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WHAT TO LOOK FOR – WEEK 12

ZEKE HUNGRY FOR YARDS: In four career games on Thanksgiving, Dallas running back **EZEKIEL ELLIOTT** has totaled 439 scrimmage yards (109.8 per game) and three rushing touchdowns. In three of those four games, he surpassed 100 scrimmage yards.

With at least 100 scrimmage yards on Thursday against Las Vegas (4:30 PM ET, CBS), Elliott will tie Pro Football Hall of Famers **MICHAEL IRVIN** (four games) and **BARRY SANDERS** (four) for the second-most games with at least 100 scrimmage yards on the holiday in league history. Only Pro Football Hall of Famer **EMMITT SMITH** (eight games) has more.

The players with the most games with at least 100 scrimmage yards on Thanksgiving in NFL history:

PLAYER	TEAM	GAMES
Emmitt Smith ^{HOF}	Dallas	8
Michael Irvin ^{HOF}	Dallas	4
Barry Sanders ^{HOF}	Detroit	4
<i>Ezekiel Elliott</i>	<i>Dallas</i>	<i>3*</i>

*Entering Thursday

Since entering the NFL in 2016, Elliott leads the league with 9,240 scrimmage yards and ranks tied for fourth with 64 scrimmage touchdowns. In 2021, he has totaled 899 scrimmage yards (695 rushing, 204 receiving) and eight touchdowns (seven rushing, one receiving).

With 101 scrimmage yards on Thursday, Elliott will become the fourth player with at least 1,000 scrimmage yards and eight touchdowns in each of his first six seasons in NFL history, joining Pro Football Hall of Famers **LADAINIAN TOMLINSON** (first eight seasons) and **EMMITT SMITH** (first seven seasons) as well as **ADRIAN PETERSON** (first seven seasons).

The players with at least 1,000 scrimmage yards and eight touchdowns in the most seasons to begin their careers in NFL history:

PLAYER	TEAM	SEASONS
LaDainian Tomlinson ^{HOF}	San Diego Chargers	8
Adrian Peterson	Minnesota	7
Emmitt Smith ^{HOF}	Dallas	7
<i>Ezekiel Elliott</i>	<i>Dallas</i>	<i>5*</i>

*Has 899 scrimmage yards and eight touchdowns in sixth season

-- **NFL** --

KINGS IN THE NORTH: Week 12 features two AFC North matchups, as the **PITTSBURGH STEELERS** (5-4-1) travel to play the **CINCINNATI BENGALS** (6-4) at Paul Brown Stadium (1:00 PM ET, CBS) and the **BALTIMORE RAVENS** (7-3) host the **CLEVELAND BROWNS** (6-5) on *Sunday Night Football* (8:20 PM ET, NBC).

With each team above .500 and within one game of a playoff position, this marks the fourth time since 1970 in which each team in one division has a winning record entering Week 12.

The divisions with each team having a winning record entering Week 12 since 1970:

DIVISION	SEASON	TEAMS
AFC North	2021	Baltimore (7-3), Cincinnati (6-4), Pittsburgh (5-4-1), Cleveland (6-5)
AFC North	2014	Cincinnati (6-3-1), Pittsburgh (7-4), Baltimore (6-4), Cleveland (6-4)
NFC East	2008	N.Y. Giants (9-1), Dallas (6-4), Washington (6-4), Philadelphia (5-4-1)
AFC Central	1977	Pittsburgh (7-4), Cincinnati (6-5), Cleveland (6-4), Houston Oilers (6-5)

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TAYLOR VS. TAMPA: Last week, Indianapolis running back **JONATHAN TAYLOR** totaled 204 scrimmage yards (185 rushing, 19 receiving) and five touchdowns (four rushing, one receiving), becoming the first player to record at least 175 rushing yards, four rushing touchdowns and one touchdown reception in a single game in NFL history.

That marked his eighth consecutive game with at least 100 scrimmage yards and a rushing touchdown, tied for the longest such streak in league history. If he accomplishes the feat again on Sunday against Tampa Bay (1:00 PM ET, FOX), Taylor will become the first player ever with at least 100 scrimmage yards and a rushing touchdown in nine straight games.

Taylor enters Week 12 leading the league with 1,122 rushing yards and 13 rushing touchdowns. On Sunday, he will be facing a Buccaneers defense that leads the league in stopping the run, allowing 78.4 rushing yards per game. Through 10 games, Tampa Bay has only allowed one 100-yard rusher this season (Chicago's **KHALIL HERBERT** – 100 rushing yards in Week 7).

Sunday's matchup will mark the fifth game since 2000 featuring the league's leading rusher against the league's top rushing defense in Week 12 or later.

The games featuring the league's leading rusher against the league's top rushing defense in Week 12 or later since 2000:

WEEK, SEASON	LEADING RUSHER (TEAM)	TOP RUSHING DEFENSE	PLAYER RUSHING STATS IN GAME	RESULT
Week 12, 2021	Jonathan Taylor (Indianapolis)	Tampa Bay	???	???
Week 13, 2018	Ezekiel Elliott (Dallas)	New Orleans	75 yards, 0 TDs	DAL 13, NO 10
Week 12, 2015	Adrian Peterson (Minnesota)	Atlanta	158 yards, 2 TDs	MIN 20, ATL 10
Week 14, 2004	Curtis Martin ^{HOF} (N.Y. Jets)	Pittsburgh	72 yards, 0 TDs	PIT 17, NYJ 6
Week 13, 2001	Curtis Martin ^{HOF} (N.Y. Jets)	Pittsburgh	58 yards, 0 TDs	PIT 18, NYJ 7

Tampa Bay quarterback **TOM BRADY** enters the week leading the league with 29 touchdown passes. With a touchdown pass on Sunday, he will mark his ninth-career season with at least 30 touchdown passes tying Pro Football Hall of Famers **BRETT FAVRE** (nine seasons) and **PEYTON MANNING** (nine) for the second-most seasons ever with at least 30 touchdown passes. Only **DREW BREES** (10) has more.

-- NFL --

GREATNESS IS IN THE AAR: Last week, Green Bay quarterback **AARON RODGERS** passed for 385 yards and four touchdowns with no interceptions for a 148.4 rating. It marked his 13th career game with at least four touchdown passes and a passer rating of 140-or-higher, tied with Pro Football Hall of Famer **PEYTON MANNING** (13) for the third-most such games all-time. Only **DREW BREES** (15) and **TOM BRADY** (14) have more.

Rodgers, the 2020 *Associated Press* Most Valuable Player, enters the week ranking second in the league with a 106.6 rating.

Los Angeles Rams defensive lineman **AARON DONALD**, the 2020 *Associated Press* Defensive Player of the Year, has six sacks this season and has recorded a sack in two of his past three games. With two sacks at Green Bay on Sunday (4:25 PM ET, FOX), Donald will become the fourth player with at least eight sacks in each of his first eight seasons since 1982, when the individual sack became an official statistic.

The players with at least eight sacks in the most seasons to begin their careers since 1982

PLAYER	TEAM(S)	SEASONS
Reggie White ^{HOF}	Philadelphia, Green Bay	14
Derrick Thomas ^{HOF}	Kansas City	10
DeMarcus Ware	Dallas	8
Aaron Donald	St. Louis/L.A. Rams	7*

*Has six sacks in eighth season

When Rodgers and Donald meet on Sunday, it will mark the sixth game since 2000 and first since 2011 featuring a reigning Most Valuable Player quarterback and the reigning Defensive Player of the Year.

The games featuring a reigning Most Valuable Player quarterback and the reigning Defensive Player of the Year since 2000:

WEEK, SEASON	MVP QUARTERBACK (TEAM)	DEFENSIVE POY (TEAM)	RESULT
Week 12, 2021	Aaron Rodgers (Green Bay)	Aaron Donald (L.A. Rams)	???
Week 8, 2011	Tom Brady (New England)	Troy Polamalu ^{HOF} (Pittsburgh)	PIT 25, NE 17
Week 1, 2005	Peyton Manning ^{HOF} (Indianapolis)	Ed Reed ^{HOF} (Baltimore)	IND 24, BAL 7
Week 15, 2004	Peyton Manning ^{HOF} (Indianapolis)	Ray Lewis ^{HOF} (Baltimore)	IND 20, BAL 10
Week 2, 2002	Kurt Warner ^{HOF} (St. Louis Rams)	Michael Strahan ^{HOF} (N.Y. Giants)	NYG 26, STL 21
Week 16, 2000	Kurt Warner ^{HOF} (St. Louis Rams)	Warren Sapp ^{HOF} (Tampa Bay)	TB 38, STL 35

-- **NFL** --

CHARGED UP: Last season, Los Angeles Chargers quarterback **JUSTIN HERBERT** recorded 31 touchdown passes and 396 completions, both the most by a rookie quarterback in NFL history. In 2021, Herbert ranks third in the league with 261 completions and fourth with 22 touchdown passes.

With a touchdown pass at Denver on Sunday (4:05 PM ET, CBS), Herbert will surpass **DEREK CARR** (53 touchdown passes) for the second-most touchdown passes ever by a player in his first two seasons. Only Pro Football Hall of Famer **DAN MARINO** (68) had more.

The players with the most touchdown passes in their first two seasons in NFL history:

PLAYER	TEAM	TOUCHDOWN PASSES
Dan Marino ^{HOF}	Miami	68
Derek Carr	Oakland Raiders	53
Justin Herbert	L.A. Chargers	53*

*In second season

With 26 completions on Sunday, Herbert will surpass **ANDREW LUCK** (682 completions) for the third-most completions ever by a player in his first two seasons. Only **KYLER MURRAY** (724 completions) and Carr (698) had more.

The players with the most completions in their first two seasons in NFL history:

PLAYER	TEAM	COMPLETIONS
Kyler Murray	Arizona	724
Derek Carr	Oakland Raiders	698
Andrew Luck	Indianapolis	682
Justin Herbert	L.A. Chargers	657*
Peyton Manning ^{HOF}	Indianapolis	657
Jameis Winston	Tampa Bay	657

*In second season

Herbert's top target this season has been wide receiver **KEENAN ALLEN**, who leads the team with 74 catches and 810 receiving yards. Allen has 698 receptions in 110 career games and his 14 games with at least 10 receptions are the fifth-most since he entered the league in 2013.

With two receptions on Sunday, Allen will tie **ANTONIO BROWN** (111 games) as the fastest player ever to reach 700 career receptions.

The players to reach 700 career receptions in the fewest games in NFL history:

PLAYER	TEAM	GAMES
Antonio Brown	Pittsburgh	111
Julio Jones	Atlanta	112
Marvin Harrison ^{HOF}	Indianapolis	114
Keenan Allen	San Diego/L.A. Chargers	110*

*Has 698 receptions in 110 games

Last week, Chargers running back **AUSTIN EKELER** totaled 115 scrimmage yards (65 receiving, 50 rushing) and a career-high four touchdowns (two rushing, two receiving). He enters Week 12 with 978 scrimmage yards (573 rushing, 405 receiving) this season and is one of two players in the league (**D'ANDRE SWIFT**) with at least 500 rushing yards and 400 receiving yards.

Ekeler, who signed with the Chargers after going undrafted in the 2017 NFL Draft, has 4,958 scrimmage yards in his career. With 42 scrimmage yards on Sunday, he will become the third undrafted player to reach 5,000 scrimmage yards in his first five seasons in the common-draft era, joining **ARIAN FOSTER** and **WILLIE PARKER**.

The undrafted players with at least 5,000 scrimmage yards in their first five seasons in the common-draft era:

PLAYER	TEAM	SCRIMMAGE YARDS
Arian Foster	Houston	6,777
Willie Parker	Pittsburgh	5,622
Austin Ekeler	San Diego/L.A. Chargers	4,958*

*In fifth season

-- NFL --

RUN CMC: Last week, Carolina running back **CHRISTIAN MCCAFFREY** recorded 119 scrimmage yards (60 receiving, 59 rushing), marking his 22nd career game with at least 50 rushing yards and 50 receiving yards.

If he accomplishes the feat at Miami on Sunday (1:00 PM ET, FOX), McCaffrey will tie TIKI BARBER (23 games) and Pro Football Hall of Famer LADAINIAN TOMLINSON (23) for the second-most games ever with at least 50 rushing yards and 50 receiving yards. Only Pro Football Hall of Famer **MARSHALL FAULK** (41) has more.

The players with the most games with at least 50 rushing yards and 50 receiving yards in NFL history:

PLAYER	TEAM(S)	GAMES
Marshall Faulk ^{HOF}	Indianapolis, St. Louis Rams	41
Tiki Barber	N.Y. Giants	23
LaDainian Tomlinson ^{HOF}	San Diego Chargers, N.Y. Jets	23
Christian McCaffrey	Carolina	22

Since entering the NFL in 2017, McCaffrey has 357 career receptions, while New Orleans running back **ALVIN KAMARA** has 358. McCaffrey on Sunday and Kamara against Buffalo on Thanksgiving (8:20 PM ET, NBC), can each surpass ROGER CRAIG (358) for the most receptions by a running back in his first five seasons in NFL history.

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