

## A classic Superbowl match-up

Written by Ryan T. Scott  
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In this day and age, the sports media can be quite thirsty about even the simplest little issue, and it doesn't help that every knucklehead on Earth gets to weigh-in with the likes of Twitter. But for the football purists who like to watch some real "rock'em sock'em head knock'em football" (as my high school defensive coach Cunningham used to say...and which I loved to play), they could not have asked for a better match-up than the Green Bay Packers line up against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

I do believe that I suggested that the Steelers would be one of the teams lining up for this gridiron war, and I also believe that the other team doesn't really have a chance no matter who it is – which is quite contrary to what the Las Vegas betting line suggests. Incredibly, the Vegas line-makers initially determined that the Packers were slight favorites, though the two-week waiting period before the game will certainly allow for some movement on that professional prediction. The Steelers are entering their third Super Bowl in six years. In my humble opinion, that means a whole lot.

Injuries mean a whole lot as well. Having set my fantasy football fortunes on the Green Bay Packers this year, I'm all too aware of the major void created when Green Bay's behemoth tight end, Jermichael Finley, was knocked out for the year with a serious knee injury. Finley was Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers' "Linus blanket" on the field. At 6'5" and nearly 250lbs, Finley was the biggest problem that the Packers had for other teams to match-up against. Typically the free safety of the opposing team is the primary person in charge of covering tight ends. Though Steeler safety Troy Polamalu has the most famous mane of hair in the history of the NFL, and is possibly the best player at the safety position in today's game, he only measures in at 5'10" and 207lbs. With Finley still unable to play in the Super Bowl, Polamalu will be free to do his usual uncanny roaming around the field without worry of the tight end version of Sasquatch.

It's curious that the Steelers are not being vaunted as a dynasty, as were the New England Patriots when they headed to their third Super Bowl in the first decade of the century. The whole world seemed to drool over quarterback Tom Brady's silky smooth passing touch, as well as the supposed Einstein-like brilliance of their head coach Bill Belichick in 2004. The Steelers have Ben Roethlisberger as their quarterback, who started off the year being beaten down and suspended for a second indiscretion with the ladies. While the case never went to court, Big

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Ben became just plain old Ben, and has had to be vigilant about marketing a better public image ala Michael Vick. Roethlisberger seems to be his same old shifty self on the field (no pun initially intended), and with two Super Bowls to his name – the last of which in 2008 ended with Roethlisberger delivering perhaps the greatest pass to ever end a Superbowl – I can't see betting against the big fella.

And then of course there is Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin who led the team to the aforementioned 2008 Super Bowl victory. Tomlin embodies every bit of an army general with his meticulous, wide-eyed, forceful nature. I can't say that I've heard enough about Tomlin's powerful presence from the media at large, but people only need to look at the way in which said presence caused the most ridiculously boisterous and entertaining coach in NFL history, Rex Ryan of the New York Jets, to wilt with reverence, rather than go his usual "this is personal" route. Ryan wasn't bringing that noise to "Tomlin's Table", and the Jets wilted right along with their coach. Tomlin's forceful handshake at the end of that AFC Championship game seemed to also suggest "we'll whoop you again if you mess around and start talkin' stuff next year pal".

To defeat some Super Bowl veterans like Tomlin and Roethlisberger – and the whole Steelers organization for that matter, since their franchise is the leader in the clubhouse with six Superbowl championships – it's going to take a fairly prodigious performance by Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers to lead his team past the Steelers #1 ranked defense. I mean if a brotha has to use a big word like prodigious, you know it's going to take something special.

All I really know is that the Super Bowl commercials better be better than the sad bunch of productions we've seen for the last few years. I'm almost looking forward to watching the Puppy Bowl on the Animal Planet at halftime instead. FYI to the fellas: If your Super Bowl watching involves the ladies, the Puppy Bowl is a slam-dunk homeboy. Enjoy the game.