



Sports

by Jerry Keys

Hard to believe it is time for the pigskin to be flying. It seemed just last week the New York Giants upended the New England Patriot's perfect season. I took multitudes of flack for picking the Giants (and many Patriot fans had to eat crow) and seeing Eli Manning step out of brother Peyton's shadow.

The Giants are not favorites to repeat. The Giants are not favored to win their division. And with the retirement of sack specialist Michael Strahan and the season ending injury to emerging sack artist Osi Umenyiora, New York may not even see a playoff appearance.

The Patriots window of opportunity seems to be closing fast. Age and losses in the free agent market will guarantee nothing near another per-

fect season. The Indianapolis Colts are hoping for a full recovery of Marvin Harrison and the Pittsburgh Steelers of Willie Parker. The championship of the AFC will come down to four teams, the Patriots, Colts, Jaguars, and Chargers. Each team has already laid claim to being the best in the AFC.



David Garrard looks for the Big Prize

The NFC has had their last three champions come out of nowhere to a certain degree. Who had the Giants going all the way last September?

Who thought the Chicago Bears would make it to the Bowl without a QB? And when the Seattle Seahawks were being termed as choke-artists, they advanced to the Bowl for the 1st time. Will the favorites-to-win the NFC Dallas Cowboys shake their playoff ghosts or will a team fly under the radar again and surprise everyone?

The AFC East should be interesting since Bret Favre now calls New York home. New England should not have any problem winning the East but the big question is which Jets team will show up for 2008, the 2006 playoff team or the 2007 disappointment?

Keep an eye on Miami.... Bill Parcells wins anywhere he goes. Didn't we say the same thing about Jimmy Johnson when he came to Miami about ten years ago?

The AFC Central will come down to two questions. Will Parker make

the air with the Green Bay Packers opting to go with Aaron Rodgers. If Chicago can ever find a QB they could run away

2008 NFL Preview

a successful return to form after a season ending injury in the next-to-last game of the year and can the Steelers defense

contain the run. One of these two will not come to pass and the Cleveland Browns will win their first division title since being reincarnated after Art Modell moved the old club to Baltimore. The Steelers should contend for a wild card spot.

The Cincinnati Bengals will present a better look this year, especially on defense. They will play better but come up short in the win column.

The AFC South had all four teams post a .500 or better record last year.

At least two teams should make the playoffs this year. In a shocking scenario, the Jacksonville Jaguars will sneak away with the division title while the Colts line up the higher of the two wild card slots. Tennessee and Houston will play better than their record indicates due to an extremely tough schedule. The San Diego Chargers should have the AFC West wrapped up by Halloween.

The NFC East is a toss up between the Cowboys and Giants. Like the AFC South, the second place team should still sneak into the playoffs. The NFC North is up in

the air with the Green Bay Packers opting to go with Aaron Rodgers. If Chicago can ever find a QB they could run away

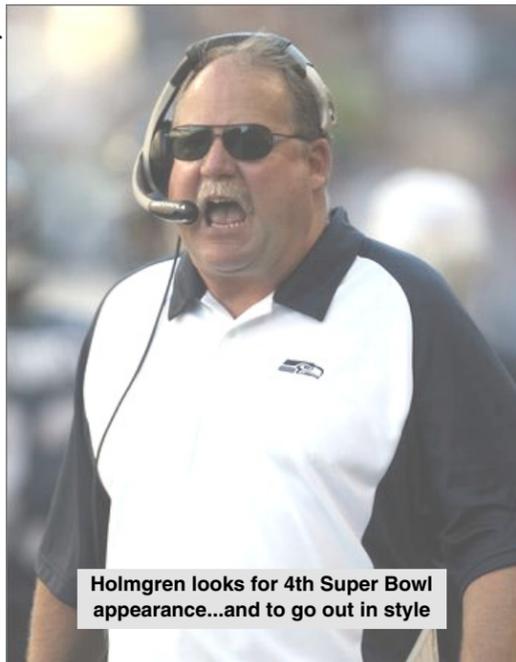
spot.

With the NFC West being a less than brutal division, the Arizona Cardinals have always looked similar to a team ready to shock the world. It was not too long ago Matt Leinart was expected to lead the team deep into the playoffs. Veteran Kurt Warner will get the starting nod for the season opener this year.

The Seahawks want to give Coach Mike Holmgren a sweet send-off as he claims this will be his final year as head coach. Seattle should claim the

West for a fifth straight year and mat wing Mike a swan song.

Just a thought but if Coach Mike did not have a quality QB, would he have went after Favre (reuniting the two from their old Green Bay days)?



Holmgren looks for 4th Super Bowl appearance...and to go out in style

with the division (same goes for the Minnesota Vikings). New Orleans should bounce back from a horrendous '07 and take the NFC South. Carolina should challenge the Saints for the division and make a strong push at a wild card

2008 Predictions

XPatriots #1	12-4	XCowboys #1	12-4
Jets	9-7	yGiants #6	10-6
Bills	6-10	Eagles	7-9
Dolphins	4-12	Redskins	5-11
XBrowns #3	10-6	XBears #4	10-6
ySteelers #5	10-6	Packers	9-7
Bengals	7-9	Vikings	9-7
Ravens	5-11	Lions	7-9
XJaguars #4	10-6	XSaints #3	11-5
yColts #6	10-6	yPanthers #5	10-6
Texans	8-8	Buccaneers	8-8
Titans	6-10	Falcons	3-13
XChargers #2	11-5	XSeahawks #2	11-5
Broncos	9-7	Cardinals	8-8
Chiefs	6-10	49'ers	6-10
Raiders	4-12	Rams	3-13

AFC Championship Game
Jaguars over Chargers

NFC Championship Game
Seahawks over Bears

Super Bowl XLIII
Jaguars over Seahawks

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