

Bills hoping to knock off unbeaten Patriots

BY DEREK HARPER
THE SPORTS XCHANGE

The Buffalo Bills will be seeking to avenge an early season loss and the unbeaten New England Patriots will be looking for their 10th win when the AFC East Division rivals meet on the Monday night stage at 8:30 p.m. (ESPN-TV) at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts.

Keys to the game: Much of the focus will be on the how the Patriots' offense adjusts minus WR Julian Edelman following the loss of RB Dion Lewis. But the determining factor could be the battle between a pair of units ranked second in the league when the Bills turn to their ground game.

Buffalo (5-4) wants to batter defenses with RBs LeSean McCoy and Karlos Williams, setting versatile QB Tyrod Taylor up to work off play-action. And with WR Sammy Watkins healthy and stretching the field, the Bills' pre-season game plan is finally starting to pay dividends on the field. However, they run into a Patriots defense allowing only 88.2 rushing yards per game. Some of that is due to opponents throwing frequently while playing from behind, but New England allows a modest 4.0 yards per carry. When the Jets were able to get after Taylor on clear passing downs last week,

Buffalo's offense flat-lined.

The Patriots have several options as they adjust to key injuries to skill players. Leaning heavier on RB LeGarrette Blount rather than a constant diet of short-range passes is an option. So, too, is continuing to spread the ball around to a slew of role players who will be asked to step up. QB Tom Brady should have time, as the Bills' strong pass rush from the past two seasons has taken a massive step back under coach Rex Ryan with only 14 sacks.

Matchup to watch: Bills LT Cordy Glenn vs. Patriots DE Chandler Jones: Gordy is a pending free agent in the spring, and his potential pay day will be dictated by how he holds up against elite players like Jones, who is in the defensive player of the year conversation with 10.5 sacks and two forced fumbles.

Player spotlight: Patriots WR Danny Amendola: Brady has been quick to note Amendola is a different type of player than Edelman despite the obvious comparisons due to stature. Regardless, Amendola averages 9.6 touches per game since 2014 when Edelman is sidelined compared to fewer than three when he plays.

Fast facts: Taylor has a 106.2 passer rating this season. Jim Kelly holds the franchise record of 101.2 set in 1990. ... Brady is 24-3 in his career against Buffalo. He is 7-1 in his past eight meetings with 18



New England Patriots wide receiver Danny Amendola catches a pass against the New York Giants in the first half at MetLife Stadium. The Patriots won and Amendola could be a frequent target of Tom Brady during their game Monday night against the Buffalo Bills.

ROBERT DEUTSCH | USA TODAY

touchdown passes, three interceptions, 2,232 passing yards and a 101.0 rating.

Series history: 111th regular-season meeting. Patriots lead series, 67-42-1. These two longtime foes meet annu-

ally in AFC East battles, although with Brady holding a 24-3 career mark in games against Buffalo it's hard to describe the recent series as a battle. The Patriots defeated the Bills 15 straight times

from 2003 to 2010. Save for last year's season finale in which Jimmy Garoppolo played the bulk of what was essentially a meaningless loss for the eventual Super Bowl champs, New England

has won every game dating back to the end of 2011. In Week 2 in Buffalo, New England held on for a 40-32 victory with Brady throwing for 366 yards and four touchdowns.

Peterson sees positive shift for Vikings

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson likes his team's mental toughness and sees a positive shift heading into Sunday's game against the Green Bay Packers.

Peterson rushed for 203 yards last Sunday against the Oakland Raiders and scored on an 80-yard sprint to seal the victory as the Vikings (7-2) won their fifth straight game. The Vikings moved a game ahead of Green Bay (6-3) and will face the Packers at home as they try to increase their lead in the NFC North. The Packers have lost three straight.

"I feel like there's a shift," Peterson told the Pioneer Press on Thursday. "Being able to take advantage of those opportunities, they're slim. You don't get to have too many opportunities in this league, especially when you're playing a game like Sunday against Green Bay."

"I'm definitely feeling a shift in terms of the mentality of the team, the way we continue to approach it with the fight, the will and the desire to win no matter what."

Peterson leads the NFL with 961 yards rushing and is averaging 4.9 yards per carry. He missed 15 games in 2014 following his child abuse indictment and league suspension.

"I think I'm approaching where I envisioned myself being as far as contributing to the offense and being effective and just my style of play," Peterson said.

Vikings head coach Mike Zimmer said Peterson has become more patient as the season progresses.

"I thought at the beginning he would try to make 80-yard runs every time he touched the ball," Zimmer said. "I think he's settled down and allowed himself to make runs. They might be a 10-yard run or a 4-yard run, but there's a lot of times those 10-yarders almost turn into an 80-yarder."



KYLE TERADA | USA TODAY

Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson (right) runs with the football against Oakland Raiders middle linebacker Curtis Lofton during the fourth quarter at O.co Coliseum. The Vikings defeated the Raiders 30-14.

Eagles start Sanchez, Bradford out

Quarterback Sam Bradford and running back Ryan Mathews are out for Sunday's game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, meaning the Eagles will use backup Mark Sanchez behind center.

Sanchez was 4-4 as a starter for Philadelphia last season when Nick Foles suffered a collarbone injury. He had 14 turnovers.

Bradford separated his left shoulder and was diagnosed with a concussion in Week 10. He was not cleared to participate in on-field workouts this week and his status for next week is in doubt.

Mathews is DeMarco Murray's backup but Philadelphia is well-positioned to absorb his absence thanks to veteran Darren Sproles. Sproles earlier this week complained that he was spending too much time on the sideline recently.

Sproles had 14 receptions for 196 yards through the first three games, including a seven-catch, 152-yard performance in the Eagles' Week 2 win over Indianapo-

lis. Since then: 15 catches, 117 yards.

Broncos' Manning, Ware not making trip to Chicago

Injured quarterback Peyton Manning isn't making the trip to Chicago for Sunday's game between the Denver Broncos and the Bears.

Manning is suffering from a torn plantar fascia in his left foot and Brock Osweiler will start in his place. There isn't yet a timetable for Manning's return and the team wants him focused on his rehabilitation efforts.

Outside linebacker Demarcus Ware also isn't making the trip to Chicago as he deals with a back injury. It will be the third game Ware has missed this season.

"It's tough. We both want to play," Ware told reporters. "I have talked to (Manning), and told him that the team is going to need us, but not at 80 percent. We need to take care of our health to be able to help the team. You want to be able to play at a certain level."

Receiver Emmanuel Sanders is listed as questionable for the game due to

Husson

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Smith sparked Husson with four touchdowns while totaling 276 rushing yards on 34 carries. He had a 65-yard touchdown run to open the first quarter, a seven-yard touchdown jaunt with 3:06 left in the first, a three-yard touchdown with 13:43 left in the first half and a 23-yard touchdown catch with 40 seconds left in the half.

Husson backup quarterback Cory Brandon, a freshman who stepped in when starter Joe Seccareccia suf-

fered a broken foot in a game two weeks ago, turned in a solid game as he completed nine of 19 passes for 167 yards with three touchdowns. Brandon connected on a nine-yard touchdown toss to junior running back Logan Steward with 8:12 left in the first half, the 23-yarder to Smith and a 64-yarder to junior wide receiver Kaedem Edge with 12:16 left in the third quarter, Husson's only second-half touchdown.

Salve Regina answered the Husson offense behind junior quarterback Basil who connected on 25 of 49 passes for five touchdowns, including two in the second half.

Senior wide receiver Hulme was Basil's favorite target as he caught 11 passes for 155 yards with three touchdowns, and senior wide receiver Derrick Sarfo-Darko caught seven passes for 188 yards and a touchdown.

Junior linebacker Ellis Throckmorton paced the Husson defense with 10 tackles, and freshman cornerback Quan Soyini, senior linebacker Bryant Wade and senior defensive lineman Ian Palmer had nine each.

Junior linebacker Ethan Gambale led the Seahawks with 16 tackles and senior linebacker Danny Ives had 13.

Sports A.M.

Cavaliers' Smith accused of choking teenager

Cleveland Cavaliers guard J.R. Smith has been accused of choking a 19-year-old student after the teenager jeered the basketball player's trade to Cleveland from the New York Knicks, the New York Daily News reported on Friday.

The alleged incident occurred in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan at about 4 a.m. on Nov. 13, the newspaper said.

Police said Smith has not been arrested, although they are investigating the reported incident. The National Basketball Association said it was "in the process of obtaining more information" about the situation. Smith's attorney said his client did nothing wrong.

The teen, Justin Brown, was with friends who admonished Smith for ignoring their request for a photo. "That's why New York kicked you out, yo!" Brown remarked, according to the News.

Smith, 30, was traded to the Cavaliers last season.

Brown told police that Smith pushed him against the exterior of the building and put his hands around Brown's neck, police sources told the newspaper.

"The accusation is completely false," Smith's lawyer, Alex Spiro, told Reuters.

Palmer, Wright, Mosley hit with fines

Arizona Cardinal quarterback Carson Palmer, Seattle Seahawks linebacker K.J. Wright and Miami Dolphins defensive tackle C.J. Mosley were among those hit with fines by the NFL this week, NFL.com reported Friday.

Wright was fined \$23,152

for a hit on Cardinals wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald.

In that same game, Palmer did a gesture identified as his crotch chop and he was fined \$11,576 by the NFL for that.

Mosley was fined \$17,363 for roughing the passer.

Jays pick up RHP Chavez in trade

The Toronto Blue Jays acquired right-handed pitcher Jesse Chavez from the Oakland Athletics in a trade that sent right-handed pitcher Liam Hendricks to the A's, Fox Sports reported Friday.

Chavez, 32, was primarily a starter for the A's this past season, making 26 starts and finishing with a 7-15 record and a 4.18 ERA.

Chavez suffered a non-displaced fracture in his ribs in mid-September and did not pitch after Sept. 11.

Chavez is entering his third and final year of arbitration eligibility after earning \$2.15 million this past season.

Wizards' Webster could be out for season

Washington Wizards forward Martell Webster had surgery on his right hip on Friday and is expected to miss the entire season.

The Wizards said the operation was performed to repair the labrum and damaged cartilage in his hip. He has not played in a game this season.

Webster has a history of injuries. He signed a four-year contract with the Wizards in 2013 and had surgery to repair a herniated disc in his lower back in June 2014. He played in only 32 games last season as a result, averaging 3.3 points.

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