

# Caution: Colts may be too offensive for Bears

**ADRIAN McCANDLESS**  
PHOTO EDITOR

I love every aspect about football, but there is nothing like the Super Bowl.

The Bears and the Colts proved themselves worthy for the top honor of playing in Super Bowl XLI this Sunday in Miami.

I suspect both sides will keep us in suspense until the final whistle blows.

Here is the million-dollar question: Who is going to win the Super Bowl?

I like both the Bears and the Colts.

Because of fantasy football, I like individual players instead of an entire team.

Payton Manning is one of my favorite quarterbacks in the league but I also admire the coaching style of Lovie Smith and the defensive skills of middle linebacker Brian Urlacher. Reggie Wayne and Marvin Harrison continue to impress me but at the same time, it amazes me to watch Cedric Benson and



Thomas Jones run the ball. Honestly, I am torn.

Between the two quarterbacks, Manning is much better and leads the league in postseason with 787 yards. Rex Grossman only mustered up nearly half that with 426 yards.

Not only does Manning have the numbers to back him up but he also has the experience and judging from the game against the Patriots, Manning also has a newfound confidence. Manning also has a 62 percent completion rate whereas Grossman only has a 50 percent completion rate.

On the other hand, the Bears' defense is insane. I wouldn't want to run into any of them in a dark alley, especially Urlacher. Not only is he huge but he is also freakishly fast.

I am anticipating Manning being sacked at the very least three times during the game.

Urlacher is crucial to the Bears' defense but not their only ammunition. Chicago's defense is notorious for stripping the ball. However, sometimes they are too consumed in trying to strip the ball that they don't focus on tackling the player. If their defense makes tackling its first priority and stripping the ball secondary, they will be tough to beat.

At the same time, if any team can combat the Bear's defense, it is the Colts. There is no denying they are

lethal.

For the Colts to win, Manning needs to connect with wide receivers Wayne and Harrison from the first minutes in the first quarter to the last minutes in the fourth. Wayne's 15 carries for the postseason play have totaled 155 yards and Harrison has 10 carries for 134 yards.

No question about it, this is going to be a close game, folks.

Chicago corner backs Nathan Vasher and Charles Tillman are going to be aggressive on balls thrown in front of them so the Colts need to protect the ball. Manning needs to keep his passes tight, or else Chicago will pick him off repeatedly. Don't let the stats fool you. Even though Vasher only has one interception during the playoffs, the Super Bowl is do or die. Vasher, like the rest of Chicago's defense, is going to step up his game.

However, Vasher and Tillman are vulnerable to the Colts' double-move routes, a weapon that is frequently utilized and expertly executed by the Colts' wideouts.

This is Vasher's and Tillman's kryptonite and the Colts need to use it to their advantage.

Even though the Colts' offense is strongly influenced by Manning, Wayne and Harrison, other team members played key roles in the victory over the Patriots. Backup

tight end Bryan Fletcher had a 32-yard catch on the winning drive two Sundays ago and Manning has effectively used rookie tailback Joseph Addai and MSU alum Dominic Rhodes to the Colts' advantage. Addai has carried 57 times with a total of 217 yards and Rhodes has 193 yards rushing with only 41 carries. Rhodes is averaging almost 5 yards per carry and will be effective on Sunday. Colts tight end Dallas Clark has also become a massive asset in the playoffs leading in postseason with 28 yards.

Defensively, Indianapolis needs to continuously put the Bears in a third-and-long situation.

Putting Bears quarterback, Rex Grossman, in this dilemma two or three times will be too much for him to handle and I think he will crack under pressure.

In order for Chicago to win, the Bears need return specialist Devin Hester to have an explosive game. The Colts' special-teams unit has been a little rocky in playoffs and Hester needs to use that fact to give the Bears good field advantage.

They must also continue to utilize the deadly combination of Benson and Jones. This pair is vital to the Bears' running game and I expect both will give the Colts a run for their money. Benson has carried the ball 36 times for 105 yards and

Jones has carried the ball 40 times for 189 yards during postseason. Between the two, they have accounted for five touchdowns during the playoffs.

The phrase "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," comes to mind

Defensively, they need to put the pressure on Manning early. The Bears need to focus on keeping Manning out of rhythm because when he is in the zone he is damn near unstoppable. Blitz Manning from the inside and he will flee from the pocket, keeping him from staying in sync. Chicago has a combined total of six sacks during postseason. They will need to continue this streak in order to keep Manning from making his big plays.

Right outside linebacker Lance Briggs leads Chicago's defense with 16 tackles in the playoffs and left defensive tackle Chris Harris comes in second with 15 tackles.

Chicago also needs to take advantage of Urlacher's ability to destroy opponents in deep coverage zones.

Grossman needs to be mentally tough this Sunday.

He has a strong arm and is accurate when his offensive line gives him time but if he is rushed it is almost too painful watching him unravel.

Both teams have their strengths

and both most definitely have their weaknesses, so who will claim the victory on Sunday?

I'm putting my money on Manning and the Colts.

I think they are finally going to win the big one.

For one, I think Manning is going to take a slow and steady approach on Sunday.

If they get behind, I don't think it will rattle him as much as it would Grossman.

After all, the Colts were behind the Patriots the entire game and Payton still came out on top.

Secondly, Grossman is going to get flustered and make mistakes, that is all there is to it.

I also don't think the Bears' defense alone can win the game for them.

I am aware the Bears played one less game than the Colts during post season, so Indianapolis should the higher statistics.

Regardless, the Colts are the better team in this match up.

There are always flukes.

I guess this will be a true test to see if a defense really does win championships.

I actually could be totally off base on this one.

But I doubt it!  
Go Indy!

## Pressures of big game sometimes too hard to handle for players

**McCLACHY TRIBUNE**

When the Chicago Bears and Indianapolis Colts step on the Dolphin Stadium field Sunday, they can expect to be swept up in a whirlwind of emotions, a combustible cocktail of anxiety and anticipation unlike anything most athletes ever experience.

And they will exit Super Bowl XLI with memories that will endure forever, ones that, years later, will instantly elicit either a smile or a

grimace, ones that will be broached by strangers in supermarket aisles and restaurants long after the players have hung up their jerseys.

So what's it like preparing for a Super Bowl or college football championship game, playing in it and dealing with the consequences? Those who have lived it say nothing in life compares.

"You can't even explain it," said former University of Miami running back Melvin Bratton, who played in two college games with a national title at stake (winning one)

and started in a Super Bowl loss as a member of the Denver Broncos.

"Your whole body is numb. You hear no crowd noise. You can hear yourself breathe. That's how intense the feeling is. It's a natural high."

Former All-Pro quarterback Joe Theismann, who played in two Super Bowls, took "100 trips to the bathroom" in the 10 minutes before taking the field.

"Guys get sick," he said. "I saw teammates hyperventilating, throwing up, linebackers banging their heads against the locker-room

wall."

Theismann managed only three hours' sleep.

The key, Theismann said, "is don't do anything stupid in the beginning of the game."

Eventually, though, the anxiety dissipates.

"After three or four times of getting up off your butt, you forget about the nervousness," said former Dolphins All-Pro guard Bob Kuechenberg.

"Then you go back to doing what you're trained to do."

Some teams employ sports psychologists to help numb players' nerves before big games.

"It can devastate a team if the proper approach is not taken," said Palm Beach-based John F. Murray, whom Tennis Magazine called the Roger Federer of sports psychologists.

"The media attention and the hoopla needs extreme management."

Bratton said he cracked jokes before championship games and spewed wisecracks in the huddle to

ease the tension: "That's how I survived it."

Murray, who has counseled tennis' Vince Spadea and others before big matches, said he suggests players competing in championship games go "through daily imagery sessions where they get so comfortable with this game that by the time it begins it's been dealt with many times before, and the players could focus on what they do best."

We'll all be watching on Sunday to see which team handles the pressure the best.

## Friends make history as first African American coaches in Super Bowl

**CARLY BURRESS**  
STAFF REPORTER

Two head coaches, Lovie Smith and Tony Dungy, are making headlines for being two good friends who happen to be the first and the second black coaches to make it to the Super Bowl.

For 41 years the black community has been able to boast about having some of the best football players to grace the Super Bowl field as well as having excellent assistant coaches standing on the sidelines.

Now they can add a little something to their bragging list.

On January 15, 2004, Lovie

Smith was named the 13th head coach for the Chicago Bears.

In 2005, this Texas native was named the Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year, which was probably because of his 11 victories, eight-game win streak and division title win.

From 1976 until 1979, he played at Tulsa where he started out as a linebacker but eventually moved to strong safety.

It was during this time that he earned two-time All-American and three-time All-Missouri Conference defensive back honors.

Beginning in 1983, Smith began coaching on the collegiate level at

Tulsa. From there he went on to coach at Wisconsin, Arizona State, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio State.

From 1996 until 2000 he graced the Tampa Bay Buccaneers linebackers with his presence.

From 2001 to 2003 Smith served as the defensive coordinator for St. Louis where he helped the Rams return to the Super Bowl.

Not only has Smith proven to be a great football coach but also the teams he has coached have proven themselves to be worthy.

In 2004 the Bears were the youngest team in the NFL and they posted a 5-11 record.

For the first two seasons Smith was head coach, Chicago was ranked second in the NFL.

Now the Bears are making it possible for the world to truly understand his abilities first hand as he was named the first black head coach to make it to the Super Bowl.

This history making moment was made even more historic as Dungy and the Indianapolis Colts defeated the Patriots four hours later and Dungy became the second black head coach to ever make it to the Super Bowl.

Smith and Dungy first crossed paths in 1996 when Smith became one of Dungy's assistants for Tampa.

Dungy first began to shine in the world of football in 1973 as a quarterback for the University of Minnesota.

By the time he graduated he was the all-time leader in attempts, completions, passing yards, touchdown passes and was two-time most valuable player.

In 1977, Dungy played safety for two seasons with Pittsburgh as a free agent. During his playing time he helped with the Super Bowl XIII victory over the Dallas Cowboys.

He was then traded to San Francisco in 1979.

In 1981, Dungy, then 25, became the NFL's youngest assistant coach when he took a position with Pittsburgh.

In 1982, he was promoted from the defensive assistant to the defensive coach.

At the age of 28, he became the league's youngest defensive coordinator.

Moving on from Pittsburgh in 1989, he then became the defensive backs coach at Kansas City and then the defensive coordinator at Minnesota in 1992.

From 1996 through 2001, Dungy held a 54-42 record as head coach with Tampa Bay, where his team qualified for the playoffs four out of six seasons.

January 22, 2002, he was named

the head coach of the Colts, where he has remained for the past five seasons.

In 2005 he led the Colts to a franchise-record 14 wins and a third consecutive divisional title.

Dungy also currently stands as the only NFL head coach to defeat all 32 NFL teams.

Both men have an outstanding record along with an incredibly close friendship, which is going to make this Super Bowl game an interesting one.

When Dungy first started coaching in Tampa, the only two other black coaches were Smith and Herman Edwards.

Both learned a great deal from Dungy who acted as their mentor and their friend.

Dungy recently stated his excitement for Smith in an interview with ESPN Sports, saying, "I'm so happy Lovie got there because he does things the right way."

He's going to get there with a lot of class, no profanity, no intimidation, just helping his guys play the best that they can. That's the way I try to do it."

This Super Bowl is going to be a game that goes against all odds.

Many are in speculation not only about the headline-making coaches but also about the two teams' quarterbacks that ESPN Sports calls "the biggest quarterback mismatch in a long time."

The Colts' Peyton Manning has worked hard for nine years to make it to the Super Bowl and he is said to be the game's top quarterback.

On the other end is the Bears Rex Grossman, who is not always on the top of the list as far as quarterbacks are concerned and is usually a step away from being benched and replaced with Brian Griese.

The Super Bowl hardly ever fails to entertain but Super Bowl XLI is going to go down in history for being a monumental time for black history as well as an interesting game because of the coaches close ties to each other.

And if the game fails to entertain then, there will still be Prince to spice things up during the Pepsi sponsored halftime show.

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