

# Brees or Brady? A Gonzo Take On the Classic “Stats v. Rings” Debate

*About a year ago, in an undisclosed location, the REO staff had a meeting. Present were Phill, Ben, Mike, Dave, Nathan, Mark and me. We ordered pizza and as the doorbell rang signifying its arrival, Phill rolled a die to see who would have to get it, counting off each of us seated at a round table as a number. I informed Phill that by casting the die he was then creating a world with six alternate timelines. One where each of us has to get the pizza when the die lands and seals our numerical fate.*

*In one of the timelines—let’s call it **The Darkest Timeline**—things go berserk thanks to some terrible luck, a Norwegian troll doll and an Indiana Jones diorama. People get hurt. Things catch on fire. Apocalyptic chaos ensues.*

*Thankfully we don’t live in that timeline, unless you get on Twitter where apparently everybody is in a perpetual meltdown. But due to a Dreamatorium created and shared by Mike and me, **Darkest Timeline Gowdy** has a chance on occasion to interact with our timeline, as he did in January when he debated me about whether Severus Snape was more hero than villain. Today, I, Regular Gowdy (RG) again invite **Darkest Timeline Gowdy (DTG)** to [Ramblingeveron.com](http://Ramblingeveron.com) to have a debate about which NFL quarterback is better: Tom Brady and his five rings plus exceptional stats or Drew Brees and his one ring plus assault on the NFL record book stats.*

RG: Thank you for joining me again.

**DTG: I think it’s been 9 months since I shredded your dignity**

in our last debate. I hope that's enough time for you to have recovered.

RG: I'm ignoring that. Before we begin, I assume you have read my article on why [Tom Brady is the most overrated quarterback of all time](#).

DTG: Yes, I read it. I was particularly impressed with how the number of times Matt Cassel gyrated in the huddle in the 3rd quarter of November games in 2010 playing vs. AFC West teams totally nullifies Tom Brady's 4 Super Bowl MVPs.

RG: I'm ignoring that as well. I mentioned it, though, because I want to make the rules for this debate clear: We are here to laud the quarterback we are defending, not trash the opponent's quarterback.

DTG: You're not going to insult Brady? I don't believe it.

RG: I've said all I can say on that topic.

DTG: Yes, and that's 2500 words that made everyone who read it dumber.

RG: Let's just get on with the debate. Since I went first last time, I'll give you the honors.

DTG: Fine. Tom Brady is more than just five Super Bowl rings. He's far and away the greatest clutch football player of all time. 27 playoff wins, approaching twice as many as second place on that list. 71 Playoff TDs, over two dozen more than the #2 guy. Eight 4th quarter comebacks and 11 game-winning drives in his playoff career. The Biggest comeback by far in Super Bowl history and the second biggest ever by 4th quarter deficit. In every Super Bowl win he had lead a game-winning drive in the fourth. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

RG: Brees on the other hand is rewriting the record book. He will soon best Peyton Manning for career yards and career TDs. He's passed for 5000 yards in a season five times, which no

one else has done more than once. He's the all time leader in completion % and has three of the top four seasons there. He's led the league in passing yards a record six times, in completions six times, in touchdowns four times and in completion percentage four times.

**DTG: But even by that criteria Brady is exceptional. He has 480 career TDs and 66,000 yards and may also pass Manning in both of those before he retires. He has a 3:1 career TD to Int ratio and has led the league in Passing TDs four times and in yards three times, including last year at 40 years old. Besides, greatness is measured in playoff success. No one can compare to Brady.**

RG: Interesting you say that because there aren't many passing stats that are commonly used to evaluate QBs that Brees doesn't have higher *per game averages* in the playoffs than Brady. He averages more yards per game, more TDs per game, has a better completion % and better TD to Int ratio. And on and on. His problem is that he hasn't gotten the opportunities as Brady has.

**DTG: People often say that but you can't fault a man for staying with the same franchise and leading them to the playoffs year in and year out.**

RG: I don't deny that...

**DTG: Narrator: "He did deny it. 2500 words worth."**

RG: ...but Brees has missed the playoffs six times as a Saint and his defense ranked the following in points allowed per game those years: 31st, 32nd (last), 28th, 31st, 26th and 25th.

**DTG: So what? Brady drug a 31st ranked defense to the Super Bowl in 2011.**

RG: That was based on yardage per game. By points, the better

statistic for determining defensive success, they were 15th. In fact, Brady has never played with a defense below 17th, which happened twice (2002 and 2005) and those were the two least successful years of his career in terms of winning.

**DTG: Sounds like a Brady insult and a recycled stat. That's a warning. Next time I get to punch you.**

RG: Fine.

**DTG: But as far as Brees goes, even when he's made the playoffs he's only 7-6.**

RG: That's because his teams have failed him in the 4th quarter over and over.

**DTG: People always say that but quarterbacks make their own luck. Do you know what Brady's stats are in his five Super Bowl wins in the 4th quarter? 56 for 76 (73.7%), 598 Yds, 4 TD, 1 Int, 108.3 rating. Also, if you look at his stats when he is behind in the 4th quarter in the Super Bowl, they are even better. His rating and QBR are astronomical.**

RG: But consider this: In four of his playoff losses with New Orleans, Brees' offenses *in the fourth quarter alone* put up 17 (vs. Minnesota last year), 16 (vs. Seattle in 2010), 15 (vs. Seattle in 2013) and 18 points (vs. San Francisco in 2012). Three different times he's led his team on a go-ahead drive late, only to have the other team come back and score and win.

**DTG: That happened to Brady vs. the Giants in 2007...**

RG: In a game where New England only put up 14 points...

**DTG: That's another snide Brady insult. [Punches RG in the arm.] And it doesn't matter. Brady has had terrible luck in the fourth quarter of Super Bowls and other playoff games. Helmet catch? Mario Manningham? Philadelphia scoring late last year? Brady passed for 500 yards and still lost. Brees isn't anything special here.**

RG: But the thing is, Brees gets shafted before the Super Bowl. He didn't even get to go to the 4th quarter of the Super Bowl but once in his career so far. And he was excellent. He's lost playoff games despite scoring 32 and 36 points...

**DTG: Brady lost the Super Bowl despite scoring 33!**

RG: But that's the Super Bowl! Brees' teams aren't good enough to even get there.

**DTG: Brady lost to Indianapolis one year despite scoring 34.**

RG: But to be fair 14 of those points were from the defense.

**DTG: Because Peyton Manning was a playoff turnover machine.**

RG: Don't you have a go at Peyton Manning!

**DTG: "Have a go?" Quit pretending you really talk like Harry Potter.**

RG: Getting back on topic...Brees could have made the playoffs more and had more success if he didn't have to deal with things like bottom of the league defenses and his head coach getting suspended.

**DTG: New England has dealt with controversy and Brady has still thrived. Wasn't it great when Brady got to stand there and get the Lombardi trophy from the man who unfairly suspended him for four games to teach him a lesson? That was so emasculating for Goodell. Just as it was for you and all the other mouseketeers in your little "I hate Brady because he's better than my favorite quarterback" Club.**

RG: That's like apples and mangoes, though. Brees thrived with the offense, but you can't win with a 30th ranked defense.

**DTG: We can only evaluate them on the hands they've been dealt. And straight up and down, my final analysis is this: Brady is the GOAT because of his playoff greatness, his Super**

**Bowl success and especially his 4th quarter when behind Super Bowl resume. Brees is great, but behind where it matters.**

RG: My final rejoinder is this: Brees is the most prolific quarterback of all-time and when he's had the playoff chances, he's been as good or better than anyone, including Brady. Switch places, or just switch defenses, and he would have five rings.

**DTG: Are we finished?**

RG: Yes, I'd say that was a draw.

**DTG: I'd say I thrashed you again.**

RG: Whatever.

**DTG: Exceptional comeback.**

RG: Wanna debate *Die Hard* in the future?

**DTG: Yes, but that must wait for December, when it's Christmas.**

RG: Get out.