



Running Wild

With so many offensive weapons at the disposal of Patriots quarterback Tom Brady and Eagles counterpart Nick Foles, the team with the best running back performance may be the last one standing on Super Sunday.

The Patriots have traditionally depended on a by-committee approach but have found a regular running back this season in Dion Lewis. The Eagles traded for former Miami Dolphins running back Jay Ajayi during the regular season — a move that has paid dividends in forming a strong one-two punch with LeGarrette Blount.

LEWIS: A STEADY CONTRIBUTOR

Lewis rushed nine times for 34 yards and brought in seven of eight targets

for 32 yards in his team's 24-20 AFC championship game win over the Jacksonville Jaguars. He also gained 34 yards on two kickoff returns.

In the Patriots' divisional-round win over the Tennessee Titans, Lewis touched the ball 24 times (15 rushes, nine catches) for a team-high 141 yards from scrimmage.

The Patriots have depended on such steady performances out of Lewis the entire year.

A fifth-round pick of the Philadelphia Eagles in 2011, Lewis was

traded to the Browns in 2013. Since landing with the Patriots, he has been a solid contributor.

BLOUNT & AJAYI: TWO PEAS IN A POD

The best NFL teams often have two strong running backs to help keep defenses off balance. The Eagles certainly fit the bill with Blount and Ajayi.

Ajayi was acquired in a trade in October, giving the Eagles an outstanding one-two combination of speed and strength. We have seen the

running back position come up big in the Super Bowl as teams turn to their runners to control the clock late in the game.

Blount is a perennial playoff performer and can wear down defenses with his straightforward running style. Ajayi is more elusive but still packs a powerful punch at the line of scrimmage.

Blount and Ajayi could turn out to be the difference in Super Bowl LII, especially if the Eagles can jump out to an early lead.