

# UNDER TOM'S THUMB CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP TRASH TALK 2018

Here we are in the penultimate weekend of the professional football season for 2017-2018. The final four. And, usually, a far better weekend of football than that of the Super Bowl.

The early game is Jacksonville at New England. There has been a lot of chatter about this one. Started with chatter about the Jag's awesome defense and D-Line ability to get to and rattle Brady. And, to be fair, Brady is nowhere near his usual self if you can really put the wood to him. But then things went bonkers with news of the injury to Tom's thumb. Hand. Whatever. If Betty Grable had "Million dollar Legs", you have to wonder what Brady's right hand is worth. Word is, however, after not doing much in practice Thursday, he back at it on Friday and looking good. Pats are favorites by 7.5, and that seems about right. The Jag's defense sure seems to be everything advertised. Calais Campbell was panned as costing way too much for Jax to pick up off the Cardinals in free agency. All he has done is have an all-world season and be in contention for defensive player of the year. Jalen Ramsey is almost as good as his mouth says he is. So, the defensive edge goes to the Jags. But Tom Brady, bum thumb or no, just has way more savvy and mojo in big games than Blake Bortles does. The fact that Pats killer Tom Coughlin is with Jacksonville now gives serious pause. But as appealing as it seems, no way to bet against New England.

The late game is Vikes at Eagles in Philly. Hey, a lot of folks thought this game would be Atlanta at Saints. The number one seeded Eagles were even home dogs against Atlanta, but they won a hard fought game. Same for the Vikes, who literally needed the "Minneapolis Miracle" in

the last second to emerge. But emerge they did. And now they are favorites by 3.5 over the, yet again, home dog Eagles. Not long ago, Nick Foles and Case Keenum were both on the Rams. Now they are squaring off in the NFC Championship game. Keenum is on a far more, and better, roll than Foles. My prescription is same as last week for Philly...take the shackles off and let Foles rip. You are going to either win or die, might as well let him play. They did not really do that last week and still managed to eek out a win. Maybe their defense is that good, we shall see. I'll take the Vikes though.

Okay, that is it, let er rip. Music is, obviously, by the Stones. If you have super vision, and look close enough, maybe you can spot me just left of center stage, about ten to fifteen people back. It was a hell of a beautiful day.