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Five Teams That Could Shock The World

By Jay Nault

We've seen it in recent years in the NFL. With the advent of free agency and the salary cap, parity

is all the rage in today's NFL. Over the past seven seasons, several surprise teams have come from seemingly nowhere to run through the playoffs and walk off with the Lombardi Trophy, leading stunned football fans everywhere to wonder if what they'd just seen was real. The Rams, Ravens and even the Patriots have all left the league in their wakes recently, which means that every season there is optimism in every NFL city.

This "prediction" column may look ridiculous in six months, much as the ones that predicted potential greatness for the Arizona Cardinals last season did. However, circumstances are in place for each team below to put together a season that will once again have football fans everywhere shaking their heads.

Cleveland Browns

The Browns overachieved last year to win six games. However, even with the Steelers in the division, the Bengals have an injured QB and the Ravens face similar uncertainty at the QB position. Not to mention, Romeo Crennel has proven that he can coach and the team gets both TE Kellen Winslow II and WR Braylon Edwards back to team with bruising RB Rueben Droughns, promising QB Charlie Frye and a defense that's being built in the mold of the Patriots. Even if the Browns don't win the division, the Steelers showed last year that a wild card can go all the way.

Oakland Raiders

Talent has never been a problem with the Raiders. The team has high draft picks and huge amounts of talent on offense, including WRs Randy Moss and Jerry Porter, RB LaMont Jordan and OL Robert Gallery, who's moving to his natural left tackle position. The Raiders also added talent to their defense in the draft with DB Michael Huff and LB Thomas Howard. If the Raiders can play with consistency and discipline, two things respected coach Art Shell should bring to the table, the Raiders have a chance. Within the division, the Chargers have a new QB to break in, the Broncos have questions on their roster and until the Chiefs prove they have a good defense, they will be beatable.

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Green Bay Packers

Don't laugh – even though the Packers suffered through a dismal 4–12 record last season, their defense ranked 7th in the NFL and QB Brett Favre returns for at least one more season. The Packers added even more talent to their defense with free agent additions DT Ryan Pickett and CB Charles Woodson, and drafted LB A.J. Hawk, who should step in immediately and make that defense even more formidable. If the Packers can produce good offensive line play, they have the advantage of having the Vikings and Lions in their division, and who out there really thought the Bears were a threat to win it all last year? The same question about the Bears remains, as they did almost nothing to improve a putrid offense from last season. The NFC has no dominant team, so don't be too shocked to see Green Bay, if breaks go their way and they manage to avoid the injury bug that ravaged their team last year, surprise some folks.

New Orleans Saints

After bottoming out in every way imaginable in 2005, no team rebounded in a more positive manner since the season ended than the Saints. They brought in a respected young coach in Sean Payton, added a winning QB in Drew Brees, and somehow got their Christmas present early when RB/WR/KR/Unique offensive weapon Reggie Bush inexplicably fell into their laps in the draft. The Saints play in a tough division, but even without the recent acquisitions, the team has never lacked talent on either side of the ball. If it all clicks, look out – the Saints could feature a punishing defense with a high-octane offense that will make them a team nobody wants to face in the playoffs. Not to mention, can you imagine the frenzy that will exist in New Orleans if the Saints are contenders?

Arizona Cardinals

Perhaps we're gluttons for punishment. The Cardinals were the popular choice to surprise last year, and they fell far short of those expectations with a 5–11 record. However, they could fulfill their promise of 2005 this year if certain things go their way. First, QB Kurt Warner must stay healthy. Even if he doesn't, new QB Matt Leinart is as NFL-ready as any QB who has come into the league in some time. Remember how Ben Roethlisberger did when pressed into duty a couple of seasons ago? The team also added RB Edgerrin James to a talented stable of receivers including Larry Fitzgerald and Anquan Boldin. The team has played well on defense over the past couple of years and has one of the best kickers in the game in Neil Rackers. That could prove important, as many of the recent "surprise" teams have won more than their share of close games on their way to the title.

Perhaps none of these teams will make the playoffs this year, but that would go against the recent norm. In today's NFL, one or two difference makers on a roster can take a team from also-ran to contender almost immediately. The teams above seem to fit that equation, and each of them also has scheduling and/or divisional advantages that should have them poised to break out in a big way with a little luck, which every team needs to win the title.

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Can One Really Trust Having Shock Collars For Dogs?

By Claire Quaty

Some people say that, like any device for animal training, a shock collar should be used in moderation and should strive to be both effective and humane. Shock collars used for dogs really do the job but some people believe that their excessive use borders on animal cruelty. Many activists are opposed to its use because of this.

The Association of Pet Behavior Counselors has a statement opposing the widespread application of the shock collar for most dogs. They don't go so far as recommending the banning of the product entirely, but feel the use of the product needs to be done in a controlled fashion. When used moderately during the training process, the shock collar can generate great results without being cruel to the dog. Excessive use should be avoided.

The primary purpose of shock collars is to deter negative behavior a dog or other animal is doing. They are primarily used during the training of the animal and are not often needed afterward. The device works by delivering a small electric shock to the animal's neck in order to shape the behavior of the animal during the training process. Behaviorist Psychology is behind this particular approach to training.

Unfortunately, the Association of Pet Behavior Counselors believe that owners can unintentionally misuse the shock collar and harm their animal during the process. Because the owner himself isn't well trained in using the collar, he can cause great pain or discomfort in his pet. Using the shock collar can also be a source of considerable distress in the animal - even when the owner thinks he is using it properly.

In a nutshell, it's just too easy to use a shock collar excessively and use it during times in which it is inappropriate to use such a device. The animal will associate the shock with whatever it was doing when the shock was delivered and can easily become confused about what behaviors are appropriate and what behaviors are not. It's too simple to accidentally shock your animal when you didn't mean to.

An inappropriately used shock collar for your dog can result in the inaccurate association of pain with normal things - like the owner, certain foods or an inanimate object. This is a serious problem that can lead to unintended and dangerous consequences. The animal can become afraid of almost everything that has become associated with pain. The dog can become aggressive and fearful around people, children, or food - perceiving a threat that actually isn't real.

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Such a collar can go awry and cause problems if not used properly on the animal. It is imperative that users of shock collars take the time to understand the device and learn how to properly train an animal while using one. As an effective animal trainer, it's important that you train yourself first.

Read more from Claire Quaty at:

<http://www.pets-mag.com>



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