



NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME NOTES

Atlanta Falcons at Minnesota Vikings

Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome



The Atlanta Falcons (15-2) will travel to Minnesota to take on the Vikings (16-1) at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome in Minneapolis on Monday, April 6 at 6 p.m. The game will be broadcast at www.atlantafalcons.com/1998, Pat Summerall and John Madden will have the call.

Atlanta closed out the regular season with nine-straight victories to secure the NFC West title for the third time in franchise history. First-team All-Pro and Pro Bowl running back Jamal Anderson posted 1,846 rushing yards and 14 touchdowns on 410 attempts while wide receivers Terence Mathis (1,136) and Tony Martin (1,181) each eclipsed the 1,000-yard mark. Pro Bowl Quarterback Chris Chandler led the club to a 13-1 record in 14 starts, throwing for 3,154 yards with 25 touchdowns and 12 interceptions.

The 'Dirty Birds' ranked fourth in the NFL in scoring defense, allowing a paltry 18.1 points per game. Led by Pro Bowl middle linebacker Jesse "the Hammer" Tuggle, the Falcons defense held opponents to 75.2 yards per game on the ground and 220.7 passing yards per game. Atlanta's secondary picked off 19 passes including 11 combined from Pro-Bowl cornerbacks Ray Buchanan (7) and Eugene Robinson (4).

The Falcons will face the most prolific offense in the history of the NFL in this matchup. The Vikings set a league record by scoring 556 points during the regular season and features Pro Bowlers such as quarterback Randall Cunningham, running back Robert Smith, and all-world wide receivers Cris Carter and Randy Moss. The 15-1 Vikings have scored 30-or-more points in 11 games and averaged 34.8 points per game. Cunningham threw 34 touchdowns including a rookie record 17 going to Moss and an additional 12 to Carter. Additionally, placekicker Gary Anderson became the first player in NFL history to convert every field goal and extra point that he attempted.

Atlanta enters the championship game after a, 20-18, victory over its NFC West rival San Francisco at the Georgia Dome in the divisional round. The Falcons jumped out to a 14-0 lead with Anderson scoring on runs of 2-yards and 34-yards. The 49ers would cut the lead to four points at half time after Steve Young hit Jerry Rice for a 17-yard touchdown and Wade Richey connected on a 36-yard field goal as time expired in the second quarter.

Morten Andersen would push the Falcons lead to 10 points with a pair of field goals, converting from 29-yards and 32-yards. Young would bring the 49ers back, engineering a 13-play, 87-yard drive culminating in an eight-yard rushing touchdown by the seven-time pro bowler. Following the score, Ty Detmer connected with Greg Clark for the two-point conversion on a fake field goal, cutting the Falcons lead to two.

Atlanta was able to run more than two minutes off the clock, feeding Anderson on six straight plays on the following position but the Falcons had to punt the ball back to Young and the 49ers with just under a minute to play. Despite connecting on seven consecutive throws on their previous scoring drive, Young was stifled by the 'Dirty Birds' completing just one of five throws on the games final drive. Atlanta's victory was sealed when William White intercepted Young's desperation heave in the waning seconds.



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PASSING

Player	Att	Cmp	Yards	Cmp Pct.	TD	INT	Rate
Chris Candler, Atl	327	190	3154	58.7	25	12	100.9
Randall Cunningham, Min	425	259	3704	60.9	34	10	106

RUSHING

Player	Att	Yards	Yds/Att.	TD
Jamal Anderson, Atl	410	1,846	4.5	14
Robert Smith, Min	249	1,187	4.8	6

RECEIVING

Player	Rec	Yards	Yds/Rec.	TD
Tony Martin, Atl	64	1,136	17.8	11
Terance Mathis, Atl	66	1,181	17.9	6
O.J. Santiago, Atl	27	428	15.9	5
Cris Carter, Min	78	1,011	13	12
Randy Moss, Min	69	1,313	19	17

DEFENSE

Player	Tot. Tkl	Solo	Sack	FF	FR	Int	Def. TD
Cornelius Bennett, Atl	92	69	1	0	2	0	0
Jesse Tuggle, Atl	86	66	3	1	1	0	1
Ray Buchanan, Atl	61	54	0	1	0	7	0
Eugene Robinson, Atl	68	48	0	2	2	4	1
Lester Archambeau, Atl	40	30	10	5	2	0	0
Chuck Smith, Atl	47	36	8.5	3	4	0	1
Ed McDaniell, Min	128	93	7	3	2	0	0
Robert Griffith, Min	89	74	0	2	0	5	0
Jimmy Hitchcock, Min	67	58	0	0	1	7	3
John Randle, Min	41	27	10.5	3	1	0	0
Derrick Alexander, Min	42	37	7.5	0	0	0	0



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NFL RANKINGS

SCORING OFFENSE

Team	Points	Pts/G
Minnesota	556	34.8
Denver	501	31.3
San Francisco	479	29.9
Atlanta	442	27.6

RUSHING LEADERS

Player	Att	Yds
Terrell Davis	392	2,008
Jamal Anderson	410	1,846
Garrison Hearst	310	1,570
Barry Sanders	343	1,491
Emmitt Smith	319	1,332

RECEIVING LEADERS

Player	Att	Yds
Antonio Freeman	84	1,424
Eric Moulds	67	1,368
Randy Moss	69	1,313
Rod Smith	86	1,222
Jimmy Smith	78	1,182
Tony Martin	66	1,181
Jerry Rice	82	1,157
Frank Sanders	89	1,145
Terance Mathis	64	1,136
Keyshawn Johnson	83	1,131

SCORING DEFENSE

Team	Points	Pts/G
Miami	265	16.6
NY Jets	266	16.6
Dallas	275	17.2
Atlanta	289	18.1

RUSHING DEFENSE

Team	Tot. Yards	Yds/G
San Diego	1140	71.3
Atlanta	1203	75.2
Denver	1287	80.4
Green Bay	1442	90.1
Buffalo	1493	93.3

RED ZONE DEFENSE

Team	RdZ Att.	RdZ Pct.
Miami	24	37.50%
Green Bay	30	40%
Pittsburgh	25	40.90%
Atlanta	25	44%
New Orleans	43	44.20%

TAKEAWAY DRIVES

Team	Drives	TO%
Atlanta	136	26.50%
Seattle	199	19.60%
Arizona	193	17.60%
Minnesota	183	17.50%