



# PLAYOFF EDITION

## SEMI FINALS

February 14, 2008

### MANNING LEADS PATS TO CHAMPIONSHIP GAME!

*TOP PICK IN THE DRAFT PAYS OFF WITH 316-YARD, 3 TD PASS PERFORMANCE IN EAST DIVISION FINAL*



**MOHAVE**

**21**

***Quote of the Day***

“What can I say?  
We shit our  
collective pants  
today.”

- ***Bobby Elder***

***Stat of the Day***

Marc Bulger  
**5 Completions**

**EAST DIVISION TITLE GAME**



Peyton Manning fights off a rush by Mohave’s Charles Grant and fires a pass to Donald Driver in Third Quarter EFL playoff action. Manning would throw 3 TD passes to lead the Patriots over the Hellfire, 33-21 in the East Division Final.



**CHARLESWOOD**

**33**

***Quote of the Day***

“We made a  
statement as a team  
today. It wasn’t just  
me...although it was  
mostly me....our  
defense played well  
too.”

-Peyton Manning

***Stat of the Day***

Peyton Manning  
**3 TD Passes**

CHARLESWOOD – The stat line really does tell the story of the East Division Title Game. The Charleswood Patriots dominated in virtually all aspects of this contest, both on the field and on the stat sheet, and emerged with the win and a berth in the EFL Championship Game. But it was not a lock from start to finish. In a game where strange bounces and big plays can lift a team to sudden advantage, a Mohave surge at the start of the second half reminded the Pats that they were in a football game. For several nervous minutes it looked like the game might get away from the home team. But a critical error, at the exact moment when the Hellfire appeared ready to gain the upper hand, turned

the momentum back sharply in the Pat's favour and they took full advantage. They went on to finish the game with punishing strength and leave no doubt about their worthiness as EFL East Division Champions.

The first quarter belonged to Charleswood. Their opening drive, a 65-yard clock-turner, ended in the red zone after a key stop by the Mohave defense. Nevertheless, it yielded a field goal and a modest 3-0 lead. Then, Mohave's offense got off to an inauspicious start. Quarterback, Marc Bulger, who has never quite gained the full confidence of his team and the fans this season due to inconsistency, threw a blind pass over the middle that was easily picked off by safety, Ed Reed. Reed's 40-yard return put the ball on the Hellfire 6 yard line and, two plays later, Thomas Jones was running over the left side and into the end zone for the game's first touchdown and a 10-0 Patriots lead.

Mohave regained their balance early in the second quarter, finishing off their only sustained drive of the afternoon with a 21-yard TD pass from Bulger to Terrell Owens, who broke a tackle and tip-toed along the sideline for the final 10 yards into the end zone. With the score 10-7 Pats, both teams fell back into somewhat conservative game plans. The Pats dominated the time-of-possession for the remainder of the first half, but could only generate one field goal, a 29-yarder by Stephen Gostkowski as time expired to give Charleswood a 13-7 locker room lead.

The Mohave half time adjustment was very clear early in the second half. After failing to move the ball on the ground with any consistency in the first two quarters, the Hellfire went deep through the air to start the third. Bulger completed a 57-yard bomb to Owens that almost went the distance but for a shoe string tackle by Ed Reed that put T.O. down at the one-yard line. On the next play, Bulger found Brian Westbrook all by himself near the left pylon, making an easy toss for the Hellfire's second touchdown and their first lead of the day.

With the score suddenly 14-13 for Mohave, the Patriots looked flat on offense trying to run the ball and were forced to punt after three downs. But the Hellfire, trying to establish the run as well, were no luckier than their opponents and, after coming up a yard short on third down, punted the ball back to the Pats. Manning went to the air three times on the next possession but misfired each time, bringing up another punting situation and, as it would turn out, the game's turning point.

Punter, Craig Hentrich booted a high ball that was fielded by Terrence Wilkins. But Wilkins fumbled the ball and it was recovered by Patriot gunner, Freddy Keiaho at the Mohave 31 yard line. That was the break the Pats needed and Peyton Manning wasted no time sticking the knife into the suddenly exposed Mohave defense. A succession of short and medium passes covered the remaining distance to the end zone in 7 plays, ending with a 9-yard slant from Manning to Jason Witten. The two-point convert failed, making it 19-14, but the Pats were ahead to stay.

The Hellfire offense continued to struggle, logging another three-and-out, and the Pats got the ball back at their own 33 yard line. Then the play came that seemed to crumple the will of the Mohave defense. Facing 4<sup>th</sup> down and inches at their own 43 yard line, Jason Findlay kept his offense on the field for a gamble that could have easily backfired. Setting up for a plunge up the gut, Manning saw that the Hellfire defense was throwing everything they had into the middle of the line. Manning barked, danced, gesticulated, pointed, and when the play finally got off, it had changed to a pass – complete to Thomas Jones, who rambled for 24 yards to the Mohave 33. A Wes Welker fumble on the next play almost gave the ball away, but it was recovered by the Pats. Two plays later, Jason Witten had his second TD pass of the day and the Pats had a double-digit lead, 26-14.

The Hellfire offense was not quite done yet. As much as it had struggled throughout the day to maintain constant thrust, it could still deliver a haymaker – and it did – in the most precarious of situations. Facing 4<sup>th</sup> down and half a yard at their own 40, Bulger took advantage of a tight stacked line by the Pat's defense and threw deep to Owens, who caught the ball on the dead run and outran Chris Hope to the end zone for a 60-yard scoring play. The Hellfire, despite being out-played, had closed the gap to 5 with over ten minutes left to play in the game. They were still very much in it.

However, the Patriots were determined to maintain their advantage. Exploiting a tiring Mohave defense, Peyton Manning played them like a virtuoso, engineering an 84-yard, 14 play drive that ate up over 8 minutes of clock time and ended with Manning's third TD pass of the day, a 1-yarder to Chad Johnson, for the virtual game-clincher. Down 33-21, the Mohave offense went '*kamikaze*,' throwing deep on every play into a sea of Patriot defensive backs, but to no avail. A final last gasp bomb to Owens sailed a foot past his outstretched finger tips, and with that the Pats fans were dancing in the aisles and Coach Jason Findlay was ducking the Gatorade dunk.

As mentioned at the outset of this story, the stats told the tale of Charleswood's dominance. The Patriots controlled the time-of-possession by a suffocating 43 to 17 minutes margin. They out-gained the Hellfire 404 to 247 in total yards and got two big turnovers without giving the ball away themselves. Although the running game struggled again, the Pats went to it often enough that Manning was given opportunities, in addition to the ones he made for himself, to make the plays that made the difference in the game. It was a sweet day for the Charleswood MVP.

For the Hellfire, the loss capped a season of disappointment and missed opportunities. Although gracious in defeat, an obviously dejected Coach Elder hinted at changes to come, probably starting with the QB position.

# L.T. RUNS WILD! STEALS GAME FOR CONVICTS IN FRONT OF STUNNED CROWD AT TILLMAN FIELD

**261 TOTAL YARDS FOR CHINO STAR / NATE CLEMENTS ADDS TWO INTERCEPTIONS AS BIG PLAYS RULE THE DAY**



**CHINO**

**38**

### *Quote of the Day*

“I feel like we stole that game at the end. In fact, we did steal it. We snuck up behind them and ripped it away. I think they got a little complacent, looked the other way, and we stole the friggin’ game! As Convicts, I wouldn’t have it any other way!”

**-Rob Nazar**

### *Stat of the Day*

LaDainian Tomlinson  
**261 Yards from Scrimmage**

## WEST DIVISION TITLE GAME



LaDainian Tomlinson finds open field on the way to a 63-yard fourth quarter touchdown run against the Corn Kings. It would be the second of two big TD runs of over 60 yards for L.T. on the day. Chino went on to beat Cowtown 38-27 in the West Division Final.



**COWTOWN**

**27**

### *Quote of the Day*

“I feel like the game was stolen from us. In fact, they did steal it. We got a little too comfortable in the third quarter and maybe we let up a bit. No excuse, of course. But when we weren’t looking they took it away! They’re Convicts for sure, and they got loose today in our house!”

**-Jim Coghlin**

### *Stat of the Day*

Chad Pennington  
**3 INTs**

**COWTOWN** – As they have done all season, the Convicts struck hard and they struck fast. With the Corn Kings players and fans starting to look away and ahead to a berth in the Championship, Chino stole one out from under their noses with a 21-point explosion in the fourth quarter. It was enough to lift the underdog visitors to a stunning and convincing 38-27 victory over the team that had handed them two losses in the regular season and had looked poised, after almost three complete quarters, to hand them a third.

The tale of the Corn Kings late collapse would mean far less without an account of how they came to be in a position for such a collapse. A 14-point lead, painstakingly built over three quarters by a meticulously executed game plan, was erased in just over 5 minutes by a star that suddenly went “nova” and vaporized the Cowtown defense. That star, of course, was LaDainian Tomlinson, or simply “L.T.,” arguably the best running back in football before the game started, and after the game, indisputably the best (with due respect to Frank Gore, of course).

He did not do it alone, however. He had help from another star – not as well known – on the defense. It was Nate Clements’ 31-yard interception return for a touchdown early in the fourth quarter that actually put the Convicts in

in the lead for the first time. It was a lead they would hold on to with a death grip and carry all the way back to the “Big House.”

For most of the game, there was no hint that L.T. would break out of jail. The Corn Kings had him well locked up. On their first series, a fourth down gamble by Rob Nazar was entrusted to Tomlinson, who was stuffed behind the line of scrimmage by linebacker, Kirk Morrison. This gave the field position advantage to the Corn Kings. Two possessions later they scored the game’s first points on a 23-yard touchdown run off tackle by Laurence Maroney.

On Chino’s next possession, 3 straight runs by L.T. failed to gain 10 yards and the Convicts were forced to punt the ball away again. Although the Convict’s defense stepped up and stopped the Corn Kings, Adam ‘Pacman’ Jones, the hero of last week’s quarter-final win over Durham, fumbled the punt return and turned the ball over at the Chino 32 yard line. The Corn Kings ran the ball to the one yard line where they faced fourth down and goal. Coach Coghlin did not hesitate entrusting the ball to his offense and on the next play Laurence Maroney broke through the middle of the line for his second touchdown of the game and a 14-0 lead for Cowtown.

Donovan McNabb, mostly invisible to this point in the game, took the reins and led an 86-yard TD drive that featured mostly short passes to Tomlinson – one of them a 26-yarder to convert a third down early in the drive – as well as a pass *by* Tomlinson – a 13-yarder to Reggie Brown on a fourth down option play that kept the drive alive. The “money shot” was a classic toss and run to Tomlinson, who snagged a short out pass from McNabb and deked through the defense for a 21-yard touchdown.

The Corn Kings would surrender the first of four turnovers on their next possession. Fading back to pass, Chad Pennington was stripped of the ball by Julius Peppers and Terrence Newman recovered at the Cowtown 19 yard line. But the Convicts could manage only a field goal after Tomlinson was stopped cold on third down. The home team remained in the lead, 14-10.

The Corn Kings regained their touchdown advantage with no time left on the clock in the first half. Starting at their own 5 yard line with less than 2 minutes remaining in the half, the Corn Kings scratched out a remarkable 79 yard drive, keyed by a 33-yard pass to Santana Moss that put the Corn Kings in scoring position. But they eventually ran out of time and had to settle for a 33-yard Jason Hanson field goal to give them a 17-10 half time lead.

The teams traded fourth down gambles to start the second half. Cowtown went for it on 4<sup>th</sup> & 4 at the Chino 40, but Jerious Norwood was stuffed for a 2-yard loss by the waiting Convicts. Then Chino aggressively went for it on 4<sup>th</sup> down & 10 at the Cowtown 39 yard line, but the pass to Anquan Boldin was rushed and sailed incomplete. The Corn Kings responded with their biggest play of the day, a perfectly thrown medium straight pass from Pennington to a wide open D.J. Hackett, who carried the rest of the way for a 50-yard touchdown and a 24-10 lead with 6:33 remaining in the third quarter.

The Convicts looked panicked. On their next possession, facing 4<sup>th</sup> down and 2 at their own 33 yard line, they decided to go for it. A fired up crowd at Tillman Field smelled blood and stood on their feet as the ball was snapped and McNabb handed the ball to Tomlinson. Victor Hobson came through on the blitz, forcing LT to cut backwards where he was bottled up for a 3 yard loss by Morrison. The crowd went wild and the Corn Kings found themselves in a position to take a commanding lead. But the Chino defense stiffened up after allowing the Corn Kings into the red zone, and then caught a big break when Jason Hanson hooked his 33-yard field goal attempt. No harm had come to Chino for missing their high risk gambit, and the stage was set for a furious comeback.

With the Corn Kings defense settling in to defend the pass, the Convicts sent L.T. on a sweep to the left. He gained the sideline, cut back inside, made a nice move on Morrison to get into the secondary, knocked over Sean Jones, and raced all the way to the end zone for an exciting 63-yard touchdown run. With the lead narrowed to 7 points, the Corn Kings recovered somewhat with nice little field goal drive to regain a narrower two-score lead, 27-17.

The Convicts got the ball back and tried going to the air again, but without success. Facing 3<sup>rd</sup> down and 10, they returned to Tomlinson and the very same play that had paid off for them at the end of the third quarter, hoping for the best. Like an instant replay, with the Corn Kings in a nickel package defending the pass, Tomlinson got around the corner, came back inside, made the middle linebacker miss, and then ran right through the secondary for another electrifying touchdown, this one covering 61 yards to narrow the Cowtown lead to 3 points, 27-24.

With the crowd getting restless and looking for the offense to regain the momentum, Pennington threw what looked like an easy short pass on 3<sup>rd</sup> down & 2, but Nate Clements, showing great instinct, jumped the route and snatched the ball. With nobody in front of him, a quick short burst of speed was all that he needed to reach the end zone for a 31-yard return and Chino’s first lead, 31-27.

It was now the Corn Kings’ turn to panic, and panic they did! On their next possession, a flustered Pennington

failed to see Clements sitting in the middle of the seam in the zone and threw the ball straight to him for his second pick in a 5-minute span. Clements, in the grasp of Jeff Saturday, lateralled the ball to ‘Pacman’ Jones, who took it the rest of the way for the back-breaking touchdown! Stunned silence engulfed Tillman Field. Pennington stood with his head down on the sideline. ‘Pacman’ Jones flashed gang signs. Four minutes later, it was all over. Chino had completed the upset, in dramatic fashion, and given the league some of its best highlight reel footage in the process.

## BOXSCORES

* Playoff * 02-08-2008	Temp: 75 Wind:	Line: Even	MVP: <b>Manning</b>		<b>MOH</b>	<b>CHP</b>	
2006 <b>Mohave</b> (0-1)	0 7 7 7	- 21			First Downs	10	24
2006 <b>Charleswood</b> (1-0)	10 3 6 14	- 33			Rushes	20-103	36-87
-----					Passes	18-5-144	38-29-316
1 7:49 <b>Charleswood</b>	FG Gostkowski 27 (14-65-7:06)		0-3		Sacked	0-0	0-0
1 6:18 <b>Charleswood</b>	TD Jones 1 run (Gostkowski) (2-6-0:51)				Fumble	3	2
0-10					Penalties	5-20	5-44
-----					Turnovers	2	0
2 12:09 <b>Mohave</b>	TD Lynch 2 run (Carney) (10-80-5:26)		7-10		Time	17:16	42:43
2 0:03 <b>Charleswood</b>	FG Gostkowski 29 (11-57-2:56)		7-13		Third Down	2-9	9-18
-----					Fourth Down	1-2	2-2
3 13:16 <b>Mohave</b>	TD Bulger 1 pass to Westbrook (Carney) (3-63-1:31)		14-13		Net Offense	247	403
3 5:00 <b>Charleswood</b>	TD Manning 9 pass to Witten (2 - failed) (7-31-3:35)		14-19		STAT SNAP:		
-----					PASSING – MOH – Bulger 18-5-1-144, 74.3; CHP – P. Manning 38-29-0-316, 126.6.		
4 12:58 <b>Charleswood</b>	TD Manning 10 pass to Witten (Gostkowski) (9-67-5:14)		14-26		RUSHING – MOLH – Westbrook 12-78, Lynch 7-25, Bulger 1-0. CHP – T. Jones, 20-52, A. Peterson 14-36, Manning 2-(-1).		
4 10:12 <b>Mohave</b>	TD Bulger 60 pass to Owens (Carney) (6-80-2:46)		21-26		RECEIVING – MOH – Owens 3-138, Lynch 1-5, Westbrook 1-1. CHP – Driver 8-82, C. Johnson 6-60, Witten 5-63, Welker 5-58, A. Peterson 3-20, T. Jones 1-24, Leonard 1-9.		
4 1:39 <b>Charleswood</b>	TD Manning 1 pass to Johnson (Gostkowski) (14-84-8:21)		21-33				
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* Playoff * 02-10-2008	Tillman Field	Temp:25 Wind:0-10	*Internet*	Line: Even		<b>CHI</b>	<b>COW</b>	
MVP: <b>Tomlinson</b>						First Downs	12	21
2006 <b>Chino</b> (1-0)	0 10 7 21	- 38			Rushes	30-189	40-190	
2006 <b>Cowtown</b> (0-1)	7 10 7 3	- 27			Passes	26-14-164	34-17-233	
-----					Sacked	2-8	3-19	
1 6:19 <b>Cowtown</b>	TD Maroney 23 run (Hanson,J) (9-80-3:17)		0-7		Fumble	1	3	
-----					Penalties	6-47	5-38	
2 12:56 <b>Cowtown</b>	TD Maroney 1 run (Hanson,J) (8-32-4:28)		0-14		Turnovers	1	4	
2 8:40 <b>Chino</b>	TD McNabb 21 pass to Tomlinson (Vinatieri) (9-86-4:05)		7-14		Challenges	1-2	0-1	
2 6:31 <b>Chino</b>	FG Vinatieri 29 (3-7-0:45)		10-14		Time	24:54	35:06	
2 0:05 <b>Cowtown</b>	FG Hanson 33 (7-79-1:48)		10-17		Third Down	3-13	6-16	
-----					Fourth Down	1-6	1-3	
3 6:43 <b>Cowtown</b>	TD Pennington 50 pass to Hackett (Hanson,J) (5-61-1:16)		10-24		Net Offense	345	404	
3 1:19 <b>Chino</b>	TD Tomlinson 63 run (Vinatieri) (4-75-0:53)		17-24		STAT SNAP:			
-----					PASSING – CHI – McNabb 24-12-0-139, 81.8, Cutler 1-1-0-12, 116.7, Tomlinson 1-1-0-13, 118.8; COW- Pennington 34-17-3-233, 45.3.			
4 12:57 <b>Cowtown</b>	FG Hanson 31 (7-34-3:18)		17-27		RUSHING – CHI – Tomlinson 22-182, Brown 1-14, L. White 1-(-1), McNabb 2-(-2), Young 4-(-4); COW – Norwood 10-63, Maroney 13-59, Barber 12-57, Moore 1-7, Pennington 2-7, Mughelli 1-1, Saturday 1-(-4).			
4 11:36 <b>Chino</b>	TD Tomlinson 61 run (Vinatieri) (3-61-1:01)		24-27		RECEIVING – CHI – Tomlinson 6-79, Boldin 3-37, McMichael 2-17, Brown 1-13, Holt 1-12, Grahama 1-6; COW – Furrey 3-26, Hackett 2-57, Moss 2-46, Barber 2-18, Moore 2-15, Miller 2-14, Spaeth 1-24, Norwood 1-16, Maroney 1-12, Kelly 1-5.			
4 9:58 <b>Chino</b>	TD Clements 31 interception return (Vinatieri) (0-0-0:00)		31-27					
4 4:24 <b>Chino</b>	TD Jones 62 interception return (Vinatieri) (0-0-0:00)		38-27					
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# **JIMMY'S CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY**

## **THE BIG GAME!**

**6:30 PM (ABC)**

**CHINO (12-6) @ CHARLESWOOD (14-4) (LINE – PATRIOTS BY 2)**

The EFL had been hoping for a Championship match-up between big market clubs and they got it. The EFL semi-finals saw the small market contenders, Cowtown and Mohave, fall to the “Star Power” of the West Coast-based Chino Convicts and the elite quarterback of the Eastern Establishment-supported Charleswood Patriots. The result: a certain ratings bonanza for the EFL’s first nationally televised contest to see who comes away with the Gale Sayers Trophy. The Convicts, slight 2-point underdogs according to Vegas book makers, appear to be the National sentimental favourite after highlight reel playoff performances against Durham and Cowtown mesmerized young and old fans alike. The Patriots, wearing the mantle of “The Favourite,” are definitely the team to beat now that Mohave is out of the picture. But how tough are they? The Patriots won the regular season game between these two teams, but it took a 14-point rally in the fourth quarter to do it, and Donovan McNabb did not play that game. The Pats get full marks for pushing the Hellfire around in the Division Title game, but they have shown that they can be beaten, or pushed to the wall, by lesser teams, and Chino is not really a “lesser” team. The Convicts have all the tools to win, and even dominate, this game, so the Pats had better be prepared.

INJURIES: *Chino:* None; *Charleswood:* Sinorice Moss (WR).

CHINO GAME PLAN: *Defense* – The Convicts had the third highest rated defense in the league during the regular season, performing better than the highly regarded Patriots defense. They tied with LA for surrendering the fewest average yards per rush in the league, forcing opponents to the air where they were reasonably proficient at stopping them as well. The Convicts will focus on stopping Peyton Manning with blitzes and nickel packages, since they believe they have nothing to fear from Thomas Jones

*Offense* – The Convicts can kill a defense in many ways, as they have already shown. Cowtown decided to take away McNabb’s receivers and LT made them pay for it. Charleswood could try a similar gambit and run the same risks, or focus on LT and let Assante Samuel and Ed Reed take care of the passing game. Either way, Chino will mix it up all day and wait for one of their big stars to make a play...or ten.

CHARLESWOOD GAME PLAN: *Defense* – The Pats defense gets better every game. Although they were burned for two big plays against Mohave, the secondary is performing at a high level and is shutting down opposing QBs. If the Convicts cannot establish the run, then the Pats secondary becomes even more dangerous and actually poses a threat to score. Look for the Pats to take away LT and force Air McNabb to the skies.

*Offense* – “*The Patriots will have to run the ball at some point, despite their problems doing so consistently. Any success with that is a bonus, as the offense will end up turning around Peyton Manning. But how well it turns will be a function of Jones’s performance and how much heat he can draw away from the QB. If the running game falters, it will be ‘Manning or bust!’*” (The above is taken directly from last week’s analysis – nothing has changed except the opponent)

RESULT: On a neutral field, virtually impossible to predict. Barring a special teams breakdown by the Pats, I’ll go with my pre-season choice: *Patriots 23, Convicts 17.*

**PICK: CHARLESWOOD**