NOTABLE PERFORMANCES FROM THE PATRIOTS WEEK 2 WIN OVER THE STEELERS

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On the afternoon of September. 20th, the New England Patriots delivered a gift to a packed crowd at Gillette Stadium, stifling the Pittsburgh Steelers to earn their first win of the 2026 season with a final score of 20 - 3. Despite some key injuries to important key players suffered suffering injuries on or before Sunday, the game was mainly dictated by the defenses with only 13 total points being cumulatively scored by the offenses.

Though the weather wasn't ideal, the overall team effort displayed on the field by the home team was a mixed bag. As previously mentioned, tThe Patriots' defense led by ascending defensive coordinator Zak Kuhr did a fantastic job for the second week in a row, only allowing onea field goal to the Aaron Rodgers-led offense and returning a fumble for six. Special teams had a solid day, with the only blemish being a missed 47-yard field goal by Andy Borregales—somewhat forgivable given the conditions. The offense was anemic, and much will be said on their play as the week progresses.

Two individual offensive players to note were quarterback Drake Maye and wide receiver Romeo Doubs, who were much maligned following the loss to Seattle in the season opener. Against the Steelers, both showed signs of improvement and some continuing issues from Week 1.

Quarterback Drake Maye

After a less-than-stellar opening to the season, Maye's performance was better in Week 2 but not up to the standard he set in 2025. The box score is mediocre: he made 14 passes out of 22 attempts and gained 17 on the ground for a total of 208 yards but lost 17 on three sacks and threw an interception. He registered a passer rating of 75.6, a bit below the league average of around 90.

There were a couple of things that were troubling, especially when considering his first performance. At Seattle, a big critique of Maye's playmaking was a combination of simply being too late in throwing the ball and not putting enough strength into some of his passes.

Those mistakes, at first glance, showed up again against the Steelers. During his interception in the third quarter, Maye undersold a lob to TE Hunter Henry, who was running a crossing route to the far sideline that should have been cleared of defenders due to routes run by receivers. If he threw the ball farther towards the sideline, a catch was probably the outcome of the play. Instead, it dropped short, right into the arms of a backpedaling Patrick Queen. Later in the quarter, Maye finds a wide-open Romeo Doubs for a 63-yard gain. Even though this was a great play, if Maye can hit Doubs in stride, it's most likely it likely would have been a touchdown. Instead, Doubs stopped to catch the ball, allowing a Steelers defender to force him out of bounds.

The biggest improvement Maye made was staying patient, something he noted he had to work on following the loss to Seattle. There weren't any forced "big plays" by Maye in this game, which drastically reduces the number of major mistakes that could at least in part be caused by him. However, the interception and one of his sacks occurred in Steelers territory, which killed the momentum on those drives.

At the moment, these mistakes shouldn't be too concerning. Maye and the offense as whole took a couple weeks to truly get going in 2025 (without a receiver like AJ Brown, like now), so it's entirely possible the same occurs this season. On the other hand, Maye didn't necessarily have these issues last year. To speculate, a reason for the sudden change could be that his shoulder injury from the playoffs is still lingering. His play will certainly be worth monitoring over the next couple of weeks.

Wide Receiver Romeo Doubs

Similar to Maye, Doubs got a lot of heat due to his extremely poor performance in the season opener. This week, he bounced back with an interesting stat line, generating 96 yards of offense with three catches on four targets.

Doubs was far from perfect, as he had another poor drop during the fourth quarter on a crucial third down. Four targets for a receiver of Doubs's nature is also poor, considering his usage at Green Bay, his former team.



Elijah Ponder of the New England with the football with a Pittsburgh Steelers trying to tackle him. The Patriots won 20 to 3 against the Steelers on Sunday, September 20, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF @PATRIOTS ON INSTAGRAM

Doubs's biggest play, the aforementioned 63-yard bomb, may be more indicative of Josh McDaniel's playcalling abilities and the Steelers defense than Doub's talent as a receiver. According to Evan Lazar, the all-22 view of the play reveals that Steelers defender #22 takes wide receiver Demario Douglas's intermediate route, leaving Doubs open behind him. Despite this, Doubs can't be faulted for doing his job properly and taking advantage of McDaniel's system and mistakes by the opposing team.

Earlier in the quarter, Doubs hauls in a 29- yard pass down the sideline, which live looked like a great play by him. He seemingly was only supposed to be running a simple out to the near sideline, but after Maye escaped a four-man rush to his side of the field, Doubs leaked behind the defense up the sideline to get open. Then, Maye found him for the big gain.

The offense failed to capitalize on the positive plays Doubs managed to generate by only netting three points in the drives in which they occurred. However, both plays can be indicative of signs of improvement with Doubs. He could be slowly growing into McDaniel's system and is in the process of building chemistry with his quarterback. It's highly likely that the version of Doubs we see this early into the season is the worst version of him, and that his impact in the offense will positively grow as the season continues.

MLB Playoffs Preview



Jackson Bryaan of the Milwaukee Brewers finishing a swing during a game. The Brewers won against the Baltimore Orioles 3-0 on Sunday, September 30, 2026.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @BREWERS ON INSTAGRAM

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With the Major League Baseball season coming to a close and the playoffs on the horizon, some clubs look ready to rock in October while others don't.

This past season, many teams have had their moments — some even looked unstoppable at times. Nevertheless, when the leaves turn brown and the weather gets cooler, that's when the players come out to play.

Often, the teams who have the most postseason success are those who have the best pitching and the players who shine in key moments.

While there are some late-season shockers, some teams, like the Atlanta Braves, Los Angeles Dodgers, Tampa Bay Rays and Milwaukee Brewers, have remained dominant the entire season.

With the Braves clinching the playoffs this year, they have officially made the postseason in the last eight out of nine seasons.

Along with their playoff experience, the Braves' Ronald Acuña Jr., Austin Riley and Ozzie Albies were all a part of the 2021 World Series championship-winning squad, meaning the Braves have players who know what it takes to win it all.

Additionally, the Braves can hit the ball over the fence with ease as first baseman Matt Olson has 40 home runs and five different players on their roster, including Olson, have at least 20 home runs.

Unfortunately for the Braves, they aren't the only ones who have playoff experience. The Dodgers have a 14-year postseason streak, the Rays have made the playoffs in six out of the last eight years and the Brewers have made it in eight out of the last nine years. However, the Dodgers have back-to-back World Series championships and a lineup that would make you check if you're looking unwittingly at the All-Star team.

They have MVP candidate Shohei Ohtani, followed by Mookie Betts, Freddie Freeman and other lethal sluggers Max Muncy and Andy Pages.

The Dodgers also have arguably one of the most talented starting rotations of all time, featuring star-studded pitchers such as Yoshinobu Yamamoto, 2-time Cy Young award winner Blake Snell and last year's Cy Young award winner Tarik Skubal.

The Brewers also have elite pitching and probable Cy Young award winner Jacob Misiorowski, who has the lowest ERA in baseball.

While the Brew Crew reached the playoffs in seven out of the previous eight seasons, they only managed to make it to two championship series in that time span. They also never made it to the World Series.

Given their recent playoff hardships, it's hard to say that this year will be any different for Milwaukee, but this could be the year that the Brewers get over the hump.

The Rays also have a similar tendency to underperform in the postseason. Despite making the playoffs five times in the previous seven seasons, Tampa Bay did not reach the championship series except for one year, 2020, when they made it to the World Series.

The Rays are solid all around, and while their bullpen has not been up to their elite standards, their improved hitting and starting pitching has made up for it.

Recent trends say that we shouldn't expect much from the Rays this postseason. However, all those early round exits came when the Rays lacked hitting. New additions Junior Caminero, Chandler Simpson and Johnathan Aranda give Tampa Bay a real chance at winning it all this postseason.

Another team that has been winning consistently throughout the entire season is the Yankees. While the Yanks have been a slight step below the four teams already mentioned, they still are one of the best teams in baseball.

New York has scary talent including power hitters Ben Rice, Luis Garcia Jr. and, Aaron Judge. Judge has been injured for most of the season but is likely to come back once the playoffs start.

On the pitching side, the Yankees have probable Cy Young award winner Cam Schlittler followed by three other elite-level starters in the rotation. If Judge is back in the lineup, New York could do some real damage this October and be a strong contender to win it all.

The Cubs' Pete Crow-Armstrong is a National League (NL) Most Valuable Player (MVP) frontrunner with 45 home runs and 38 stolen bases along with 107 RBIs. The Cubs are a fun team who love to hit homers as they lead the league in home runs and have seven different players who have at least 15 homers. Their pitching is questionable.

The Phillies have had a similar roster for the past five years. Kyle Schwarber, a standout, also has 45 homers this season as well. In 2022 and 2023, Philly made it to the World Series and Championship Series. However, they have lost in the divisional round in each of the last two years. The Phillies are certainly a talented ball club, although they are essentially a worse version of themselves in 2022 and 2023, and with so many other talented teams, it may be tough to spread the brotherly love this postseason.

One team that is hot and ready to go for October is the San Diego Padres. "Slam Diego" has won 13 out of their last 14 games, going from being out of the Wild Card to sitting in a comfortable 5-game lead over the chasing Diamondbacks. While their roster does not compare to teams such as the Dodgers and Rays, the Padres are hot at the right time. If San Diego carries their dominance into October, they might end up making a lot of noise during the playoffs this year.

Through the Boston Red Sox's first 78 games, the Red Sox were 32-46. They would go on to win 21 out of their next 24 games and get as close as half a game behind the Yankees.

Unfortunately, a 15-game win streak in July doesn't get you anything in October. Boston has not been on their A-game recently, losing seven out of their last 11 games. Most of those losses being to teams that are below .500. The Red Sox also scored five runs in only three of their last 15 games. While their rotation is one of the best in baseball, if they can't score runs, they won't be making it very far this postseason.

There are boatloads of storylines and loaded teams going into this postseason. Some ball clubs like the Brewers are trying to get over the hump and prove baseball fans wrong. Others, like the Cubs, have their sights set on winning the World Series despite not having the best team on paper.

No matter who you are, October baseball is thrilling to watch. Watching ballparks packed with fans waving towels up in the air and hearing the crowd pop when a player crushes a home run is an experience like no other.

Playoff baseball isn't just more exciting, it's a whole different game.