biggest story. No issue facing this 0-3 team is as important as that.

The third-year veteran is nothing if not candid when it comes to his play, and as he has struggled early this season, he has remained strikingly so. His teammates believe in him and have since he entered the starting lineup as a rookie in 2014.

They remained firmly in support of their quarterback Sunday.

"He's a really good player," tight end [**Marcedes Lewis**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17603/marcedes-lewis/) said. "He's proven that last year. The way he prepares, the way he practices. ... He wants to do really well. All good players go through what he's going through right now. You have to fight through it. We're going to be there to help him fight through it.

"Adversity is real, and if you let it beat your [tail], you stay in that slump."

And indeed, that's where the Jaguars are entering this week's home game against AFC rival Indianapolis at Wembley Stadium in London. They're in a slump that in many ways has been defined by the unexpected slump of Bortles.

His six interceptions this season included five in the last two games.

But Bortles -- and the offense in general -- would benefit from some semblance of a rushing attack.

As the Associated Press' Mark Long reminded readers, it's a significant problem that plagued head coach Gus Bradley's team last year and failed to get fixed in the offseason.

Now, after three feeble games on the ground, the Jaguars are having conversations about whether to "get big to run" or try to spread defenses out in hopes of creating some extra space.

Either way, Jacksonville needs to improve its rushing attack.

"I do think running the ball would help [Bortles]," Bradley said Monday. "Obviously, it would take some pressure off of him. I think sometimes when you can run the ball, it can open up some of those play-action passes."

Opponents "are not honoring the run very much. Then it is tough to run play-action when they are not honoring the run. A lot of times your explosive passes come off of play-action. I think they go hand-in-hand. I think we can take more of a burden off of him by finding a way to run the ball."

[**T.J. Yeldon**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20971/t.j.-yeldon/) has 84 yards on 34 attempts, averaging 2.5 yards a carry. That's actually decent compared to [**Chris Ivory**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18435/chris-ivory/), who missed the first two games of the season because of a "general medical issue" that required a hospital stay. Ivory ran 12 times for 14 yards against the Ravens, averaging 1.2 yards a touch.

Worth noting, Ivory went into Sunday's game with a sprained right knee and then suffered a sprained left ankle but only missed a couple of plays. He worked on a limited basis on Wednesday as he tries to get back to 100 percent.

Jacksonville ranks 31st in the league — only Minnesota is worse — in rushing. Take away Bortles' scrambles and the Jags are averaging 2.4 yards a carry

Although Bradley won't use it as any excuse, his line was shuffled significantly Sunday. Left tackle Kelvin Beachum (concussion) and center Brandon Linder (knee) missed the game, forcing center Tyler Shatley and guard Chris Reed to make their first career starts. Bortles was sacked four times, and Jacksonville ran 21 times for 48 yards.

Not being able to get much going on the ground, it was up to Bortles to make plays. And he came up short — again.

As NFL.com's Mark Ortega suggested, it seems Bortles has seriously regressed this season. But there's clearly plenty of blame to go around. ...

Other notes of interest. ... [**Allen Robinson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20450/allen-robinson/) tried to downplay the significance of his performance on Sunday against the Baltimore Ravens. After two sub-par games in which he caught a total of nine passes for 126 yards and no touchdowns, Robinson finished the game with seven catches (on a team-leading 11 targets) for 57 yards and a pair of touchdowns. That enabled him to take over the team lead in receptions with 16 and a team-high 183 yards. It's still a long way from what Robinson did a year ago, when he hauled in 80 passes, good for 1,400 yards and 14 scores.

More to the point for fantasy owners, Robinson saw three red zone targets (tops on the team) and caught three of them for 20 yards and the two touchdowns. As NFL.com's Matt Harmon noted, it's Robinson's role as the lead dog inside the 20-yard line that unlocks his ceiling. ...

Receiver [**Marqise Lee**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20443/marqise-lee/) continued to show his value when healthy. Lee, who has battled injuries his first couple of years with the Jaguars, has been healthy since midway in training camp and was a contributor against Baltimore with 11- and 20-yard receptions on the Jaguars first drive of the second half. The plays helped produce a Jaguars touchdown. ...

And finally. ... TE [**Julius Thomas**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18685/julius-thomas/) injured his elbow in Sunday's game but played through it with the help of a brace. Thomas was not on the practice field Wednesday.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Blake Bortles, Chad Henne, Brandon Allen   
**RBs:** T.J. Yeldon, Chris Ivory, Denard Robinson, Corey Grant, Joe Banyard   
**WRs:** Allen Robinson, Allen Hurns, Marqise Lee, Rashad Greene, Bryan Walters   
**TEs:** Julius Thomas, Marcedes Lewis, Ben Koyack, Neal Sterling

**Kansas City Chiefs**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's Adam Teicher suggested, if the formula the Chiefs used to beat the Jets on Sunday looked familiar, it's because they used it many times last season in stringing together 11 straight wins.

They got an early lead, and that allowed them to play the game on their terms. They used a ball-control offense to keep possession away from the Jets, who entered the game as one of the NFL's highest-scoring teams. They limited their mistakes and took advantage of those made by the Jets.

It sounds simple, and it allowed the 2-1 Chiefs to claim a 24-3 win at Arrowhead Stadium. It's a formula Kansas City needs to utilize this Sunday against the Pittsburgh Steelers and beyond because when they play this way, the Chiefs are at their best.

Their big comeback against the San Diego Chargers in Week 1 sparked visions of a high-scoring Chiefs offense, but that isn't who the Chiefs have been since they acquired [**Alex Smith**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16367/alex-smith/) to be their quarterback in 2013. That game was the only time since Smith arrived that the Chiefs scored a late touchdown to win a game.

On Sunday, they had just one offensive play longer than 20 yards. That was a short slant pattern that [**Travis Kelce**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19961/travis-kelce/)took for 42 yards.

But Teicher contends the Chiefs didn't need big offense.

They scored the game's first touchdown and then were free to do what they like to do. They moved the chains, held a big edge in time of possession and pressured the Jets into eight turnovers. The Chiefs pinched off three New York drives with interceptions in the end zone. They scored a touchdown on a fumble return during a Jets kickoff return. They returned an interception for a touchdown.

This is exactly how the Chiefs won many of those 11 straight games last season. They never trailed in eight of those games. In two others, their biggest deficit was less than a touchdown. Only once in the streak did the Chiefs have to rally from a double-digit deficit to win.

After two games in which the Chiefs fell behind by double digits, they finally recalled their winning formula. They're going to need to use it again and again if they are to make the playoffs this season.

Meanwhile, whether it's this Sunday against the Steelers in Pittsburgh or sometime shortly afterward, Andy Reid is going to have to make a decision with [**Jamaal Charles**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18001/jamaal-charles/) that he hasn't had to since joining the Kansas City Chiefs as their coach in 2013.

The question: What to do with him?

According to Teicher, Reid's choice with Charles was obvious before the veteran running back tore the ACL in his right knee last October. It was to play Charles, one of the most productive running backs of his era before and since Reid's arrival.

Charles is on the verge of his return, whether or not it happens against the Steelers. But he hasn't played any live football in almost a year. He's also returning to a Chiefs running back world that was far different than it was before his injury.

[**Spencer Ware**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19881/spencer-ware/) and [**Charcandrick West**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22005/charcandrick-west/) are no longer unproven players as they were before Charles left the lineup. They've proved their value to the Chiefs, enough so that the Chiefs found it necessary to re-sign both to contract extensions over the offseason.

Still, the Chiefs are aware that Charles has better big-play ability and can thus add another dimension to what has been a struggling offense.

The plan with Charles during much of the offseason, when the Chiefs thought he would be ready to play at the start of the regular season, was to install him as the full-time featured back.

That still could happen at some point during the season, once the Chiefs are convinced he's the same player he was before the injury and ready for a big workload.

But Teicher advised readers that won't happen immediately after his return.

"That would go against every cautious move the Chiefs have made with him," Teicher explained. "It would also ignore the contributions the Chiefs have received from their two other backs."

That's particularly true for Ware, who is averaging 4.9 yards per carry and is second on the Chiefs in receiving yards.

The Chiefs would more likely get Charles involved in some sort of playing rotation. It makes more sense that the rotation would also involve Ware more than West. Not only has Ware been more productive than West but his physical style would give the Chiefs more of a change of pace than if they split playing time between Charles and West.

Adding to the intrigue this week, West did not practice Wednesday due to a sprained ankle. Charles was working with the regular offense Wednesday after working with the scout team the last two weeks.

Needless to say, I'll be watching Charles' and West's progress closely in coming days. Watch the Late-Breaking Updates section for more as the week progresses.

Whoever gets the bulk of the workload this week will be going up against a Steelers defense that was unable to stop the Philadelphia run game last Sunday. ...

Other notes of interest. ... Smith threw for 237 yards against the Jets, pushing him over 25,000 yards for his NFL career. Smith has passed for 25,130 yards. He finished the game with a 105.2 passer rating, the 27th time he's topped a 100 rating. His teams are 26-1 in those games.

As NFL.com's Dan Hanzus notes, Kelce lived up to the Baby Gronk moniker, taking advantage of soft underneath coverage by the Jets to put up his best numbers of the season. On his biggest play of the day -- the above-mentioned 42-yard catch-and-run -- he ran away from Jets safety Calvin Pryor then ran over safety Marcus Gilchrist.

According to Teicher, the Chiefs lined Kelce up wide more often against the Jets than they had in either of their first two games, and the long pass came on one such play. Kelce has 106 yards after the catch, which is second in the league among tight ends.

One last note here. ... Opposing running backs are starting to make a habit of lighting up the Steelers secondary in the passing game. One week after [**Giovani Bernard**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19856/giovani-bernard/) had 100 receiving yards and a touchdown, Eagles running back [**Darren Sproles**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16345/darren-sproles/) had six receptions for 128 yards, including a 73-yard touchdown.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Alex Smith, Nick Foles, Tyler Bray   
**RBs:** Spencer Ware, Jamaal Charles, Charcandrick West, Knile Davis   
**WRs:** Jeremy Maclin, Chris Conley, Albert Wilson, Tyreek Hill, De'Anthony Thomas, Demarcus Robinson   
**TEs:** Travis Kelce, James O'Shaughnessy, Demetrius Harris, Ross Travis

**Los Angeles Rams**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's Alden Gonzalez framed it: "Somehow, some way, the Los Angeles Rams are 2-1."

Their early season schedule is a nightmare, their offense remains troublesome, and their secondary needs work. But the Rams have recovered from a humiliating season-opening loss to the lowly San Francisco 49ers with back-to-back victories, first against the menacing Seattle Seahawks and, on Sunday, on the road against the upstart Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

More importantly -- from both a football and fantasy football perspective, after going the first two weeks without scoring a touchdown, the Rams erupted for four offensive touchdowns and a defensive score in a 37-32 win over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday.

That included two touchdowns from [**Todd Gurley**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20965/todd-gurley/), a 43-yard score from [**Tavon Austin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19902/tavon-austin/) and a 77-yard fumble recovery from the vaunted defensive line. The victory gave Jeff Fisher his first Week 3 victory since he joined the organization in 2012.

The Rams are 2-1 for the first time since 2006 -- six years before Fisher became coach -- and are now tied with the Seahawks for first place in the NFC West.

As the Sports Xchange suggested, it was a small step in the right direction for a franchise starved for positive feedback.

And it all started with an opening drive that resulted in of all things a touchdown pass from quarterback [**Case Keenum**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19313/case-keenum/) to beleaguered wide receiver [**Brian Quick**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19072/brian-quick/).

"It was really big," Keenum said. "I wanted the ball, coming out (after the coin flip). Coach (Jeff) Fisher said he wanted the ball. We wanted to go put some points on the board. We converted on some third downs, which were really big coming out of the gate, and (Quick) ran a great route on the post and spread it out there. He went and got it. It was great. It was really good."

Said Fisher: "When you score points, which we did, you got a chance. Turnovers hurt us early, but we got the two big plays on defense, the return for touchdown and the interception by Mark (Barron). That kind of balanced things out. I thought Case made some good throws. The game was hard, but he made some really good throws. It was great to get the ball in the end zone, finally."

Keenum finished 14 of 26 for 190 yards with two touchdowns and one interception.

For the winning to continue, the offense needs to build off the success of Sunday. Against Tampa Bay, the key was simply doing the basics.

"We executed," Keenum said. "We put it in the end zone. We had a couple of goal-line series where we had a lot of plays down there and the offensive line did a great job of blocking for (running back) Todd (Gurley) and Todd finished on all of those, which was really good. And then the couple of explosive plays guys getting up and downfield making plays for me, which was great.

Gurley finally got going late on a key scoring drive that saw him rush for 38 yards on six carries. The last was a 1-yard touchdown run. The memorable one was a brilliant 16-yard run on which he somehow stayed on his feet.

As Gonzalez summed up: "The Rams are far from perfect, but their record says they're at least above average. ..."

Other notes of interest. ... According to NFL.com's Matt Harmon, both Austin and Quick were able to get behind the Buccaneers secondary for long touchdowns. Before we get fooled by Quick again, Harmon reminded us that he played on just 55 percent of the snaps on Sunday. Harmon added that [**Kenny Britt**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18182/kenny-britt/) looked like he was developing something of a floor in this offense after seeing 34.5 percent of the team targets in Week 2.

That game crashing down to earth in a plus matchup this week.

Receivers [**Pharoh Cooper**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22271/pharoh-cooper/) (shoulder) and [**Nelson Spruce**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22298/nelson-spruce/) (knee) practiced all of last week after being sidelined all month by their respective injuries. Neither was cleared to play Sunday against the Buccaneers.

And finally. ... QB [**Jared Goff**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22098/jared-goff/) was active and served as the second-stringer for the second week in a row.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Case Keenum, Sean Mannion, Jared Goff   
**RBs:** Todd Gurley, Benny Cunningham, Chase Reynolds, Malcolm Brown   
**WRs:** Tavon Austin, Kenny Britt, Pharoh Cooper, Brian Quick, Bradley Marquez, Mike Thomas, Nelson Spruce   
**TEs:** Lance Kendricks, Tyler Higbee, Cory Harkey, Temarrick Hemingway

**Miami Dolphins**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

The Miami Dolphins finally won a game, but as ESPN.com's Chris Sprow suggested, Sunday's overtime escape against the Browns somehow felt like something less.

"It was a boxing triumph in which the final blow was actually an opponent knocking himself out after staggering and stumbling out of the ring," Sprow wrote. "The relief is in the 30-24 outcome, but how the Dolphins got there will raise a litany of questions. ..."

For starters, head coach Adam Gase isn't happy with his team.

After watching recurring mistakes for three weeks, Gase wants to see his players doing what they're supposed to be doing making blocks, getting off blocks, catching the ball, etc.

"I'm over discussing any of this stuff with players," Gase said. "We're either going to start getting the job done, or we're going to make changes."

Gase, the NFL's youngest head coach at 38 and someone developing a reputation for candor, has been threatening changes for the last week or so for players who don't perform, and he made one such change against Cleveland.

Gase benched right tackle Ja'Wuan James after he gave up what could have been a game-losing strip-sack to Browns linebacker Corey Lemonier with 20 seconds left.

James, who was benched in overtime in favor of Billy Turner, might or might not get the chance to bounce back Thursday at Cincinnati. Gase was noncommittal on whether James would start.

"We'll see where it goes," Gase said. "We've got a couple of moving pieces, obviously, with our injury situation. We'll see what happens."

Since the New England loss in Week 2, Gase has been preaching change is coming if performances don't improve.

"The tape don't lie," Gase said after the 31-24 loss at New England. "We will find out who played hard. And some of the guys that didn't will move on."

Gase seems fed up, and he wants his players to know he's aggravated.

"We just want guys to do it right," Gase said. "So whoever wants to do it right, those are the guys that we're going to put out there.

"Talent is irrelevant at this point."

Sounds like things will continue to be interesting as Gase goes about finding his best players. ...

Other notes of interest. ... Gase is a renowned quarterback whisperer who arrived to unleash [**Ryan Tannehill**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19013/ryan-tannehill/), but early on, the Dolphins' QB was a disaster, and he almost cost them the game late.

Tannehill threw an interception on his first passing attempt of the game, then provided Cleveland with its only first-half touchdown with a pick-six toss just minutes before halftime. In the final minute, he held the ball for too long, allowing the Browns to get a strip-sack that turned into the winning field goal attempt that went awry.

Wide receiver [**Jarvis Landry**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20451/jarvis-landry/) is among the few bright spots for the Dolphins so far. Landry (24 receptions, 314 yards, one touchdown) is tied for the NFL lead in receptions with Pittsburgh's [**Antonio Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18410/antonio-brown/) and third in the league in receiving yards.

Gase likes what he's seen from Landry.

"He's everything you want, and he has not disappointed," Gase said. "He is as advertised. When I got here, I didn't watch a whole bunch since he has been in the league, but he is exactly what everybody said he was, and he's actually. ... Made some strides, too, as far as getting better."

On the injury front. ... [**Arian Foster**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18322/arian-foster/) (groin), who missed last week's game against Cleveland, won't play Thursday at Cincinnati.

Tight end [**Jordan Cameron**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18680/jordan-cameron/) definitely won't play Thursday.

"[Cameron] will be out this week," Gase said. "He does have a concussion, so he's in the protocol."

Cameron's absence means the Dolphins will rely on tight ends [**Dion Sims**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19966/dion-sims/) and [**MarQueis Gray**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19848/marqueis-gray/). Gase said it's doubtful the Dolphins could sign a tight end and school him on the offense by Thursday's game.

Landry injured a shoulder against the Browns. He is listed as questionable as is [**DeVante Parker**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21015/devante-parker/) (hamstring) You'll need to check back in the 90 minutes leading up to kickoff for their official games status (watch the Late-Breaking News section).

LT Branden Albert (ankle) is slowed by an injury sustained against Cleveland. Miami didn't practice Monday but the injury report listed Albert as DNP (Did Not Practice). Teams that play on Thursday following a Monday game give a practice projection. If Albert is unable to play it's not clear how the Dolphins would adjust. There's a chance rookie LG Laremy Tunsil could move to LT. ...

Meanwhile, [**Kenyan Drake**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22150/kenyan-drake/) (nine carries, 37 yards, 4.1 yards per carry) got the first shot at the job against Cleveland, earning the start with Foster sidelined. "He did well at times," Gase said. "We have to clean up some of these little minor mental errors we're having, whether it be in the passing game or if we do something not smart as far as where we're running the football. There are little tiny things that pop up that sometimes you don't notice unless you know exactly what scheme we're running, and that's sometimes experience."

There's no word on whether Drake will start against Cincinnati this week, but with Foster out again there's an obvious opening.

[**Jay Ajayi**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20969/jay-ajayi/) (seven carries, 28 yards, 1 TD), who had the game-winning 11-yard touchdown run against Cleveland, seemed pleased with his performance. Ajayi, who was left home in Miami for the opener at Seattle because he reportedly didn't react well to being named the backup, said Sunday's performance was a bit of redemption.

"I have a lot of pride in myself and the kind of player I want to be," he said, "and I felt like I was able to get a little redemption today and it was a great feeling."

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Ryan Tannehill, Matt Moore, Brandon Doughty   
**RBs:** Kenyan Drake, Jay Ajayi, Damien Williams, Isaiah Pead, Arian Foster   
**WRs:** Jarvis Landry, DeVante Parker, Kenny Stills, Leonte Carroo, Jakeem Grant, Griff Whalen, Justin Hunter   
**TEs:** Dion Sims, Jordan Cameron

**Minnesota Vikings**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

The Minnesota Vikings keep finding ways to overcome injuries and keep finding ways to win football games.

With [**Adrian Peterson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17820/adrian-peterson/), [**Teddy Bridgewater**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20361/teddy-bridgewater/) and other starters out with injuries, the Vikings' defense proved capable of carrying the team while snapping Carolina's 14-game home win streak, writes Ben Goessling.

Yes, [**Sam Bradford**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18337/sam-bradford/) threw a touchdown pass to [**Kyle Rudolph**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18675/kyle-rudolph/) and Marcus Sherels returned a punt for a score; but Minnesota's defense put the clamps on [**Cam Newton**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18573/cam-newton/), intercepting the league's reigning MVP three times and getting eight sacks, one of those resulting in a safety by Danielle Hunter. The eight sacks were the second-most ever against Newton.

"We have a great team -- the best team I have been a part of," said defensive end Everson Griffen, who had three sacks. "We come from every area on the field and we get sacks."

Said Newton: "They were dictating to us after they got the momentum."

The Vikings improved 3-0 despite losing Peterson and offensive tackle Matt Kalil to injuries last week. They lost Bridgewater in the preseason.

The Panthers were averaging 42 points per game in their last three home games, but could do little after bolting to a 10-0 lead. The Vikings held Carolina wide receivers [**Kelvin Benjamin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20444/kelvin-benjamin/) and [**Devin Funchess**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21086/devin-funchess/) without a catch.

"For him not to have any touches is baffling," Newton said of Benjamin. "We have to find ways" to get him the ball.

Cornerback Captain Munnerlyn said the Vikings focus was on shutting down Benjamin.

"We just knew where Benjamin was the whole time," Munnerlyn said. "Funchess, we weren't worried about him. It was [**Kelvin Benjamin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20444/kelvin-benjamin/). Me personally, I think No. 17 (Funchess) is not that good, so we weren't really worried about him."

Benjamin said the Vikings' pressure on Newton helped take him out of the game.

Bradford improved to 2-0 as the Vikings starter, completing 18 of 28 passes for 171 yards. Bradford didn't dominate by any stretch of the imagination, but for the second straight game he didn't turn the ball over. In fact, the Vikings' offense has not turned the ball over all season.

The only turnover the team has is safety Andrew Sendejo's fumble during a fumble return. The Vikings also protected Bradford extremely well considering they opened the game with Kalil on injured reserve and played the final 2 1/2 quarters without left guard Alex Boone (hip).

T.J. Clemmings played very well in his first career start at left tackle. Jeremiah Sirles stepped in for Boone and helped the offense play better than it did during the first half.

With Peterson injured, [**Matt Asiata**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18628/matt-asiata/) and [**Jerick McKinnon**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20394/jerick-mckinnon/) combined for 70 yards rushing on 22 carries. As NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich noted, fantasy owners were sent reeling when Asiata was announced as "the starter" on Sunday morning, but that didn't matter much as he had just six rush attempts in the game. McKinnon proved to be the volume play but had a tough time getting anything done against the Panthers.

Franciscovich added that both backs are stashes for now, but McKinnon is the guy you're going to want to flex in more favorable matchups going forward.

The Vikings play the Giants on Monday night in Week 4, so neither back is an ideal option. But again, if you have to use either, McKinnon is the better play due to his volume and all-around better skill set and athleticism. ...

In addition, Rudolph had seven catches for 70 yards, including a 15-yard TD catch to put the Vikings ahead for good in the early in the third quarter.

Receiver [**Cordarrelle Patterson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19903/cordarrelle-patterson/), the NFL's leading kick returner, became one heck of a gunner on punt coverage on Sunday. In his first game as a gunner, Patterson downed a 58-yarder at the 2 and tackled returner [**Ted Ginn**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17819/ted-ginn/) Jr. for a 1-yard loss after a 50-yard punt.

But what about rookie wideout [**Laquon Treadwell**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22264/laquon-treadwell/), who has only played a pair of snaps over the first three games?

"He has to continue to do better in practice," head coach Mike Zimmer said of the team's 2016 first-round pick. "He's working, just biding his time until he gets an opportunity like how [**Stefon Diggs**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21025/stefon-diggs/) was last year. I still think he's thinking about the number of steps to take on each route and things like that, being at the right depth."

Remember, Zimmer was similarly hesitant to play Patterson, even though Patterson was selected before Zimmer's time in Minnesota.

So what are we learning?

Good teams keep the most knowledgeable and prepared players on the field for the most amount of snaps. Treadwell will be a part of that unit once he can run the offense at a rate similar to or better than Diggs, [**Adam Thielen**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20906/adam-thielen/) and [**Charles Johnson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19956/charles-johnson/) (the three leading snap counts among wide receivers on offense).

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Sam Bradford, Shaun Hill, Taylor Heinicke   
**RBs:** Jerick McKinnon, Matt Asiata, Ronnie Hillman, Adrian Peterson   
**WRs:** Stefon Diggs, Charles Johnson, Laquon Treadwell, Adam Thielen, Cordarrelle Patterson, Jarius Wright   
**TEs:** Kyle Rudolph, MyCole Pruitt, Rhett Ellison, David Morgan

**New England Patriots**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

With only four days to get ready for a Week 3 game against the Texans and only one healthy quarterback, the Patriots decided not to sign an available veteran. With 10 days between Week 3 and Week 4 games and possibly no healthy quarterbacks, the Patriots may still not sign another quarterback as they prepare to face the Bills.

Citing a source with knowledge of the situation, Profootballtalk.com's Mike Florio reported on Sunday the Patriots will add a quarterback only as a last resort. For now, the focus is on rehabbing [**Jimmy Garoppolo**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20365/jimmy-garoppolo/)'s shoulder injury and [**Jacoby Brissett**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22106/jacoby-brissett/)'s thumb injury.

According to Mike Reiss of ESPN.com, both [**Jimmy Garoppolo**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20365/jimmy-garoppolo/) and [**Jacoby Brissett**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22106/jacoby-brissett/) were on hand for the start of Tuesday's practice, as the team hopes one or both will be available this week against the Buffalo Bills.

Garoppolo missed last week's win over the Texans with a sprained AC joint in his right shoulder. Rookie Brissett started, but suffered a thumb injury that has led to some speculation about his status.

Brissett joked with reporters as he walked through the locker room, saying: "Never seen so many people looking at my hand."

Garoppolo didn't say anything, but he wasn't in a sling or anything, either.

Reporters were only there for stretching, and the Patriots don't have to submit an injury report until tomorrow. And they're a week away from [**Tom Brady**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/5550/tom-brady/) coming back, at which point the panic won't be as intense.

While many are hopeful that Garoppolo will be ready to go on Sunday, it’s definitely not a given at this point.

According to CSNNE.com’s Mike Giardi, Garoppolo is “still in pain and does not yet have full mobility in his throwing shoulder.”

CSNNE.coms' Tom E. Curran had better news about Brissett’s thumb. The rookie quarterback was in the Patriots locker room locker room Tuesday morning without splint, tape or cast on his thumb.

When he asked Brissett if he's feeling "tip-top," he answered, "Oh yeah."

Whatever the case, Florio reports the Patriots are reluctant to add a quarterback because they'd be required to cut a player on the 53-man roster. If the player have fewer than four years of service, he'd be exposed to waivers. A vested veteran would be free to sign with another team.

At this point, we'll assume one of the injured QBs will be ready after both were on the field to some degree Wednesday (and I'll be following up via Late-Breaking Update on a regular basis on the situation in coming day).

But what if neither is ready? Would New England run the risk of actually having to use [**Julian Edelman**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18247/julian-edelman/) as the starter on Sunday? Perhaps. He knows the offense better than T.J. Yates or [**Sean Renfree**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19849/sean-renfree/) (both of whom worked out for the team last week) or any other free agent would, and Edelman played quarterback at Kent State.

The Patriots also have another player whom they believe would be able to take snaps, if need be. While the team is being characteristically tight lipped about who that would be, the smart money is on second-year tight end [**A.J. Derby**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21101/a.j.-derby/), a sixth-round pick in 2015 who played quarterback at Iowa, Coffeyville Community College, and Arkansas.

Based on the manner in which the Patriots got Brissett ready to play quarterback in four days, don't be shocked if they decide to start getting Edelman ready in the event that neither Garoppolo nor Brissett will be able to play in what will be the last game before [**Tom Brady**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/5550/tom-brady/)'s suspension ends.

I'll obviously be following up on this one via Late-Breaking Update in coming days. ...

Whatever happens, head coach Bill Belichick surely has a plan. And it would be unwise to assume his plan won't work.

On the other hand, it might be wise to assume that plan will include a heavy dose of [**LeGarrette Blount**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18440/legarrette-blount/).

The Patriots boast the league's best ground game with 452 total yards, good for an average of 150.7 per game. Blount has carried much of that workload and leads the league in rushing with 298 yards and four touchdowns.

Blount ran for 105 yards and two scores in the win against the Houston Texans last Thursday.

"I always feel like if we can just get a hole, get him started, get him going, that he has a lot of ability to make yards on his own," Belichick said. Don't overlook Blount when setting your lineups this week.

Also of interest. ... Tight end [**Rob Gronkowski**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18347/rob-gronkowski/) (hamstring) saw his first action of the season against the Texans, though it came in a very limited role. The All-Pro played just 14 of 64 offensive snaps and was utilized almost entirely as a blocker, targeted with just a single throw on the night.

The snaps played will rise, and so will the production, as Gronkowski works his way back from a hamstring injury.

For what it's worth, Gronkowski told reporters on Wednesday that he had “no setbacks” last Thursday. He also said that hamstring injuries are tricky and he won't push until he's ready.

I'll have more on Gronk, who was officially limited Wednesday, when I begin updating the QB's early Thursday. ...

Of course, the focus last Thursday was on protection protecting Brissett and protecting the football. And it worked. The rookie was sacked just once and did not turn the ball over. He put up pedestrian numbers completing 11 of 19 throws for 103 yards with no touchdowns or interceptions for a 72.9 passer rating but it was more than enough in conjunction with the impressive other two phases of the game to get the win.

Edelman led the receivers with four catches for 38 yards. Rookie [**Malcolm Mitchell**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22282/malcolm-mitchell/) had the biggest play of the night through the air for either team, a 27-yard catch-and-run in the first quarter to set up New England's opening points on a short field goal.

Other than that the passing attack didn't do all that much to either win or lose the game for New England, which was pretty much part of the plan that Brissett executed with solid poise in a tough situation.

Again, expect more of the same this week, regardless of the starter.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Jacoby Brissett, Jimmy Garoppolo, Tom Brady   
**RBs:** LeGarrette Blount, James White, D.J. Foster, Brandon Bolden, James Develin, Dion Lewis   
**WRs:** Julian Edelman, Danny Amendola, Chris Hogan, Malcolm Mitchell, Matt Slater   
**TEs:** Rob Gronkowski, Martellus Bennett, A.J. Derby, Clay Harbor

**New Orleans Saints**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's Mike Triplett asked, "When is 32 points and 474 yards not enough?

"Every other week, if you're the New Orleans Saints."

The Saints' epic offense was once again trumped by the epic struggles of their defense and special teams in a 45-32 loss to the Atlanta Falcons on Monday night in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.

The same thing happened in a 35-34 loss to the Oakland Raiders in Week 1. And the same thing essentially happened with the defense in 2012, 2014 and 2015, too.

The Saints rank first in total offensive yards since Week 1 of 2012, with 398 more yards than the Broncos. But they rank last in defensive yards with 831 more yards allowed than the Giants.

The Saints (0-3) are now on a fast track to their third straight losing season and their fourth in the past five years -- even though [**Drew Brees**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/10002/drew-brees/) once again leads the NFL with 1,062 passing yards and is tied for the league lead with eight TD passes.

Brees wasn't perfect -- in fact, his fourth-quarter interception on a tipped pass was returned 90 yards for a touchdown by Atlanta linebacker Deion Jones to essentially seal the Saints' fate.

But it was the first interception Brees had thrown in more than 300 pass attempts -- snapping the third-longest streak in NFL history. He still finished the night with 376 yards and three TDs.

Triplett went on to suggest he problem with the Saints is that Brees has to be almost perfect for them to win. And it's not a stretch to suggest that New Orleans has wasted the back half of his Hall of Fame career because it can't find a way to fix its defense.

That said, fantasy owners are less invested in wins and Brees' legacy than they are in production. And as long as the Saints defense is allowing opponents to score nearly at will, Brees and the rest of the offense will feel compelled to keep up.

Remember, the Saints set NFL records for the most TD passes allowed in a season last year (45), the highest opponents' passer rating in a season last year (116.1) and the most yards allowed in a season in 2012 (7,042). On Monday night, the Saints allowed 442 yards and allowed touchdowns on five straight possessions at one point.

That lousy defense is a big reason the Saints rank 1st in the NFL in total offensive yards since the start of 2012, with 398 more yards than the Broncos, according to ESPN Stats and Information. They rank last in defensive yards allowed, with 831 more yards allowed than the Giants.

Meanwhile, the schedule doesn't get any easier -- starting with a short week and a long road trip before Sunday's game at the San Diego Chargers (a game that Brees will be extremely motivated to win in his first trip back to face his former team in San Diego in his 11 years with the Saints).

Saints tight end [**Coby Fleener**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19036/coby-fleener/) said the quick turnaround could actually be a good thing for a Saints team that is eager to move on.

"Well, I wouldn't say that the frustration hasn't set in. I think there are a lot of frustrated people around here, myself included. Nobody likes to lose around here," Fleener said when asked about the Saints trying to maintain their optimism. "And I think all we can do is make sure we have a better week of practice, go in on a short week – I think that'll actually be nice for us, getting back on the field sooner than later."

Worth noting, Fleener, with 109, had the most receiving yards by a tight end in Week 3 (edging out former Saint and current Seahawk [**Jimmy Graham**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18364/jimmy-graham/), who had 100).

As Triplett suggested, Monday was proof that Fleener's opportunities aren't going anywhere in this tight end-friendly offense. The Saints will probably be in offensive track meets like this all year long, so this won't be the last time we see a game that requires 11 targets, seven catches and a TD from Fleener. ...

Four players caught at least six passes, with Fleener, [**Brandon Coleman**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20452/brandon-coleman/) and [**Michael Thomas**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22266/michael-thomas/) catching seven each and [**Travaris Cadet**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19505/travaris-cadet/) getting six. ...

Other notes of interest. ... Seeking more balance after having just 13 attempts in the previous game, the Saints had their best rushing day of the season. They picked up 115 yards and averaged 5.0 yards a pop on 23 carries with[**Mark Ingram**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18590/mark-ingram/) leading the way. He has 77 yards and a 5.1 average on 15 attempts with a long run of 17 yards. [**Tim Hightower**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18025/tim-hightower/) also had some strong carries with 19 yards including an 11-yarder on three attempts and fullback [**John Kuhn**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17728/john-kuhn/) had a 3-yard touchdown run. ...

[**Willie Snead**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20480/willie-snead/), the Saints' No. 2 receiving option, was inactive against the Falcons because of a toe injury. Starting LT Terron Armstead also did not play because of a knee injury. Tight end [**Josh Hill**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20880/josh-hill/), who sprained an ankle in the season opener, was out for the second week in a row. There is no timetable for their return.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Drew Brees, Luke McCown, Garrett Grayson   
**RBs:** Mark Ingram, Tim Hightower, Travaris Cadet, Marcus Murphy, Daniel Lasco   
**WRs:** Brandin Cooks, Willie Snead, Michael Thomas, Brandon Coleman, TommyLee Lewis   
**TEs:** Coby Fleener, Josh Hill, Chris Manhertz

**New York Giants**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

According to the Associated Press, the Giants' first regular-season loss under Ben McAdoo looked like many of the crushing defeats from their last year under Tom Coughlin.

In falling 29-27 to the Redskins on Sunday, the Giants (2-1) blew a late lead, turned over the ball three times, had dumb penalties, and sustained a couple of injuries that are going to leave them short-handed heading to Minnesota Monday night.

Of interest to fantasy owners, [**Shane Vereen**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18601/shane-vereen/) suffered a triceps injury that requires surgery.

In a tweet sent out by the team, the Giants announced that the 27-year old Vereen's surgery would be "season-ending." However, the team has now backed off of that statement, according to a report by the NFL Network.

Vereen's recovery time from his injury, which he played through in Week 3's loss to Washington, is about two months. There is a possibility that if there are no snags with his recovery and rehab, he could return to action later in the year as the Giants' lone "designated to return" player.

This year, the NFL tweaked the short-term IR rule by removing the requirement that teams designate which player they plan to return after the mandated waiting period of six weeks. This means any player placed on injured reserve after the start of the season is eligible for the return designation.

If all goes well with Vereen, a big part of the Giants' third-down package, he could be back late November.

Vereen got the start Sunday with [**Rashad Jennings**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18254/rashad-jennings/) (thumb) sidelined. Vereen ran for 67 yards and a touchdown in the 29-27 loss to Washington.

"Shane is a tremendous football player and our thoughts go to him with that tough injury," McAdoo said. "I feel for the player. He's a good football player. We wish him a speedy recovery."

Until a decision is made on Vereen, McAdoo said the plan to replace him will be "by committee."

The Giants are hoping to get Jennings back for their Monday night meeting in Minnesota. Jennings, however, was noncommittal after Sunday's game regarding whether he thought he might be able to go against the Vikings.

The rest of the committee will include [**Orleans Darkwa**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20905/orleans-darkwa/), who ran 10 times for 53 yards in Sunday's loss; veteran[**Bobby Rainey**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19292/bobby-rainey/) and rookie [**Paul Perkins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22151/paul-perkins/).

For what it's worth, McAdoo told reporters this week that "Perkins is ready to step up.'

I'll be following up on the backfield via Late-Breaking Update in coming days. ...

Meanwhile, the big rematch between New York Giants receiver [**Odell Beckham**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20445/odell-beckham/) and Washington cornerback Josh Norman was, as expected, a letdown compared to last year's histrionics.

Beckham, who vowed to be on his best behavior, didn't draw any penalties in that game and in fact topped the Giants receivers with seven catches (out of 11 pass targets) for 121 yards. Six of his receptions and 107 of his yards came against Norman.

On the sideline, however, Beckham was spotted not once but twice outwardly expressing his frustration over how the game was unfolding, including one incident where he appeared to be in tears and another where he was seen swinging his helmet at the kicking net, only to catch the net and pull the framework down on to his shoulder.

McAdoo was rather blunt with his take on Beckham's behavior on the sideline.

"He needs to control his emotions better and become less of a distraction to himself and to his teammates," he said. "It's our job to help him with that process and maturing."

McAdoo said that "it takes a village" to deal with a personality such as Beckham's in helping him find the right balance between expressing himself and not losing his cool. The key, he said, is to communicate.

"Having a variety of different people, coaches, staff members to communicate with. Just help him direct his focus," McAdoo said.

McAdoo, who was the offensive coordinator last year when Beckham had his initial outburst playing against Norman, has said in the past that he didn't do enough to help Beckham avoid imploding. This time around, things were different.

"There were conversations during the course of the game," he said. "He and I had conversations on two different occasions."

Teammate and fellow receiver [**Victor Cruz**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18454/victor-cruz/) had some encouraging feedback regarding how Beckham carried himself Sunday.

"I think he was great. I think he understood the point of emphasis of this game. I think he understood the heightened attention of this game that he individually was going to get and I think he handled the pressure well," Cruz said. ...

Other notes of interest. ... The good news is that [**Eli Manning**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16185/eli-manning/) passed for 350 yards and completed 65.7 percent of his passes. The bad news is he absorbed two more sacks and three hits and had eight of his passes broken up.

According to NFL.com's Matt Harmon, the Giants deployed three wide receivers on all but two of their plays where they used four wideouts. Beckham played 100 percent of the snaps, while [**Sterling Shepard**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22273/sterling-shepard/) and Cruz played 99 percent. At this point Shepard is ahead of Cruz in the pecking order, and Harmon could see that coming by the team asking Cruz to move out of the slot to make room for the rookie.

Shepard had more targets than the veteran for the second straight week and came with a lower average depth of target (11.1 to 13.7) indicating he will bring more consistent production going forward.

The head-scratcher of the week in passing game?

Why Manning continues to target his two tight ends, [**Will Tye**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22017/will-tye/) and [**Larry Donnell**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20856/larry-donnell/), who are just not capable of racking up the yardage after the catch. The final numbers included an embarrassingly low 4.7 yards per catch average for Tye, and an even worse 3.7 yards per catch for Donnell.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Eli Manning, Ryan Nassib   
**RBs:** Orleans Darkwa, Paul Perkins, Rashad Jennings, Bobby Rainey, Shane Vereen   
**WRs:** Odell Beckham, Sterling Shepard, Victor Cruz, Tavarres King, Dwayne Harris, Roger Lewis   
**TEs:** Will Tye, Larry Donnell, Jerell Adams

**New York Jets**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

According to Associated Press sports writer Dennis Waszak Jr, [**Ryan Fitzpatrick**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16399/ryan-fitzpatrick/) tried to quickly move on from one of the ugliest performances of his career.

Throwing six interceptions certainly stings. It still did a day after a 24-3 loss at Kansas City.

"It's a hard day for me to come in today after, pretty much, we lost that game because of my performance," Fitzpatrick said Monday. "We don't really need to pin it or try to put it on anything else. I think that was pretty evident. To walk in today and have to face the guys, it's not an easy thing to do, but at the same time, I've got to be the same guy every day as a leader, as a player, and just come in."

The veteran quarterback was one of a very few players in the locker room during media availability. He shouldered the blame for the defeat, as he did after the game, but also insisted he wasn't going to dwell on it anymore.

Not when the Jets have a matchup at home with Seattle to prepare for.

"I think they're all easy to get over when you have a game the next week coming up," he said. "But it was so bad, and there were so many poor things on my part that happened in that game that you want to put it behind you as fast as you can."

Fitzpatrick finished 20 of 44 for 188 yards and tied a franchise record -- shared by Joe Namath, who did it three times -- with his six-pack of interceptions.

One of the picks was returned for a touchdown, and he had three red-zone throws intercepted in a span of five passes.

Fitzpatrick is the fourth quarterback in the last 35 seasons to throw no touchdown passes and at least six interceptions in an NFL game. The other three are Brian Sipe (1983 Browns), Todd Blackledge (1985 Chiefs) and Tom Tupa (1989 Cardinals).

"I had the two forced balls in the red area, and that can't happen," Fitzpatrick said. "But we did some good things up front that maybe were overshadowed by all the turnovers. But obviously the lesson from that game is you can't turn the ball over, especially that many times, and expect to win games in the NFL."

Fitzpatrick and the Jets (1-2) know they've got to turn things around quickly with the Seahawks coming to town, even with [**Russell Wilson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19126/russell-wilson/)'s availability uncertain with a sprained medial collateral ligament in his left knee.

The combined record of New York's next four opponents is 8-4 — Seattle (2-1), Pittsburgh (2-1), Arizona (1-2), Baltimore (3-0) — so things could spiral quickly, long before the Jets even get to their bye in Week 11.

"I think we know who we are," head coach Todd Bowles said. "We just have to be who we are."

Things were looking way up for the Jets last week after a 37-31 win at Buffalo in which Fitzpatrick threw for 374 yards and was selected the AFC's offensive player of the week. That seemed so long ago after the clunker in Kansas City, with some fans and media wondering if the Jets' confidence in Fitzpatrick was shaken.

Fitzpatrick didn't address the team as a whole, but said there were "plenty of side discussions" with different players trying to work through the loss.

"Any time you lose like that," Bowles said, "you have to have a 'Come-to-Jesus' meeting."

Whatever Bowles said to his players made an impact. So much so, that Fitzpatrick thinks it's something the Jets could build on moving forward.

"I thought the way that he delivered the message today was great," the quarterback said. "I thought it was something that was necessary, and potentially a turning point in the season in terms of the focus that hopefully we come with after this game. ..."

Other notes of interest. ... [**Matt Forte**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17987/matt-forte/) (15 carries for 65 yards) had another solid game and the Jets averaged more than 5.3 yards per carry, but they had to abandon the run when they got down by two touchdowns and had to go into comeback mode with the scattershot Fitzpatrick. ...

On the injury front, Bowles told reporters on Wednesday that [**Eric Decker**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18359/eric-decker/)'s shoulder injury is worse after Sunday's game. His status bears watching in comind days. Meanwhile, Forte (knee) was limited Wednesday. Receiver [**Jalin Marshall**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22297/jalin-marshall/) is expected to miss multiple weeks with a torn labrum.

I'll have an eye on Decker and Forte in coming days. ...

The Jets took a chance on a talented but troubled tight end Monday, when they claimed [**Austin Seferian-Jenkins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20512/austin-seferian-jenkins/)off waivers from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Seferian-Jenkins was waived by Tampa Bay Friday morning, hours after he was arrested for driving while under the influence. It was the second DUI arrest for Seferian-Jenkins, who was previously charged while a student at the University of Washington in 2013.

The Buccaneers selected Seferian-Jenkins in the second round of the 2014 draft but he continually battled with the coaching staff and played just 18 out of a possible 34 games in two-plus NFL seasons.

But Seferian-Jenkins, who turns 24 on Thursday, had 45 catches for 603 yards and seven touchdowns in his limited duty, which surely made him attractive to a Jets squad that has gotten next to nothing from tight ends since Chan Gailey took over as offensive coordinator prior to last season. Jets tight ends had eight catches last season and have none this season.

However, offensive coordinator Chan Gailey rarely uses traditional tight ends in the passing game. With the addition of Seferian-Jenkins, the Jets now have four tight ends on the roster with [**Kellen Davis**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18028/kellen-davis/), [**Brandon Bostick**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19705/brandon-bostick/)and [**Braedon Bowman**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22263/braedon-bowman/) — and none has any catches this season.

Last season, tight ends had only eight receptions, with [**Jeff Cumberland**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18571/jeff-cumberland/) catching five passes and Davis three.

And finally. ... CBSSports.com reported Monday night that [**C.J. Spiller**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18338/c.j.-spiller/) was scheduled to work out for the Jets on Tuesday. Spiller struggled in his first season with the New Orleans Saints last year (351 yards and two touchdowns on 70 touches) and was released after being inactive for the season opener, but he played under Gailey with the Bills from 2010 through 2012, during which he racked up 2,973 yards from scrimmage and 15 touchdowns while adding another score as a kickoff returner.

Spiller could help the Jets both in the backfield and as a returner. The Jets had just two backs -- starter Forte and backup [**Bilal Powell**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18603/bilal-powell/) -- active for Sunday's loss to the Chiefs, during which rookie kickoff returner [**Jalin Marshall**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22297/jalin-marshall/) had a fumble returned for a touchdown.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Ryan Fitzpatrick, Geno Smith, Bryce Petty, Christian Hackenberg   
**RBs:** Matt Forte, Bilal Powell, Dominique Williams, Troymaine Pope   
**WRs:** Brandon Marshall, Eric Decker, Quincy Enunwa, Robby Anderson, Charone Peake, Jalin Marshall   
**TEs:** Kellen Davis, Austin Seferian-Jenkins, Brandon Bostick

**Oakland Raiders**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

To [**Derek Carr**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20362/derek-carr/), it's time for all the critics to stop picking on the Oakland Raiders defense.

Carr threw for 249 yards and a touchdown, and the Raiders beat the Tennessee Titans 17-10 on Sunday with their defense finally coming up with some big plays.

A pair of takeaways and stops at crucial times were enough for the Raiders to hold on for a 17-10 victory over the Titans on Sunday.

"They won the game for us," Carr said. "That right there was a prime example of what I've seen every day in practice. That's why I kept saying what I was saying. It's hard to complete balls against them."

The Raiders (2-1) forced three turnovers and had a sack after coming into this game having given up more yards than any team since at least 1940 through the first two games. Head coach Jack Del Rio made a couple of lineup changes, starting linebacker Cory James and rookie safety Karl Joseph, their top draft pick.

Meanwhile, [**Michael Crabtree**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18174/michael-crabtree/) continued to impress, posting a game-high eight catches for 102 yards, with six of those receptions resulting in first downs, in Tennessee.

As ESPN.com's Paul Gutierrez suggested, Crabtree still may not possess the breakaway speed he had coming out of Texas Tech, but as a sure-handed and strong-handed receiver, there may not be a bigger security blanket for Carr.

Crabtree, who had his fourth 100-yard receiving game for Oakland since 2015 after having just one the previous two seasons, has that postseason pedigree already.

Crabtree has been relatively clutch in Oakland's victories this season, coming up with a game-winning two-point conversion at the New Orleans Saints in the season opener two weeks ago and then his catches extending drives in Tennessee.

Even with the Raiders' offense stalling and getting shut out in the second half against the Titans.

"I thought overall we were pretty darn solid," said Del Rio. "We didn't end up generating as many points as we would like to have, but we did enough to earn a tough victory on the road."

Added Carr: "We expect execution all the time. That's what we have to kind of realize in the NFL – it's not going to be perfect or pretty. I thought we moved the ball well. We just didn't get enough points in the second half, obviously."

Twice Crabtree lost his helmet on tough catches and Carr's first interception of the season came on a pass to Crabtree that was tipped up on contact with the receiver.

But neither player would have it any other way.

"That's a football game," Crabtree said. "Any given Sunday, man. We're playing talented guys and you've got to bring your best and they brought their best and we came up with the win."

Worth noting. ... Carr's stat line doesn't look impressive at first glance -- 21 of 35 for 249 yards, along with tossing a touchdown and a pick. However he had a very solid performance overall that was hampered by several drops and offensive penalties.

One of Carr's most impressive traits is his ability to avoid getting sacked. Heading into Sunday's game, Oakland had allowed just one quarterback takedown, the fewest in the league. While he was sacked once by Tennessee, the Raiders' promising young quarterback highlighted his pocket awareness on one particular play in the third quarter.

Carr immediately faced trouble on a play-action, and evaded three Titans pass rushers and scrambled to his right. He still managed to keep his eyes down the field, throwing across his body on the run and finding Crabtree for 29 yards. Carr also tossed a 19-yard TD pass to [**Seth Roberts**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22009/seth-roberts/) late in the second quarter against a Tennessee defense that had allowed only one offensive TD through the first two games.

According to NFL.com, "That toss was part [**Aaron Rodgers**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16314/aaron-rodgers/), part [**Tony Romo**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16154/tony-romo/), and it showed just how special of a player Carr can be in the NFL. ..."

The Raiders head across the country again this week to play the Ravens in Baltimore. That's a couple of long trips back-to-back. ...

Other notes of interest. ... The Raiders seemed to be off and running when [**Latavius Murray**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19901/latavius-murray/) capped off the opening drive with a 22-yard touchdown run between the blocks of right tackle Menelik Watson and right guard Gabe Jackson. The Raiders finished with a respectable 123 yards on 25 carries, getting chunk yards if not consistent yards, with down-and-distance hurting the play-calling options.

But as NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich pointed out, with each passing week, Murray's share of backfield touches diminishes. [**DeAndre Washington**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22159/deandre-washington/) led the Raiders backfield with 62 yards from scrimmage and [**Jalen Richard**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22175/jalen-richard/) was involved as well logging 27 percent of the backfield touches.

Franciscovich summed up, "Murray's usage is very concerning going forward and because of his decreased volume, he can't be considered anything more than a flex play at best on a weekly basis. ..."

[**Sebastian Janikowski**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/5279/sebastian-janikowski/) became the NFL's career leader in field goals made from 50 yards and out when he connected from 52 in the second quarter. He gave the Raiders a 10-3 lead on the 53rd field goal of 50 or more yards for the 17-year veteran, which broke a tie with [**Jason Hanson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/2896/jason-hanson/). His field goal came after a holding penalty wiped out a TD pass by Carr.

And finally. ... Fullback [**Marcel Reece**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18336/marcel-reece/), a seven-year veteran and four-time Pro Bowl selection, was released just as he was scheduled to come off suspension for violating the NFL policy on performance enhancing drugs.

Reece was suspended for four games, beginning his suspension in Week 17 last season and through the first three games of this season.

In his absence, the Raiders' running game went from No. 28 last season to No. 2 through three games at 148.3 yards per game. [**Jamize Olawale**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20860/jamize-olawale/), who had begun taking snaps from Reece last year, is the starting fullback.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Derek Carr, Matthew McGloin, Connor Cook   
**RBs:** Latavius Murray, DeAndre Washington, Jalen Richard, Taiwan Jones, Marcel Reece   
**WRs:** Amari Cooper, Michael Crabtree, Seth Roberts, Andre Holmes, Johnny Holton   
**TEs:** Clive Walford, Lee Smith, Mychal Rivera

**Philadelphia Eagles**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As Profootballtalk.com's Michael David Smith wrote about [**Carson Wentz**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22099/carson-wentz/) on Monday: "Can you believe the Eagles' rookie quarterback was playing at North Dakota State last year? He looks like a 10-year veteran. He absolutely carved up the Steelers in yesterday's 34-3 beatdown, and he's the first rookie quarterback in NFL history to throw 100 passes without an interception.

"Wentz is the rookie of the year favorite, but he's more than that. Through three games, he's an MVP candidate."

Indeed, as Associated Press sports writer Rob Maaddi noted, Wentz has already been compared to [**Aaron Rodgers**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16314/aaron-rodgers/), [**Brett Favre**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/2566/brett-favre/) and Peyton Manning, the defense is dominating, and the Philadelphia Eagles are 3-0.

No one saw this coming except maybe head coach Doug Pederson.

"I told the team way back in OTAs that it just takes a little bit of belief; belief in themselves, trust the process, believe in the coaches and the coaches believe in one another," Pederson said. "Am I surprised? A little. But at the same time, I know that locker room, I know those guys and I know what they are building. By no means have we accomplished anything yet, the season is still extremely young. But what they did (against Pittsburgh) just proves that they are coming together as a football team."

The Eagles dismantled the Steelers, shutting down [**Ben Roethlisberger**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16187/ben-roethlisberger/) and a high-powered offense and having their way with a defense that's been cruel to rookie quarterbacks — 19-2 against them since 2004 — not named Wentz.

So forget about rebuilding. This team is a contender now. Still, it's only three games.

"I thought we were very underrated in the media's eye, which honestly it seems like our team always does better when the media doesn't expect us to do well," center Jason Kelce said.

Wentz, the No. 2 overall pick, gets most of the credit for Philadelphia's fast start. He deserves praise not only for his performance but his leadership ability. It's remarkable for a 23-year old who played at an FCS school.

"Being 10 years in, this kid is inspiring me," tight end [**Brent Celek**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17928/brent-celek/) said. "He's adding youth to my game just by the way he's acting, being in the huddle, taking command, it's beyond impressive; it's great. We have to keep it going. I'm not going to sit here and say we're the greatest team, but I'm excited with how he's playing and he's elevating everybody else's play by the way he's handling it."

"He loves watching tape. He and the quarterbacks, [**Chase Daniel**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18417/chase-daniel/), they're in here at 5:30 in the morning watching film. They're exhausting the tape," Pederson said. "I hear him just even in the building talking to guys about plays and routes and protections. It's Peyton Manning-ish.

"You hate to label -- I don't want to put labels on guys -- but that's how Peyton prepared, that's how these top quarterbacks prepare each week. He has that now as a young quarterback, and that will just carry him throughout his career."

Worth noting: The Eagles are 3-0 for the 3rd time in the last 20 seasons (also 2004 and 2014). Pederson and Wentz joined Rex Ryan and [**Mark Sanchez**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18172/mark-sanchez/) as the only rookie coach/QB tandems to start a season 3-0, per the Elias Sports Bureau. Wentz is the first player in NFL history with at least 100 pass attempts, 60 completions, five TDs and zero INTs in his first three games.

Not surprisingly, Wentz's 23-of-31, 301-yard, two-touchdown outing against the Steelers earned him NFC Offensive Player of the Week honors. ...

Then there's Jim Schwartz's defense. A unit that ranked in the bottom five each of the past three seasons has allowed the fewest points (20) in the NFL, excluding a punt return for a score.

"The first day, Jim said: 'This is how we're going to do it. And I'm going to give you the tools that you need, but you guys need to own this defense. You guys need to take this over,'" cornerback Nolan Carroll said. "And I think that's what we did."

Now the Eagles have an extra week to reflect on their success before entering a tough stretch. After a bye, they're on the road four of the next five games. ...

Other notes of interest. ... The 33-year-old [**Darren Sproles**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16345/darren-sproles/) still has plenty left. He caught six passes for 128 yards. Rookie [**Wendell Smallwood**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22160/wendell-smallwood/) ran for 79 yards and his first career TD. [**Kenjon Barner**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19870/kenjon-barner/) had 42 yards rushing and his first score. Meanwhile, [**Ryan Mathews**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18339/ryan-mathews/) only carried twice for minus-5 yards. He was forced out of the game early when an already-tender ankle stiffened up early in the game.

Pederson told reporters on Tuesday that Mathews remains the starter when healthy, but they'll continue to have a rotation. ...

As NFL.com's Matt Harmon noted, in 34-3 blowout win, the Eagles did not need to pass the ball much, and Sproles leading the team in targets shows that. The snap share among the wide receivers remained the same with [**Jordan Matthews**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20449/jordan-matthews/) leading the way (85 percent), [**Nelson Agholor**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21020/nelson-agholor/) is second (80 percent) and [**Dorial Green-Beckham**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21018/dorial-green-beckham/)rounding out in third with (49 percent).

TE [**Zach Ertz**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19959/zach-ertz/), who has missed the last two games with a rib displacement, is expected to return after the bye week and be ready for the Detroit game, Pederson said.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Carson Wentz, Chase Daniel   
**RBs:** Ryan Mathews, Darren Sproles, Kenjon Barner, Wendell Smallwood   
**WRs:** Jordan Matthews, Nelson Agholor, Josh Huff, Dorial Green-Beckham, Bryce Treggs   
**TEs:** Zach Ertz, Brent Celek, Trey Burton

**Pittsburgh Steelers**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

[**Le'Veon Bell**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19865/le)'s three-game suspension for a second violation of the league's substance abuse policy over and star running back is ready to get back to work, particularly after spending Sunday afternoon watching his teammates get clobbered across the state in Philadelphia.

"It sucked," Bell said.

Pretty much. The team that looked borderline unstoppable at times during wins over Washington and Cincinnati was a mess against the Eagles. [**DeAngelo Williams**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17602/deangelo-williams/), who filled in so brilliantly for Bell during the opening two weeks, slogged for just 21 yards. The offense posted its lowest point total in five years and the defense spent the afternoon futilely trying to make Eagles quarterback [**Carson Wentz**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22099/carson-wentz/) look like a rookie.

Enter Bell, limited to six of Pittsburgh's last 22 games thanks to knee injuries and run-ins with the league's drug policy. An All-Pro in 2014 when he emerged as one of the best all-around backs in the league, Bell believes he's a better player than the one last seen being carted off the field in a loss to the Bengals last November with a torn MCL in his right knee.

"I'm a lot smarter," Bell said. "So many things I did my (in 2014) were good things. But I look back at my film now and I'm like, 'What am I doing on this play? What am I doing on that play?'"

Sunday night's visit from Kansas City (2-1) marks Bell's first appearance in a game that matters in 11 months. He insists his surgically repaired right knee is fine. So, too, is the desire to prove that he's all the way back. The faster the better.

"I've always felt like I had to prove something to somebody," Bell said. "That is never going to go away. I'm always going to have this personal chip on my shoulder."

The good news for fantasy owners? It sounds like Bell will be given every opportunity to prove himself this week.

Head coach Mike Tomlin said the running back would return to his workhorse role after missing the first three games of the 2016 season.

"His level of conditioning is not a concern to us," Tomlin said Tuesday. "He's a guy that's highly conditioned over a 12-month calendar. We've seen him every day, he's been a part of this, he's been in the building, he's up to speed on what we're doing from a schematic standpoint, really in tune here. We'll see how sharp he is physically once we get him out on the practice field and kind of go from there but rest assured, you're going to see [**Le'Veon Bell**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19865/le) and probably a lot of him on Sunday."

There was some thought that the Steelers would employ a shared backfield after [**DeAngelo Williams**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17602/deangelo-williams/) led the NFL in rushing through the first two games of the season. Despite Williams looking spry, Bell will return to his normal workload.

Williams insisted last week he was just an insurance policy until Bell returned.

The Steelers need Bell's dynamic ability in both the run and pass game.

In the 34-3 blowout loss to the Eagles last Sunday, the absences of Bell and receiver [**Martavis Bryant**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20457/martavis-bryant/) (yearlong suspension) finally showed on the field as [**Ben Roethlisberger**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16187/ben-roethlisberger/) couldn't move the ball without his playmakers. Slot receiver [**Eli Rogers**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22608/eli-rogers/) (turf toe) also went down with injury, escalating the offensive problems (Rogers was in a walking boot as of Tuesday and didn't practice Wednesday; I'll follow up on his status via Late-Breaking Update in coming days).

Much like this season, Williams excelled last year when Bell was suspended for the first two games. He ran for 127 yards against New England and scored three rushing touchdowns against San Francisco. The Steelers were thankful they signed him to a two-year, $4 million deal as a free agent from Carolina after the 2014 season.

But Williams virtually disappeared when Bell returned in Week 3. He had a total of 13 carries in the next five games — Bell had 103 — before taking over again as the primary back in Week 8 when Bell went down for the season with a knee injury. Williams finished as the team's leading rusher with 907 yards and scored 11 rushing touchdowns, tied for most in the NFL.

As Pittsburgh Post-Gazette staffer Ron Cook suggested, Bell has to get most of the work again when he returns. It might not be an 8-to-1 split of carries like last season, but 4-to-1 or even 5-to-1 seems likely. Beyond being a unique talent who can catch the ball as well as he runs with it, Bell is in the final year of his contract.

It seems less than 50-50 that the Steelers will sign him to a long-term, mega-million deal after the season or even put the one-year franchise tag on him. It will be hard for them to trust a guy who has been suspended two years in a row and also had season-ending knee injuries the past two years.

So why not run Bell until the wheels fall off?

That should start Sunday night against the Kansas City Chiefs.

A few final notes of interest. ... [**Ben Roethlisberger**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16187/ben-roethlisberger/) was held to a season-low 257 yards with no touchdowns against the Eagles. [**Antonio Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18410/antonio-brown/) had 140 receiving yards, but 85 of those came in the second half when the Steelers were trailing by multiple scores. No other receiver had more than four receptions or 50 receiving yards.

[**Markus Wheaton**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19909/markus-wheaton/) returned from a shoulder injury that forced him to miss the first two games, but he had three drops, including one in the end zone on the Steelers' first drive. He finished the game with one reception for two yards.

As NFL.com's Chris Wesseling notes, [**Sammie Coates**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21022/sammie-coates/) continues to benefit from Roethlisberger's status as the best deep passer in football, but is a far cry from Bryant as the second fiddle to Brown.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Ben Roethlisberger, Landry Jones, Zach Mettenberger   
**RBs:** Le'Veon Bell, DeAngelo Williams, Fitzgerald Toussaint, Daryl Richardson   
**WRs:** Antonio Brown, Markus Wheaton, Eli Rogers, Sammie Coates, Darrius Heyward-Bey   
**TEs:** Jesse James, Xavier Grimble, Ladarius Green

**San Diego Chargers**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's Eric D. Williams noted, after a solid first two weeks of production, running back [**Melvin Gordon**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20966/melvin-gordon/) and the Chargers' offense coughed and sputtered in a 26-22 loss to the Indianapolis Colts on Sunday evening at Lucas Oil Stadium.

Gordon totaled just 35 yards on 16 carries.

The Wisconsin product did notch four receptions for 43 yards. However, the Chargers managed just one offensive touchdown, a 1-yard plunge by Gordon -- his fourth TD of the season.

With [**Danny Woodhead**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18295/danny-woodhead/), [**Keenan Allen**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19905/keenan-allen/), Stevie Johnson and [**Branden Oliver**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20893/branden-oliver/) all done for the year due to injuries -- along with [**Antonio Gates**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16181/antonio-gates/) not playing in this one due to a hamstring issue -- the Chargers needed Gordon to be the engine that drove their offense.

But against an Indianapolis defense geared to stop the run, San Diego's offensive line could not generate a consistent push up front to ignite Gordon and the running game.

But as NFL.com's' Jeremy Bergman suggested, "Gordon is no Woodhead." Gordon earned 2.2 yards per carry and combined with newcomer [**Dexter McCluster**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18345/dexter-mccluster/) for just 52 yards on passes out of the backfield.

Meanwhile, a gutsy performance by San Diego's defense allowed the Chargers to hang around until late in the fourth quarter.

Behind cornerback Casey Hayward's third interception of the season and a strip sack by rookie linebacker Jatavis Brown that was returned by defensive tackle Caraun Reid for a score, the Chargers kept things close heading into the fourth quarter.

Brown, thrust into the starting lineup when Manti Te'o had to leave the game due to what turned out to be a season-ending Achilles injury, recorded his strip sack of [**Andrew Luck**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19006/andrew-luck/) late in the first half, and Reid returned the fumble 61 yards for his second NFL touchdown, pulling the Chargers even 13-13 at the half.

Chargers defensive coordinator John Pagano devised another solid game plan, keeping Luck from taking over early. Luck was under pressure most of the game, with the Chargers recording two sacks.

Still, with the loss, San Diego dropped to 1-2 on the season and into the AFC West cellar. The defending Super Bowl champion Denver Broncos lead the division at 3-0, while the Oakland Raiders and Kansas City Chiefs are tied at 2-1.

The loss was their ninth road loss in their last 10 trips. They also lost for the 15th time in 20 games and none of these numbers add up well for head coach Mike McCoy.

Now in his fourth year and on the heels of going 4-12, the Sports Xchange believes McCoy needs to do something extraordinary and quickly. A season that was supposed to bring a playoff run, which might help fuel a ballot win for taxpayer money for a new stadium, is slipping away. ...

Other notes of interest. ... Gordon got his fourth touchdown in three games on Sunday. But there were few smiles when the running game was brought up in Sunday's loss to the Colts. "We got to be better and that includes me," said Gordon, who finished with 35 yards on 16 carries. "We got to take over and it's on me to have great plays in the running game."

But the Chargers' run-blocking looked more of the sloppy 2015 vintage.

"Nobody is perfect out there. It's football," Gordon said. "We just got to tighten up. We didn't play charges football."

The Chargers are averaging 2.74 yards per carry when using two running backs, with a long of 11 yards. San Diego has run two-tight end sets on 36 runs, averaging 3.92 yards per carry with a long of 21 yards. And on rushes with three-receiver sets, the Chargers have 36 runs for 4.83 yards per carry, with a long of 23 yards. ...

[**Philip Rivers**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16186/philip-rivers/) is third in the NFL in passer rating (109.5) and has not thrown an interception through three games -- the first player in the franchise to do that since Stan Humphries accomplish the feat in 1994. ... [**Travis Benjamin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19528/travis-benjamin/)leads the Chargers with 17 receptions for 229 yards and two touchdowns.

As noted above, Gates wasn't able to go on Sunday and there's a chance the 36-year-old doesn't go this week against the Saints as he wasn't practicing on Wednesday. [**Hunter Henry**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22216/hunter-henry/) will continue to fill in as needed.

Henry played all 60 snaps on offense in Indianapolis.

Rivers got dinged for a costly 15-yard penalty for taunting, when swapping smack talk with Colts defensive tackle David Parry. "That's the most unfair penalty I have ever received," Rivers said. "It may have been the cleanest thing said on the field today."

McCluster, who was signed in the day leading up to Sunday's game, replaced Craig Mager as the kickoff returner. He averaged nearly 20 yards on two returns.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Philip Rivers, Kellen Clemens   
**RBs:** Melvin Gordon, Kenneth Farrow, Dexter McCluster, Andre Williams   
**WRs:** Travis Benjamin, Tyrell Williams, Dontrelle Inman, Isaiah Burse   
**TEs:** Antonio Gates, Hunter Henry, Sean McGrath, Asante Cleveland

**San Francisco 49ers**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

Head coach Chip Kelly said Monday he isn't ready to make a quarterback switch after his offense struggled in consecutive road losses to Carolina and Seattle.

Kelly said [**Colin Kaepernick**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18576/colin-kaepernick/), the backup, isn't physically ready to start while [**Blaine Gabbert**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18572/blaine-gabbert/) ranks 31st in the NFL in completion percentage and 30th in passer rating through three games.

Kelly's offense managed just 254 yards in the 37-18 loss to the Seahawks on Sunday.

"Kap is our number two right now and everybody wants to know why Kap isn't our number one. I don't think Kap is 100 percent right now," Kelly said.

"I think his playing weight has been around 225 and he's not at that right now. He's going out there and continuing to work, continuing to get better. He had a serious layoff in times in terms of being able to medical rehab.

"To get the full Kap for what you need, the potential that he has, he needs to continue to just work on the physical aspect of things.

Kaepernick missed the bulk of the offseason program recovering from three surgeries since November. He was placed on injured reserve Nov. 21 to have surgery on his left shoulder before having two more procedures on his right hand and left knee in January.

He missed the first two preseason games nursing a fatigued throwing shoulder which set him back while competing for the starting role.

Kaepernick was the only member of the 49ers working out on the team's practice field Monday while Kelly addressed reporters. Players are given Mondays off.

Kaepernick made headlines in the preseason when he first elected not to stand during the national anthem before games in protest of racial inequality and police brutality.

He announced after the preseason finale he would donate $1 million of his salary to organizations supporting his cause. He confirmed last week that he received death threats in reaction to his protest.

Gabbert didn't eclipse 100 yards passing Sunday until 2:03 remaining with a completion to [**Rod Streater**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19781/rod-streater/). The offense didn't convert a third down until the fourth quarter after starting 0 for 10. At that point, the Seahawks led 37-3.

"I think sometimes everybody keeps pointing specifically to the quarterback, but it's not like the offensive line's playing tremendous, the running back are doing everything, the wide receivers are doing everything and we're just not getting good quarterback play," Kelly said.

"I think it's the entire group offensively. We need to convert."

Kelly said Kaepernick received increased practice time leading up to the loss in Seattle. Kaepernick worked as the scout team quarterback to help the starting defense better prepare for [**Russell Wilson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19126/russell-wilson/) and the Seahawks, who run a similar scheme to Kelly's.

Meanwhile, the news -- at least from a fantasy perspective -- wasn't all bad.

[**Carlos Hyde**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20386/carlos-hyde/) scored two touchdowns in the fourth quarter against Seattle, when the 49ers were already blown out. According to NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich, of Hyde's 103 rushing yards, 65 percent of them were added in the final quarter when Seattle's defense was playing softer coverages. He became the first 100-yard rusher in a game at Seattle since Dallas' RB [**DeMarco Murray**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18597/demarco-murray/) gained 115 on Oct. 12, 2014.

Kelly was asked to explain the wisdom of having his offensive star, running back [**Carlos Hyde**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20386/carlos-hyde/), in the game with his team down 37-3 in the fourth quarter.

"You never know," he said. "We're going to keep playing and keep going and seeing what can go on.

"Everybody needs to keep playing, and we need to continue to execute. The more times we get a chance to play, the better we're going to be."

Whatever the case, it's welcome news for Hyde owners. Franciscovich added: "Hyde should continue to be the engine that moves the 49ers offense as long as he keeps producing at a high level. San Francisco takes on the Dallas in Week 4 -- a matchup that Hyde should be considered an RB2 at worst in. ..."

Also of interest. ... TE [**Vance McDonald**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19963/vance-mcdonald/) (bruised hip) left Sunday's loss to Seattle in the second quarter after suffering the injury. He never returned to the game. He finished with two catches for four yards.

Kelly suggested on Wednesday that McDonald's status is up in the air for Sunday but that his injury isn't long term. ...

When San Francisco finally converted its first third down of the day with about 11 minutes left in the game, receiver[**Torrey Smith**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18632/torrey-smith/) limped off after the catch.

The status of both men bear watching in coming days; I'll have more via Late-Breaking Update as the week progresses. ...

The 49ers signed receiver/punt returner [**Keshawn Martin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19159/keshawn-martin/) to a two-year deal on Tuesday.

And finally. ... The 49ers issued a one-sentence statement late Monday afternoon, announcing that veteran offensive tackle Anthony Davis apparently has retired again. The statement said: "Offensive lineman Anthony Davis informed the team that he has retired from the National Football League." They subsequently made the official announcement on Tuesday.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Blaine Gabbert, Colin Kaepernick, Christian Ponder   
**RBs:** Carlos Hyde, Shaun Draughn, Mike Davis, Kendall Gaskins   
**WRs:** Torrey Smith, Quinton Patton, Jeremy Kerley, Aaron Burbridge, Rod Streater, Jerome Simpson, Eric Rogers   
**TEs:** Vance McDonald, Garrett Celek, Blake Bell, Bruce Miller

**Seattle Seahawks**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

For the second time in three weeks, the Seahawks -- and fantasy owners -- are sweating a leg injury to quarterback[**Russell Wilson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19126/russell-wilson/).

Wilson suffered a sprained MCL in his left knee on Sunday in the third quarter of Seattle's 37-18 win over the San Francisco 49ers.

However, head coach Pete Carroll said on Monday that it appears that Wilson avoided any major damage in his knee.

"He's remarkably well off for having a play like that," Carroll said. "He looked very good, very upbeat and positive about feeling like he's going to be fine. Just all positive."

Carroll said he expects Wilson to be able to play Sunday against the New York Jets. The plan is for Wilson to practice with the team on Wednesday.

Wilson, who was already playing through a sprained ankle, was injured while being sacked by 49ers linebacker Eli Harold. Wilson was scrambling from pressure when Harold caught him and pulled him down from behind. Wilson's left leg was caught awkwardly underneath Harold as he was pulled to the ground.

Harold was flagged for a horse-collar tackle of Wilson on the play. The penalty gave Seattle a new set of downs and Wilson had to be replaced by rookie [**Trevone Boykin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22326/trevone-boykin/). It was the first snaps of his career Wilson has missed due to injury. The only snaps he'd previously missed had been coming out of games late in blowouts.

Wilson returned to finish the series after missing just one play. However, he would defer to Boykin for the remainder of the game with Seattle holding a 30-3 lead. Wilson completed 15 of 23 passes for 243 yards and a touchdown against the 49ers before exiting the game.

"I felt like I was strong enough to move just fine," Wilson said. "I came out for a play and realized I was good to go so I went back out there."

Wilson spoke extensively with trainers and put a knee brace on his knee on the sideline. Eventually he removed the brace and had a large ice pack wrapped around the knee in its place. Wilson said he would have stayed in the game and kept playing if the result had been in doubt. He expected to be able to play next week against the Jets as well.

"I'll be good to go," he said.

And Wilson was practicing Wednesday, with Carroll telling reporters, "He's going along just like we've seen the last few weeks."

As ESPN.com's Sheil Kapadia noted, Wilson takes pride in his durability. He has never missed a start, and Sunday was the first time he'd even missed a snap because of injury. He believes he can overcome pretty much any ailment through treatment and prayer.

The reality is it's unlikely that he'll ever admit an injury is bothering him.

That's why going forward, Kapadia believes the onus is on the coaching staff to make smart decisions when it comes to Wilson's injuries.

Carroll said that Wilson's injury is all about stability with his left knee.

"What he has, a lot of guys play with, and so this is something that our trainers have been through a number of times," Carroll said. "They know that this is really possible that he'll be fine."

As long as Wilson is not risking further damage, there's nothing wrong with that stance.

But Kapadia stressed, the coaches and medical staff need to make sure they're the ones making the call, not Wilson.

Stay tuned. I'll have more on Wilson throughout the week in the Late-Breaking Updates section. But I won't be the only one paying attention.

"We'll be watching it very closely to do the right thing to make sure that we ensure his health and his well-being moving forward and our team's well-being moving forward and all that," Carroll said. "We'll take all that into account. ..."

Meanwhile, the news wasn't good for running back [**Thomas Rawls**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20978/thomas-rawls/). Carroll said Rawls has been diagnosed with an injury to the fibula in his left leg and will be out a few weeks.

Rawls was doubtful and missed practice all of last week after suffering the injury in the first half of the Week 2 loss at Los Angeles.

Injuries aside, the win over San Francisco went well.

Entering the day, the offense had managed just one touchdown on 22 possessions. But the Seahawks had everything working against the 49ers. [**Christine Michael**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19864/christine-michael/) carried 20 times for 106 yards and a pair of touchdowns. Wide receiver [**Doug Baldwin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18952/doug-baldwin/) and tight end [**Jimmy Graham**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18364/jimmy-graham/) carried the passing game.

Michael opened the scoring with a 41-yard touchdown run on Seattle's third play from scrimmage. As NFL.com's Marc Sessler noted, highlights aside, Michael repeatedly challenged defenders, spun out of tackles and battled for extra yardage. Michael will be a volume-heavy player while Seattle prepares for the Jets, Falcons and Cardinals over their next three dates.

Baldwin had eight catches for 164 yards and a touchdown on 10 targets.

When Graham tore his patellar tendon last season, there were people who doubted he'd ever be the same kind of player he once was: A patellar tendon injury is a notoriously difficult injury to recover from. But Graham is back and playing great football, with six catches for 100 yards and a touchdown in Sunday's blowout win over the 49ers.

A few final notes here. ... Tight end [**Nick Vannett**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22218/nick-vannett/) has a chance to play this week against the Jets. He's missed the last five weeks with a high-ankle sprain.

Running back [**C.J. Prosise**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22152/c.j.-prosise/) has missed the last two games despite being able to practice due to the need to wear a hard cast to protect a broken bone in his wrist. Carroll said Prosise will get a more serious look to play due to Rawls' injury and thinks he'll be able to play this week.

Nonetheless, the Seahawks worked out free-agent running back [**Bernard Pierce**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19111/bernard-pierce/) on Tuesday, although there's no indication he'll be signed at this point. ...

RG Germain Ifedi is "doing quite well," per Carroll. He has missed the first three games due to a high-ankle sprain. Carroll was optimistic he'll be able to play this week and would resume his starting role at right guard if able to play.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Russell Wilson, Trevone Boykin   
**RBs:** Christine Michael, Alex Collins, C.J. Prosise, Thomas Rawls   
**WRs:** Doug Baldwin, Tyler Lockett, Jermaine Kearse, Paul Richardson, Tanner McEvoy   
**TEs:** Jimmy Graham, Luke Willson, Nick Vannett, Brandon Williams

**Tampa Bay Buccaneers**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers nearly pulled off a thrilling comeback Sunday against the Los Angeles Rams after an hour-long weather delay, but instead [**Jameis Winston**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20944/jameis-winston/) and the offense came up short, losing 37-32.

The Bucs got the ball back with 1 minute, 42 seconds to go and marched down to the Rams' 15-yard line. On second-and-11, the Rams had eight defenders in the end zone and Winston had no one to throw to. He scrambled and fell five yards short of the end zone as the clock ran out.

The defense got itself some early turnovers.

There was a pick-six by Kwon Alexander in the first quarter and a fumble forced by Lavonte David that Chris Conte recovered. But all of the wind was taken out of their sails when kicker [**Roberto Aguayo**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22480/roberto-aguayo/) missed a 41-yard field goal attempt with 4:46 to go in the third quarter.

On the ensuing drive, the defense gave up multiple explosive plays -- a 19-yard catch by [**Kenny Britt**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18182/kenny-britt/), a 12-yard catch by [**Bradley Marquez**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22022/bradley-marquez/) and a 16-yard run by [**Todd Gurley**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20965/todd-gurley/), setting up a 1-yard touchdown run by Gurley that gave the Rams a 24-20 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

With 11:56 to go in the fourth quarter, from the Rams' 13-yard line, Winston dropped back and was met by Pro Bowler Robert Quinn, who stripped the ball from his hands. Ethan Westbrook scooped it up and raced 77 yards to score, making it 31-26 Rams. Then [**Tavon Austin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19902/tavon-austin/) took a deep pass to the left and turned into a touchdown to make it 37-26 with 4:38 to go.

The offense did score a late touchdown -- a miraculous 7-yard throw off Winston's back foot to a leaping [**Mike Evans**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20442/mike-evans/) that made it 37-32 after a failed two-point conversion.

Not counting Winston's turnover, the Bucs' defense surrendered 30 points to an offense that had failed to score a single offensive touchdown the first two weeks of the season. Isn't this why they got rid of Lovie Smith in the first place, because his defense was giving up too many big plays?

The defense is still a work in progress. At times, it looked the part and bullied Keenum, even without Robert Ayers. Howard Jones and Noah Spence were lightning-quick off the edge paired with Gerald McCoy in the middle. That should be expected against a Rams' offensive line that has had its own share of struggles.

The offense had its own bright spots with [**Cameron Brate**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21915/cameron-brate/) scoring two touchdowns and Evans finishing with 10 catches for 132 yards and a score.

Evans had his third consecutive game with a touchdown reception. He is now second in the NFL in targets with 38 behind [**Antonio Brown**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18410/antonio-brown/)'s 40.

Meanwhile, [**Vincent Jackson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16326/vincent-jackson/) has nine catches on 22 targets this year, which is second on the team to [**Adam Humphries**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22010/adam-humphries/). As NFL.com's Matt Harmon put it, "It's been one hell of a career for Jackson, but this looks like we are past the end of the road."

[**Cameron Brate**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21915/cameron-brate/) played on 76 percent of the team snaps, well ahead of [**Brandon Myers**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18237/brandon-myers/)' 46 percent. He also led the team on Sunday with a whopping five red-zone targets, catching two for touchdowns. Brate now looks like a strong candidate for a breakout season at tight end with [**Austin Seferian-Jenkins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20512/austin-seferian-jenkins/)' departure clearing the way. ...

Winston reset his career high with 58 passes (36 completions) for 405 yards and three touchdowns.

As NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich notes, with [**Doug Martin**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19040/doug-martin/) out, the Bucs' offense was mainly funneled through[**Charles Sims**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20397/charles-sims/) and Evans.

As the feature back, Sims came through with 124 total yards and a score doing much of his damage with 69 yards through the air. As long as Martin is sidelined, Sims will present RB1 upside. [**Jacquizz Rodgers**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18596/jacquizz-rodgers/) poses no real threat to Sims' workload as he played on just 21 snaps compared to 68 for Sims.

The Buccaneers play the Broncos this week, so it's a matchup that doesn't sound favorable until you consider that Denver let [**Jeremy Hill**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20390/jeremy-hill/) run all over them in Week 3. And if the Bucs are struggling, Sims provides a safe floor with his role as a receiver.

For the record, Martin, TE Luke Stocker (ankle) and WR Cecil Shorts (hamstring) were all held out of Wednesday's practice.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Jameis Winston, Mike Glennon, Ryan Griffin   
**RBs:** Charles Sims, Mike James, Doug Martin, Alan Cross, Peyton Barber   
**WRs:** Mike Evans, Vincent Jackson, Adam Humphries, Russell Shepard, Evan Spencer, Cecil Shorts   
**TEs:** Cameron Brate, Luke Stocker, Brandon Myers

**Tennessee Titans**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

According to Associated Press sports writer Teresa Walker, the Titans are trying to figure out how to stop hurting themselves offensively.

The quicker the better.

The Titans missed another opportunity at a rare home win with a 17-10 loss to Oakland and fell to 2-16 in their own stadium since the end of the 2013 season after a combination of mistakes. Now they hit the road for two straight games tied with Houston. The Titans play the Texans on Sunday and Tennessee enters the game scoring an NFL-worst 14 points per game and needing to clean up penalties, mistakes and turnovers.

"It's the NFL," running back [**DeMarco Murray**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18597/demarco-murray/) said Monday. "It's hard to score points, but at the end of the day, it's self-inflicted wounds by us. I don't think it's the defense, it's not the rush, it's us. We have to find a way to get the job done."

The Titans (1-2) outgained Oakland 393-368, and Murray even ended a 34-game drought for this franchise by rushing for 114 yards on 16 carries — the first running back to reach 100 yards in a game since the 2013 season finale.

Tennessee had a chance to win in the final minute after driving to the Oakland 3 before two penalties and one not called cost the Titans. Head coach Mike Mularkey said Monday he told the offense to go for the 2-point conversion and the win when they scored the touchdown. Officials wiped that out flagging receiver [**Andre Johnson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/16044/andre-johnson/) for offensive pass interference on his 13-yard TD catch.

Mularkey again defended left tackle Taylor Lewan for an unnecessary roughness penalty that pushed Tennessee back from the 3 to the Oakland 18 before Johnson's catch. The Titans coach said he doesn't want to take away his players aggressiveness, especially when a Raiders linebacker appeared to be coming into the pile when the whistle blew.

Lewan and umpire Dan Farrell also exchanged words after the game, which Mularkey called unacceptable. Wide receiver [**Harry Douglas**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/18004/harry-douglas/) didn't draw a flag on the final play despite going down in the end zone as the ball arrived .

"We didn't lose the game because of the officials," Mularkey said. "We have to coach better, we have to play better, and I think they have to officiate better. All of us have to do things better ... I just want consistency."

One of Murray's mistakes included going the wrong way on a pass to Douglas earlier in the fourth quarter.

"We just have to eliminate the mental errors," Murray said. "I know I had two myself. We're playing well. When you look at the film, it's never as bad as you think it is. We've got to look at ourselves, each man in the mirror and say, 'This is what I can improve on in my game.' We're a good team, there's no doubt in my mind."

The Titans rank seventh in the NFL averaging 128 yards rushing per game and third averaging 5.1 yards per rush. The defense currently is tied for eighth giving up only 19 points per game.

[**Marcus Mariota**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20945/marcus-mariota/), who already has seven turnovers this season, has to limit his mistakes as well. The quarterback could get back both tight end [**Delanie Walker**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17766/delanie-walker/), who missed the Oakland game with a sore right hamstring, and wide receiver [**Kendall Wright**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19029/kendall-wright/), who has yet to play this season after an injured left hamstring.

"That's me learning and growing," Mariota said after the game. "I can do a better job of just taking it one play at a time, not trying to win the game on one throw. But again, it's a process for me and I am doing my best to learn."

Worth noting, Mariota in the first three quarters this season: 60 percent, one TD, three picks, 66.0 passer rating. Mariota in the fourth quarter this season: 67.6 percent, three TDs, one pick, 104.4 passer rating.

One positive note here: Murray rushed for 114 yards on 16 carries, the first time Tennessee has had a 100-yard rusher in a game since 2013. That former 39-game absence without a player reaching the 100-yard plateau was the second-longest one in the league.

It doesn't hold a candle to the Colts' streak though, Indy has gone 52 consecutive games without a player reaching the century mark on the ground.

Murray is responsible for 300 yards from scrimmage over the last two games, adding 155 more against the Raiders. As NFL.com's Matt Franciscovich suggests, [**Derrick Henry**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22144/derrick-henry/) owners will have to remain patient for now. Henry did not play poorly when given opportunities but the volume simply isn't there for him to be a fantasy asset just yet.

Also of interest. ... Mularkey said [**Tajae Sharpe**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22285/tajae-sharpe/) took a "step back" on Sunday. The coach said the rookie was inconsistent.

Wright, who has been out since Aug. 2 with a hamstring injury, is on track to practice this week and return to the lineup.

Walker could return to practice by Thursday at the latest as the Titans try to get him back this week.

[**Jace Amaro**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20510/jace-amaro/) filled in for Walker and had three catches for a team-high 59 yards against Oakland.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Marcus Mariota, Matt Cassel, Alex Tanney   
**RBs:** DeMarco Murray, Derrick Henry, Antonio Andrews   
**WRs:** Rishard Matthews, Tajae Sharpe, Kendall Wright, Andre Johnson, Harry Douglas, Tre McBride   
**TEs:** Delanie Walker, Anthony Fasano, Jace Amaro, Phillip Supernaw

**Washington Redskins**

**Compiled by FootballDiehards Editor Bob Harris | Updated 28 September 2016**

As ESPN.com's John Keim noted, the Redskins committed their usual Meadowlands gaffes, giving away early points. They continued to fail in the red zone, losing a chance at more points. They lost players to injuries. They were on the wrong end of close replay calls.

And yet, they never wilted -- and they might have saved their season in the process.

Their 29-27 win over the Giants could rank as one of their biggest in a few seasons. They were helped by numerous dumb plays and penalties by New York. But to consider that as the reason they won would be unfair to the Redskins -- and wrong.

The Redskins, 0-2 entering the game and with seeds of frustration beginning to sprout for a variety of reasons, absolutely needed a win. An 0-3 start with a better showing than the first two weeks wasn't going to get it done. But things didn't start well: a botched punt return after a good first series led to a Giants touchdown.

Then cornerback Bashaud Breeland was hurt and lost for the game and safety DeAngelo Hall was hurt and lost for the game (and the season). The Redskins trailed by as many as 12 points in the first half and botched a series at the end of the half that cost them some points.

And then left guard Shawn Lauvao and center Kory Lichtensteiger both were lost for the game by the third play in the second half. That forced Pro Bowl tackle Trent Williams to move inside to guard.

And yet. ...

They somehow won. But they won because they exhibited the same resilient mindset they showed last season. The NFC East was down last year, but whenever the Redskins looked finished, they somehow recovered. Quarterback[**Kirk Cousins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19070/kirk-cousins/), who struggled in the first two games, had some moments Sunday when he botched a play -- he did a poor job at the end of the half by not throwing the ball away and saving time for a field goal, instead getting sacked as the clock expired.

But he didn't throw any picks and led a go-ahead touchdown drive. There was rookie linebacker Su'a Cravens with a diving interception to end the Giants' hopes, one play after an 18-yard completion on third-and-14. Every time New York seemed ready to put the game away, the Redskins pushed back.

They watched one teammate after another get hurt and lost for the game. They trailed much of the day and into the final minutes.

But they come home 1-2 to face Cleveland, having lost some players but maybe having found themselves.

As for the injuries. ... The team placed Lichtensteiger on injured reserve Tuesday with an injured calf and signed free agent center John Sullivan.

As part of a flurry of moves Tuesday, the Redskins moved offensive lineman Vinston Painter from their practice squad to their active roster, signed cornerback Tye Smith to their practice squad and released linebacker Amarlo Herrera from their practice squad.

Lichtensteiger was one of several Redskins hurt during Sunday's 29-27 victory over the New York Giants. Another was Hall, who went on IR with a torn ligament in his right knee.

Left guard Shawn Lauvao left Sunday's game with a sprained ankle.

So it was important to add some depth along the offensive line. The 31-year-old Sullivan missed all of last season with a back injury, then was cut by the Minnesota Vikings at the end of August. ...

Other good news from the game. ... Cousins completed three passes thrown at least 20 yards downfield Sunday, including a 44-yard touchdown to [**DeSean Jackson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/17989/desean-jackson/). Punter Tress Way also completed a throw that distance on a fake punt.

Entering the game, the Giants hadn't allowed any completions on such passes this season, and they hadn't allowed that many in a game since the 52-49 game against the Saints last season.

With his 44-yard touchdown in Sunday's comeback win over the Giants, Jackson now has 29 career touchdowns of 40 or more yards, the most among active players and the 10th most in NFL history.

Jackson is playing on a sore ankle and knee, but it is hard to know it by his numbers. Jackson has five catches of 20-plus yards, tied for fourth in the NFL. Cousins leads the NFL in passing yards after three games (989) and is on pace to shatter his own franchise record for most passing yards in a season (4,166).

Jackson did not practice Wednesday. [**Josh Doctson**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/22267/josh-doctson/), who was held out against the Giants after experiencing tightness in his tender Achilles during pre-game warmups, was also held out. I'll follow up on both in coming days (watch the Late-Breaking Updates section for more). ...

[**Jamison Crowder**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/21037/jamison-crowder/) set a personal best with his 55-yard touchdown reception Sunday against the Giants. He also set a personal best with a 50-yard punt return.

This might not seem like much of an improvement over the first two weeks, but given the injuries on the offensive line, the running game was acceptable. Washington was far more balanced than coming into the game when its pass-to-run ratio was 89/29. This time it was 36/30 and one of those "passes" was thrown by the punter on a fake.

[**Matt Jones**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/20981/matt-jones/) finished with 65 rushing yards, but on the game-winning drive, the Redskins handed him the ball eight times to set up the go-ahead field goal.

Of course, the overall yardage has been there all along. They have managed games of 384 yards, 432 and 403, respectively.

But they struggled in the red zone, and as Keim pointed out, this league is about points, not yards. And that's where the Redskins must improve -- and have a chance to improve.

And finally. ... [**Dustin Hopkins**](http://www.footballdiehards.com/fantasyfootball/profiles/19983/dustin-hopkins/) went 5-for-5 on field goals and 2-for-2 on extra points in Sunday’s win over the Giants, and he’s been recognized for it.

Hopkins was named the NFC Special Teams Player of the Week today.

It’s the first player of the week award for Hopkins, who tied a franchise record with his five field goals.

Hopkins is 11-for-11 on field goals on the season and has made 15 field goals in a row dating back to last season.

**DEPTH CHART**  
**QBs:** Kirk Cousins, Colt McCoy, Nate Sudfeld   
**RBs:** Matt Jones, Robert Kelley, Chris Thompson, Keith Marshall   
**WRs:** DeSean Jackson, Pierre Garcon, Jamison Crowder, Josh Doctson, Ryan Grant, Rashad Ross   
**TEs:** Jordan Reed, Vernon Davis, Niles Paul