

CARDS SEIZE WIN, RESPECT

Inspired by doubters across the country, the balanced Cardinals bury the Falcons in the second half of an epic win



Cardinals wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald pulls down a 42-yard pass for a touchdown between Falcons safety Lawyer Milloy (left) and cornerback Chris Houston (right) during the first quarter of Saturday's wild-card game.

DAVID KADLUBOWSKI/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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The way the Cardinals saw it, their bandwagon entering the playoffs was nearly empty, as if someone had put "one and done" on the destination sign above the cab.

They were called the worst division winner in history. A blowout loss to the Falcons in the first round was predicted by some. And it didn't go unnoticed that it took two deadline extensions and a deal with a pool company to sell out University of Phoenix Stadium on Saturday and avoid a local television blackout.

Maybe that's to be expected when most people didn't even have a television the last time you played a home playoff game.

The Cardinals made history just by taking the field in their first home playoff game since 1947. They made it a successful chapter by beating the Falcons 30-24 in front of a sellout crowd of 62,848.

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Winning the battles

The Cardinals beat the Falcons in almost every way:

- » Cardinals (357 net yards) over Falcons (250 net yards).
- » K. Warner (271 yards, two TDs, one INT) over M. Ryan (199, two TDs, two INTs).
- » E. James (73 yards) over M. Turner (42 yards).
- » L. Fitzgerald (101 yards, 42-yard TD) over R. White (84 yards, 5-yard TD).
- » Cards D (three sacks, two INTs) over Falcons D (no sacks, one INT).

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