








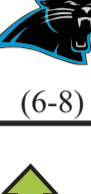

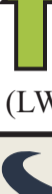
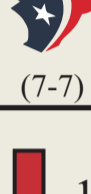











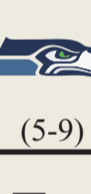





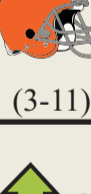


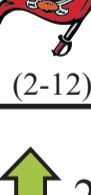





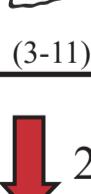







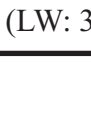


Pinned In Their Backyard

Slot	Team	Three easy steps/slides to get there
17	 (7-7)	1) WR Mike Wallace started the game with a TD catch (a 60-yarder on Pittsburgh's first play), and he ended it with another TD grab (the game-winning 19-yarder with no time left). That's full circle at its best. 2) Ben Roethlisberger set a franchise record with 503 passing yards, and he wasn't showing off. Pittsburgh needed every one of them to survive this Sunday. 3) When Mike Tomlin ordered the surprise onside kick after regaining the lead late in the 4th quarter, he performed the ultimate disservice to his D. I hope that doesn't come back to bite him in the future.
	  1 (LW: 18)	
BEHIND: PACKERS (37-36, W) AHEAD: RAVENS		
18	 (7-7)	1) Michael Turner missed 2 games; he took part in the game's first snap, and then disappeared. However, another Atlanta RB (Jason Snelling) ended up as the game's leading rusher. <i>El Cid</i> would be proud. 2) Atlanta CB Brent Grimes picked off two passes to raise his INT total to 4 on the season; but just like I did with the Ravens' Ed Reed , I'll refuse to say that he's a ball hawk. He's a ball-Falcon. 3) "They didn't have anything to play for other than to ruin our season," Jets' S Jim Leonhard said. Even with Christmas upon us, give them a break. They're black Falcons. They're entitled to have a black heart.
	  3 (LW: 21)	
BEHIND: @JETS (10-7, W) AHEAD: BILLS		
19	 (7-7)	1) Mark Sanchez is in his 20's (23 years old). And against Atlanta, his interceptions number also reached the 20's (an even 20). He plays his age. 2) Furthermore, he wore braces (on his knees, but still). 3) Remember the kid from <i>Not Another Teen Movie</i> that waited and waited to start a slow-clap sequence? Well, that was Jets' K Jay Feely this weekend -- one FG try was botched due to a mishandled snap; he missed one kick at the end of the 1st half; and finally, he had another one blocked in the 4th quarter. Add everything up, and too many youngster references will tell you one thing: They're not ready to play with the big boys.
	  2 (LW: 17)	
BEHIND: FALCONS (10-7, L) AHEAD: @COLTS		
20	 (6-8)	1) Kudos to the Panthers' D-Line. Led by Julius Peppers , the unit absolutely manhandled the Vikings' O-Line, and that eventually caused controversy in the Minnesota sideline. The true definition of creating havoc. 2) Carolina has now won 11 straight games in which Jonathan Stewart has scored a rushing TD. They'd be wise to favor this stat. 3) Thanks to Steve Smith (9 catches, 157 yards), QB Matt Moore threw for career highs in TD passes (3) and yards (299). If he wants to get the full-time responsibility, Carolina will want to see <i>Moore</i> of that.
	  3 (LW: 23)	
BEHIND: VIKINGS (26-7, W) AHEAD: @GIANTS		
21	 (7-7)	1) The Rams surrendered 367 yards and 1 TD through the air. They got (Matt Schaub -ed around. 2) About Houston WR Andre Johnson (9 catches, 196 yards): "He can do it all"... "He's got the size, speed, run after the catch, blocking, everything. There's nobody in this league that compares to him." Rams' CB Ron Bartell said. I know what you're thinking... He had him at hello. 3) "We've got more corrections to make, but a win's a win." Texans' head coach Gary Kubiak said. And a horse is a horse, of course, of course.
	  1 (LW: 20)	
BEHIND: @RAMS (16-13, W) AHEAD: @DOLPHINS		
22	 (6-8)	1) In the end, Frank Gore (107 rushing yards on Sunday --58 yards shy of his fourth consecutive 1,000-yard season) has proved he is reliable... 2) While Alex Smith (20 of 37, 177 yards, 1 TD's, 3 INTS's) has not. 3) REVIEW TIME – PART TWO: Back in September, I said that you could bet that the loss suffered at the hands of the Vikings would drive the 49ers the rest of the year. And it drove them alright...out of the playoffs. Yikes.
	  3 (LW: 19)	
BEHIND: @EAGLES (27-13, L) AHEAD: LIONS		
23	 (5-9)	1) "I didn't know it was illegal." Raiders' CB Stanford Routt said after performing a horse-collar tackle on Denver WR Brandon Stokley to prevent a TD late in the 4th quarter. That was straight out of <i>Donovan McNabb's Rulebook-Studying School of Arts</i> . 2) Their game was stopped with 6:53 left in the game after a fan shined a laser on the players. That was straight out of <i>Seinfeld</i> . 3) JaMarcus Russell finally found a way to deliver a victory for the Silver and Black...and the win is going to be credited to Charlie Frye's résumé. That was straight out of the <i>Twilight Zone</i> . Fittingly.
	  4 (LW: 27)	
BEHIND: @BRONCOS (20-19, W) AHEAD: @BROWNS		
24	 (5-9)	1) The Bills had 104 yards in penalties...in the first half alone. Overwhelmed? Undisciplined? Dumb?...A little bit of everything. 2) Trent Edwards passed for -1 yard (1 of 2 attempts) and still notched a better QB rating (56.2) than 9 QB's that actually passed for positive yardage. Again, you gotta love NFL statistics, but the QB rating formula should be re-evaluated. 3) Jairus Byrd became the 18th Bill to be sent to injure-reserve; and you know that when you get to the 18th, the gig is up.
	  1 (LW: 25)	
BEHIND: PATRIOTS (17-10, L) AHEAD: @FALCONS		

At The Bottom Of The Pile

Slot	Team	Three easy steps/slides to get there
25	 (5-9)	1) When a 1-12 road team shows more swagger than a 5-8 host...I let the explanations run free: 2) "I don't know what the perception (of the Seahawks) is. I try to put myself in another team's shoes. Seattle WR T.J. Houshmandzadeh said. Already jumping ship? 3) "It was exasperation to believe we could actually be at the point where our backup right corner is long snapping"... "I say to myself, 'How did this happen?'" Seahawks' head coach Jim Mora said. Coach, you should be the one to answer that...you're the one that determines the depth chart.
	  3 (LW: 22)	
BEHIND: BUCS (24-7, L) AHEAD: @PACKERS		
26	 (4-10)	1) If Monday Night was truly an audition, new Redskins' GM Bruce Allen is gonna look an awful lot like Simon Cowell . 2) And I won't blame him if he starts practicing a British accent. 3) "The score, the record, [they] say that we're horrible, that we don't know how to play football. But I've been around these guys a lot and I think they know how to play football. I think we're just all going in different directions, and we need somebody to lead us in the right direction." Redskins' DT Albert Haynesworth said. With friends like these, who needs enemies?...Am I right Coach (Jim Zorn)?
	  2 (LW: 24)	
BEHIND: GIANTS (45-12, L) AHEAD: COWBOYS		
27	 (3-11)	1) Worth repeating: RB Jerome Harrison ran for 286 yards (and 3 TD's) to break the franchise record of 237, held by Jim Brown ; and... 2) WR/KR/occasional RB/Soon to be paid big-time Josh Cribbs became the 2nd player in NFL history (Ted Ginn Jr. --earlier this year) to have two 100-yard TD's of any kind in the same game; and also set an NFL record with his eighth career kickoff return for a TD. 3) Before he got placed on injured reserve, Browns' QB Brady Quinn won his last two outings while posting QB ratings of 48.1 and 27.7. I'm sorry, but there's NO WAY I'm going to say that he left on a high note.
	  2 (LW: 29)	
BEHIND: CHIEFS (41-34, W) AHEAD: RAIDERS		
28	 (2-12)	1) The Bucs won on the West Coast for the first time since beating Oakland in the Super Bowl back in '03. 2) That day, Brad Johnson (Tampa Bay) threw one pick and Rich Gannon (Oakland) threw 5. On Sunday, Josh Freeman (Tampa Bay) threw one pick and Matt Hasselbeck (Seattle) threw 4. Coincidence? I don't know, but I sure enjoy making ends meet. 3) "There was never a moment when my confidence was shaken," Bucs' QB Josh Freeman said. Maybe stirred, but not shaken.
	  2 (LW: 30)	
BEHIND: @SEAHAWKS (24-7, W) AHEAD: @SAINTS		
29	 (5-9)	1) Bears' backup QB Caleb Hanie had a better passer rating (8.3) than Jay Cutler (7.9); and that's not a compliment. 2) Still, Jay Cutler had a better yards-per-carry average (5.8) than RB's Matt Forte (3.5) and Kahlil Bell (5.0). 3) And yet, Matt Forte had more tackles (1) than receiving yards (0), although he caught 2 passes. Yes, this kind of gravity would be disgusting even for Newton .
	  3 (LW: 26)	
BEHIND: @RAVENS (31-7, L) AHEAD: VIKINGS		
30	 (3-11)	1) In the past three games, the Chiefs have allowed 796 yards on the ground. What can I say?... the runs have gotten the best of them. 2) Arrowhead Stadium's 19-year sellout streak ended, and to "celebrate" that, the Chiefs allowed 40 points for the third time in their last 4 games. 3) "Defensively you've got to stop the run"... "Special teams you've got to cover up and on playing when you are throwing the ball, you gotta catch it. We gave up 351 rushing yards, we allowed two kickoff return TD's and we dropped nine passes. Chiefs' head coach Todd Haley said. That was the break down of a breakdown.
	  2 (LW: 28)	
BEHIND: BROWNS (41-34, L) AHEAD: @BENGALS		
31	 (2-12)	1) S Louis Delmas became the only rookie in NFL history with a safety, interception and scores off a fumble recovery and an interception (100-yard return on Sunday). That's one silver lining. 2) RB Maurice Morris led the Lions in both rushing yards (126) and receiving units (35). That's silver lining No. 2. 3) EXPLANATION ZONE. "We could've jogged out to the field today and it would've been a better effort," Lions' head coach Jim Schwartz said. Is he...losing it? That's your big, bad cloud.
	  (LW: 31)	
BEHIND: CARDS (31-24, L) AHEAD: @49ers		
32	 (1-13)	1) 46,256 folks --the franchise's worst paid attendance since moving to STL-- watched the Rams lose their 12 straight game against the AFC AND their 12 straight contest at home. A double <i>dirty dozen</i> -feature that wasn't a box-office hit. We're starting with the left foot. 2) Danny Amendola scored his first career TD, and I bet people still know more things about Danny Almonte . This is getting uglier. 3) EXPLANATION ZONE. "Everyone here kind of has a sour taste in their mouth," Rams' LB James Laurinaitis said. And I won't even ask how he found that out. Oh yeah...just put them to sleep already.
	  (LW: 32)	
BEHIND: TEXANS (16-13, L) AHEAD: @CARDS		