

What do you predict for the Patriots-Giants rematch?

Tell us what you think at projsports.com/patriots



MINNESOTA'S STARS TOP MOUNT: View the gallery at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland

Projo PatsTalk

A multimedia review of Sunday's game, and a look at the week ahead this afternoon at projsports.com/patriots

Deep freeze

Sunday's NFL title game was the third-coldest in NFL history:

	YR.*	TEMP.	WIND CHILL
Chargers at Bengals	1981	-9	-59
Cowboys at Packers	1967	-13	-46
Giants at Packers	2007	-1	-23

* — refers to season; '81 and '07 games were played the next January.

SECTION C



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projoSPORTS

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Giant effort vs. Pats jump-started New York's playoff run

Giants coach Tom Coughlin refused to rest his key players with a playoff spot already set, and his team and Eli Manning have been on the mark since.

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — In the days leading up to his New York Giants' regular-season finale against the New England Patriots, Giants coach Tom Coughlin insisted that

his team was preparing for the game just like the 15 before it, and that all of his players would be available.

But his words were met with skepticism. At the time, New York had nothing to gain or lose — it was locked in as the No. 5 seed in the NFC playoffs and would play the next weekend in Tampa Bay. But there was the matter of being the last team with a chance to keep the Patriots from achieving a perfect 16-0 regular season. Most pundits felt Coughlin would rest his starters and key person-



COUGHLIN

In the process, New York did suffer a few injuries. Yet, resisting the urge to sit Eli Man-

nel, looking ahead to the game with the Buccaneers.

Coughlin wasn't bluffing, however. The Giants had all hands on deck, and gave New England all it could handle before the Pats secured victory No. 16.

In the process, New York did suffer a few injuries. Yet, resisting the urge to sit Eli Man-

ning, Brandon Jacobs, Michael Strahan and the rest of his top players may have propelled Coughlin and the Giants to this point, as NFC champions and the Patriots' opponent once again, in Super Bowl XLII in 11 days.

But the Giants, and even the Pats,

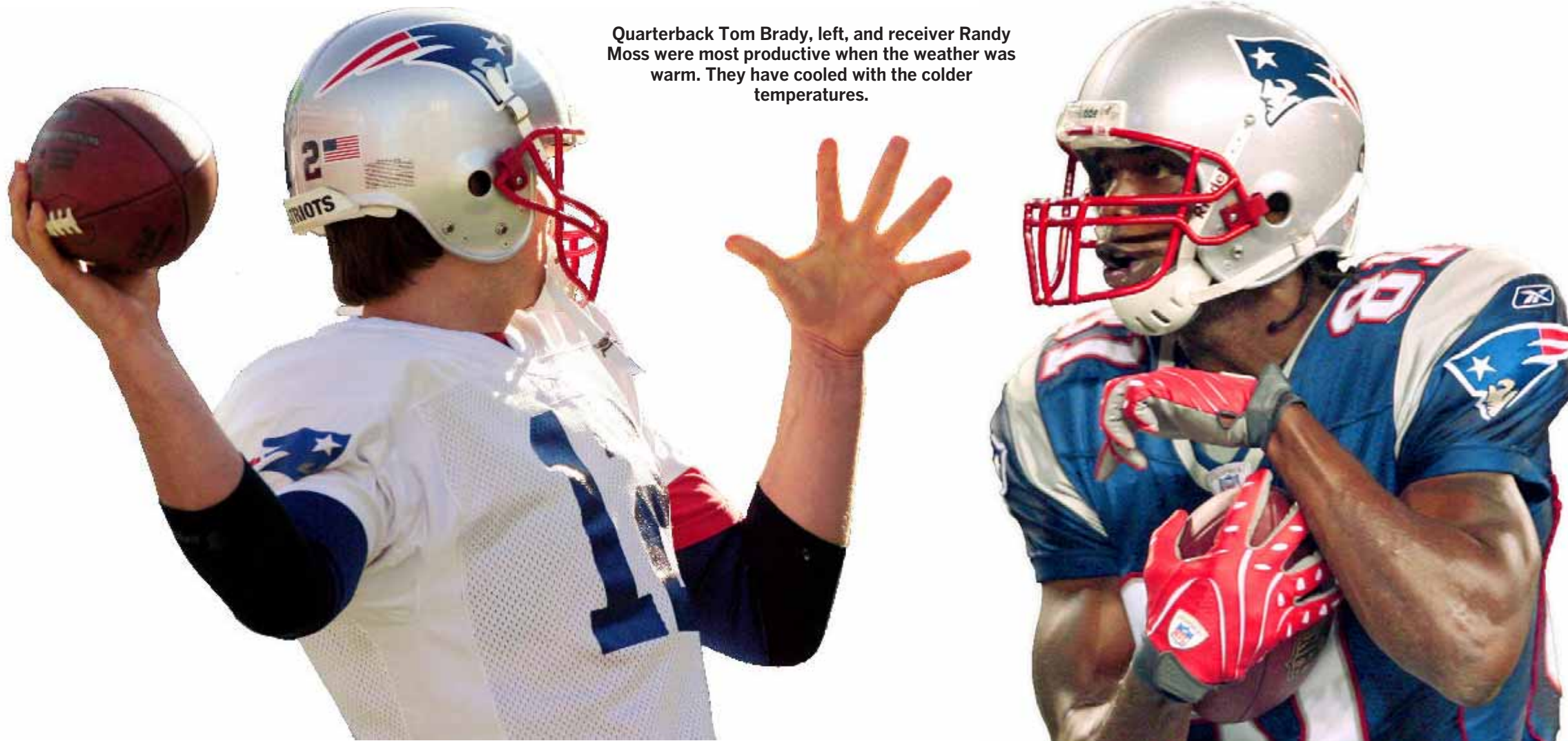
played through.

After New York's Dec. 29 loss to New England, Coughlin and several of his players thought there would be positives after the loss, and they have been proven right. Manning, who had been uneven to that point in his career, had a solid night (22-for-32, 251 yards, four touchdowns, one interception), and has carried that into the postseason. In three playoff games, all on the road, he has not com-

SEE PATRIOTS, C5

TURN UP THE HEAT

Quarterback Tom Brady, left, and receiver Randy Moss were most productive when the weather was warm. They have cooled with the colder temperatures.



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Glendale, Ariz., should be perfect place for Brady to get hot again

The Patriots are like an Eskimo who excels at surfing. Or a Hawaiian who's a great downhill skier.

They are a team that is out of its element in the prevailing elements. They are a cold-weather team that plays its best in warm weather.

What the Patriots do best is throw the football, and it's always better to pass the proverbial pigskin when it's sunny and warm and the air is gentle than when it's 23 degrees and wind gusting out of the northwest at around 20 mph, creating a wind chill of 9.

Or did you think it was a coincidence that Tom Brady had his worst game of the season in the worst weather conditions he has played in all year? "I don't think we executed as well as

I thought we were capable," Brady said Sunday night after throwing a season-high three interceptions in New England's 21-12 victory over stubborn San Diego that sent the Patriots to the Super Bowl for the fourth time in seven years.

"I'm glad we have the week off here to regroup a little bit and try to elevate our game for one last performance," Brady said. "Whoever it is we're playing (he didn't know at the time it would be the Giants), it's going to be the toughest game of the season. I'm glad it's warm weather."

Bring on the heat, says Brady, meaning the Arizona sunshine, not the Gi-

"[I'm glad] we're going someplace warm, because I'm freezing my you-know-what off."

TOM BRADY
Patriots quarterback



ants' fearsome pass rush.

In a record-setting season, Brady was hottest when the weather was warm.

Through the first eight games, he

threw 30 touchdown passes and only two interceptions. He threw for at least three TDs in each of those eight games. He threw for four against Buffalo, five against the NFC East-champion Cowboys and six at Miami, and didn't throw a single interception in any of those three games.

However, in the second half of the season, in November and December, Brady's numbers slipped to 20 TDs and six interceptions.

In January, in the playoffs, he has three interceptions and four TD passes.

It was funny to hear from someone who spent time with the Jaguars shortly after the team plane arrived in New England for the AFC semifinal playoff

game that Jacksonville coach Jack Del Rio was complaining about the weather.

Too warm, he moaned. No snow, he complained.

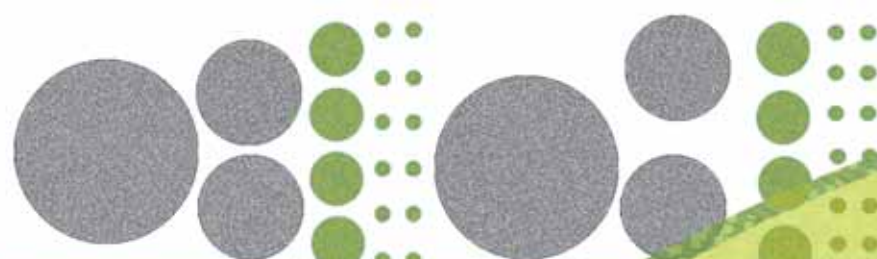
In a classic bit of role reversal, it was the Jags who were hoping for bad weather in hopes that swirling snow would keep Brady from hurling the football all over the field.

Those concerns proved justified in light of the fact that, in near-perfect conditions for mid-January in Foxboro — 37 degrees, only a mild breeze — Brady was nearly perfect in his passing, completing 26 of 28 attempts (including one dropped pass) for three touchdowns, without an interception.

The Jaguars came in wanting to play smash-mouth football — to pound

SEE DONALDSON, C5

show us what you've got!



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