

Baltimore Ravens



Season Finish: 11-5, Wild Card, 6th Seed in Playoffs

OFFENSE

That significant shift in mind-set for the Ravens, whose offensive strategy for nearly a decade was to not mess up the defense's masterpiece, comes at a crucial time. Leaguewide scoring has risen steadily in recent years as rule changes and the increasing popularity of the spread offense have pried open the passing game.

The rookie quarterback Joe Flacco is credited with shoring up the Ravens' confidence in their offense. His strong arm and even-keeled demeanor impressed the defensive veterans who set the tone for the team.

Still, the Ravens looked a lot like the 2000 team on the field until recently, striving for balance even as Flacco emerged. With three running backs, they rank first in the N.F.L. in rushing percentage, running the ball 56 percent of the time, well above the league average of 44.6 percent and bucking the trend toward the pass-heavy game. They were fourth in average rushing yards.

One of their favorite plays is

a run behind an unbalanced line, with both tackles playing on the same side of the center. That explains why the Ravens ranked first in the league in third- and fourth-and-1 situations, converting 89.3% of the time, and why they were ninth in drives that lasted at least five minutes.

DEFENSE

There are several keys to forcing turnovers, players and coaches said, and the Ravens have successfully employed most of them in posting the NFL's best turnover ratio (plus 13).

It's all in how players approach the game, according to Ravens defensive coordinator Rex Ryan. Players must want turnovers and seek opportunities to create them, as Ivy did against Pittsburgh.

That attitude has helped the Ravens intercept more passes than any team in the NFL and has them on the verge of finishing with the franchise's best turnover ratio since the defense of 2000.



Ravens sack Steelers' Ben Roethlisberger

Even rookies are playing a role. Landry, a rookie, is tied for the team lead with five interceptions. Pro Bowlers Reed and cornerback Chris McAlister also have five interceptions.

The Ravens' pass rush has also helped the turnover production. When an opposing quarterback is under pressure, he is more likely to make hasty decisions and errant throws.

The Ravens are second in the NFL with 57 sacks, and defensive lineman Trevor Pryce (12) and linebackers Suggs (8.5) and Bart Scott (9.5) account for more than half of those.

RECORD	TEAM STATISTICS (REG. SEASON)	RAVENS	OPPONENTS
1. W 17-10 against Cincinnati	Total First Downs	300	288
2. W 28-10 against Cleveland	First Downs (Rushing-Passing Penalty)	132-147-21	58-152-18
3. L 20-23 to Pittsburgh	Third Down Conversions	95/232	71-212
4. L 10-13 to Tennessee	Fourth Down Conversions	7/11	3/16
5. L 3-31 to Indianapolis	Total Offensive Yards	5184	4177
6. W 27-13 against Miami	Offense (Play-Average Yards)	1058-4.9	928-4.5
7. W 29-10 against Oakland	Total Rushing Yards	2376	1302
8. W 37-27 against Cleveland	Rushing (Plays-Average Yards)	562-4.0	366-3.6
9. W 41-13 against Houston	Total Passing Yards	2808	2875
10. L 10-31 to New York Giants	Passing (Comp-Att-Int-Avg)	261-433-12-7.1	276-528-26-5.9
11. W 36-7 against Philadelphia	Sacks	34	33
12. W 34-3 against Cincinnati	Field Goals	28/35	21/22
13. W 24-10 against Washington	Touchdowns	42	26
14. L 9-13 to Pittsburgh	(Rushing-Passing>Returns-Defense)	20-16-0-6	4-17-2-3
15. W 33-24 against Dallas	Time of Possession	33:22	27:00
16. W 27-7 against Jacksonville	Turnover Ratio	+13	-