



Tampa Bay Buccaneers tight end Rob Gronkowski celebrates one of his two touchdown catches in Super Bowl 55 against the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday in Tampa, Florida. Ben Liebenberg/AP

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 SUPER BOWL | TAMPA BAY 31, KANSAS CITY 9

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Tom Brady’s 7th title looks familiar

Buccaneers’ defense prevents the Chiefs, Mahomes from repeat win

BY ROB MAADDI
AP Pro Football Writer

TAMPA, Fla. — Tom Brady made his seventh Super Bowl title look familiar — despite moving south to a new team and conference during a pandemic.

Brady threw two touchdown passes to old friend Rob Gronkowski and one to good pal Antonio Brown, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers beat Patrick Mahomes and Kansas City 31-9 on their home field in Super Bowl 55 on Sunday.

The GOAT earned his fifth Super Bowl MVP award and extended his Super Bowl titles’ record in his 10th appearance, his first without Patriots coach Bill Belichick. The 43-year-old Brady broke his own mark for oldest player to win a Super Bowl and joined Hall of Famer Peyton Manning as the only quarterbacks to win one with multiple franchises.

“I’m not making any comparisons,” Brady said. “Experiencing it with this group of guys is amazing.”

Stunningly, it was also easier than any of his previous Super Bowl victories, which came by an average margin of five points. This was also the first time Mahomes lost by double digits in his four-year career.

The Buccaneers (15-5) won their second NFL title and first in 18 years while becoming the first team to play the big game at home, capping an unusual and challenging season played through the novel coronavirus. They won three road games as a wild-card team to reach the Super Bowl, and joined the NHL’s Lightning as a 2020 season champion. The Rays also went to the World Series but lost to the Dodgers.

“I’m so proud of all these guys,” Brady said. “We had a rough November but we came together at the right time. We knew this was gonna happen. We played our best game of the year.”

Tampa’s victory prevented Mahomes and the Chiefs (16-3) from becoming the first repeat champions since Brady’s Patriots did it in 2003-04.

“I didn’t see it coming at all,” Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. “I thought we were going to come in and play these guys just like we’ve been playing teams, and it didn’t happen that way. I give them credit on that.”



Tampa Bay Buccaneers outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett sacks Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes during the second half of the Super Bowl 55 on Sunday in Tampa, Florida. The Buccaneers won, 31-9.

The NFL completed its 269-game season on time without any cancellations, a remarkable accomplishment that required nearly 1 million COVID-19 tests for players and team personnel.

Due to the virus, only 25,000 mask-wearing fans were allowed in, including approximately 7,500 vaccinated health care workers who were given free tickets by the NFL. About 30,000 cardboard cutouts made the stadium look full.

A streaker wearing a hot-pink onesie eluded security and slid into the end zone with 5:03 left in the game. Mahomes and Kansas City’s high-powered offense never got that far against Tampa’s ferocious defense.

“Obviously I didn’t play the way I wanted to play,” Mahomes said. “What else can you say? All you can do is leave everything you have on the field. I feel like the guys did that. ... They beat us pretty good, the worst I’ve been beaten in a long time.”

Bruce Arians became the oldest coach at age 68 to win the Super Bowl. His mom, 95-year-old Kay Arians, witnessed it in person. Brady, Gronk and defensive coordinator Todd Bowles helped

Arians get that Vince Lombardi Trophy.

“This really belongs to the coaching staff and our players. I didn’t do a damn thing,” Arians said after he was handed the trophy.

Bowles devised a masterful plan to frustrate Mahomes and shut down the Chiefs, the complete opposite of Kansas City’s 27-24 win in Tampa in Week 12, when the Chiefs jumped to a 17-0 lead in the first quarter. Tyreek Hill had 269 yards receiving and three TDs in that one. He was held to 73 yards on seven catches.

After the Chiefs took a 3-0 early lead, it was all Brady and the Bucs.

Brady accomplished a career-first when he tossed an 8-yard TD pass to Gronkowski to give the Buccaneers a 7-3 lead with 37 seconds left in the first quarter. Brady’s nine Super Bowl teams in New England produced just three points total in the first quarter. Gronkowski, who came out of retirement to play with his buddy, caught his 13th and 14th postseason TDs from Brady. That broke the record they shared with Jerry Rice and Joe Montana, who combined for 12.

See Super Bowl / A5

Suh captures first Super Bowl title

Oregon native Ndamukong Suh may have already decided to re-sign with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers before Tom Brady joined the team in March, but Brady’s decision to sign with the Buccaneers made Suh’s choice easier.

The defensive tackle figured having the legendary quarterback and six-time Super Bowl champion on his side would boost the Buccaneers’ chances of reaching Super Bowl 55. The former Grant High School Generals star’s decision proved to be prescient.

Brady threw three touchdown passes to power the Buccaneers to a 31-9 win over Kansas City Sunday in Super Bowl 55, helping Suh win his first Super Bowl title.

Suh, 34, won a Super Bowl championship after missing out on capturing the Lombardi Trophy two years ago. Suh was a member of the Los Angeles Rams team that suffered a 13-3 loss to Brady and the New England Patriots in Super Bowl 53 in 2019.

Suh and the Tampa Bay defense completely shut down the high-scoring Kansas City offense throughout the game. Suh posted 1.5 sacks of the Buccaneers’ three sacks in the game. The Buccaneers took advantage of Kansas City’s makeshift offensive line and backups at the tackle positions to pressure Mahomes constantly during the game.

Suh finished his second year with the Buccaneers after signing a one-year, \$8 million contract in 2020. He’ll be a free agent for the third consecutive season, but he has said he would prefer to re-sign with the Buccaneers for the 2021 season.

— The Oregonian