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SPORTS

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SECTION B

ROAD TO THE SUPER BOWL



Super Bowl XLI: Indianapolis Colts vs. Chicago Bears

Time: 6 p.m. Feb. 4 TV: WISH-Channel 8 Radio: WFBQ-94.7 FM



COMEBACK COLTS

GAME AT A GLANCE

The big plays

The game-winner: Joseph Addai ran in from 3 yards out to provide the winning margin for the Colts. Indianapolis' offensive line opened a huge hole for Addai to run through on the play.

Rumblin', fumblin': The Patriots scored first when they botched a handoff and fumbled. Three Colts on top of the ball couldn't recover it, and it squirted into the end zone, where the Patriots' Logan Mankins fell on it. The Colts returned the favor when center Jeff Saturday scored after a fumble by Dominic Rhodes.

Taking it to the house: With New England ahead 14-3, Patriots cornerback Asante Samuel, right, picked off a Peyton Manning pass intended for Marvin Harrison and returned it 39 yards for a score.



The big guy scores again: Colts back-up defensive tackle Dan Klecko caught his second TD pass of the season, and Manning hit Marvin Harrison for a two-point conversion to tie the game at 21-all.

Momentum gone: After Klecko's score, Ellis Hobbs returned the kickoff 80 yards to set up New England's next score.

Touchdown not overturned: In the third quarter, Patriots wide receiver Jabar Gaffney caught a pass in the back of the end zone, and officials ruled Colts defenders pushed him out of bounds. Colts coach Tony Dungy asked for a review of the play, but the call on the field was upheld, and New England led 28-21.

Big-play Dallas: Colts tight end Dallas Clark turned a pass from Manning into a 52-yard catch and run to set up Adam Vinatieri's 36-yard field goal to tie the game at 28-all.



By the numbers

5

Number of rushing TDs for Colts QB Peyton Manning this season. He had none in the previous three seasons.

76

Number of yards Colts covered during their two third-quarter scoring drives.

2

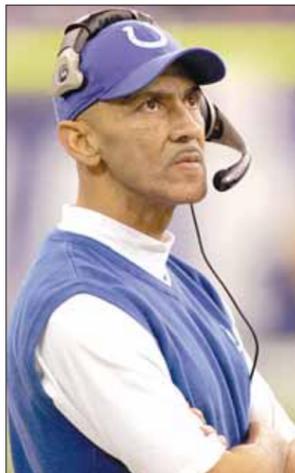
Number of passes Patriots wide receiver Reche Caldwell dropped while wide open, one that would have been a touchdown.

270

Number of yards allowed by the Colts on kickoff and punt returns. But Indianapolis kept the Patriots on their own 20-yard line on the kickoff after the go-ahead score.



The Colts' Joseph Addai runs into the end zone for the game-winning touchdown in the fourth quarter of Sunday's AFC title game against the New England Patriots.



Colts coach Tony Dungy watches from the sidelines during the first half of Sunday's AFC Championship Game at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis.

Colts get past Pats with historic late rally

By EDDIE PELLIS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

A comeback, a drive, a legacy. And yes — finally — Peyton Manning gets his Super Bowl trip. So does Tony Dungy.

Football's most prolific quarterback put on a show for the ages Sunday, rallying the Indianapolis Colts from 18 points down and driving them 80 yards for the winning score in a wildly entertaining 38-34 victory against the New England Patriots.

In his nine years in the league, Manning has never played in a game like this AFC championship contest. He threw for 349 yards and one touchdown and brought his team back from a 21-3 deficit, the biggest comeback in conference title-game history.

Joseph Addai capped Manning's late drive with the winning score, a 3-yard run

INSIDE

More on the NFL conference championship games:

• AP columnist Dave Goldberg writes about the AFC title game, plus a look at other conference championship game news.

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• The Bears end the Saints' storybook season in the NFC title game.

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with 1 minute left to help the Colts (15-4) complete the rally and send Dungy to his first Super Bowl, and a very special one.

The Colts coach will face the Chicago Bears and his good friend Lovie Smith in Miami in two weeks. Together they are the first black coaches to make the Super Bowl in its 41 years.

After Indy's last touchdown, Manning was on the sideline, his head down as he

couldn't bear to watch. New England's Tom Brady, he of the three Super Bowl rings, threw an interception to Marlin Jackson, and the RCA Dome crowd went wild. One kneel-down later, and Manning ripped off his helmet to celebrate.

Not only was it a win for Manning, the All-Pro, All-Everything son of Archie, it was a riveting, back-and-forth showcase of two of the NFL's best teams, best quarterbacks, and yet another example of why football is America's favorite sport.

It was anything but by-the-book, and that started becoming obvious when New England left guard Logan Mankins opened the scoring by pouncing on a fumbled handoff between Brady and Laurence Maroney that squirted into the Indy end zone midway through the first quarter.

It got worse from there for Manning,

(SEE COLTS, PAGE B3)

Manning deserved AFC championship, but so did Indianapolis fans

INDIANAPOLIS

When it counted most, Peyton Manning delivered.

And after he did, the 57,000-plus fans in the RCA Dome crowd didn't know whether to breathe a collective sigh of relief or party their hearts out.

So they did both.

After taking a nanosecond to digest a playoff spectacle for the ages, a wave of blue and white rocked the dome in a fitting post-performance sendoff for the Super Bowl-bound Indianapolis Colts.

As the Colts were presented the Lamar Hunt Trophy for winning the AFC Championship, confetti



Rick Morwick

COLTS BEAT

and fireworks filled the stadium. U2's "It's A Beautiful Day" rang out on the dome speakers. Players hugged and high-fived.

Fans did, too. And no hyperbole here, the din was ear-splitting. No one left early.

Fans hung around to savor the unprecedented moment.

By 10:17 p.m., when the game ended, the party had only just begun. It'll keep going, in various manifestations, right up to the Feb. 4 kickoff against the Chicago Bears in Miami.

The city needed this. The state needed this. The Colts needed this. And perhaps more than any one entity, Manning needed this. He made it happen.

In the process, he created his own postseason lore.

In what will long be remembered — in this town, at least — as "The Drive," Manning marched the Colts to the end



The Colts' Peyton Manning celebrates after Joseph Addai scored the game-winning touchdown during Sunday's AFC title game.

(SEE FANS, PAGE B3)

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