

NFL WEEK 6 WINNERS, LOSERS

Cowboys looking like Super Bowl contender

Lorenzo Reyes
USA TODAY

Week 6 in the NFL, frankly, was rather underwhelming.

It was marked by blowouts and a lack of drama, but there were still plenty of takeaways to be gleaned. And perhaps no one has more to celebrate than the Cardinals, who took down the Browns and remained the NFL's lone unblemished team at 6-0.

But the Cowboys also have plenty to be happy about, too, after they beat the Patriots for the first time since 1996 and continued to roll on offense. They have star power all throughout their team, but franchise quarterback Dak Prescott is the catalyst that has Dallas looking like a Super Bowl contender.

Here are the winners and losers of Week 6.

WINNERS

Dak Prescott as an MVP candidate

Perhaps more so than any recent season, the early battle for the MVP race seems to be filled with several contenders. From Kyler Murray of the Cardinals, Josh Allen of the Bills, Tom Brady of the Buccaneers, Matthew Stafford of the Rams to Lamar Jackson of the Ravens, the list is full of passers with different skill sets. After the Cowboys battled the Patriots to overtime and then prevailed 35-29, add Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott to that list.

Prescott has completed 73.1% of his passes (which ranks second in the NFL) for 1,813 yards (fifth), with 16 touchdowns (tied for third), with a QB rating of 115 (fourth). Prescott has been especially reliable for the Cowboys (5-1) in the clutch. And while the Dallas roster is exceptionally talented, Prescott has elevated the play of the young players – especially the young receivers like CeeDee Lamb, who caught the game-winning touchdown pass against New England. Prescott's understanding of the Dallas offense under coordinator Kellen Moore is remarkable and his ability to make downfield throws while on the move makes him so difficult to defend. Not only is Prescott playing at an elite level, he has the Cowboys looking like a problem for the rest of the NFC.

The Bengals offense with Ja'Marr Chase

These are not the same Bengals that we had seen over the last half decade. This young team took another step in a dominant 34-11 victory against the Lions. Second-year passer Joe Burrow has been excellent, but it's his former LSU teammate and rookie No. 5 overall pick Ja'Marr Chase who has electrified this offense. Chase now has 553 yards and five touchdowns on 27 catches this year. His receiving yards are second most in NFL history for a player through his first six games.

Just watch the effort that Chase made on the Joe Mixon touchdown to make the key block down the field. These are the effort plays that good teams make. The Bengals have become one of the most reliable red-zone teams in the NFL. They entered Week 6 ranked third in the league (80%) and converted



Dak Prescott threw for 445 yards and three TDs in the Cowboys' overtime win over the Patriots. DAVID BUTLER II/USA TODAY SPORTS

both their trips inside the 20. Are the Bengals a playoff team? It's still far too early to tell. While they toppled a capable Steelers team in Week 3 and an inconsistent Vikings squad in the season opener, their other victories have come against the Lions and Jaguars, who have combined for a 1-11 record. They need more games like this against playoff-caliber opponents. At the very least, it's safe to say this team just being in the conversation shows how much it has grown.

LOSERS

The entire Week 6 slate

As far as parity and entertainment goes, Week 6 was a dud. Only one of the 1 p.m. ET games was a one-score game with any drama, that was between the Panthers and the Vikings. Even then, it only became that way late in the game. The best game of the week, far and away, was the one between the Patriots and the Cowboys in the later afternoon window. Other than that, the only other one-score games Sunday were between the Dolphins and the Jaguars in London, which took place in the morning, and the Steelers-Seahawks matchup in prime time.

The average margin of victory in Sunday's games was 15.4 points. Even the night game, which is usually the marquee matchup of the week, was dulled because Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson was sidelined against the Steelers because of a finger injury. And while the game ended up being decided in overtime, the primary source of drama came down to an odd officiating sequence and several turnovers. NFL Sundays are typically wild and this sometimes happens. The good news is that Monday night's game should have been an interesting look at a pair of teams in the AFC that should be up for playoff spots in the Bills and the Titans.

Kansas City ball security

The second half of the Chiefs' 31-13 victory against the Washington Football Team showed just how dangerous this team can be when its offense is clicking. The Chiefs scored 21 unanswered points

after halftime to run away with the game. But ball security issues are a major problem for the reigning AFC champions. And if the problem persists, it threatens their chances of making another deep run in the postseason.

With three more giveaways against Washington, the Chiefs now rank dead last in the NFL with 14. Most problematic is that 10 of those have come after the Chiefs have crossed the 50-yard line, essentially wiping out scoring opportunities. The good news is that so many of these have been careless mistakes. Just on Sunday, one of quarterback Patrick Mahomes' interceptions glanced off of receiver Tyreek Hill's hands. Fellow receiver Mecole Hardman fumbled in the second quarter, an issue the Chiefs' skill players have had all season, loose handling of the ball. Mahomes, at times, looks as if he's trying to do too much. He has thrown at least one pick in each of his last five games. He is tied for second most in the league with eight. Last season, he had six in the entire season. The Chiefs are still one of the most explosive and dangerous teams in the league, but if they don't solve their ball security problems, that alone won't be enough to get them out of tough matchups.

Chargers' run defense

The Chargers were a surprise upstart in the NFL this season, and still are, but their 34-6 loss against the Ravens revealed their most concerning flaw. A rushing defense that came into Week 6 ranked last in the entire league (157.6 yards allowed per game) was mastered by Baltimore. To be clear, the Ravens' rushing outfit would cause fits for any defense. But Baltimore used six different ball carriers to total 187 rushing yards. In Los Angeles' only other loss of the season, a Week 2 game against the Cowboys, Dallas rushed for 198 yards, meaning that in the Chargers' losses, they gave up an average of 192.5 yards per game.

In LA's victories, however, that number drops to 147.5. Taking out last week's 47-42 shootout victory against the Browns in which Cleveland rushed for 230 yards, that number drops to 120. When the Chargers give up that many rushing yards, it does two things: The

defense wears down and stays on the field – the Ravens held the ball for 38:07 of game time – but it also keeps the explosive Chargers offense on the sideline.

Sam Darnold and the Panthers' receivers

After starting the season 3-0, the Panthers have been complete opposites and are in the middle of a three-game losing streak after they fell to the Vikings 34-28. All three losses have come with star running back Christian McCaffrey sidelined. McCaffrey was placed on injured reserve Saturday, so he'll be on that for at least two more games. McCaffrey, one of the top pass-catching backs in the NFL, had been a safety valve for Sam Darnold. Without him, Carolina's receivers have underwhelmed. Against Minnesota, the Panthers had six dropped passes, several of which would've extended drives had they resulted in first downs.

Darnold finished the game 17 of 41 passing for 207 yards with one touchdown and one interception for a QB rating of 55.8. His first half was even worse. He finished with a QB rating of 17.8. But the drops appeared to impact Darnold's decision-making and accuracy. While Darnold's play improved in the fourth – he helped the Panthers score 11 unanswered points in the final five minutes of the game – he also missed on several throws he should've completed. Carolina's schedule eases up over the next couple of weeks before it stiffens at the end of the year. But if the Panthers can't figure out how to win without McCaffrey and if they can't stop the self-enforced errors, their hot start to the season may just end up going to waste.

Vic Fangio

The Broncos got cooked at home against a division opponent that just had its head coach resign less than a week before the game because of leaked emails that showed misogynistic and homophobic language. And it was the defense, Fangio's expertise, that let Denver down. The Raiders, coached by interim Rich Bisaccia after Jon Gruden resigned last Monday, beat the Broncos 34-24. Now, Broncos quarterback Teddy Bridgewater did account for four turnovers, but he was playing at a disadvantage because the defense put him in a hole from very early on.

This was a Raiders team that had a new play-caller in offensive coordinator Greg Olson and whose players and coaches had to spend all week answering questions about Gruden. "The best part for me was getting back on the grass," Bisaccia said. "The worst part for me was figuring out the headset." That's how new this was to Las Vegas' staff. The Broncos allowed the Raiders to convert seven chunk plays of 20 or more yards. Denver had only five fewer yards of total offense than Las Vegas gained (426-421), but Denver needed 25 more plays to get there. That means the Raiders averaged an astounding 8.2 yards per play. Denver started the season hot, but its three victories came against the Giants, Jaguars and Jets, who are 3-14 combined. Now, after the Broncos fell to 15-23 since Fangio became their head coach, he's about to start facing questions about his future.

MARKETPLACE TODAY

To view more Classified listings, visit: classifieds.usatoday.com

For advertising information: 1.800.397.0070 www.russelljohns.com/usat

NOTICES
<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notice to Bidders</p> <p>Region 14 ESC (the "Lead Agency"), on behalf of National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance (NCPA) and public agencies in all 50 states, that elect to access the Master Agreement is soliciting proposals to enter into Master Agreements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI Contract Review Software and Contract Organization Services #23-21 • Control Room Console Solutions #24-21 • Cyber-Security Solutions, Malware, Ransomware Protection, Other Related Products and Services #34-21 • Digital Healthcare Diagnostic Testing and Related Products and Services #25-21 • Digital Healthcare Guidance – Pharmacy #26-21 • Digital Healthcare Guidance – Surgical Consulting #27-21 • Electrical Power System and Electronics Systems Protection Consulting and related Products and Services #28-21 • HVAC Equipment, Installation, Service, Building Control Systems & Related Products and Services #32-21 • Medical Supplies and Related Goods and Services #29-21 • Parking and Mobility Consulting #31-21 • Playground Equipment, Outdoor Fitness Equipment, Site Furnishings, Surfacing and Related Products/Services #35-21 • Public Sector Operations, and Financial Management Software and Consulting Services #30-21 • Vehicle Wash Systems and Related Services #33-21 <p>Due Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 2:00 pm CST</p> <p>Responses shall be received electronically no later than the submittal deadline via our online Bonfire portal at ncpa.bonfirehub.com.</p> <p>NCPA To request a copy of specifications, please visit NCPA's website www.ncpa.us.</p>
<p>GET NOTICED! sales@russelljohns.com</p>

PUBLIC NOTICE
<p>Sourcewell, a State of Minnesota local government unit and service cooperative, is requesting proposals for Underground Infrastructure Inspection and Rehabilitation Equipment with Related Services to result in a contracting solution for use by its Participating Entities. Sourcewell Participating Entities include thousands of governmental, higher education, K-12 education, nonprofit, tribal government, and other public agencies located in the United States and Canada.</p> <p>A full copy of the Request for Proposals can be found on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal https://portal.sourcewell-mn.gov.</p> <p>Only proposals submitted through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal will be considered.</p> <p>Proposals are due no later than December 7, 2021, at 4:30 pm Central Time, and late proposals will not be considered.</p>
ANNOUNCEMENTS
<p>HAVE YOU BEEN CLASSIFIED AS A HIGH RISK DRIVER DUE TO DUI, DWI OR TICKETS FOR AGGRESSIVE DRIVING?</p> <p>Serenity is here to help by making SR-22 insurance easy to get and affordable for everyone.</p> <p>800-509-9315 THE CALL & QUOTE ARE FREE.</p>
BUSINESS
<p>FINANCIAL</p> <p>Are you getting hit with high interest rates because of a low credit score? Improve it today!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FREE Consultation • FREE Credit Evaluation <p>800-852-4931</p> <p>IMPROVE YOUR CREDIT SCORE</p>

FINANCIAL
<p>ELIMINATE your overwhelming debt</p> <p>We can help if your total debt is \$10,000 or more!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CREDIT CARD DEBT ✓ MEDICAL DEBT ✓ PERSONAL LOANS <p>800-825-1306</p> <p>Avoid bankruptcy today and start over completely debt-free.</p> <p>THE CALL IS FREE.</p>
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
<p>PRIVATE MORTGAGE INVESTORS WANTED (20% RETURN IN 120 DAYS) Vx 100% Self Sustainable Intelligent Homes JUST IMAGINE NEVER HAVING A POWER BILL, A HEATING BILL, A WATER BILL, AN INTERNET BILL, or even a CELL PHONE BILL!!!! INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY! Please go to the below facebook link to watch our video https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=357632292762102&id=109613270897340</p> <p>We pay 20% return for putting up the capital to build the homes where the private mortgage investor owns the home until our buyer pays them out in less than 120 days! PH or TXT 249-525-7238 or john@vxmicropower.com</p>

MARKETPLACE
<p>BOOKS / PUBLICATIONS</p> <p>A Garden Observed: Cultivating A Life by Melanie Boyer</p> <p>Enchanting 220 page coffee-table devotional filled with garden photography</p> <p>Available on Amazon</p>
HEALTH/FITNESS
<p>ATTENTION</p> <p>If you've had Hernia Surgery and have experienced any COMPLICATIONS you may be entitled to SIGNIFICANT CASH COMPENSATION.</p> <p>CALL THE HERNIA MESH HELPLINE NOW AT 800-478-7176</p>
HEALTH/FITNESS
<p>TALCUM POWDER SETTLEMENT</p> <p>If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with ovarian cancer after using talcum based products you may be entitled to significant compensation</p> <p>800-208-3526</p>
<p>Place Your Ad Here! (800) 397-0070 sales@russelljohns.com</p>