

Mirador Predicts Superbowl 51

Xavier's Prediction: Falcons 35: Patriots 31— The Falcons are the hottest team in the NFL and the Patriots won't slow them down. The offense, led by Matt Ryan, has averaged 40 points per game in their two playoff blowouts. Last week Julio Jones proved he is the best wide receiver in the game, embarrassing the Packers secondary for 180 yards and two touchdowns. I don't see the smaller cornerback Malcolm Butler stopping Julio. The offense is balanced, allowing both running backs Devonta Freeman and Tevin Coleman to mutually shine while still having arguably the best passing game. Both backs are versatile; being a threat on the ground as well as in the passing game. In the last two playoff games the duo has combined for 179 receiving yards. Atlanta's offensive line led by center Alex Mack, has done a phenomenal job keeping the MVP front runner Matt Ryan clean, only allowing two sacks in the playoffs. On the defensive side, the Falcons have an extremely underrated defense. Although they don't have many big name guys, they play well as a unit. Last week, they shutout Aaron Rodgers in the first half, putting their offense in great positions. Linebacker Vic Beasley will have to continue to apply pressure to QB Tom Brady. The Falcons must turn the Patriots into an one-dimensional team, allowing them to drop 7 defenders in coverage. If the Falcons corners can be physical with the smaller New England wideouts, they can really limit Brady's numbers, resulting in a Falcons win.

Robin's prediction: Patriots 31: Falcons 27 The Patriots have been nearly unstoppable since star Quarterback Tom Brady returned from his four game suspension. New England is coming into the Super Bowl with only two losses this season and one loss with Brady as their playcaller. The Patriots have averaged 35 points per game this postseason with a key blowout win to long-time rival Pittsburgh Steelers. Tom Brady has been nothing but terrific and is a definite MVP contender and

should be trouble for the Falcons Defense. His pre-snap adjustments have been unstoppable for opposing teams. Falcons have yet to play a team as premier as the Patriots who finished with the best record in football. Brady missed four games this year and still finished top five in passing yards only behind all-time great Drew Brees. The Falcons will be short-handed in their offense with key receiver Julio Jones playing through a toe injury. This could be a big break for the Patriots star cornerback Malcolm Butler who is assigned to guarding the NFL's top receiver. Butler is known for his key interception vs. the Seahawks in Super Bowl XLIX which gave New England its fourth Super Bowl win. Overall the Patriots experience might be too much for the Falcons who are appearing in their first Super Bowl compared to the Patriot's seven Super Bowl appearances. If the Falcons want to win they need to apply pressure and force Brady to get rid of the ball quicker. The Patriots offensive line is too good to lose head to head battles. The only way I can see the Falcons putting pressure on Brady is if they start blitzing the linebackers, but Brady has proved time and time again that blitzing him only creates more windows to throw to.