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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Week 11 Preview: Sharks Host Power on Saturday** *Jacksonville looks to remain perfect against conference opponents*

**JACKSONVILLE** – The 2012 South Division Champion Jacksonville Sharks (7-3) return home this week, hosting the East Division's Pittsburgh Power (3-6) on Saturday, June 1 on Sea Best Field at the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena. Kickoff for Saturday's game is set for 7:00 p.m.

The Sharks head into this week's action with a chance to build on the team's 44-41 road win over the in-state rival Orlando Predators last Saturday night. That victory snapped the Sharks' three-game losing streak and allowed the team to regain sole possession of first place in the South Division, as Jacksonville currently holds a one-game lead over the Tampa Bay Storm with eight games remaining for each team. Though much will change in the final two months of the regular season, this week's game is a matchup of the No. 1 and No. 4 seeds in the American Conference playoff race.

This week, Jacksonville faces an opponent against which it has enjoyed tremendous success. The Sharks have taken each of their three previous meetings against Pittsburgh, winning each game by at least 20 points. That includes a 61-35 Week 2 victory over the Power earlier this season, a game in which the Jacksonville defense set a new franchise record with a total of seven quarterback sacks.

That early season performance established what has become a trend for each team this season. The relentless Shark pass rush has led the AFL in quarterback sacks for nearly the entire season and currently has a league-best total of 29. Defensive lineman Jerry Turner regained the individual league lead (8.0) with a sack last week, passing teammate Aaron Robbins, who leads all Mac linebackers with 7.5 sacks.

The Sharks' front four is a lot for any team to handle, let alone a team that has struggled to protect the quarterback to the extent that Pittsburgh has this season. Through nine games, the Power has allowed opposing defenses to record a total of 30 sacks, highest in the league. Rest assured that Turner, Robbins and the rest of the Sharks' d-line will be looking to exploit this advantage on Saturday night.

Offensively, last week's game saw the return of quarterback Bernard Morris to the starting lineup. Morris accounted for five total touchdowns (three passing, two rushing) against the Predators, and has a chance to build momentum with another matchup against his former team. Morris began the 2011 season as the Power's starter before suffering a mid-season injury, and has enjoyed tremendous success against Pittsburgh since re-joining the Sharks in 2012. In two games against the Power, Morris has completed 46 of his 62 passes for 442 yards and 12 touchdowns, throwing just one interception in those contests.

Though the Sharks did come away with a win in their last game, the offense has still crossed the 50-point threshold just once since Week 4. One area in which improvement could lead to increased production is on third down. Over the last three weeks, the Jacksonville offense is just six-of-24, a conversion rate of 25% that is well below the team's season average of 48%. With that said, converting against the Power defense is no small feat, as Pittsburgh's opponents have cashed in on just over a third of their third-down attempts this season.

On the other side, Pittsburgh hopes to have found stability at the quarterback position in Steven Sheffield, who has started the last three games in place of the injured Jordan Jefferson. Sheffield has led his team to two wins in those three contests, including a come-from-behind, 55-44 defeat of the Cleveland Gladiators last Saturday night. After seeing limited action with Spokane in 2011 and San Antonio in 2012, Sheffield has already set a new single-season high with 15 passing touchdowns. But the Power signal-caller has also been turnover-prone, throwing seven interceptions this season.

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The Shark secondary enjoyed success in the first meeting between these teams, pulling down a season-high three picks, including a 52-yard interception return for a touchdown by veteran Micheaux Robinson. Worth noting, however, is that Sheffield did not play in that game, and so this week Robinson and his teammates will face the challenge of attacking a quarterback whom they have not seen in person. There is no doubt that Sheffield will look early and often for wideout Mike Washington, far and away Pittsburgh's most productive receiver this season. Leading his team with 79 catches for 842 yards and 15 scores, Washington has more than twice as many receptions and touchdowns as any other player on the Pittsburgh roster.

This week's game is the first of several rematches that the Sharks will play over the course of the second half of the season. In addition to this week, the team will square off against the Orlando Predators, New Orleans VooDoo, Tampa Bay Storm and Cleveland Gladiators for a second time. Finally, the Sharks still have two games remaining against the Spokane Shock, as those two squads will meet for the first time in Week 12.

To this point in the season, the Sharks have taken care of business against foes in the American Conference. In fact, Jacksonville has a perfect 6-0 record in conference play, notching exactly one win against each of the six other teams in the conference. Though there is still plenty of football to be played, that record definitely stands as a positive sign as the Sharks head toward the postseason.

#### **About the Jacksonville Sharks**

The Jacksonville Sharks return home to face the Pittsburgh Power on Saturday, June 1, with kickoff set for 7:00 p.m. The Sharks are members of the Arena Football League (AFL). The ArenaBowl XXIV and back-to-back-to-back South Division Champions are presented by Sea Best Seafood and play all home games on Sea Best Field at the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena. Season Tickets for the 2013 season are still available, two tickets as low as \$121. To reserve your season tickets, or for more information, please call (904) 621-0700. Follow the Sharks on facebook at [facebook.com/jaxsharks](https://www.facebook.com/jaxsharks) and on Twitter @jaxsharks, as well as the Attack Dance Team at [facebook.com/sharkattackdance](https://www.facebook.com/sharkattackdance) and Chum at [facebook.com/chumsharks](https://www.facebook.com/chumsharks).

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