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Washington Redskins 2006 Preview

By Jason A. Martin

The Washington Redskins had a pretty good season last year. In 2005, they won some games they shouldn't have, but they made it to the playoffs. While their defense played above their talent level, the offense was a bit lacking at times. Will this year be any different? Let's figure it out by breaking down the main units of the teams.

Quarterbacks

Who's the quarterback? Mark Brunell is getting up there in years, and he is not consistent. He's 36 years old, and he showed signs of wear last season. Expect him to play well in the first 5-8 games of the season and tail off. If he gets hurt or tires, who takes his place? The answer is Todd Collins—if you call that an answer. Collins is a decent backup, but that's it. The Redskins are about average in this area.

Running Backs

The Redskins are above average in the running game thanks to Clinton Portis. I look for him to have a solid year running the ball. They have solid players in the fullback position. The running game could become the bright spot in the offense this year. Manuel White, fullback, broke his leg last year. He's going to get a shot to produce this season. If he can stay healthy, White will be a great addition to the running game.

Receivers

Is this receiving core worth anything? On the surface, it seems like the Redskins are just about average in the receiving game, but there lies more beneath. They acquired Antwaan Randle El from the Steelers. He might be just what they need to stretch the opposing defenses even further. Between Randle El and Santana Moss, opposing defenses could have their hands full. The downside is that Randle El also has the potential to be a big bust.

Defense and Special Teams

The defense is expected to perform well in 2006. The secondary is above average. Shawn Springs is 31 now, and he can still cover well. His main problem is staying healthy. Carlos Rogers showed the potential to justify his being picked number one in the 2005 draft. The rest of the defense is pretty average. They need to perform above their potential to give the Redskins a real shot to win important games.

2006 Prediction

I think last season was a fluke. The Redskins were the recipients of some lucky bounces. I count 5 games that they could have easily lost—a few of those they should have. The fact is; the 2005 Redskins could have been 7–11 or 6–12. Not much has changed for them this year and their schedule is much tougher. There are only four games against pretty weak opponents—New Orleans Saints, New York Jets, Houston Texans and St. Louis Rams. Even those four games aren't guaranteed. The

Redskins should fight for the cellar in the NFC East this season. Getting to 8–8 will be a real accomplishment. The playoffs are going to have to wait until at least 2007 for this team.

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NFL Week Two Part Five

By Sebastien Veilleux

In our final part of the NFL week two review, I will go over two big matchups in the NFL this week. These two matchups have playoff implications and could determine the entire season for all four clubs involved. The two games I'll be reviewing are the Washington Redskins at the Dallas Cowboys and the Pittsburgh Steelers at the Jacksonville Jaguars. Let's take a look.

Washington Redskins at Dallas Cowboys

Both of these teams are down 0–1 on the season and neither one can afford to go 0–2. Someone's season is going to come to a screeching halt this week. The Washington Redskins were stunned on Monday night by the Minnesota Vikings. They lost 19–16, but they had a shot to sent it to overtime. Hall missed the field goal. Redskins QB Mark Brunell was fairly accurate—60%—but he didn't throw for many yards and he didn't have a TD pass. The running game was split among a few backs. Clinton Portis is having shoulder pains again and could see limited action this week.

The Dallas Cowboys—all abuzz about T.O. being added to the team—went down to Jacksonville last Sunday. They lost to the Jaguars 24–17 and looked a bit out of sync. Drew Bledsoe quickly raised alarms as he threw three interceptions. He also completed just under 50% of his passes. It was a poor performance by Bledsoe and Dallas fans should start worrying. Jones carried the ball for 72 yards and scored a TD for Dallas. Both of these teams are expected to play hard to avoid that infamous 0–2 start, which practically means no Super Bowl appearance.

Pick: Dallas Why? The Redskins offense is horrible. If Dallas can score 14 points, they can probably win.

Pittsburgh Steelers at Jacksonville Jaguars

The Steelers may be without Big Ben again this week. He's questionable, but he's working hard to show coach Cowher that he's ready to play. The team has had an extra long rest. They played last Thursday night at home against the Dolphins. They won that game 28–17. Charlie Batch had one of the best games of his career. Parker added 115 yards on the ground and the Steelers defense stifled the Dolphins for most of the night.

Jacksonville again won at home on opening weekend. The first quarter was choppy, but the team got it together after that. Their challenge is increased this week despite being at home. Leftwich will need to tighten up his passes and play mistake free football. The Jaguars defense will need to stop the run. If Big Ben is playing, they will need to pressure him and knock him down often. Both of these teams have tough games again next week. It's go time.

Pick: Steelers Why? They have extra rest and could be charged up more if Big Ben comes back. They have a better defense than Jacksonville and Leftwich is prone to throwing interceptions.

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