



# **GAME NOTES**

## **Patriots vs. Cincinnati Bengals– September 12, 2010**

### **GOOD AT HOME**

The Patriots improved to a perfect 9-0 at Gillette Stadium in home openers. New England has won its home opener in each season since moving into Gillette Stadium in 2002 and has won 14 of its last 16 home openers overall. The Patriots have also won seven straight times on Kickoff Weekend. New England is now 60-13 (.822) all-time at Gillette Stadium (including playoffs, the best home record in the NFL since the facility opened in 2002).

### **NEW FACES**

Of the 16 new Patriots on the 53-man opening day roster in 2010, 12 saw action in their first regular-season game as a member of the Patriots. Of that group, six players were 2010 draft picks. The new Patriots who made their New England debuts today are: P Zoltan Mesko, CB Devin McCourty, S Jarrad Page, LB Brandon Spikes, LB Tracy White, DL Kyle Love, TE Alge Crumpler, TE Aaron Hernandez, TE Rob Gronkowski, DL Gerard Warren, LB Marques Murrell and DL Jermaine Cunningham.

### **WES WELKER HAS TWO TOUCHDOWNS, TYING CAREER HIGH**

Wes Welker tied his single-game career high with his fourth two-touchdown game after a 9-yard touchdown reception in the first quarter and a 4-yard touchdown reception in the second quarter. Welker also had two touchdown receptions in games at Miami (10/21/07), at Dallas (10/14/07) and vs. Tennessee (10/18/09).

### **WELKER IS GOOD FOR AT LEAST SIX**

After catching a team-high eight passes for a team-high 64 yards this afternoon, Welker now has 6 or more catches in 27 of his last 31 games. Welker has caught at least one pass in each of his 50 games with the Patriots, including today's game. He has a current streak of 64 straight games with at least one reception. The last time Welker did not catch a pass in a game was December 24, 2005 when he played for Miami.

### **LB GARY GUYTON SCORES ON HIS FIRST CAREER INTERCEPTION**

LB Gary Guyton picked off a Carson Palmer pass in the second quarter and returned it 59 yards for a touchdown. It marks his first NFL interception. Last season the Patriots returned three interceptions for a touchdown. Brandon Meriweather returned an interception 39 yards for a score at Tampa Bay (10/25/09), CB Leigh Bodden scored on a 53-yard return vs. NY Jets (11/22/09) and Darius Bulter returned an interception 91 yards for a touchdown at Houston (1/3/10). Guyton's return is the first interception returned for a touchdown by a New England linebacker since Adalius Thomas returned one 65 yards for a touchdown vs. San Diego (9/16/07).

### **WR BRANDON TATE ON THE RETURN**

Brandon Tate returned the second half kickoff 97 yards for a touchdown. It is his first NFL touchdown and the first kickoff returned for a touchdown by New England since Ellis Hobbs returned a kick 95 yards for a touchdown at Oakland (12/14/08). Tate's return was the ninth longest kickoff return for a touchdown in New England history and was the longest since Hobbs returned the second half kick for a

team-record 108 yards at the New York Jets (9/9/07). Tate holds the NCAA record in combined kick and punt return yards with 3,523 yards and holds the ACC career records for kickoff returns (109) and kickoff return yardage (2,688).

### **TE ROB GRONKOWSKI SCORES ON HIS FIRST NFL CATCH**

Rookie TE Rob Gronkowski scored on a 1-yard touchdown pass from Tom Brady in the fourth quarter. It was his first NFL reception. Gronkowski is the first Patriots rookie to score a touchdown on opening day since WR Deion Branch in 2002. Gronkowski was selected by the Patriots in the second round (42nd overall) of the 2010 NFL Draft out of Arizona.

### **PATS RETURNED A KO AND INT. FOR A TD IN SAME GAME FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2002.**

LB Gary Guyton scored on a 59-yard interception return and WR Brandon Tate returned a kickoff for a 97-yard touchdown. It is the first time since 2002 that the Patriots returned an interception and kickoff for a touchdown in the same game. On November 17, 2002 at Oakland Kevin Faulk returned a kickoff 86 yards for a touchdown and LB Tedy Bruschi scored on a 48-yard interception return.

### **TOM BRADY THROWS THREE TOUCHDOWNS**

Tom Brady finished the game with three touchdown passes. It is the 70th time in his career that he has had two or more touchdowns in a game and the 24th time he has had three touchdowns in a game. The Patriots are 60-10 all-time when Brady throws two or more touchdowns and 21-3 when he throws for three touchdowns. It is the fourth time that he has thrown for three touchdowns in a season-opener. He also threw three touchdowns in season openers vs. Pittsburgh (9/9/02), vs. Indianapolis (9/9/04) and at New York Jets (9/9/07).

### **HERNANDEZ STARTS BIG**

Rookie TE Aaron Hernandez's first NFL reception was a 45-yard catch early in the first quarter from QB Tom Brady. It is the longest reception for a Patriots rookie on his first career catch since WR Tony Simmons had a 47-yard reception from QB Drew Bledsoe in Simmons's NFL debut (10/15/1998) at Miami. In 2009, the Patriots had 12 pass plays of 40 or more yards, including seven of 50 yards or more. Hernandez was drafted by the Patriots in the fourth round (113th overall) of the 2010 NFL Draft out of the University of Florida.

### **FOUR 2010 DRAFT PICKS IN THE STARTING LINEUP**

Four of the Patriots' 2010 draft picks were in the starting lineup. First round pick CB Devin McCourty and second-round pick LB Brandon Spikes started on defense and second-round pick TE Rob Gronkowski and TE Aaron Hernandez started on offense.

### **FRED TAYLOR GOES LONG**

Fred Taylor had a 24-yard run in the first quarter. It was the longest run of his Patriots tenure. Last season the Patriots had six runs of 20 or more yards. Taylor is fifth in the NFL with 331 rushes of 10 or more yards. Taylor finished with a 5.1-yard per carry average on 14 rushing attempts for 71 yards.

### **PATRIOTS OPEN 2010 WITH TWO SCORING DRIVES**

The Patriots scored a touchdown and a field goal on their first two drives. The last time the Patriots scored on their first two drives of the season was Sept. 8, 2005 vs. Oakland in a 30-20 win.

### **LB ROB NINKOVICH FORCES AND RECOVERS A FUMBLE**

LB Rob Ninkovich was credited with his first career forced fumble and fumble recovery in the first quarter when he stripped Cincinnati RB Cedric Benson to give the Patriots a first down at the Bengals 28-yard line.

## **BRADY IMPROVES TO 8-1 ON KICKOFF WEEKEND**

Tom Brady leads all active quarterbacks with an 8-1 record as a starter on Kickoff Weekend, including today's victory. The most prolific Kickoff Weekend QBs since 1970 are Roger Staubach 8-0, Tom Brady 8-1 and Lynn Dickey 7-2 (min. 5 starts).

## **PATRIOTS QUICK HITS**

- Today's game was the 173rd consecutive home sellout for the Patriots. The sellout streak is now in its 17th year, dating back to the 1994 regular-season opener.
- The Patriots beat the Bengals in the season opener for the first time in three tries. Cincinnati had previously beaten New England in the season openers in 1972 and 2001.
- The New England defense allowed the Bengals a total of just five total first downs on Cincinnati's first five possessions, as the Patriots took a 24-0 lead during that span.

## **TOM BRADY QUICK HITS**

- Tom Brady recorded his 98th career regular season win as a starter and needs two more wins to become the 11th NFL QB to reach 100 wins.
- Brady won his 20th consecutive regular-season start at Gillette Stadium. The last time the Patriots lost a regular-season home game in which Brady started was on Nov. 12, 2006 against the New York Jets.
- Brady improved to 4-0 as a starter in his career against the Cincinnati Bengals. The Patriots have averaged 36.3 points per game in Brady's four career starts against Cincinnati, scoring at least 34 points in each game.
- Brady posted a passer rating of 120.9 against the Bengals, improving his career record in the regular season to 50-3 when he posts a passer rating of 100.0 or better.

## **STARTING STRONG**

The Patriots put up 38 points this afternoon, tying the second-highest opening day point total in team history. The only season in which the Patriots opened with more points was 1997, when New England beat San Diego 41-7 at Foxboro Stadium.

## **MOST POINTS SCORED ON OPENING DAY / PATRIOTS HISTORY**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Score</b>
08/31/97	San Diego	41-7
<b>09/12/10</b>	<b>Cincinnati</b>	<b>38-24</b>
09/09/07	at N.Y. Jets	38-14
09/08/63	N.Y. Jets	38-14
09/04/94	at Miami	35-39
09/07/80	Cleveland	34-17
09/15/74	Miami	34-24
09/07/86	Indianapolis	33-3

## **LARGEST HALFTIME LEAD IN SEASON OPENER SINCE 1997**

The Patriots took a 24-3 halftime lead, the largest halftime lead in a season-opener for the Patriots since 1997 when they had a 31-0 lead vs. San Diego (8/31/07) that ended in a 41-7 win.

## **CHUNG LEADS TEAM WITH 16 TACKLES**

Patrick Chung was credited with 16 tackles by the day-of-game stats crew, a total that stands as his career high. As a rookie in 2009, Chung totaled 26 tackles. Chung was selected by the Patriots in the second round (34th overall) of the 2009 NFL Draft.

## **BANTA-CAIN AND PRYOR SACK ENDS BENGALS' FIRST DRIVE**

Tully Banta-Cain and Myron Pryor combined to sack Carson Palmer for a 4-yard loss on third-and-two to complete the Patriots' first defensive possession of the season and force a Cincinnati punt. For Pryor, a 2009 sixth-round draft choice, the shared sack was the first of his career. Banta-Cain led the Patriots last season with 10.0 sacks, and today's half-sack raised his career total to 23.0 sacks.