

GAME AT A GLANCE

Game summary

New England 7 14 7 6—34
Indianapolis 3 3 15 17—38

First quarter

NE—Mankins fumble recovery in end zone (Gostkowski kick), 7:24.
Ind—FG Vinatieri 42, -48.

Second quarter

NE—Dillon 7 run (Gostkowski kick), 10:18.
NE—Samuel 39 interception return (Gostkowski kick), 9:25.
Ind—FG Vinatieri 26, -07.

Third quarter

Ind—Manning 1 run (Vinatieri kick), 8:13.
Ind—Klecko 1 pass from Manning (M.Harrison pass from Manning), 4:00.
NE—Gaffney 6 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 1:25.

Fourth quarter

Ind—Saturday fumble recovery in end zone (Vinatieri kick), 13:24.
NE—FG Gostkowski 28, 7:42.
Ind—FG Vinatieri 36, 5:31.
NE—FG Gostkowski 43, 3:49.
Ind—Addai 3 run (Vinatieri kick), 1:00.
A—57,433.

TEAM STATS

	NE	Ind
First downs	17	32
Total Net Yards	319	455
Rushes-yards	24-93	30-125
Passing	226	330
Punt Returns	3-39	3-40
Kickoff Returns	8-231	5-92
Interceptions Ret.	1-39	1-6
Comp-Att-Int	21-34-1	27-47-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-6	3-19
Punts	5-51.4	4-52.8
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-0
Penalties-Yards	8-63	4-32
Time of Possession	28:45	31:15

INDIVIDUAL STATS

RUSHING — New England: Dillon 7-48, Faulk 4-27, Maroney 8-13, Evans 1-4, Brady 4-1. Indianapolis: Rhodes 14-69, Addai 14-56, Manning 2-0.

PASSING — New England: Brady 21-34-1-232. Indianapolis: Manning 27-47-1-349.

RECEIVING — New England: Watson 5-48, Caldwell 4-46, Evans 4-33, Gaffney 3-37, Brown 2-32, Graham 1-25, Maroney 1-6, Faulk 1-5. Indianapolis: Clark 6-137, Wayne 5-68, M.Harrison 4-41, Rhodes 4-38, Moorehead 3-23, Addai 2-4, Fletcher 1-32, Utecht 1-5, Klecko 1-1.

MISSED FIELD GOALS — None.

History lesson

A look at how the Colts have fared in the NFL playoffs:

1987

Won AFC East Division title; lost 38-21 at Cleveland in AFC divisional round

1995

Finished second in AFC East; won 35-20 at San Diego in AFC wild-card game; won 10-7 at Kansas City in AFC divisional round; lost 20-16 at Pittsburgh in AFC championship game

1996

Finished third in AFC East; lost 42-14 at Pittsburgh in AFC wild-card game

1999

Won AFC East Division title; lost at home 19-16 to Tennessee in AFC wild-card game

2000

Finished second in AFC East; lost 23-17 at Miami in AFC wild-card game

2002

Finished second in AFC South; lost 41-0 at New York Jets in AFC wild-card game

2003

Won AFC South Division title; won 41-10 at home against Denver in AFC wild-card game; won 38-31 at Kansas City in AFC divisional round; lost 24-14 at New England in AFC championship game

2004

Won AFC South Division title; won 49-24 at home against Denver in AFC wild-card game; lost 20-3 at New England in AFC divisional round

2005

Won AFC South Division title; lost 21-18 at home against Pittsburgh in AFC divisional round

2006

Won AFC South Division title; won 23-8 at home against Kansas City in AFC wild-card game; won 15-6 at Baltimore in AFC divisional round; won 38-34 at home in AFC championship.

Key players



Peyton Manning
Colts quarterback

Was 27 of 47 for 349 yards and a touchdown and engineered the game-winning drive.



Dallas Clark
Colts tight end

Caught 6 passes for 137 yards, including a 52-yarder that set up a game-tying touchdown.



Gary Brackett
Colts linebacker

Recorded a team-high seven tackles, including six solo tackles.



Adam Vinatieri
Colts kicker

Was 3 of 3 in field-goal attempts. Combined with his three extra-point kicks, that gave the Colts 12 points for the game.



Indianapolis Colts running back Joseph Addai, left, leaps in front of New England Patriots linebacker Tedy Bruschi but can't grab a long pass from quarterback Peyton Manning in the first quarter of the AFC Championship Game at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis on Sunday.

Bears, Colts to make history

The Associated Press

Two good friends who happen to be NFL coaches are already front-and-center in this Super Bowl, and kickoff is still two weeks away.

Lovie Smith became the first black head coach to make it all the way to the NFL's marquee game Sunday when his Chicago Bears won the NFC championship.

About four hours later, his pal and mentor, Tony Dungy, joined him there when his Indianapolis Colts took the AFC title.

For the first time in the big game's 41-year history not one, but two black head coaches will be on the sidelines.

"It means a lot," Dungy said after a 38-34 victory over the New England Patriots. "I'm very proud to represent African-American coaches."

Las Vegas oddsmakers installed Indianapolis as a one-touchdown favorite in the Super Bowl on Feb. 4 at Miami's Dolphin Stadium.

Smith earned his trip when the Bears (15-3) beat the New Orleans Saints 39-14.

"I'll feel even better to be the first black coach to hold up the world championship trophy," Smith said.

It won't be easy, though, especially the way Peyton Manning and the Colts (15-4) are playing.

Manning has been dogged for years by critics who said his greatness was diminished by the fact he couldn't win a big game. After leading his team back from an 18-point deficit, the Colts quarterback finally has the chance — on football's biggest stage.

Dungy Super Bowl's second black coach

By DAVE GOLDBERG

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Tony Dungy, the face and the voice of the NFL's black coaches, is in the Super Bowl.

He's not the first black coach to make it there. That distinction belongs to his good buddy Lovie Smith, whose Chicago Bears won the NFC championship earlier Sunday.

Doesn't really matter. They'll have plenty to talk about in Miami, where their teams will go head-to-head in the NFL title game on Feb. 4.

Dungy has always been the front man for the NFL's minority coaches — outspoken when he thought there weren't enough opportunities, the first to congratulate the league's owners when they began to provide an outlet for equal opportunity.

But despite a regular-season winning



New England Patriots linebacker Eric Alexander tackles Indianapolis Colts running back Dominic Rhodes in the second quarter of the AFC Championship Game at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis on Sunday.

COLUMN

percentage of .644, he was labeled as a coach who could get his teams to the post-season, in both Tampa and Indianapolis, but never win the big one.

Until Sunday.

Yes, Peyton Manning, another guy who wasn't supposed to be able to produce in the clutch, rallied Dungy's Colts from a 21-3 deficit and finally produced the 80-yard drive for the winning touchdown in Indianapolis' 38-34 win over New England.

But Dungy's calm also was a huge factor in the AFC title game.

Sure, he showed emotion when calls went against his team. Yet even when all the breaks went against him — a couple of questionable calls and a fumble by the Patriots that got through the Colts and into the arms of New England guard

Logan Mankins for a touchdown — he remained cool.

And when Joseph Addai burst up the middle from 3 yards out for a touchdown with a minute left, and Marlin Jackson clinched it with an interception 44 seconds later, Dungy was in the Super Bowl for the first time in his 11 seasons as an NFL coach.

It's also fitting that he join Smith, his former assistant in Tampa Bay.

Dungy didn't want to talk about the possibility last week, perhaps for reasons of superstition.

"If it happens, we'll have plenty of time to talk about it," he said.

Now he will — with two black coaches in the title game.

It's very fitting that Tony Dungy is one of them.

Dave Goldberg covers sports for The Associated Press. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com

• Colts

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

who telegraphed a throw to the sideline that Patriots cornerback Asante Samuel snatched and took 39 yards into the end zone for a 21-3 lead.

Then, the gameplan changed because it had to, and the game morphed from another Manning meltdown into something much more.

He led the Colts on an 80-yard drive late in the first half for a field goal to make it 21-6. In the third quarter, he was at his cruel best, dissecting an exhausted Patriots defense for a pair of long drives and scores.

The first came on a 1-yard quarterback sneak. The second was capped by a 1-yard pass to Dan Klecko, a defensive tackle who came in as a supposed decoy at the goal line. A circus catch by Marvin Harrison for the 2-point conversion tied the game at 21.

The rest of the game was rollicking, back-and-forth, and Manning never let up.

The Patriots answered with an 80-yard kickoff return by Ellis Hobbs, which set up a 6-yard touchdown from Brady to Jabar Gaffney. Officials awarded the score to Gaffney after ruling he was forced out of the back of the end zone by an Indy defender.

Manning came right back, and proving that one good offensive lineman deserves another, his handoff to Dominic Rhodes misfired. The ball scooted forward and

center Jeff Saturday got this touchdown to tie the score at 28.

After that drive, Manning could be seen on the sideline, nursing a sore thumb. But he wasn't coming out.

The teams traded field goals, and Patriots kicker Stephen Gostkowski put New England ahead 34-31 on a 43-yarder with 3:49 left.

After a touchback, it was time for Manning's drive: 11 yards to Reggie Wayne, 32 yards to Bryan Fletcher, a scary completion to Wayne, who nearly lost the ball but snatched it back.

A roughing-the-passer call gave Indy the ball at the 11, then Manning handed off three straight times to Addai for the last 11 yards — showing that, yes, maybe it really is about more than just the quarterback.

his legacy as an all-time great. A Super Bowl victory would only enhance it. When you orchestrate the greatest comeback in playoff history, and play like a championship in the process, your legacy is iced.

Not complete, maybe, but iced. A Super Bowl victory, pardon the cliché, would be icing.

"We have one more mission. We're not done yet," Colts owner Jim Irsay told the

crowd, who were equally enthused when coach Tony Dungy added the following comment.

"This is about Indianapolis and the Colts, and we're excited about that." Deservedly so.

Rick Morwick is sports editor of the Daily Journal. Comments can be sent to P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131 or by e-mail at rmorwick@thejournalnet.com.

Rookie kicker makes good

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS

New England kicker Stephen Gostkowski did his best Adam Vinatieri imitation in the New England Patriots' 38-34 loss to the Indianapolis Colts in Sunday's AFC Championship Game.

With the man he replaced on the opposite sideline, Gostkowski kicked a 28-yard field goal with 7:45 left to give the Patriots a 31-28 lead.

When Vinatieri tied the game with a 36-yarder with 5:35 left, Gostkowski, the rookie from Memphis, kicked back. With 3:49 to go, Gostkowski hit a 43-yarder to put the Patriots back in the lead, 34-31.

Last week, Gostkowski hit the game-winner, a 31-yarder, with 1:10 left to defeat San Diego 24-21.

Testaverde denied

Patriots backup quarterback Vinny Testaverde again was denied a trip to the big game.

A Heisman Trophy winner at the University of Miami (Fla.), Testaverde has gotten close during his long career.

After leading the New York Jets to their first AFC East title in 1998, he helped them to a 10-0 lead over Denver in the AFC championship game. But John Elway, in his final season, rallied the Broncos to a 23-10 victory and then to their second straight Super Bowl title.

Testaverde is on his seventh stop with five franchises.

Hobbs' big returns

New England's Ellis Hobbs had two huge runbacks in the second half to make things difficult for the Colts.

After the Colts tied the game at 21 in the third quarter, Hobbs returned the kickoff 80 yards, which led to a Patriots touchdown five plays later.

When the Colts tied the game at 31 in the fourth quarter, Hobbs returned the kickoff 41 yards, leading to a field goal by Gostkowski that gave the Patriots a 34-31 lead.

Comeback falls short

Tom Brady had an unfamiliar look on his face Sunday night, the look of a comeback quarterback who finally ran out of rallies.

Seconds after his final pass of the AFC championship game was intercepted, Brady removed his helmet and walked slowly to the sidelines, stunned. Colts 38, Patriots 34.

Usually, Brady's smiling at the end of playoff games. He had only lost one of 13 before Peyton Manning and Indianapolis pulled off the biggest comeback in championship game history.

Twenty-four times Brady had led New England to a victory from a fourth-quarter deficit or tie. He did it a week earlier in a 24-21 win over San Diego.

And he seemed poised to do that again when he led the Patriots to two fourth-quarter field goals and a 34-31 lead after Indianapolis had tied the game at 28.

But Manning led the Colts on a seven-play, 80-yard drive and the decisive 3-yard touchdown run by Joseph Addai with 1:00 left.

Still, Brady had time.

He got the ball at his 21, but his first pass to Reche Caldwell was incomplete. He followed that with completions of 19 yards to Benjamin Watson and 15 yards to Heath Evans.

But then he threw up the middle toward Watson where Marlin Jackson intercepted at the Colts 35 and immediately went down with 16 seconds left, clutching the ball as teammates piled on him.

Brady just looked on, helplessly. Coach Bill Belichick clutched the collar of his gray sweatshirt and the Patriots hopes for a fourth championship in six years were dashed.

The loss dropped Brady to 12-2 in the playoffs, including two losses in his last four games. And he lost for the first time in four games against the Colts decided by six points or less.

He also won't get a shot at his third Super Bowl MVP award. Manning — who has two regular-season MVP awards — will get that chance instead in two weeks against the Chicago Bears.

NOTEBOOK