

# Foes getting to know Colts' secret weapon



The Patriots' Artrell Hawkins, left, chases Colts tight end Dallas Clark during a 52-yard pass play in the AFC Championship Game in Indianapolis on Sunday.

By MICHAEL MAROT  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**INDIANAPOLIS**  
Peyton Manning, Marvin Harrison and Reggie Wayne may be Indianapolis' best-known offensive stars.

Defenses can forget about tight end Dallas Clark at their own peril.

The fourth-year tight end has given the Colts a different dimension over the middle, one that creates nearly as many mismatches for linebackers and safeties as it does scoring chances for the Colts.

"That's the position you want to be in," Clark said after Sunday's AFC title game victory. "You want to be the guy getting Peyton time, running routes and making plays."

As usual, Clark produced his share of big plays against New England.

He led all Colts receivers with six catches for 137 yards, and his 52-yarder deep down the middle set up a crucial late field goal that tied it at 31-all. Indy won 38-34.

Not surprisingly, Clark's postseason emergence has paralleled Indy's success.

On a team with two Pro Bowl receivers and a two-time MVP, Manning has exploited the soft underneath routes by repeatedly throwing to his tight ends. The result: Clark has a team-high 17 receptions for 281 yards in three playoff games with a Super Bowl still to play.

Yet he's often overlooked on an offense that has five Pro Bowl players: Manning,

## THE CLARK FILE

**Who:** Dallas Clark  
**Team:** Indianapolis Colts  
**Number:** 44  
**Position:** Tight end  
**Height:** 6-foot-3  
**Weight:** 252 pounds  
**Born:** June 12, 1979, in Sioux Falls, S.D.  
**Resides:** Iowa City  
**Statistics:** Caught 30 passes for 367 yards (12.2 average) and four touchdowns during the regular season. He has caught 17 passes for 281 yards (16.5 average) in postseason games this season.

Harrison, Wayne and offensive linemen Jeff Saturday and Tarik Glenn.

Indianapolis understands how important Clark, who sometimes lines up as the Colts' third wide receiver, has become to the offense.

He's strong enough to block effectively on the line, agile enough to play the slot and quick enough to burn linebackers and safeties that dare to challenge his speed. At times, Clark looks awkward catching balls on his knees or jumping for overthrown passes, but if he gets a chance to run, he's tough to catch.

Those were the assets that intrigued team president Bill Polian enough to make Clark the Colts' first-round draft pick in 2003, and he's been pleased with Clark's progress.

"This may be a better offense than what we

had in Buffalo because we have Dallas Clark, who really is a Pro Bowl-caliber tight end," Polian told radio listeners Monday night.

If Clark has found it difficult to earn his Pro Bowl status, it's not his fault. The AFC has three of the league's most dominant and highly publicized tight ends: Kansas City's Tony Gonzalez, San Diego's Antonio Gates and Baltimore's Todd Heap.

But Clark couldn't care less about going to Hawaii. He'd rather be preparing for one more meaningful game.

"It's a great feeling," he said of the Colts' first Super Bowl berth in 36 years. "It's great for the organization and for coach (Tony) Dungy. This is huge."

Clark's impact in Indianapolis can even be measured in simpler terms. When he's played this season, the Colts are 14-1. When he missed four games with a sprained knee ligament, the Colts lost three times.

Initially, the Colts thought Clark tore his anterior cruciate ligament. Fortunately for the Colts, it wasn't as bad as first feared.

On Sunday, Clark proved the difference in the Colts getting past their old nemesis. When Manning couldn't go deep, he looked underneath and found Clark for several key catches, just as Dungy drew it up.

"We knew they were going to do some take-away on our outside receivers," Dungy said. "So we thought the running backs and tight ends in the middle of the field would have a chance for a good game, and they did."

## Bears lineman can go to Super Bowl, judge rules

The Associated Press

### SKOKIE, Ill.

Chicago Bears defensive tackle Tank Johnson will play in the Super Bowl with court approval and a stern warning from a judge to stay out of trouble.



JOHNSON

Cook County (Ill.) Judge John Moran granted a defense request Tuesday to allow Johnson to leave the state as he awaits trial on gun possession charges. The Bears will play the Indianapolis Colts in the Super Bowl in Miami on Feb. 4.

Moran set no restrictions on Johnson but said he must obey the law or face dire consequences.

Defense attorney Lorna Propes said Johnson is grateful.

"He is a young man who is right now having the opportunity of a lifetime," Propes told reporters after the hearing.

Johnson was arrested Dec. 14 after police raided his home in Gurnee, Ill., about 40 miles northwest of Chicago.

Prosecutors say officers found three rifles, three handguns and ammunition in Johnson's home.

He faces 10 counts of possession of firearms without a state gun-owner identification card.

Arrested three times in 18 months, Johnson has pleaded not guilty to the most recent charges.

The previous arrests involved a scuffle with a police officer, an incident in which the charges were dropped; and a misdemeanor weapons charge.

Assistant State's Attorney Rick Cenar said the prosecution did not object to the decision because Johnson has complied with the terms of his home confinement.

"It's also a legitimate work-related reason," Cenar said after the hearing.

Dressed in a dark suit, blue shirt and blue tie, Johnson stood quietly in the courtroom Tuesday, letting his attorneys speak for him.

Propes said Johnson has been compliant with the requirements of his home confinement.

"He's been there every single time they've checked on him," she said.

A court hearing to possibly drop Johnson's home confinement was set for Feb. 8, four days after the Super Bowl.

A Cook County judge previously ordered Johnson to stay at home except to go to work, and he needed Moran's permission to leave Illinois for the Super Bowl.

## • Peyton

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

"Now, what would not be appropriate is if you prayed that Tom Brady broke his leg," Boersig said. She said people who offer prayers should be open to results they don't anticipate.

"He just said a prayer, that he felt there was a power that could help him. I'm sure that there were people on the Patriots' bench who were praying too, but that doesn't mean that Peyton's prayer was better. I think God is hearing all of those prayers," Boersig said.

Christian tradition teaches that Jesus Christ, on the eve of his crucifixion, prayed to God that he be spared the cross, but only if it was God's will.

If God had a hand in the Colts' victory, Boersig said, it's part of a larger plan.

"We don't know the whole picture. We can see only our part," she said.

Colts chaplain Ken Johnson said he was praying feverishly during the game, and he believes

divine intervention played a role in the outcome.

Others on the team share his belief. Center Jeff Saturday, who recovered Dominic Rhodes' fumble into the end zone for a touchdown, noted after the game: "This is 100 percent of a God moment, things that are unexplainable, things that happen for no reason."

Johnson, who organizes services the nights before games and leads Bible study for coaches and players, said prayer can bring a sense of calm to a player caught up in the drama of a close game. That might have been happening with Manning and other players, he said.

"I do believe God is up in heaven looking down on this game," Johnson said. "God is concerned about his people and the things his people are concerned about here."

But that concern goes only so far, he said. After all, coach Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears, the Colts' opponent in the Feb. 4 Super Bowl, is as much a man of faith as Manning, Saturday or Colts coach Tony Dungy.

"God will do what he can do for you, but you've got to do what you can do for you," Johnson said.

## • Rookie

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

in the playoffs. He's also their third-leading receiver with 12 catches for 52 yards. He was the third-leading receiver in the regular season with 40 receptions for 325 yards and a touchdown.

"Joseph's just been an awesome rookie for us this year," Glenn said. "He's stepped in, started in the playoffs and just been clutch for us. Him and Dominic Rhodes splitting time, they've both just been golden in terms of whenever we call on them to run the ball."

"They establish the run, and we've been able to get efficient plays out of them."

Addai attributes much of his

success to Rhodes, who ran for 641 yards and five touchdowns in the regular season.

Rhodes and Addai are friends who don't mind sharing the back-field spotlight.

"Dom's been helping me out a lot," said Addai, who also split carries with other runners in college at LSU. "Since training camp, he's helped me out a lot."

"Every time I've got my chance, I go out there and try to take advantage of it, and that's what I've been doing."

His next opportunity to fuel the ground game is the Feb. 4 Super Bowl, when the Colts play the Chicago Bears in Miami.

Addai can't think of a better destination to cap his own special season and that of the Colts.

"Not a bad rookie year," he said. "My rookie year, going to the Super Bowl, that's really good."

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