



NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME NOTES

*Atlanta Falcons Defeat Minnesota Vikings, 30-27,
Advance to Super Bowl XXXIII*



The Atlanta Falcons defeated the Minnesota Vikings, 30-27, in overtime at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome to capture the club's first George Halas Trophy as NFC Champions. Morten Andersen's set a ball 38 yards off the Metrodome's AstroTurf through the uprights to send the club to its first Super Bowl.

The Dirty Birds quickly showed they came to play, opening the game with a 12-play, 72-yard touchdown drive. Pro Bowl quarterback Chris Chandler connected with All-Pro running back Jamal Anderson for a five-yard touchdown to kick off the scoring. The dynamic Vikings offense responded on the ensuing drive as Randall Cunningham hit Randy Moss for a 31-yard touchdown, evening the score after Gary Anderson's extra point.

Minnesota would score the next 20 points after its first touchdown as Anderson converted on field goals of 29 and 35 yards and Cunningham added a one-yard touchdown run. Not content to take a 13-point lead into halftime, the Vikings attempted to put together another scoring drive with just 1:17 remaining on the clock. Cunningham failed to connect with Matthew Hatchette and Cris Carter on first and second down, setting up a third-and-10 with just over a minute remaining in the half.

Cunningham dropped back to attempt another pass on third down and was strip-sacked by Chuck Smith. Travis Hall picked up the loose ball and set up the Falcons with a short field and a chance to cut into the Minnesota lead. On the next play, Chandler hit Terance Mathis for a 14-yard touchdown to make it a six-point game at halftime.

Atlanta would cut the Minnesota advantage to three with a 27-yard kick by Andersen in the third quarter. The Vikings showed why they had been such a force all season, responding with another touchdown pass from Cunningham – a five-yard toss to Hatchette. Facing yet another 10-point deficit, the Falcons refused to be denied.

Andersen would add another field goal to trim the lead to seven early in the fourth quarter. Cunningham would give the Falcons hope, fumbling at the Vikings 30-yard line but a pair of Chandler passes on third and fourth down fell incomplete. On the ensuing drive, Minnesota marched down the field leaning on 44 rushing yards from Robert Smith to set up a 38-yard field goal attempt that would have almost certainly sealed the win. Shockingly, Gary Anderson, who had not missed a field goal or PAT all season missed wide left and gave the Falcons new life.

With 2:07 remaining in the game, Chandler orchestrated an eight-play drive culminating in a 16-yard touchdown pass to Mathis, tying the game at 27-27 with less than a minute on the clock to force overtime. In the extra frame, the Falcons Pro Bowl backfield of Chandler and Anderson went to work. Atlanta drove down to the Vikings 21-yard line on its second possession. Facing a third-and-nine, Dan Reeves sent Andersen out to attempt a 38-yard game-winning kick. The Great Dane's kick flew true, sending the Falcons to Super Bowl XXXIII where they will face the winner of the Jets-Broncos AFC title game.



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SCORING

| Quarter | Team | Play Detail | ATL | MIN |
|---------|---------|--|-----|-----|
| 1 | Falcons | Jamal Anderson 5 yard pass from Chris Chandler (Morten Andersen kick) | 7 | 0 |
| | Vikings | Randy Moss 31 yard pass from Randall Cunningham (Gary Anderson kick) | 7 | 7 |
| 2 | Vikings | Gary Anderson 29 yard field goal | 7 | 10 |
| | Vikings | Randall Cunningham 1 yard rush (Gary Anderson kick) | 7 | 17 |
| | Vikings | Gary Anderson 35 yard field goal | 7 | 20 |
| | Falcons | Terance Mathis 14 yard pass from Chris Chandler (Morten Andersen kick) | 14 | 20 |
| 3 | Falcons | Morten Andersen 27 yard field goal | 17 | 20 |
| 4 | Vikings | Matthew Hatchette 5 yard pass from Randall Cunningham (Gary Anderson kick) | 17 | 27 |
| | Falcons | Morten Andersen 24 yard field goal | 20 | 27 |
| | Falcons | Terance Mathis 16 yard pass from Chris Chandler (Morten Andersen kick) | 27 | 27 |
| OT | Falcons | Morten Andersen 38 yard field goal | 30 | 27 |



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PASSING

| Player | Att | Cmp | Yards | Cmp Pct. | TD | INT | Rate |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-------|----------|----|-----|-------|
| Chris Candler, Atl | 43 | 27 | 340 | 62.8 | 3 | 0 | 110.6 |
| Randall Cunningham, Min | 48 | 29 | 266 | 60.4 | 2 | 0 | 89.4 |

RUSHING

| Player | Att | Yards | Yds/Att. | TD |
|-------------------------|-----|-------|----------|----|
| Jamal Anderson, Atl | 23 | 67 | 2.9 | 0 |
| Tim Dwight, Atl | 3 | 28 | 9.3 | 0 |
| Chris Candler, Atl | 2 | 15 | 7.5 | 0 |
| Robert Smith, Min | 21 | 71 | 3.4 | 0 |
| Randall Cunningham, Min | 6 | 13 | 2.2 | 1 |
| Leroy Hoard, Min | 6 | 10 | 1.7 | 0 |
| Charles Evans, Min | 1 | 8 | 8 | 0 |

RECEIVING

| Player | Rec | Yards | Yds/Rec. | TD |
|------------------------|-----|-------|----------|----|
| Tony Martin, Atl | 5 | 129 | 25.8 | 0 |
| Terance Mathis, Atl | 6 | 73 | 12.2 | 2 |
| Jamal Anderson, Atl | 6 | 33 | 5.5 | 1 |
| O.J. Santiago, Atl | 3 | 54 | 18 | 0 |
| Brian Kozlowski, Atl | 3 | 11 | 3.7 | 0 |
| Harold Green, Atl | 2 | 9 | 4.5 | 0 |
| Ronnie Harris, Atl | 1 | 29 | 29 | 0 |
| Ed Smith, Atl | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Randy Moss, Min | 6 | 75 | 12.5 | 1 |
| Cris Carter, Min | 6 | 67 | 11.2 | 0 |
| Matthew Hatchette, Min | 4 | 34 | 8.5 | 1 |
| Andrew Glover, Min | 4 | 34 | 8.5 | 0 |
| Leroy Hoard, Min | 3 | 23 | 7.7 | 0 |
| Greg DeLong, Min | 2 | 17 | 8.5 | 0 |
| David Palmer, Min | 2 | 9 | 4.5 | 0 |
| Charles Evans, Min | 1 | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| Robert Smith, Min | 1 | -1 | -1 | 0 |