
THE SPORTIER

Super Bowl LV Update: Defense Wins Championships

Even though this Super Bowl could have gone many different ways, the final result of tonight's game could likely not have been predicted by anybody. With two star offensive tackles (Mitchell Schwartz and Eric Fisher) among the four offensive linemen ruled out for Kansas City, Patrick Mahomes looked helpless, having to avoid pressure on almost every single drop back. Tampa Bay defensive coordinator Todd Bowles was able to take advantage of a banged up Kansas City offensive line, as he was allowed to essentially recreate the effect of a blitz by sending only four rushers to attack the weak offensive line, all the while keeping many of the linebackers and secondary players focused on the lethal receivers of the Chiefs. This strategy worked out perfectly, as Mahomes was unable to find any receivers while twisting and turning from pursuing defenders. The high-powered Chiefs offense, with a broken offensive line and dropped passes in key situations, were unbelievably held out of the end zone for the entire game. The number one passing offense had just 53% of its passing attempts completed, with Mahomes throwing two interceptions to go along with those completions. Even though much of the credit during this game should be given to the Buccaneers defense for neutralizing the lethal Kansas City offense, the Tampa Bay offense was able to put up 31 points to complement their defensive performance. Bucs quarterback Tom Brady, who only had 29 passing attempts, completed 21 passes for a total of 201 yards and three touchdowns, and was not overpowering in this game. But the weapons that followed him to Tampa Bay, including Rob Gronkowski, Antonio Brown, and Leonard Fournette, all scored. Even though the Super Bowl MVP Award could have gone to a key member of the Tampa Bay defense, such as Shaquil Barrett, who recorded the most hits on Mahomes during the game, it would have been too difficult to name just one player on the outstanding Tampa Bay defense that deserved the award compared to the other 10 men on the unit. This same situation coincidentally arose in Super Bowl XLII, where the Giants defense held an at-the-time undefeated Patriots team to just 14 points in that Super Bowl victory. Eli Manning received his first Super Bowl MVP during that game, just as Brady got his fifth tonight. Brady, winning his 7th Super Bowl (more than any single NFL franchise), was able to lead the Buccaneers on an 8-game win streak to finish out the season, culminating in him being able to bring a second Super Bowl to Tampa Bay, with their other being in 2002. It is clear that some of the 11 penalties for 120 yards against the Chiefs may have been questionable, but the aggressive play style of the Chiefs defense did not help their cause, resulting in multiple holding and pass interference calls. Mahomes, who will likely need surgery his foot in the offseason, as it was reported that he was dealing with turf toe, tried his absolute best to keep his team in the game, proven by his throws on the run and his throws while falling. Unfortunately, his best efforts were not enough tonight, as the Buccaneers defense proved to be the X-factor in the game that put a pause on the Chiefs dynasty for at least one season.

Sources:

[ESPN](#), [Sporting News](#)