



GAME NOTES

New England Patriots vs. Pittsburgh Steelers– September 10, 2015

TEAM NOTES

PATRIOTS IMPROVE TO 3-0 IN THURSDAY NIGHT KICKOFF GAMES

The NFL's Thursday Night Kickoff tradition began in 2002 and the defending Super Bowl Champion has hosted every year since 2004. New England is 3-0 when playing in the Thursday kickoff game as the defending Super Bowl Champion. New England defeated Indianapolis, 27-24, on Sept. 9, 2004 and Oakland, 30-20, on Sept. 8, 2005 in Thursday games at Gillette Stadium. The Patriots are 4-0 all-time in season openers in the season after winning the Super Bowl.

PATRIOTS JUMP AHEAD OF PITTBURGH IN SEASON OPENERS.

The Patriots improved to 2-1 in season openers against the Steelers. The last time the Patriots played Pittsburgh in the season-opener was in 2002 in the grand-opening of Gillette Stadium, a 30-14 win on Monday Night Football when the Patriots were coming off their first Super Bowl win.

Patriots vs. Pittsburgh in Season Openers (2-1)

Year	Date	Opponent	Score
1979	09/03	vs. Pittsburgh	13-16 (L) (OT)
2002	09/09	vs. Pittsburgh	30-14 (w)
2015	09/10	vs. Pittsburgh	28-21 (w)

PATRIOTS, BILL BELICHICK AND TOM BRADY IMPROVE OPENING DAY RECORDS

Tom Brady has the best opening day record of any Super Bowl era quarterback. New England won its eighth consecutive time when opening the season at home.

OPENING DAY RECORDS FOR THE PATRIOTS

	W	L	T	Pct.
New England Patriots ...	31	25	0	.554
Bill Belichick.....	14	7	0	.667
Tom Brady.....	12	2	0	.857

PATRIOTS SELL OUT 231st CONSECUTIVE HOME GAME

The Patriots had a sellout crowd for the 231st consecutive home game. The sellout streak is now in its 22nd season, and includes every preseason, regular season and playoff game since the 1994 regular season home opener.

PATRIOTS HAVE BEST RECORD IN PAST TEN YEARS

The Patriots' record of 123-38 (.763) over the past 10-plus seasons (since 2005) is the best in the NFL. Over the past 10 years, only six NFL teams have posted a winning percentage of .600 or better.

BEST RECORDS SINCE 2005

Team	W	L	T	Pct.
New England	123	38	0	.764
Indianapolis	110	50	0	.688
Pittsburgh	101	60	0	.627
Green Bay	98	61	1	.616
San Diego	97	63	0	.606
Baltimore	96	64	0	.600

PATRIOTS HAVE BEST SEPTEMBER RECORD OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

No team in the NFL has started off seasons stronger than the Patriots over the past 10 years, as New England has amassed a league-best 24-10 September record since 2005.

BEST SEPTEMBER RECORDS SINCE 2005

Team	Wins	Losses	Pct.
New England	24	10	.706
Baltimore	22	11	.667
Dallas	22	11	.667
Indianapolis	22	11	.667
Denver	22	12	.647
Seattle	21	12	.636

PATRIOTS IMPROVE BEST HOME RECORD SINCE 2001

The Patriots have the best home record in the NFL since 2001 with a 95-18 record, including a .841 winning percentage.

BEST HOME RECORDS SINCE 2001

(regular season)

Team	Wins	Losses	Ties	Pct.
New England	95	18	0	.841
Baltimore	85	27	0	.759
Green Bay	81	30	1	.728
Indianapolis	81	31	0	.723
Pittsburgh	81	30	1	.728

PATRIOTS IMPROVE TO 19 STRAIGHT HOME WINS AGAINST NON-DIVISION AFC FOES

The Patriots have now won 19 straight home games against non-division AFC opponents. Their last loss at Gillette Stadium to a non-division AFC team was a 33-10 loss vs. Pittsburgh on Nov. 30, 2008.

PATRIOTS EXTEND WIN STREAK WHEN LEADING AT THE HALF

The Patriots led the Steelers 14-3 at halftime and won the game 28-21. It marked the Patriots' 75th straight victory when holding a halftime lead at home, dating back to 2000. New England is now 67-0 when leading at halftime in games at Gillette Stadium.

INDIVIDUAL NOTES

TOM BRADY HAS MOST WINS BY A STARTING QB WITH ONE TEAM

Tom Brady has 161 career regular-season wins with the Patriots, surpassing Brett Favre (160 wins with Green Bay) for the most wins by a starting quarterback with one team. Brady made his 208th career start against Pittsburgh. It took Favre 253 starts to reach 160 wins.

MOST WINS AS A STARTING QUARTERBACK FOR ONE TEAM

<u>Player</u>	<u>Wins</u>	<u>Team</u>
Tom Brady	161	New England
Brett Favre	160	Green Bay
John Elway	148	Denver
Dan Marino	147	Miami
Peyton Manning	141	Indianapolis

BRADY MAKES HIS 14th STRAIGHT OPENING DAY START WITH ONE TEAM; LONGEST CURRENT STREAK AND FOURTH LONGEST STREAK IN NFL HISTORY

Tom Brady made his 14th opening day start with the Patriots. The only NFL quarterbacks with more opening day starts with one team are John Elway (16 with Denver), Dan Marino (16 with Miami) and Brett Favre (15 with Green Bay). Eli Manning is expected to make his 11th straight opening day start for the New York Giants, which will be the second longest active streak.

BRADY MATCHES STEVE GROGAN WITH HIS 16th SEASON WITH THE TEAM

The 2015 season is Brady's 16th season with the Patriots, matching Steve Grogan (1975-90) for the most seasons with the team.

TOM BRADY MAKES 109th CONSECUTIVE START

Tom Brady made his 109th straight start, including postseason games and is the only quarterback in NFL history with two separate streaks of 100-plus starts.

MOST CONSECUTIVE STARTS BY AN NFL QB (including playoffs)

<u>Games</u>	<u>Quarterbacks</u>
321	Brett Favre (1992-2010)
227	Peyton Manning (1998-2011)
178	Eli Manning (2004-present)
153	Philip Rivers (2006-present)
128	Tom Brady (2001-2008)
127	Joe Flacco (2008-present)
123	Ron Jaworski (1977-1984)
110	Joe Ferguson (1977-1984)
109	Tom Brady (2009-present)

TOM BRADY HAS BEST OPENING DAY RECORD IN SUPER BOWL ERA

Tom Brady is 12-2 as a starting quarterback on opening day, the best record among any quarterback on opening day in the Super Bowl era.

NFL QUARTERBACKS WITH THE BEST RECORD IN SEASON-OPENING GAMES

Player	Season Opening Record	WIN PCT
Tom Brady	12-2	.857
John Elway	12-4	.750
Dan Fouts	9-3	.750
Peyton Manning	12-4	.750

BRADY NEARING 400 TOUCHDOWNS

Brady tied Drew Brees for fifth place for most career touchdown passes with 396 and needs four more touchdown passes to become the fourth NFL player to ever reach 400 career touchdown passes – Peyton Manning (530), Brett Favre (508) and Dan Marino (420).

BRADY IMPROVES TO 24 STRAIGHT HOME WINS AGAINST NON-DIVISION AFC TEAMS

Tom Brady improved to 24 straight wins at home as a starting quarterback against non-division AFC opponents. His last home loss to a non-division AFC team was Nov. 5, 2006 in a 27-20 defeat to Indianapolis.

BRADY SETS TEAM RECORD WITH 19 CONSECUTIVE PASS COMPLETIONS

Tom Brady completed 19 consecutive passes against Pittsburgh, setting a new team record. Brady had 14 straight pass completions vs. Jacksonville on Dec. 27, 2009. He set a Super Bowl record with 16 straight pass completions vs. the New York Giants in Super Bowl XLVI. The NFL record for most consecutive completions in a single game is 22, set by Mark Brunell while with Washington in a game vs. Houston on Sept. 24, 2006 and David Carr while with Houston vs. Buffalo on Nov. 19, 2006.

BRADY HAS 23rd CAREER GAME WITH 4+ TOUCHDOWN PASSES

Tom Brady threw for four touchdowns against the Steelers, marking his 23rd career game with four or more scoring passes. Brady now has 18 career games with four or more touchdowns and no interceptions, tying Peyton Manning and Drew Brees for the NFL record for the most such games.

MOST GAMES WITH 4-PLUS TOUCHDOWN PASSES

Peyton Manning	35
Drew Brees	26
Tom Brady	23
Brett Favre	23
Dan Marino	21
Johnny Unitas	17

MOST GAMES WITH 4-PLUS TOUCHDOWNS AND NO INTERCEPTIONS

Tom Brady	18
Peyton Manning	18
Drew Brees	18
Brett Favre	12

DION LEWIS HAS 120 YARDS FROM SCRIMMAGE

RB Dion Lewis had 120 yards from scrimmage on 20 touches in his Patriots debut, tallying 69 rushing yards on 15 carries (4.6 avg) and adding 51 receiving yards on 4 catches, including a 19-yard reception. The 120 scrimmage yards set a new career high for Lewis, topping his 58 yards from scrimmage (all rushing) while playing for Philadelphia against Washington on Jan. 1, 2012. Lewis's 69 rushing yards and 51 receiving yards against Pittsburgh were each career highs.

GOSTKOWSKI HANDLES THE NEW EXTRA POINT RULE; EXTENDS HIS STREAK

Stephen Gostkowski kicked the first extra point under the NFL's new rule that moved the extra point attempts from the 2-yard line to the 15-yard line for a 33-yard kick. He extended his streak of consecutive extra points to 415.

Most Consecutive (Kicking) Points After Touchdown

422 Matt Stover, Baltimore, 1996-2008; Indianapolis, 2009

415 Stephen Gostkowski, New England, 2006-present

371 Jason Elam, Denver, 1993-2002

371 Jeff Wilkins, St. Louis, 1999-2007

360 Jay Feely, Atlanta, 2002-04; N.Y. Giants, 2005-06; Miami, 2007; N.Y. Jets, 2008-09; Arizona, 2010-2013, Chicago, 2014

2015 FIRST ROUND DRAFT PICK MALCOM BROWN RECORDS FIRST NFL SACK

2015 first-round draft pick DL Malcom Brown registered his first NFL sack on the game's first series when he dropped WR Antonio Brown for an 8-yard loss after Brown attempted a pass off of a lateral. The sack came on first down at the Patriots' 24 yard line and began a stand by the Patriots defense that stopped Pittsburgh's initial offensive momentum on a game-opening drive that ended with a missed field goal

GRONKOWSKI SCORES FIRST POINTS OF 2015;

HAS NOW SCORED IN FOUR STRAIGHT REGULAR SEASON GAMES

Rob Gronkowski scored the Patriots first points of the season on a 16-yard touchdown pass from Tom Brady in the second quarter. He has now caught a touchdown pass in four straight regular season games after closing out the 2014 by scoring a touchdown in the final three regular season games. He has now caught a touchdown pass in seven straight games, including the postseason. Gronkowski's longest streak of consecutive regular season games with a receiving touchdown is six in 2011, which is a franchise record for most consecutive games with a receiving touchdown.

GRONKOWSKI TIES CAREER HIGH WITH THREE TOUCHDOWN CATCHES

Gronkowski caught three touchdowns to tie his career high. He also had three touchdown receptions vs. Chicago (10/26/14) and at Pittsburgh (11/18/10). It is the fourth time overall that he has scored three touchdowns in a game. Gronkowski had three touchdowns overall vs. Indianapolis on Dec. 4, 2011 when he caught two touchdown passes and scored on a 2-yard run.

GRONKOWSKI TIES TEAM MARK WITH FOUR GAMES WITH THREE OR MORE TOUCHDOWNS.

With his three touchdowns against Pittsburgh, Gronkowski tied the Patriots record for most games with three or more touchdowns with four such games. The record is shared with Randy Moss.

Most Overall Games with Three or More Touchdowns

4 Rob Gronkowski

4 Randy Moss

2 Billy Lott

2 Curtis Martin

2 Larry Garron

2 Sam Cunningham

GRONKOWSKI SCORES IN SEASON OPENER FOR FIFTH TIME IN FIVE TRIES

Rob Gronkowski played in a season-opener for the fifth time in his career and scored a touchdown for the fifth time. Gronkowski scored a touchdown in the Patriots' first game of the season in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015. He did not play in the season opener in 2013.

GRONKOWSKI MATCHES CAREER LONG

Gronkowski had a 52-yard reception in the fourth quarter, matching his career long. He had a 52-yard touchdown reception vs. Kansas City on Nov. 21, 2011.

EDELMAN HAS SIXTH CAREER GAME WITH 10-PLUS CATCHES

Edelman had his sixth regular season game with at least 10 catches, finishing with 11 grabs for 97 yards.

SCOTT CHANDLER SCORES TOUCHDOWN WITH THE PATRIOTS

Scott Chandler scored his first touchdown as a member of the Patriots in the third quarter on a 1-yard touchdown pass from Tom Brady.

HIGHTOWER RECORDS FIRST SACK OF SEASON

LB Dont'a Hightower sacked Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger for a 6-yard loss on second down in the first quarter, setting up a third-and-long that the Steelers did not convert. Hightower had a career-high 6 sacks in 2014.

BRADY COMPLETES THREE STRAIGHT TO LEAD TO FIRST SCORE OF SEASON

With the Patriots facing a second-and-seven from Pittsburgh's 48-yard line in the second quarter, Tom Brady completed three consecutive passes to lead the Patriots to their first touchdown of the season. Brady hit Julian Edelman for a 13-yard completion, then connected with Rob Gronkowski on back-to-back plays in the second quarter, with the two passes to Gronkowski totaling 35 yards and ending in a 16-yard touchdown and a 7-0 Patriots lead.

HARMON RECORDS FOURTH QUARTER INTERCEPTION

Duron Harmon intercepted a deep ball from Ben Roethlisberger in the fourth quarter with the Patriots holding a 28-14 lead. The pick was the fourth of Harmon's career and was the only turnover of the game.

LINEUP NOTES

NEW FACES

The Patriots have 21 players on the opening day roster that were not with the team in 2014. Of that group, 10 saw action in the game against the Steelers: David Andrews, Malcom Brown, Tarell Brown, Travaris Cadet, Joe Cardona, Scott Chandler, Justin Coleman, Bradley Fletcher, Trey Flowers, Jonathan Freeny, Geneo Grissom, Chris Harper, Tre' Jackson, Rufus Johnson, Dion Lewis, Eric Martin, Shaq Mason, Jordan Richards, Jabaal Sheard, Khyri Thornton, and Michael Williams.

- **2015 Draft Picks** Malcom Brown, Jordan Richards, Geneo Grissom, Trey Flowers, Tre' Jackson, Shaq mason, Joe Cardona,
- **2015 rookie free agents** – David Andrews, Justin Coleman and Chris Harper
- **First-Year** – LB Rufus Johnson
- **Veteran free agents** – Tarell Brown, Travaris Cadet, Scott Chandler, Bradley Fletcher, Jonathan Freeny, Dion Lewis, Eric Martin, Jabaal Sheard, Khyri Thornton, and Michael Williams.

TWO 2015 DRAFT PICKS MAKE THE START

Two of the Patriots 2015 draft picks were in the starting lineup with first-round pick DL Malcom Brown at defensive tackle and fourth-round pick Tre' Jackson at right guard.

ROOKIE FREE AGENTS DAVID ANDREWS STARTS AT CENTER

Rookie free agent C David Andrews made the start at center. He is the third rookie free agent to start on opening day under Bill Belichick. DL Jace Saylor in 2001 and WR Kenbrell Thompkins in 2013 also started on opening day after making the team as a rookie free agent.

JEROD MAYO MAKES A SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO ACTION

LB Jerod Mayo made a successful return to regular season action after being limited to just six games in 2014 due to injury.

DION LEWIS MAKES FIRST CAREER NFL START

RB Dion Lewis made his first NFL start vs. Pittsburgh.