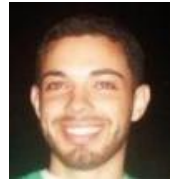


Patriots Empty the Ketchup Bottle



By
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The New England Patriots entered Week 10 of the NFL season looking to forget about last week's putrid loss to the Cleveland Browns. Awaiting their arrival were the Pittsburgh Steelers. Both teams brought their 6-2 records into a game that was expected to be a physical showdown to determine the AFC's top dogs. Tom Brady is 6-1 lifetime against the Steelers, and the Patriots are 25-2 in games following a loss, which gave the fans a few reasons to be optimistic heading into the game.

Sunday night at 8:20 the bell was rung and the fight was on. On their first possession, the Steelers ran three dismal plays before being forced to punt. The Patriots defense was hungry and looked eager to get out of the woodshed Cleveland had left them in. On their first drive, Brady led his team on a methodical 70-yard drive, culminating with rookie Rob Gronkowski catching a 19-yard TD pass. This battery of Brady to Gronkowski would have much more in store for the Terrible Towel waving Steeler fans before the night was over.



Rob Gronkowski plucks his first of three TD catches out of mid-air.

By the end of the first quarter the Patriots were leading 10-0 , and the their defense had held Big Ben and the Steelers offense without a first down. In the second quarter the Steelers marched down the field and were threatening to score with a first-and-goal, but New England's young secondary was up to the challenge. Roethlisberger threw three consecutive incompletions, and the Steelers had to settle for a field goal.

The Patriots went into halftime leading 10-3 after thoroughly outplaying the Steelers. Following halftime the Patriots got the ball, and their first drive of the second half went much like their opening drive of the first. They put together another clock-munching drive, this time running ten plays but ending the same, with Brady hitting Gronkowski and putting the Pats up 17-3.

The Steelers tried to respond quickly, and were in great position to do so after a Brandon Meriweather pass interference penalty gave them first-and-goal on the eight yard line. New England's defense stood tall once again, holding Pittsburgh to a field goal attempt, which was promptly botched by kicker Jeff Reed. Brady then got the ball back and went to work, dropping a bomb deep over the middle to receiver Brandon Tate. This setup another touchdown when Brady called his own number and ran it in on a QB sneak.



Brady threw for 3 TD's and rushed for another.

The Patriots took a 23-3 lead into the fourth quarter. Things started out rocky when Ben Roethlisberger put together his own eight play drive, which was finally capped off with the Steelers first touchdown of the night. While the score gave Pittsburgh new life, the Patriots did not let them build any momentum from it. The Pats failed to score on their next

possession, but the defense came up with a score of its own when safety James Sanders made a great play on a bobbled Roethlisberger pass, intercepting it and returning it for a touchdown.

The Steelers wore down the Pats defense in the fourth quarter and scored 23 points, but most of it was against soft zone coverage. The Pats had the lead, so they were trying to prevent any big plays. In the end it was too little too late for the Steelers, as they were unable to match the tremendous showing by New England.

Overall this was the best team win of the season for the Patriots, but they don't have much time to savor the victory. Peyton Manning and the Colts pay a visit to Foxboro on Sunday for their annual showdown with Brady and the Patriots, who seem to be back on track.