

THIS YEAR'S MATCHUP AMONG THE MOST UNLIKELY AT START OF SEASON

SUPER BOWL

Seattle Seahawks vs.
New England Patriots

KICKOFF: SUNDAY, FEB. 8, AT 6:30 P.M. EST

BY ARNIE MELENDREZ STAPLETON

AP Pro Football Writer

Mike Vrabel and Sam Darnold are bringing the unluckiest of Super Bowl matchups to Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, a showdown that drew 4,800-to-1 odds at the start of the season.

Those preseason odds seemed about right when both the New England Patriots (80-to-1) and Seattle Seahawks (60-to-1) lost their season openers too.

But the longshots wouldn't be stopped short on their way to Super Bowl 60.

Vrabel, who was fired by the Tennessee Titans in 2023, replaced Jerod Mayo as head coach in New England after his one-year stint produced a second straight 4-13 season. Vrabel quickly turned around the Patriots (17-3), who dispatched the Chargers, Texans and Broncos — three top-5 defenses — in the playoffs on their way to their 12th Super Bowl appearance.

Vrabel, who won three Super Bowls as a playmaking linebacker for New England, could become the first person in NFL history to also win as a head coach for the same franchise.

"I won't win it. It'll be the players that'll win the game," Vrabel said. "I promise you, it won't be me that'll win it, and I promise you that I'll do everything I can, and our staff, to have them ready for the game."

Vrabel tied George Seifert of the San Francisco 49ers in 1989 with 17 victories, including playoffs, in his first season with a team.

Patriots signal-caller Drake Maye became the first member of the vaunted 2024 quarterback draft class to reach the big game — despite taking 15 sacks so far in the playoffs. With the Broncos' Bo Nix, his pre-draft training partner, watching from a suite just days after undergoing ankle surgery, Maye scrambled for 57 yards in the snow in Denver, allowing the Patriots to convert on second-and-10, third-and-9 and third-and-15 on their way to a 10-7 win over the Broncos in the AFC championship.

One of Vrabel's first moves after becoming Patriots head coach was to bring back Josh McDaniels for his third stint as New England's offensive coordinator, this time to tutor Maye, the third overall pick of the 2024 NFL draft out of North Carolina.

"He does a great job of mixing it up,

PENGUINS SUMMARY											
EASTERN CONFERENCE		GP		W		L		OT	Pts	GF	GA
Pittsburgh	2	1	2	—	5						
Buffalo	1	0	1	—	2						
First Period—1, Buffalo. Zucker 15 (McLeod, Byram), 1:46. 2, Pittsburgh. A.Hayes 1 (McGroarty, Solyovoy), 9:18. 3, Pittsburgh. A.Hayes 2 (Wotherston, Mantha), 18:47.											
Second Period—4, Pittsburgh, Kindel 13, 7:44. Third Period—5, Buffalo, Thompson 30 (Dahlin, Quinn), 1:55 (pp). 6, Pittsburgh, Novak 11 (Malkin, Chinakow), 15:33. 7, Pittsburgh, Kindel 14 (Dewar), 19:46 (en). Shots on Goal—Pittsburgh 10-7-15—32. Buffalo 9-9-12—30. Power-play opportunities—Pittsburgh 0 of 3; Buffalo 1 of 5. Goalties—Pittsburgh, Silvers 11-7-8 (29 shots-27 saves). Buffalo, Lyon 14-8-3 (31-27). A—19,070 (19,070). T—2:37. Referees—Jake Brenk, Michael Sullivan. Linesmen—Andrew Smith, James Tobias.											
NHL STANDINGS											
WESTERN CONFERENCE		GP		W		L		OT	Pts	GF	GA
c-Colorado	55	37	14	4	78	199	140				
c-Minnesota	57	36	15	6	78	197	163				
c-Montreal	57	32	17	8	72	199	187				
c-Detroit	58	33	19	6	72	174	175				
m-Pittsburgh	56	29	15	12	70	192	169				
Buffalo	57	32	19	6	70	195	176				
Boston	57	32	20	5	69	195	182				
m-N.Y. Islanders	58	32	21	5	69	162	162				
Columbus	56	29	20	7	65	179	177				
Washington	59	29	23	7	65	189	177				
Ottawa	57	28	22	7	63	191	184				
Toronto	57	27	21	9	63	188	194				
Philadelphia	56	25	20	11	61	167	180				
Florida	57	29	25	3	61	174	191				
New Jersey	57	28	27	2	58	146	175				
N.Y. Rangers	57	22	29	6	50	151	180				



Score by Quarters

Union 10 5 2 5 — 22

Keystone 11 15 22 5 — 53

3-point goals — Union (Renwick), Keystone (D.

Corcetti, Nelli, Irwin).

CLARION-LIMESTONE (46)

Parker 2 0-0 6, Beggs 0 0-0 5, Kemmer 0 1-2 1, Love

1 0-0 2, Rinker 0 0-0 0, Miles 0 0-0 0, Craig 10 5-7 27,

Bracken 2 1-1 5. Totals: 17 7-10 46.

CRANBERRY (54)

Marchin 2 2-4 6, Findlay 3 2-2 8, Baker 2 1-2 5, Mor-

row 3 0-0 7, Sanchez 2 2-1 0, Zerbe 7 0-0 16, Melat

0 0-0 0, McCloskey 1 0-0 2, Knapp 0 0-0 2. Totals: 22

7-12 54.

Score by Quarters

Union 10 5 2 5 — 22

Keystone 11 15 22 5 — 53

3-point goals — Union (Renwick), Keystone (D.

Corcetti, Nelli, Irwin).

CLARION-LIMESTONE (46)

Parker 2 0-0 6, Beggs 0 0-0 5, Kemmer 0 1-2 1, Love

1 0-0 2, Rinker 0 0-0 0, Miles 0 0-0 0, Craig 10 5-7 27,

Bracken 2 1-1 5. Totals: 17 7-10 46.

CRANBERRY (54)

Marchin 2 2-4 6, Findlay 3 2-2 8, Baker 2 1-2 5, Mor-

row 3 0-0 7, Sanchez 2 2-1 0, Zerbe 7 0-0 16, Melat

0 0-0 0, McCloskey 1 0-0 2, Knapp 0 0-0 2. Totals: 22

7-12 54.

Score by Quarters

Union 10 5 2 5 — 22

Keystone 11 15 22 5 — 53

3-point goals — Union (Renwick), Keystone (D.

Corcetti, Nelli, Irwin).

CLARION-LIMESTONE (46)

Parker 2 0-0 6, Beggs 0 0-0 5, Kemmer 0 1-2 1, Love

1 0-0 2, Rinker 0 0-0 0, Miles 0 0-0 0, Craig 10 5-7 27,

Bracken 2 1-1 5. Totals: 17 7-10 46.

CRANBERRY (54)

Marchin 2 2-4 6, Findlay 3 2-2 8, Baker 2 1-2 5, Mor-

row 3 0-0 7, Sanchez 2 2-1 0, Zerbe 7 0-0 16, Melat

0 0-0 0, McCloskey 1 0-0 2, Knapp 0 0-0 2. Totals: 22

7-12 54.

Score by Quarters

Union 10 5 2 5 — 22

Keystone 11 15 22 5 — 53

3-point goals — Union (Renwick), Keystone (D.

Corcetti, Nelli, Irwin).

CLARION-LIMESTONE (46)

Parker 2 0-0 6, Beggs 0 0-0 5, Kemmer 0 1-2 1, Love

1 0-0 2, Rinker 0 0-0 0, Miles 0 0-0 0, Craig 10 5-7 27,

Bracken 2 1-1 5. Totals: 17 7-10 46.

CRANBERRY (54)

Marchin 2 2-4 6, Findlay 3 2-2 8, Baker 2 1-2 5, Mor-

row 3 0-0 7, Sanchez 2 2-1 0, Zerbe 7 0-0 16, Melat

0 0-0 0, McCloskey 1 0-0 2, Knapp 0 0-0 2. Totals: 22

7-12 54.

Score by Quarters

Union 10 5 2 5 — 22

Keystone 11 15 22 5 — 53

3-point goals — Union (Renwick), Keystone (D.

Corcetti, Nelli, Irwin).

CLARION-LIMESTONE (46)

Parker 2 0-0 6, Beggs 0 0-0 5, Kemmer 0 1-2 1, Love

1 0-0 2, Rinker 0 0-0 0, Miles 0 0-0 0, Craig 10 5-7 27,

Bracken 2 1-1 5. Totals: 17 7-10 46.

CRANBERRY (54)

Marchin 2 2-4 6, Findlay 3 2-2 8, Baker 2 1-2 5, Mor-

row 3 0-0 7, Sanchez 2 2-1 0, Zerbe 7 0-0 16, Melat

0 0-0 0, McCloskey 1 0-0 2, Knapp 0 0-0 2. Totals: 22

7-12 54.

Score by Quarters

Union 10 5 2 5 — 22