

SPORTS

Super Wild Finish to NFL Season

Manning leads Giants over New England

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) -- Tom Brady let his final pass fly toward the scrum of players in the end zone, hoping for an incredible finish.

Uh-uh, Tom. Not in this city, and not in this game.

Indianapolis is a Manning town, whether it's Peyton or Eli pulling out the wins. And the Super Bowl is suddenly the province of the New York Giants, who have figured out how to topple Brady and the New England Patriots in the biggest moments.

Eli Manning led another fourth-quarter touchdown drive and won his second Super Bowl MVP on Sunday night, leading the Giants to a 21-17 victory that provided a pulsating finish to an NFL season that started with turmoil and a lockout.

"It's been a wild game," said Manning, who now has one more Super Bowl title than his older brother. "It's been a wild season."

A wild finish was certainly fitting.

The Giants (13-7) almost didn't make the playoffs, needing a lot of help at 7-7 with two games left. Their defense finally came together, and Manning gave them a chance in every game with his penchant for comebacks — a league-record 15 touchdowns in the fourth quarter.

Of course, his greatest career comeback was in that Super Bowl four years ago, when the



New York Giants wide receiver Victor Cruz (80) and kicker Lawrence Tynes (9) celebrate with the Vince Lombardi Trophy after the Giants' 21-17 win over the New England Patriots in NFL Super Bowl XLVI. (AP photo)

Patriots were undefeated and Manning led a late scoring drive that included an enduring Super Bowl moment — the incredible catch David Tyree made by trapping the ball against his helmet.

The Patriots (15-4) had a chance to avoid more such history on Sunday. Brady, trying to match boyhood hero Joe Montana and Terry Bradshaw with four Super Bowl titles, had New England in range to put it away late in the fourth quarter.

Wes Welker dropped a pass at the 20-yard line with 4 minutes left, forcing a punt that gave the Giants another chance trailing 17-15.

"It comes to the biggest moment of my life, and (I) don't come up with it," said a red-eyed

Welker. "It's one of those plays I've made a thousand times."

Manning's turn for more Super Bowl magic.

He threw a spot-on 38-yard pass down the sideline to Mario Manningham, fitting the ball perfectly between two defensive backs barreling down on the receiver. Manningham got both feet down before getting smacked out of bounds in front of the Patriots' bench, a catch that was upheld on replay and reminded the 68,658 fans at Lucas Oil Stadium — one in particular — about that other catch four years earlier.

"In those situations, you are always looking to see who is going to be the guy," Tyree said, in the Giants locker room.

Once Manningham came down with it, the Giants sensed things had turned their way, just like four years earlier.

"I think they are both spectacular catches," Giants coach Tom Coughlin said. "I think with Mario's earlier tonight, the way he kept his feet inbounds and held onto the ball (while) going out of bounds was a remarkable thing."

The Patriots were thinking the same thing, too.

"I thought that play they made on our sideline was a phenomenal throw and catch," Brady said. "That got them going."

They got down to the 6-yard line with just over a minute left and the Patriots down to one

timeout. New York could have run the clock down to a few seconds and kicked a field goal.

Patriots coach Bill Belichick did the math and decided on a trade-off: Give up a touchdown for some time. New England pulled up and allowed Ahmad Bradshaw to run the final 6 yards with 57 seconds left.

Once Bradshaw realized what was happening, he tried to stop at the 1-yard line to keep the clock going but ended up falling backward into the end zone.

Brady would get one last chance with the Giants defense bearing down on him, as it always does. Defensive end Justin Tuck huddled the New York defense after a touchback on the kickoff left the ball at the 20-yard line.

"I think a lot of guys had their eyes lit up," Tuck said. "This is what we've been working for all year, and we've got 57 seconds left to be world champs."

Brady set a Super Bowl record by completing 16 consecutive passes earlier in the game, topping Montana's record. When he needed several quick completions to get moving in the last minute, he couldn't do it.

Manning was 10 of 14 for 118 yards in the final quarter with his seventh game-winning drive of the season. Overall, he completed 30 of 40 for 296 yards with a touchdown and no interceptions, leading the Giants to their fourth Super Bowl championship — two behind Pittsburgh for the record.

"It just feels good to win a Super Bowl," Eli said. "Doesn't matter where you are."

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The Portland Observer

Coach Earns Sportsmanship Award

Naaman Yarbrough a role model for Portland youth

Each year, students from Self Enhancement join hundreds of other kids from across the Portland area to participate in the Tualatin Valley Football League; teaching children the value of athletic competition in a safe and enjoyable environment.

SEI Football Coach Naaman Yarbrough not only single-handedly led his team of 3rd and 4th graders to victory this year, he also picked up the esteemed Wellnitz Award for sportsmanship along the way.

"Naaman is committed, dedicated and just flat out a good coach. This is an extremely difficult award to win, and it is well-deserved," said Tony Melson, SEI sports outreach coordinator. "Naaman had quite a few younger and inexperienced kids on his team this year. Not only

did he coach them to victory, he managed to teach them the value of true sportsmanship."

When Naaman was a young man, he was also a part of the SEI program, along with the majority of his siblings.

Because of his time at SEI, and through the attentions of his coordinator and mentor Richard Fortson, Naaman was able to succeed after high school, and in turn, become a role model for a new generation of youth in need of guidance.