

Texans ready to show that they are for real in rematch with Patriots

Written by Yolande Y. Lezine

Wednesday, 09 January 2013 00:00



The Houston Texans 19-13 Wildcard Playoff victory over the Cincinnati Bengals wasn't very pretty; but it was another playoff win in the 2012 playoffs.

Now Houston will have a chance to redeem themselves in Foxboro, Mass. , when they face Tom Brady and the New England Patriots in a rematch of a very ugly regular season game that was played on a Monday night on national television.

The venue is the same, but the stakes are different now. If the Texans can beat the Patriots, and they have the talent to do that, and the Baltimore Ravens can go into Denver, Colorado and take care of Peyton Manning and the Broncos, then the impossible can still happen! The road to the Superbowl could still come through Houston if the Ravens beat the Broncos on Saturday afternoon and the Texans defeat the Patriots on Sunday afternoon. It would be fitting to have a rematch of the Houston Texans vs. the Baltimore Ravens in what would be the AFC Championship game, held right here at Reliant Stadium.

It's impossible, but its something that could very well happen. This would truly wipe away the horrible month of December where the Texans played their worst football of the 2012 season going 1-3 in the month. Yes, its nice to have a 12-4 regular season record, for it is the best record in franchise history, but as everyone in Houston would say, "WE WANT MORE!"

Houston was run off the field last month by the Patriots in a 42-14 route! This time, the Texans need to leave their mistakes at home. There's no room for jitters. The divisional round of the NFL playoffs isn't for players who have nothing to prove.

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If the Texans don't want to be embarrassed again on a national stage, they must go to New England better prepared to play. Leave the high school lettermen jackets at home this time. They looked great, but we must not only look the part but play the part this time. It was apparent from the start, for whatever reason, that the regular season game against the Patriots on December 10th was too big for them.

The Texans are now 13-4 with a playoff victory for the second consecutive season. Now they must do what few don't feel they can. They must upset New England. They have to play smart, hard-nosed football from start to finish. They can do it. They need to look at this game with the same chip that they had on their shoulder after the Green Bay Packers and quarterback Aaron Rodgers embarrassed them on Sunday night. They came back and blew out the Baltimore Ravens at home, with the former Texans players telling their former teammates that they would be back for the playoffs in January.

How sweet that would be, especially with Ravens linebacker back on the field after announcing his retirement after 17 seasons last week. It would just be fitting to have both the Texans and Ravens for the AFC Championship, with a right to go to the Superbowl in New Orleans, Louisiana on Sunday, February 3rd.

This is a chance for redemption, to make up for a performance that caused them to be ridiculed from coast to coast.

Many fans expect a repeat performance in which Tom Brady to take aim at the Texans secondary. The Texans can't turn the ball over and commit foolish penalties. They are 8-0 this season when running back Arian Foster rushes for at least 100 yards, so getting him involved in the offense early and often is imperative. They have to run the ball well enough to help control the clock and keep Tom Brady on the bench.

Matt Schaub has to move the chains with sharp passes. And when the Texans get into the red zone, they have to score touchdowns and not field goals. If they continue to settle for field goals, they're doomed.

And the defense has to play the way it did against the Bengals. It has to be dominant at the line of scrimmage. It has to force turnovers and not give up the big plays that plagued them in the

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first game at New England.

Brady stunned the Texans with play-action passes that allowed Brandon Lloyd and Donte' Stallworth to get behind the secondary for big plays.

It would help if J.J. Watt, Antonio Smith, Connor Barwin, Brooks Reed, and the rest of the defense get to Brady and disrupt his timing with his receivers rather than allow him to sit comfortably in the pocket and wait for them to get open.

All of the pressure is on the favored Patriots. They have to win. There's no pressure on the Texans because nobody expects them to win. At least nobody outside of Reliant Stadium!{jcomments on}