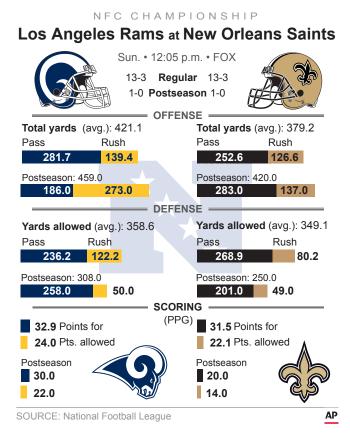
Saints-Rams NFC title game a clash of like-minded coaches



By BRETT MARTEL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — One way or another, the NFC Championship between the Los Angeles Rams and New Orleans Saints will be won by a coach named Sean with an Irish surname who designs and calls plays for one of the most innovative and productive offenses in the NFL.

The ties between the Saints' Sean Payton and the Rams' Sean McVay go well beyond a shared name.

"We both cut our teeth in this league under Jon Gruden," Payton said. "That (Rams) staff — there's a ton of guys that we're friendly with and that we know on that staff. Guys who we have worked with, and Sean and I have a real good relationship. He is an engaging guy, a fun guy to be around."



AP Photo/File

At left, in an Aug. 9, 2018, file photo, New Orleans Saints head coach Sean Payton watches from the sideline during the first half of an NFL preseason football game against the Jacksonville Jaguars, in Jacksonville, Fla. At right, in a Nov. 19, 2018, file photo, Los Angeles Rams head coach Sean McVay watches on the sideline during an NFL football game against the Kansas City Chiefs, in Los Angeles.

Gruden, the current Oakland Raiders coach, was the offensive coordinator with the Eagles in 1997 when Payton was hired as quarterbacks coach. In 2008, Gruden was the head coach in Tampa Bay when he hired McVay as a receivers coach.

During the past two seasons Payton and McVay have each led their teams to the playoffs with one of the best offenses in football, thanks in part to elite quarterbacks — Drew Brees with New Orleans (14-3) and Jared Goff of Los Angeles (14-3).

Both coaches have acknowledged they watch each other's offensive film nearly every week — not just because of the possi-

bility of playing against one another; they're looking for good ideas.

And then there are some connections on the roster and coaching staff. One of the Rams' top receivers, Brandin Cooks, was Payton's first-round draft choice in 2014. Los Angeles' running game coordinator is Aaron Kromer, a former running backs and offensive line coach under Payton, including on the 2009 Super Bowl-winning squad.

Players on both teams praise their coach's intangible feel for how a game is developing.

Saints Pro Bowl left tackle Terron Armstead extoled Payton's "fearlessness" in his play calling and said the coach has "so much believe and confidence in us and the system that we can go out and make a play no matter the down and distance."

AP

Chiefs' bandwagon rolling into mighty Patriots at Arrowhead

By DAVE SKRETTA Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — It seems football fans everywhere are suddenly on the Kansas City Chiefs' bandwagon, enthralled by their record-setting young quarterback and exciting playmakers and hopeful their amiable old coach can finally win the big one.

Then again, maybe they're just fans of anybody facing New England.

The Patriots have dominated the AFC for nearly two decades, and the coach-quarterback combination of Bill Belichick and Tom Brady will be playing in an eighth consecutive conference title game Sunday night when New England visits the Chiefs at frigid, hostile Arrowhead Stadium.

But whereas Brady & Co. once instilled awe in their opponents, the Chiefs view their showdown as an opportunity for Patrick Mahomes



AP Photo/File

At left, in a Sept. 23, 2018, file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady throws during a game against the Detroit Lions, in Detroit. At right, in an Oct. 7, 2018, file photo, Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes throws a pass during a game against the Jacksonville Jaguars, in Kansas City, Mo.

to take the baton as the league's best quarterback and for Kansas City, seeking its first Super Bowl appearance in 49 years, to surpass the Patriots as the NFL's "it" team.

"It'll be huge," Mahomes said. "When I got here, the goal was to win the AFC championship and get to the Super Bowl, and win that. To do that early in my career, it would be a huge thing." There aren't two more dichotomous teams than the Patriots and Chiefs.

New England has won five Super Bowls during the Belichick-Brady era, setting all kinds of records along the way. The cruel efficiency with which they've sliced up the AFC has made them the bane of fans everywhere, but New England and given them the kind of unbeatable aura that accompanied the New York Yankees teams of Derek Jeter and the Chicago Bulls teams of Michael Jordan.

It's not just petty jealousy, though. Many fans have been turned off by Deflategate, Spygate and other instances over the years that have saddled the Patriots with a rather unsavory reputation.

Brady has mostly shrugged it off. So has Belichick, who almost seems to embrace the villain role.

"I don't think about it too much, what people might say or think," said Brady, whose team is a rare playoff underdog Sunday. "I know we're playing against a very good football team. They're the first seed for a reason. They've had a great season and we're going to have to go into a really tough environment and play our best football, and it's a great opportunity for us."

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP

New England Patriots at Kansas City Chiefs



SOURCE: National Football League

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EAST OREGONIAN



Exclusively in the Wednesday East Oregonian and Hermiston Herald

cooking this week

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man -	-68		12:00 p.m. CBUT the Great British Baking Show (N)	FOOD Chopped	8.00 p.m. roos chapped
	I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I		FOOD Barefoot Contessa	4:00 p.m. FOOD Chopped 5:00 p.m. KONG-DT2 The Rachael	Friday
Meatless Wednesday: Flavortown Market goes to the greens and beans			1:00 p.m. CHAN Eat St. FOOD The Kitchen	Ray Show	12:00 p.m. KCTS Taste of Malaysia
Incancer	A. the aroon	and heans	auto a m COOD Holiday	6:00 p.m. FOOD Chopped	With Martin Yan
Market does	s to the green	s and scans	Gingerbread Showdown	7:00 p.m. FOOD Chopped	FOOD Barefoot Contessi 12:30 p.m. KCTS Simply Ming
		permarket, and the competi-	3:00 p.m. FOOD Holiday Baking Championship	8:00 p.m. FOOD Chopped	12:30 p.m. KCIS samply wing FOOD Giada's Holiday
By Andrew Warren	In the first round of the	tors are required to "shop"	4:00 p.m. FOOD Holiday Baking	Wednesday	Handbook
TV Media	competition, host Guy Fieri	for their own ingredients			1:00 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer
	gives the competing chefs a list of ingredients that their	from the store's shelves, and	5:00 p.m. FOOD Holiday Baking	12:00 p.m. KCTS Pati's Mexican	1:30 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer
No surprise here: our society is one that loves to eat	dishes must feature. Then, in	all sorts of twists tie into the	Championship 6:00 p.m. FOOD Holiday Baking	Table FOOD Farmhouse Rules	Woman
V is one that loves to eat	the second round, the chefs	unique milieu.	Championship	12-30 n.m. KCTS Christopher	2:00 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
meat. Flavorful chicken, rich	spin a wheel that randomly	The judges that Guy has	7:00 p.m. KCTS America's Test	Kimball's Milk Street	and Dives 2:30 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
beet, fall-off-the-bone pork and	gives each of them a meat	brought in to taste this week's	Kitchen From Cook's	1:00 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer	and Dives
the ocean's delicious bounty	dish that they must make	meatless meals are a who's	FOOD Holiday Baking	Woman	3:00 p.m. CHAN The Rachael Ray
are foods that have places of honor on our tables, but we all	venetarian Finally, Guy gets	who of Food Network celebrity	Championship	2:00 p.m. FOOD Guy's Grocery	Show
know that most of us should	tricky in the final round and	chefs. There's a pair of "Food Network Star" winners in	8:00 p.m. FOOD Guy's Grocery Games	3:00 p.m. CHAN The Rachael Ray	FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives
eat a little less meat — it's	takes must the remaining	Damaris Phillip ("Southern	0.50.50	Show	3:30 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
good for the environment and	competitors' shopping carts	at Heart") and Aarti Sequeira	Monday	FOOD Guy's Grocery	and Dives
it's good for our bodies, too.	before sending them out	("Aarti Party"), along with fre-	12:00 p.m. KCTS Martha Bakes	Games 4:00 p.m. KCTS The Great British	4:00 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives
Well the latest episode of	to shop for the ingredients	quent judge and "Top Chef. All-	FOOD The Kitchen	4:00 p.m. KCIS the Great British Baking Show	4:30 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
"Guy's Grocery Games 15	needed to make their guilty	Stars" winner Richard Blais.	12:30 p.m. KCTS Martha Stewart's	FOOD Guy's Grocery	
action meatless. Contestants	pleasure dishes.	Veggies don't have to be	Cooking School 1:00 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer	Games	5:00 p.m. KONG-DT2 The Rachael
cook through three vegetable-	"Guy's Grocery Games" is similar to other cooking	horing, and with those three		5:00 p.m. KONG-DT2 The Rachael Ray Show	Ray Show FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
inspired rounds as they try to	competition shows, with a	discerning judges ready to	1:30 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer	FOOD Guy's Grocery	and Dives
beat out the competition and	chef getting the ax after each	tarte everything on the plate.	Woman 2:00 p.m. FOOD Christmas Cookie	Games	5:30 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
prove that greens and beans	round once the judges have	the contestants in this week's		6:00 p.m. FOOD Guy's Grocery Games	and Dives 6:00 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
can be just as delicious as their	had a chance to taste and	"Guy's Grocery Games" have	3:00 p.m. CHAN The Rachael Ray	7:00 p.m. FOOD Guy's Grocery	and Disps
meatier counterparts in a new episode aining Wednesday, Dec.	evaluate all of the dishes. The	to pack as much punch into	Show FOOD Christmas Cookie		6:30 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
26, on Food Network.	contest is held inside of a su-	their dishes as they can.	Challenge	8:00 p.m. FOOD Guy's Grocery Games	and Dives
25, on Food Network.	contest s files		4:00 p.m. FOOD Christmas Cookie	Games	7:00 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives
-			Challenge 5:00 p.m. KONG-DT2 The Rachael	Thursday	7:30 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
	CONTRACTOR OF THE OWNER			12:00 p.m. KCTS Cook's Country	
And International Contraction of the local division of the local d			FOOD Christmas Cookie	From America's Test	8:00 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives
E LEOOD			Gallenge 6:00 p.m. FOOD Christmas Cookie		and unves
FAFUUD	11 40				Saturday
Lan Oob		ALL THE THE PARTY OF	7:00 p.m. FOOD Christmas Cookie	12:30 p.m. KC15 America's read	12:00 p.m. FOOD Trisha's
and the second se	- EH AA AA	and the second second second		libertrated	Couthorn Kitchen (N)
SALE AND			8:00 p.m. KCPQ MasterChef Junio Celebrity Showdown	1:00 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer Woman	12:30 p.m. FOOD Guy's Ranch
Statute States		All all and	FOOD Holiday Baking	1:30 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer	Kitchen (N) 1:00 p.m. CHAN Donut Showdown
the second second			Championship	Woman	
			Tuesday	2:00 p.m. FOOD Beat Bobby Flay	Championship
- CARLANCE HE	- 10 m			2:30 p.m. FOOD Beat Bobby Flay 3:00 p.m. CHAN The Rachael Ray	2:00 p.m. KCTS KCTS 9 Cooks FOOD Christmas Cookie
		A REAL PROPERTY AND ADDRESS OF	12:00 p.m. KCTS Lidia Celebrates	Show	challenet.
	the second second	THE OWNER WATER	America FOOD Trisha's Southern	FOOD Beat Bobby Flay	3:00 p.m. FOOD Chopped
And the second s		Concession of the local big lines	Kitchen	3:30 p.m. FOOD Beat Bobby Flay 4:00 p.m. FOOD Beat Bobby Flay	4-on m m FOOD Choosed
CONTRACTOR OF THE OWNER	ALL DE LE DE	THE PARTY OF THE P	12:30 p.m. FOOD Trisha's	4-20 mm EOOD Reat Bobby Flat	5.00 p.m. roop chapped
A DESCRIPTION OF A DESC	and the second se	NAME OF TAXABLE PARTY.	Southern Kitchen 1:00 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer	5:00 p.m. KONG-DT2 The Racha	el ano p.m. roop chopped
ALCONOMIC CONTRACTOR	Mark Street	AND ADDRESS OF TAXABLE PARTY.		Ray Show FOOD Beat Bobby Fla	8:00 p.m. FOOD Diners, Drive-Ins
STATES STATES			1:30 p.m. FOOD The Pioneer	5:30 p.m. FOOD Beat Bobby Fla	
Guy Fieri as seen in "Gu	y's Grocery Games"		Woman		~
buy rich as seen in the	dia te				

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