

Notebook



Elsa/Getty Images

Michigan's Tom Brady has won two Super Bowl MVP awards quarterbacking the Patriots.

This one is big, folks

Beat the drums. Stoke the passions. Watch the polls and standings.

Nothing in football stirs the emotions like a game between natural rivals who are Nos. 1 and 2.

And you thought Sunday's Lions-Cardinals game was going to fly under the radar?

Not a chance. It is the NFL's version of One vs. Two — the low-flying Cardinals with one victory, against the declawed Lions with two victories.

So much is at stake.

They have the NFL's worst records — the Cardinals at 1-8, the Lions at 2-7 — and the loser will have the inside track on the first pick in the 2007 draft. Let the drama begin.

While the Lions and Cardinals get ready for the titanic scrum at University of Phoenix Stadium — and titanic is an appropriate word, considering the Titanic wound up on the bottom of the ocean on its maiden voyage and never surfaced again — it is time to reflect on today's real game — One vs. Two.

Ohio State and Michigan will decide this installment of their rivalry today in Columbus. Both schools have made a substantial impact on the NFL.

Here is how the schools compare:

■ **Players on NFL opening-day rosters in 2006:** Ohio State 39, Michigan 36. Miami (Fla.) was No. 1 with 42, followed by Florida State (41) and Tennessee (40). Georgia had 39 to tie Ohio State for fifth. Michigan was sixth. If anyone cares, Notre Dame and Southern California were tied for 12th with 26.

■ **Players drafted in 2006:** Ohio State nine, Michigan three. USC was first with 11. Ohio State was tied with Miami (Fla.) and Virginia Tech for second. Michigan was tied for 25th.

■ **Players drafted by the NFL since 2001:** Ohio State 45, Michigan 25. Ohio State's one-season high was 14 in 2004. Michigan's high was six, in '03.

■ **Players drafted first overall:** Ohio State, three — **Orlando Pace**, 1997; **Dan Wilkinson**, 1994; **Tom Cousineau**, 1979. Michigan, one — **Tom Harmon**, 1941.

■ **Super Bowl MVPs:** Michigan three, Ohio State none. Michigan's **Tom Brady** was a double with the 2001 and '03 Patriots teams. **Desmond Howard** won with the '96 Packers.

■ **Pro Football Hall of Fame:** Michigan, seven — **George Allen**, **Dan Dierdorf**, **Len Ford**, **Benny Friedman**, **Elroy Hirsch**, **Bill Hewitt** and **Tom Mack**. Hirsch and Allen attended more than one college. Ohio State, six — **Sid Gillman**, **Lou Groza**, **Dante Lavelli**, **Jim Parker**, **Paul Warfield** and **Bill Willis**.

Clearance sales

Former Lions quarterback **Joey Harrington** can shop for some bargains when he gets to Ford Field on Thursday with the Dolphins.

Full price for Lions replica jerseys is \$75. Harrington's Lions jerseys — blue and white — have been slashed to \$20. That puts Harrington in good, or bad, company with another former Lion, **Charles Rogers**. Rogers' jersey has been cut to \$20.

There are slight discounts on jerseys of some active players, but the biggest bargain is \$40 for a **Mike Williams** jersey.

Another cut — the player and the jersey price — is coming.



Lisa Blumenfeld/Getty Images

Chargers RB LaDainian Tomlinson leads the NFL in touchdowns (18). He has 15 in his past five games.

LT moving up

Chargers running back **LaDainian Tomlinson** is regarded by many as the NFL's best player, and his accomplishments rank among the greats.

Tomlinson leads the league in touchdowns (18) and yards from scrimmage (1,309). In his sixth pro season, LT has 98 touchdowns.

Tomlinson scored four touchdowns in the comeback victory at Cincinnati. That gave him 15 in the past five games, the most for a five-game period.

Jim Brown had the previous record with 14 in five games.

"It's kind of an unreal situation, because when you talk about Jim Brown and what he's meant to not only me but a lot of other guys, it's kind of like a heroic figure that you have in a guy like Jim Brown," Tomlinson said during a conference call this week.

Best bets

Instant Repays for Week 11 ...

- Vikings +3.5 at Dolphins
- Packers +6 over Patriots
- Bengals +3.5 at Saints
- **Best Bet:** Vikings
- **Records:** Repays 13-13, Bets Bets 3-6-1

Lions at Cardinals: 4 p.m. Sunday | TV/radio: FOX/WKRC 97.1 | Line: Cardinals by 2

LIONS 2-MINUTE DRILL

BY MIKE O'HARA
THE DETROIT NEWS

1 Rattle the rook
There haven't been many times this season when the Lions have made a quarterback uncomfortable for a long time. Sunday's game at Arizona has to be an exception.

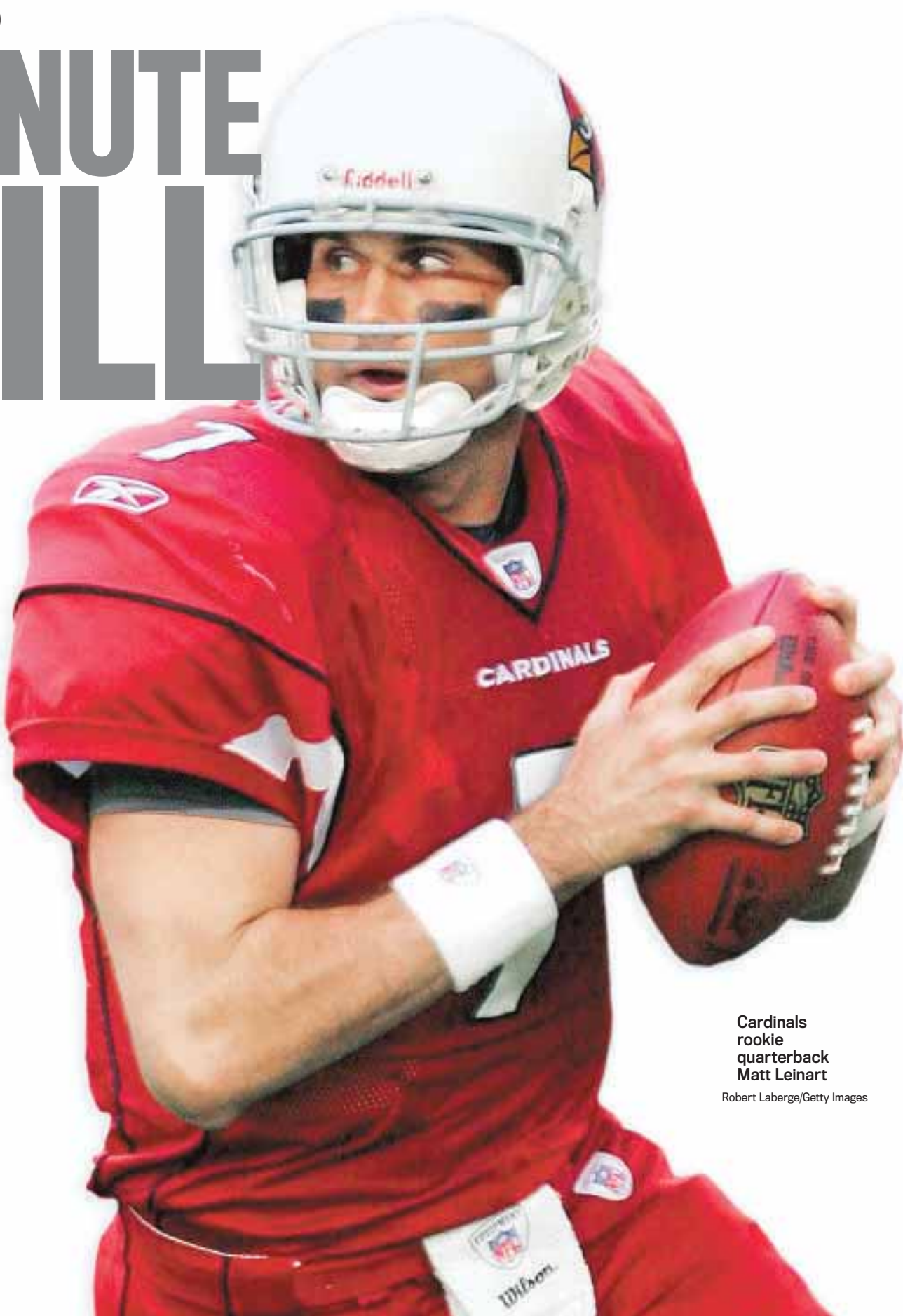
The Lions ought to be able to dictate the tempo against rookie QB **Matt Leinart**. It is important not to let Leinart get into a rhythm and build confidence.

"Playing any quarterback, you want to get them out of their rhythm," **S Terrence Holt** said. "Him being a young quarterback, you want him to do the same thing. Nothing changes."

Quarterbacks have completed 68.5 percent of their passes against the Lions, with 15 TDs and five INTs. Last week second-year 49ers QB **Alex Smith** went 14-for-20 and evaded the rush by rolling out.

"The older the quarterbacks, the less likely it is you can get them out of a rhythm," Holt said. "It just depends on the guy. We want to break his rhythm the best we can. We just want to break the offense's rhythm the best we can."

"Sometimes, you can dictate different things by pressure."



Cardinals rookie quarterback **Matt Leinart**

Robert Laberge/Getty Images

2 Get your focus straight

A week ago, the Lions were upbeat and confident — they were coming off a convincing victory over the Falcons and their next three teams were against teams with losing records (49ers, Cardinals, Dolphins). All that exploded in their faces with the loss to the 49ers.

There was a different air — quieter and more subdued — this week. If the Lions are focused, it's a good thing. If they're deflated, it's bad.

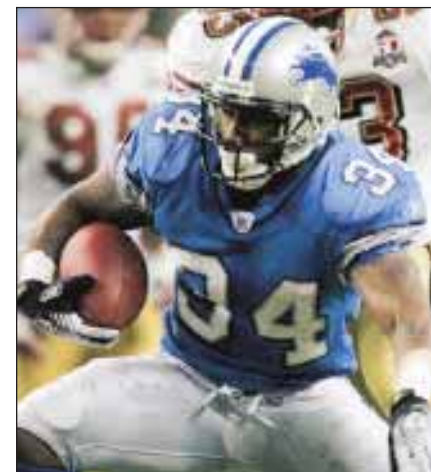


Stephen Dunn/Getty Images

Cardinals coach **Dennis Green**

3 Protect the ball

A statistic that continues to be amazing is how the Lions (minus-5) cannot win with a negative turnover ratio. They have lost 54 straight games when they lose in turnover ratio. They lost four fumbles and an interception to the 49ers. That added up to a loss. Cincinnati and St. Louis are the only teams with a positive turnover ratio that have losing records. Seattle and New Orleans are the only winning teams with a negative ratio.



Lions running back **Kevin Jones**

4 Dominate up front

If the Lions don't dominate the running game Sunday, they never will. Arizona is last in the NFL in rushing and did not improve this season, as was expected with the signing of free-agent TB **Edgerrin James**. As a team, the Cardinals average 2.8 yards per attempt. James' average is 2.9. **Kevin Jones** has run effectively most of the season. If the Lions can get a lead and pound the ball, Jones can have a big game.



Lions defensive end **Cory Redding**

Daniel Mears/The Detroit News



Lions receiver **Mike Furrey**

5 Balance on offense

The passing game has become a one-receiver threat, with **Jon Kitna** going to **Roy Williams**. There have been big-play contributions from the tight ends, but the other receivers have been shut down. **Mike Furrey** got free for nine catches against the Jets but had only eight catches combined in the other three games.

Prediction

It might be their last chance to win.

LIONS 20, CARDINALS 17

Bill Kostroun/Associated Press

NFC North

Bears (8-1)

QB **Rex Grossman** has remained healthy, starting every game. He played three games as a rookie in 2003, and injuries limited him to six games the past two seasons. GM **Jerry Angelo** hasn't begun negotiations on a contract extension for Grossman, drafted in the first round in 2003 and signed through next season. "We like Rex," Angelo told reporters. "He's still a work in progress. The things we see for the most part have been pretty good. When he has a poor game, it's obviously bothersome, and I'm not going to say it's no big deal."



Packers (4-5)

Rookies and veterans who have been largely untested have developed into key players for the Packers and are responsible for their surprising success under first-year coach **Mike McCarthy**. Former Western Michigan receiver **Greg Jennings** (28 receptions, 485 yards) has been a good complement to **Donald Driver**; TE **David Martin** has become more than a quality backup; C **Scott Wells** was given a long-term extension; and RB **Ahman Green**, 29, is not showing his age or wear and tear of carrying the running load (616 yards, 4.3 average).



Vikings (4-5)

Coach **Brad Childress** might make one change in the offensive line at Miami, with **Mike Rosenthal** likely a replacement for **Marcus Johnson** at right tackle. "I look at that every week and see where we are at and see if somebody gives us a better chance than somebody else," Childress said. S **Dwight Smith** was deactivated for the opener in a disciplinary move. He did not play the first series against the Packers. Smith admitted he was late to a team meeting the day before the game. QB **Brad Johnson's** production (one TD, five INTs) has declined in the Vikes' three-game losing streak.



Lions (2-7)

Backup QB **Josh McCown**, who spent the first four seasons of his career in Arizona, enjoyed his stay. The Cardinals began play in their new stadium this season. "I'm really excited to get to play in that stadium," McCown said. "I had to talk about it in all these banquets for four years. Now that I didn't get to play in it, it kind of stunk. To get to go back and see it at least, and be in it, is kind of cool." McCown was 10-12 as a starter. Barring a setback, DT **Shaun Cody** will return after missing four games because of a dislocated toe.

