

Buccaneers or Chiefs? Who has the edge this Sunday in Super Bowl LV?

By Robert Belardi

For the first time in Super Bowl history, a team will be hosting the NFL's most prestigious game in their home stadium.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers will become the first to do so on Sunday when the Kansas City Chiefs come to town to battle it out for the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

Both teams earned their trip to the grand dance in exhilarating fashion. The Buccaneers staved off the Green Bay Packers in Lambeau Field 31-26. The Kansas City Chiefs came back down 10-0 to the pesky Buffalo Bills at Arrowhead Stadium, with a 38-24 victory.

Each year, the hype surrounding the Super Bowl never seems to fade, but this year's storyline is one for the ages.

Tom Brady will be playing in his 10th Super Bowl, having won six titles already. And he will be taking on the quarterback on the other end of the field who was his Super Bowl predecessor in Patrick Mahomes.

Mahomes looks to defend his title, having won the Super Bowl last year against the San Francisco 49ers.

And he might be able to do so because of his coaches. Chiefs head coach Andy Reid and offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy aren't shy to take risks. We saw it in the AFC Divisional Round against Cleveland on fourth down with their back-up Chad Henne. To risk it all is what Reid and Bieniemy are all about.

Football Editor at theScore, Daniel Valente predicts Reid and Bieniemy won't be the only ones that are willing to chance it.

"Really what makes this matchup against Tampa Bay intriguing is they're going up against another coach and another team that has the philosophy of, 'we're going to risk it all,'" Valente said.

"Bruce Arians, Tampa Bay's coach, no risk it, no biscuit. He's same thing. Third and one he's going long. I think if it's any team that can go blow for blow with KC, it's Tampa."

In a tale of two offences that totalled over 6,000 yards in the regular season each, the Chiefs have distinctive weapons that Valente says are talented to earn more yards after the catch.

Tyreek Hill, Mecole Hardman and Travis Kelce are only three of the Chiefs' offensive stalwarts that will be quite the load to handle for the Bucs.

But another intriguing matchup in this one is the Buccaneers pass rush against a banged-up Chiefs offensive line.

"I think that's the one thing that's being overlooked a lot in this matchup is the battle in the trenches. Tampa's pass rush against KC's depleted offensive line. They're down (Eric) Fisher and Andy Reid said today (January 25) that Mitchell Schwartz isn't looking likely to be coming back in the Super Bowl," Valente said.

If Tampa Bay wants to pull off an upset, this is the key matchup. The Buccaneers stout defence with Ndamukong Suh, Jason Pierre-Paul, Vita Vea, Shaquil Barrett, Devon White and Lavonte David will be key.

If the Buccaneers also want to control the tempo offensively, they can do so running the football. The Bucs have two studs in Leonard Fournette and Ronald Jones with other running options should they choose to use them.

But, Valente says, he is confident in Kansas City's defence heading into this matchup with the Bucs. It's because of their defensive coordinator.

?What really gives me trust in Kansas City's defence, is their defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo. He's gone up against Brady numerous times in his career. He's the guy who ended the (Patriots') undefeated season when he was with the Giants,? Valente said.

?He's done it once in ?07. He's caused Brady fits throughout his career.?

It's going to be a tale of matchups heading into this game. It's going to be about the Chiefs defence locking up Bucs wideouts Mike Evans, Chris Godwin and, depending on his usage, Antonio Brown.

Valente's pick, if he had to choose: 23-17 in favour of the Kansas City Chiefs. He says in these matches that are labelled to be shootouts, defences come to play. It will be a tight game. We'll find out on Sunday who will bring home the Vince Lombardi trophy.