

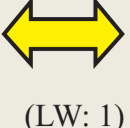


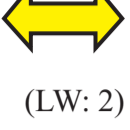


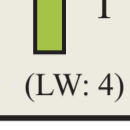



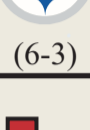





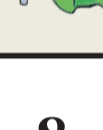
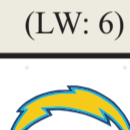


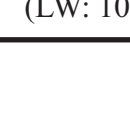









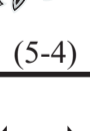




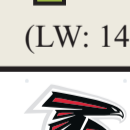
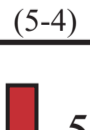










In the Red Zone

Slot	Team	Three easy steps/slides to get there
1	 (9-0)	1) Peyton Manning deserves credit for leading the Colts to stage an honorable remake of the 2006 AFC Championship game; and that was possible thanks to... 2) Safety Melvin Bullitt , who shot through the field to stop Kevin Faulk a half-yard short of the potential game-clinching first down. 3) PRAISING ZONE. DE Robert Mathis had himself quite a box score-filler (8 tackles, 2 sacks, 1 pass defended, 3 QB hits), but his hustle during a 29-yard sprint by Faulk near the end of the 1st quarter stated that Indy was game for the long run.
  (LW: 1)		BEHIND: PATRIOTS (35-34, W) AHEAD: @RAVENS
2	 (9-0)	1) Combination of factors in STL: The Saints were depleted in their secondary and the Rams hit 'em in the mouth; the Saints were lackadaisical and the Rams pushed 'em to the brink. In the end, talent alone pulled New Orleans out of this one. 2) The poster boy of that concept is none other than Reggie Bush ; he made enough plays (2 TD's) for the Saints to get by. 3) PRAISING ZONE. Saints' KR Courtney Roby scored his first TD since '05 and New Orleans' first kickoff return TD since '04.
  (LW: 2)		BEHIND: @RAMS (28-23, W) AHEAD: @BUCS
3	 (8-1)	1) With 201 yards, Sidney Rice became the fourth player in Vikings history with at least 200 yards receiving in a single game. 2) Minnesota DE Ray Edwards feasted on Lions' QB Matthew Stafford , notching 2 sacks and 4 QB hits. 3) PRAISING ZONE. So, Sidney...what's the secret of your successful relationship with Brett Favre? "Just communication and trust," Vikings WR Sidney Rice said. The lesson? ANY relationship works that way.
  (LW: 4)		BEHIND: LIONS (27-10, W) AHEAD: SEAHAWKS
4	 (7-2)	1) Without Cedric Benson for the 2nd half, the Bengals beat the Steelers at their own game. Their D bent, but didn't break; it harassed Big Ben ; bottled up the running game, and enjoyed every minute while doing it. However... 2) The Gameball goes to the Bengals' special teams. The whole unit put Cincinnati in a position to win. 3) PRAISING ZONE. The Bengals swept Pittsburgh (for the first time since 98') and the Ravens. The word that you're looking for is <i>impressive</i> .
  (LW: 7)		BEHIND: @STEELERS (18-12, W) AHEAD: @RAIDERS
5	 (6-3)	1) Even after they were manhandled, the Steelers remain title contenders; but as complicated as it may sound, their defending hopes rest on a joint (Troy Polamalu's knee). Well, maybe it's not <i>that</i> complicated. 2) "I'd give my left arm to play them again." Steelers' S Ryan Clark said. I don't want him to lose his arm, but I agree -- I'd love to see them again. 3) The Steelers were denied of the Bengals' end zone (0-4), and they get snubbed of this chart's as well.
  (LW: 3)		BEHIND: BENGALS (18-12, L) AHEAD: @CHIEFS
6	 (6-3)	1) Tom Brady threw for 375 yards, Randy Moss , Wes Welker and Kevin Faulk combined for 352 offensive yards, the D intercepted Peyton Manning twice, Dallas Clark was contained, and still... 2) Bill Belichick lost his first game ever when leading by 13 points in the fourth quarter; all because... 3) He decided to pull a page out of Barry Switzer's '95 book. Losing to the Colts and a rookie head coach already stings, but if he somehow learns of this reference, he's gonna kick himself further.
  (LW: 5)		BEHIND: @COLTS (35-34, L) AHEAD: JETS
7	 (6-3)	1) The Broncos were notified, and the Redskins still burned them with some trickery. No wonder they have lost three straight. 2) Phil Simms had a 6-5 record playing in Washington; Chris Simms accumulated a 7.5 QB rating in relief of the injured Kyle Orton . I guess it's not hereditary. 3) "I'm still trippin', man," Broncos' RB Correll Buckhalter said. And if I had gained 51 rushing yards and no TD's in the last three games, I would've said the same thing.
  (LW: 6)		BEHIND: @REDSKINS (27-17, L) AHEAD: CHARGERS
8	 (6-3)	1) Phillip Rivers melted the Eagles with his most efficient outing of the season: 20 of 25 for 231 yards, 2 TD's, 131.8 QB rating. 2) Addition by subtraction: P Mike Scifres (46.8 net average on 4 punts) took the dangerous Philly returners out of the equation. 3) With 2 TD's, LaDainian Tomlinson (146 in his career) passed Marcus Allen for 3rd all-time, trailing only Jerry Rice and Emmitt Smith ; but learning that he's going to become a father undoubtedly put all his accolades on the backburner.
  (LW: 10)		BEHIND: EAGLES (31-23, W) AHEAD: @BRONCOS

Inside Enemy Territory

Slot	Team	Three easy steps/slides to get there
9	 (6-3)	1) The Cowboys were out-sacked 5-4 by the Packers. That's saying something. 2) An injured thumb is slowing down Marion Barber dramatically. Since getting 124 rushing yards in Week 2, he has failed to surpass the 53-yard barrier. 3) WR Roy Williams had 5 catches for 105 yards and the Cowboys' lonely touchdown, but he's not bringing anything special to the table.
  (LW: 8)		BEHIND: @PACKERS (17-7, L) AHEAD: REDSKINS
10	 (6-3)	1) Rookie RB Beanie Wells was not a Baby , but rather a man among boys. He gained a career-best 85 yards on 16 carries and 2 TD's, including the 13-yard TD scamper that put the Cards up for good. 2) Which is more remarkable of Kurt Warner ? A) He has thrown at least 20 completions in every game. B) He just completed back-to-back weeks without turnovers for the first time all season... Yes, I picked the latter as well. 3) This is going to be Anquan Boldin's last hurrah with Arizona; It'd feed him the ball early and often. Sundin (8 rec. for 105 yds.) was a good start.
  (LW: 13)		BEHIND: SEAHAWKS (31-20, W) AHEAD: @RAMS
11	 (5-4)	1) The Ravens just waited for the Browns to self-destruct. Don't read too much into anything else...except this column, of course. 2) Instead, concentrate your efforts on the following: 3) During pregame warmups, Ray Lewis started to eat the grass of the playing field. The extra fiber was helpful. Given that the Ravens scored the game's only points in the second half, it's safe to say that they relieved their constipation. I apologize...but it was too good to pass up.
  (LW: 11)		BEHIND: @BROWNS (16-0, W) AHEAD: COLTS
12	 (5-4)	1) In the 1st half, the Eagles had the ball three times inside the 10-yard line of the Chargers, and only managed to get field goals. Much like the Steelers, they have issues running the ball. 2) Philadelphia entered the game with a +12 turnover differential while San Diego was EVEN in that stat. The Chargers won the battle 1-0. Enough said. 3) I'm not a doctor, but I like to think that I have common sense; Brian Westbrook should not be allowed to play the rest of the season.
  (LW: 12)		BEHIND: @CHARGERS (31-23, L) AHEAD: @BEARS
13	 (5-4)	1) Eli Manning did not ask New York management to get another tight end 'cause he didn't want to upset the Boss (Kevin) of him. 2) So, safety C.C. Brown did not have to convince the Yankees' CC Sabathia to do a crossover to play for the Giants. 3) After last week's loss, New York DID enjoy the bye week. And that's that.
  (LW: 14)		BEHIND: BYE AHEAD: FALCONS
14	 (5-4)	1) K Jason Elam seems to be nearing the end of the road. His quarter 34-yarder that would've given Atlanta the lead in the 4th quarter is just part of a career-worst 64.3% success rate in '09. 2) Matt Ryan has now one less INT (12) than Jake Delhomme (13), and the ATL finds itself only 1 game ahead of Carolina. 3) Michael Turner was on his way to another solid performance (9 carries, 111 yds.) when his ankle was sprained. It feels like this isn't going to be the Falcons' year after all.
  (LW: 9)		BEHIND: @PANTHERS (28-19, L) AHEAD: @GIANTS
15	 (5-4)	1) DT Amobi Okoye did not participate in a running play as a tribute to Christian Okoye , the original " Nigerian Nightmare ". 2) Even after their mishaps, RB Chris Brown and K Kris Brown did not get signed to do the sequel of Trading Places . 3) After last week's loss, Houston DID enjoy the bye week. And that's that.
  (LW: 15)		BEHIND: BYE AHEAD: TITANS
16	 (5-4)	1) CB Charles Woodson had 9 tackles, 1 sack, 1 INT and two forced fumbles against the Cowboys. That will earn him NFC Defensive Player of the Week honors. 2) And thanks to the ball-hawk mentality, the Pack won the turnover battle (3-0) to break wide open a tight contest. 3) After watching Aaron Rodgers get sacked four more times (41, if you're counting), I can assure you the following: In Wisconsin, the concept " Max Protection " is associated only with prophylactics.
  (LW: 20)		BEHIND: COWBOYS (17-7, W) AHEAD: 49ers