



**2002 NFL SEASON  
SIXTH SENSE SPORTS**

## **WEEK 1**

Home team in caps.

### **Thursday, September 5**

#### **San Francisco –3 NY GIANTS 40**

Hard to like the Giants in this game. When we last saw the Giants, they were playing a similar team in Green Bay and lost that game 25-34 and the final score doesn't indicate how lopsided that game really was. The Giants gave up over 400 yards in that game. They did amass over 500 yards themselves but much of that was gained after being down badly and having to throw to get back into the game. I rate the Packers as better than the 49ers but the 49ers are not far behind the Packers and have improved since last year. Meanwhile, the Giants have lost some personnel and look to be rebuilding. Based on their stats from last year, I rate both of these teams (Giants and 49ers) as above average teams. Those ratings are based on how well they do from a yards per play standpoint versus the competition they faced. Based on that, they rate about the same. The Giants played three games against above average teams last year and went 0-3 ats. The 49ers played four games against above average teams last year and went 3-1 ats. We know the 49ers are better this year and the Giants are worse. The Giants did a nice job of stopping the run last year against this type of team as they allowed only 3.1 ypr and gained 4.8 ypr with their offense. The real problems for NY were in the passing game. Not only did they only gain an average of 5.5 yps but they gave up 8.6 yps against above average teams. The 49ers also gained 4.8 ypr against above average teams and allowed 4.1 ypr. They passed for 6.6 yps and allowed 6.9 yps against above average teams. When I run the projected stats for this game based on their performance from last year against above average teams, I get the 49ers gaining over 400 yards on offense and limiting the Giants to under 300 yards and winning the game 29-22. Fassel is only 14-19-4 ats at home and 4-7 as a home dog. Mariucci is now 6-1 ats when favored on the road against a .500 or worse team and laying four or less points. The only problem I have with playing SF here is they qualify in a week one situation which is now 34-64-3 ats and a subset of that which is 22-50-2. I can't go against that but I'll still predict a 49ers win based on the stats listed above. I'll let the line decide who covers and look for a high scoring game. **SAN FRANCISCO 27 NY GIANTS 24**

### **Sunday, September 8**

#### **TENNESSEE –1 Philadelphia 37**

This should be a great game. I believe the Titans will be an outstanding team this year. They get much healthier on defense and Eddie George is healthy this year and should return to the Eddie George of old. Both of these teams play well in this role and my final score predicts the Eagles winning by two points, if I use last year's numbers which indicate Tennessee is a below average team. I believe Tennessee will become an above average team again this year and when I run the numbers against those types of teams, I get Tennessee winning this game by about seven points. Tennessee head coach Jeff Fisher is 22-16-1 ats versus .667 or greater teams and 9-6-1 ats as a home favorite of three or less points. That record improves to 8-2-1 ats since the Titans have been in Tennessee and out of Houston. Meanwhile, Andy Reid and the Eagles are now 16-9-1 ats as a dog and 17-6 on the road, including 15-9-1 ats when playing greater than .500 teams. I consider the Titans to be a better than .500 team this year. Having said all of that, Reid is only 3-3 ats when playing on the road as a dog of 0 to 3 points and facing a team that is .500 or above. Tennessee played three top teams last year (I rate Philly as a top team) and held those teams to just 3.2 ypr. Their problems were in the secondary as they allowed a whopping 8.0 yps to those top teams. Even though I expect those numbers to improve drastically this year, using those numbers still only nets Philly a two point win if I use Tennessee as a below average team. Philly should be as good this year as last year and I already said I expect the Titans to be vastly improved. Using last year's numbers gives Philly a two point win but with the improvement I expect out of Tennessee, they should win this game using numbers reflecting Tennessee as an above average team. Two years ago, Philly lost as a three point home dog to Tennessee 13-15. I'll lean with Tennessee. **TENNESSEE 19 PHILADELPHIA 12**

#### **NY Jets –3 BUFFALO 40**

Buffalo should be improved this year but improving from a 3-13 season isn't saying much. I like the direction

they are headed in but I don't see them winning more than six games this year. Herman Edwards continues to do a fantastic job with the Jets. Last year I rated the Jets as an above average team while Buffalo rated as a below average team. The Bills were just 3-6 ats against above average teams and lost at home to the Jets as 3.5 point dogs 36-42 while upsetting the Jets in the Meadowlands, 14-9 as seven point dogs. That home loss for the Jets should have them focused for this game. The Bills rushing defense allowed 4.8 ypr to above average teams while the Jets averaged 4.7 ypr against below average teams last year, including allowing the Jets to rush for 5.1 ypr and 6.4 ypr in their two meetings last year. I expect the Jets to rush for over 170 yards in this game while giving up around 120 yards to the Bills. Last year the Bills averaged 5.1 and 4.8 ypr in their two meetings with the Jets and gained 162 and 192 yards rushing. They could easily do that again. Factoring in all of those numbers, my final prediction is for a two point Jets victory. With the Jets expected to be about the same as last year and the Bills a better team, this could be a good spot for the Bills to get the cover. I will lean towards a Bills cover. **NY JETS 20 BUFFALO 18**

#### **WASHINGTON -7 Arizona 44.5**

When I first saw this game this summer, I expected to be on the Cardinals. I may still lean their way, but not quite as strong as originally expected. I rated both teams as below average last year and they might both be below average this year. With Marvin Lewis now in charge of the defense and all the help they have added on defense, including the maturation of La Var Arrington, it's hard to believe this team could be below average. They will probably move up to a above average team. Dave McGinnis is now 8-5-1 ats as a dog including 6-1-1 as an away dog. My final numbers predict a 13 point Washington victory but those were numbers established by Marty Schottenheimer last year and we all know Steve Spurrier is about 180 degrees different than Schottenheimer. Washington does qualify in a negative 34-64-3 week one situation which tells me to lean with Arizona but the Cardinals don't qualify under any of the much better subsets of that situation which make it basically a .500 system without the subsets. I will lean with Arizona simply because I think there is too much hype for Spurrier and the Cardinals do posses enough passing offense to get back into a game if they need to. **WASHINGTON 21 ARIZONA 17**

#### **Baltimore -2 CAROLINA 33.5**

Oh, how the mighty have fallen. Baltimore looks to be just a shell of themselves from last year and the year before. They Ravens have lost nearly everything that was positive for them on offense and many of their defensive players as well. They didn't exactly light it up during the preseason, averaging only 10 points per game. Carolina comes off a 1-15 season but the Panthers, as bad as they were last year, lost eight of those 15 games by seven or less points. If they had won half of those, they could have finished 5-11. That's not much better but it certainly looks better than 1-15. For the Ravens, I just don't see Chris Redman leading this team to too many victories. Before you think a 1-15 team should be played against, you should know 1-15 teams are now 5-0 ats in week one the following year. Baltimore also qualifies in a negative 34-64-3 week one situation and they also qualify in 22-50-3, 5-33 and 0-12 subsets of that situation. I rated Baltimore as an above average team last year, for good reason, but this year I rate them as below average. When I run the numbers for a Panthers team (rated as a poor team) against a below average team, I get Baltimore winning the game by a score of 17-10. In those numbers, I project Carolina to turn the ball over about two times more than Baltimore. That might not happen, given an experienced Rodney Peete is playing for Carolina and an inexperienced Chris Redman is playing for Baltimore. If I make the turnovers even, I get Carolina winning the game by two points, which I can see happening. Brian Billick is 10-3 ats versus .333 or worse teams but only 2-2 ats on the road and favored, meaning most of his success has come at home. I'll call for the upset, if you can call it that. **CAROLINA 14 BALTIMORE 12**

#### **CHICAGO -4.5 Minnesota 40.5**

A couple of items to note in this game. Like I said earlier, I rate these teams based on their yards per play averages and then match that number up with their competition. I rate teams as top, above average, below average and poor. Three teams made it to the list of poor teams last year. Two of those teams were Carolina (as expected), Atlanta and would you care to guess who the third team was? The Chicago Bears averaged 4.5 yppl last year but did so against a group of teams who allowed 5.1 yppl for a net of -0.6 yppl. On defense, the Bears were much better, allowing only 4.9 yppl against a group of teams averaging 5.0 yppl. That makes the Bears a net -0.5 yppl and ranks them only above Carolina (-1-1 yppl) and Atlanta (-0.7 yppl). That doesn't spell success for the Bears this year. Despite all of that, I still think they win about 10 games this year. They are in a terrific spot this week as home di-

visional favorites who finished at .500 or better last year are now 40-21-3 ats in week one. The Bears qualify in a subset of that which is now 21-4-1 ats since 1983. The Vikings also qualify in a 34-64-3 negative situation including subsets which are 22-50-2 ats and 5-33 ats. Last year the Bears won both games against the Vikings, winning at home (in Chicago – Bears games this year are in Champagne, Ill.) 17-10 as 3.5 point home dogs and at Minnesota, 13-6 as 3 point dogs. That game in Minnesota was won without Anthony Thomas. Running the numbers for Minnesota against poor teams and Chicago against below average teams, I get the Bears winning this game by a comfortable margin. Dick Jauron is now 14-5-1 ats versus .500 or worse teams, although only 1-3-1 ats when favored at home by more than three points. The Vikings should get better this year, but I think it will take some time for new head coach Mike Tice and his new offensive coordinator to get this team, which has numerous new starters on defense, to gel. The Bears only allowed 5.6 yps against below average teams last year and I expect them to limit Minnesota again this year. Last year they held the Vikings to 215 yards and 192 yards passing and I only project the Vikings to gain about 200 yards passing in this game. **CHICAGO 24 MINNESOTA 10**

### **CINCINNATI –2 San Diego 37.5**

I don't have much of an opinion on this game. SD's Schottenheimer is 50-41-4 as a dog but only 18-18 as a road dog of three or less points, meaning he is about average when taking on the more competitive teams. SD has held Corey Dillon in check the last couple of times they have played Cincinnati. The Chargers have held Dillon to 46 yards on 15 carries last year in San Diego and 37 yards on 12 carries in 1999 in Cincinnati. If Dillon doesn't get his yards, it is very tough for Cincinnati to win games. The Bengals are just 6-39 SU since 1998 when Corey Dillon fails to gain 100 yards and 10-7 SU when he gets 100 yards. The Chargers rate out as an above average team last year and they held below average teams to just 84 yards per game and 3.1 ypr. I project the Bengals to only get 75 yards rushing and that spells trouble for Cincinnati winning this game. And if they don't win, they don't cover the spread. **SAN DIEGO 17 CINCINNATI 14**

### **CLEVELAND –2.5 Kansas City 37.5**

This is a very interesting game. I don't have any situations to fall back on and I don't see any coaching trends to get me leaning one way or another. My match up projections favor Kansas City pretty easily in this game. Those match ups are based on last year's numbers and they rate Kansas City as a top team based on their 5.7 yppf average on offense versus teams allowing only 5.0 yppf for a net of 0.7 yppf and on defense they allowed 5.3 versus teams averaging 5.1 yppf for a net of -0.2. The final net is 0.5 yppf better as a team than the competition they faced. The Chiefs biggest problems last year were turnovers. They ended up turning the ball over seven more times than they forced turnovers. Those types of numbers will make it very hard to win games on a consistent basis. Last year, Cleveland rated as a below average team. That could certainly change this year as the Browns could move up to an above average team. The Browns really struggled against top teams who could rush the ball last year. They only faced Pittsburgh, in that category, but allowed well over 200 yards rushing in both of those games. Kansas City figures to be able to rush the ball in this game as well and if they do, they will win this game. **KANSAS CITY 24 CLEVELAND 14**

### **GREEN BAY –7 Atlanta 43**

This is a classic match up between a top rated team and a poor rated team. Those ratings reflect the best and the worse of the teams in the NFL. Atlanta did come to GB last year and win the game outright, 23-20 as 10.5 point dogs. Dan Reeves is now 80-61-8 as a dog but only 18-23-4 with Atlanta. He is 44-33-2 versus .667 or better teams but only 4-6 ats with Atlanta on the road against .667 or better teams. On the flip side, Mike Sherman is now only 7-11 ats versus .500 or worse teams, including just 1-4 when favored by seven or less against .500 or worse teams at home. My match up projections predict an easy Packer victory and I'll stay with that but I think this is a good game to pass. **GREEN BAY 28 ATLANTA 14**

### **Indianapolis –3.5 JACKSONVILLE 44**

Both of these teams rated out as above average teams last year, based on their yppf. Turnovers really hurt Indianapolis and they look to start fresh again this year with Tony Dungy brought in to resurrect the defense. Edgerrin James is hopefully healthy and ready to run again. Tom Moore was kept as the offensive coordinator so hopefully

Tony Dungy will not effect that area of the Colts game. For Jacksonville, well, they look much like Baltimore with all the deletions to their roster. It's really hard to predict Jacksonville will have any success at all this year. If I use last year's ratings, I come up with a Jacksonville victory by about 31-21 but I must downgrade Jacksonville from an above average team to a below average team with all the losses they have faced. When I rerun the numbers I still get a Jacksonville win but by a much closer score. I'll hold with that prediction as I have to see Indianapolis play better defense than they have the last couple of years. **JACKSONVILLE 23 INDIANAPOLIS 20**

#### **MIAMI -8 Detroit 35.5**

Certainly not thrilled with taking Detroit in this game with Mike McMahon as their starting qb. While, McMahon could end up being a very good NFL qb, I don't want anything to do with him in Miami on opening day. It should be noted Marty Mornhinweg is now 3-1-1 as a dog of seven or more points. But Dave Wannstedt is now 13-6-1 as a favorite with Miami and 10-4-1 as a home favorite with Miami. In addition he is 10-2-1 versus .500 or worse teams with Miami including 6-0 versus .333 or worse teams and 7-0-1 as a home favorite versus .500 or worse teams. Detroit also qualifies in a 34-64-3 week one situation, including subsets that are 22-50-2 and 5-33 ats. My projections only predict a Miami victory by six points but I will increase that based on the negative situation that Detroit qualifies in. The biggest problem for Detroit in this game is the 7.1 yps they allowed to above average teams last year. That could be a problem because Miami went 6-1 ats against below average teams last year, aiding their cause by throwing for 7.7 yps against those teams. I project Miami to throw for only 202 yards but they should hold Detroit's passing game down. Detroit averaged just 4.4 yps last year against above average teams while Miami allowed only 5.6 yps against below average teams. Too much defense, the ability to strike through the air and the inability for Detroit to get back in the game via the pass. And I haven't even mentioned Ricky Williams ability to run the ball through the Detroit defense, which should only aid the passing game. **MIAMI 21 DETROIT 10**

#### **St. Louis -3 DENVER 52**

Very intriguing match up between these two teams. The Rams come in favored on grass, where they are 5-7 ats since 1999 and only 2-5 ats on grass, favored and facing a .500 or better team. I consider the Broncos to be a .500 or better team this year. On the other side, Mike Shanahan is now 16-8-3 as a dog with Denver, 27-21-2 at home with Denver, 19-9-1 versus .667 or better teams with Denver, 2-0-1 as a home dog with Denver and 10-2 at home versus .667 or better teams. Those are the makings of a very good game. My ratings using Denver's below average rating of last year say the Rams win this game 22-20. If I upgrade Denver to an above average team, which I think they will be this year, my ratings predict a Bronco victory of 23-20. That assumes the Broncos will get about 1.5 more turnovers than they will commit. If the turnovers are even, Denver only loses by about 1 point and still covers the spread. St. Louis also qualifies in a negative 34-64-3 week one situation but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. I like Denver and the under in this game. **DENVER 23 ST LOUIS 20**

#### **OAKLAND -7 Seattle 41**

I expect the Raiders to take a turn for the worse this year, but maybe not in this game. I just can't see Seattle doing anything offensively in this game, especially if their qb is Matt Hasselbeck. Even if it's Dilfer, the situation is not good for Seattle. My projections do favor Seattle in this game but Seattle qualifies in a negative 34-64-3 situation including subsets that are 22-50-2 and 5-33 ats. Oakland also qualifies in a 15-3-1 situation that plays on teams who allowed 14 or less points, on average, during the preseason when facing teams who allowed 13 or more points, on average, during the preseason. There's more to it than that but that is the basics of the situation. But, as I mentioned, the numbers are a bit conflicting as my projections suggest only a three point Raider victory but the situation favors the Raiders. A good game to pass on. **OAKLAND 24 SEATTLE 17**

#### **TAMPA BAY -5.5 New Orleans 37.5**

Another interesting battle between what is expected to be a one or two horse race in the NFC South this year. TB qualifies in the same 40-21-3 ats situation mentioned in the Bears game and the subset that is 21-4-1 ats. The problems with taking TB in this game is Gruden is only 20-24 ats as a favorite, 17-22 ats at home and 15-25 versus .500 or worse teams so I don't see the coaching change as being a positive in ats roles for TB. Meanwhile, Jim

Haslett is now 9-5-1 on the road. Haslett is only 5-9 versus .500 or better teams but he is 4-1 as a road dog of four or more points. It's very hard for me to take TB until I see their offense perform better. TB rated out as a below average team last year, as did New Orleans. Their offense only averaged 4.6 yppl last year against teams allowing 5.0 yppl. Their defense did better, allowing only 4.9 yppl to teams averaging 5.2 but once again, their defense could not make up for their offensive inabilities. I don't know if the Saints will be any better this year with all of their losses, but they do possess the offense to stay in this game if TB's offense doesn't improve. In addition, TB is now only 9-17 as a home favorite of five or more points since 1984 and only 5-14 ats since 1992 so their bad ats record as a decent size home favorite isn't because of their ineptness back in the late 70's and early 80's. My match up projections do side with TB in this game and I'll side with them but I can't back them with my money just yet.

**TAMPA BAY 27 NEW ORLEANS 13**

### **Dallas -8 HOUSTON 33**

Not much for me to say here seeing we have yet to see Houston play a regular season game. I will note that Dave Campo is just 2-4 ats as a favorite, 6-9-1 on the road and 2-4 versus .333 or worse teams. Dom Capers (Texan's coach) is now 22-14-2 as a dog when he was with Carolina and 22-9-2 versus .500 or worse teams. I can't lay this many points with a Dallas team that doesn't score until I see them play better. Dallas does have an excellent defense and Houston only averaged 11 points, on average, during the preseason. Short of turnovers, this game could go under the low total. Simply a guess. **DALLAS 14 HOUSTON 10**

### **Monday, September 9**

Well, well, well, what do we have here? A rematch of last year's AFC Championship game. But this time we have the SB Champions in their own back yard and they are an underdog. I understand the underdog role. Yes, NE is the SB Champions but let's face it, they allowed 30 more yards than they gained last year. They rated out as a below average team and now they face a top team in Pittsburgh, who must be hungry, after their loss as 10 point favorites. That was a game that saw the Steelers out gain NE 306-259 but they lost the turnover battle 0-4 and allowed a punt return for a touchdown. Can that happen again? I'll tell you why it just might. Pittsburgh's Bill Cowher is 50-42-6 as a favorite and 46-27-3 versus .500 or better teams and 27-17-2 versus .667 or better teams. That all looks pretty good on the surface but a closer look reveals Cowher is only 10-19-4 as a road favorite and just 2-10-3 as a road favorite of three or less points. Simply put, he has trouble winning the closely matched games on the road. On the other side, we have crafty old Bill Belichick. Good old Bill. His numbers are never very pretty but all he does is win when you least expect it. Need proof. Let me show you. Belichick is now 14-6 as a dog with NE, 30-22 at home (10-5 with NE), 21-11-1 versus .667 or better teams and 5-0 as a home dog versus .667 or better teams with NE. That 5-0 record includes being 1-0 as a home dog of 1-3 points. My match up projections indicate a Pittsburgh victory by a score of 26-13. They should. Hell, Belichick's teams never possess the great numbers, he just brings out a great game plan when facing the best teams. You can't account for that when running your numbers. Believe me, I learned the hard way last year. This is a game with conflicting trends, as the numbers suggest Pittsburgh, but the coaching trends suggest NE. A good game to pass but a GREAT game to watch and see if Belichick can pull his magic once again. **PITTSBURGH 23 NEW ENGLAND 20**

### **BEST BETS**

**YTD 0-0**

**3% CHICAGO -4.5**

## **WEEK 2**

Home team in caps.

All records are ats unless other wise noted.

#### **INDIANAPOLIS –2.5 Miami 46.5**

You could probably just pencil in Miami for a three point win here. The Dolphins have won the past three games in Indy by exactly three points. In those games they have been three and seven point dogs and a pick 'em. Only once in the past 10 games played in Indy have the Dolphins lost by more than four points. The biggest question mark for Indy is their defense. With Tony Dungy now at the helm, it is expected to improve drastically. If week one was any indication, their defense has probably improved. Although it was only against Jacksonville, the Colts allowed 3.7 ypr and 6.1 yps for a 5.0 yppl average. That 5.0 yppl is pretty good but it might be masked a bit because Jacksonville decided to run the ball 32 times last week for 3.7 ypr, which will hold down their yards per play average. Jacksonville did throw the ball for 6.1 yps which is below average, from a defensive standpoint. That tells me Miami will probably be able to throw the ball here as well. Based on last year's number versus similar competition, I project Miami to run for about 5.0 ypr and throw for about 6.5 yps. Those rushing numbers might end up a little worse but I do expect Miami to throw the ball with some success. I realize it was only against Detroit last week but Miami did throw for 7.7 yps and I expect that success to continue. With Ricky Williams now a true threat to run the ball and Randy McMichael a positive security blanket and a threat for Jay Fiedler, the Dolphins passing game could be very good this year. The Dolphins defense stifled Detroit's offense last week allowing them only 2.7 ypr and 5.3 yps and it could have been even better except Miami was playing a lot of their second and third string players in the fourth quarter. I have to see more out of the Indy defense before I can expect them to be able to beat a solid running team with a good defense. It should be noted Tony Dungy was 11-2-1 as a home favorite of less than four points with TB. Indy, however; is just 4-3 as a home favorite of less than four points since 1998. This game also qualifies in a 299-222-18 under situation. **MIAMI 21 INDIANAPOLIS 17**

#### **KANSAS CITY –4.5 Jacksonville 44**

The Chiefs offense looked like it was in mid season form last week, rushing for 194 yards at a 6.5 ypr average and passing for another 276 yards at 9.5 yps. They totaled 470 total yards at 8.0 yppl. What didn't look like it was in mid season form was their defense. The Chiefs allowed 39 points and 352 yards passing at 8.6 yps. Their run defense was very good, allowing Cleveland only 59 yards on just 20 attempts. It is pretty clear that Butch Davis felt they could throw the ball and spent most of the day throwing, rather than running the ball. Jacksonville, on the other hand, played pretty good defense against a pretty good Indianapolis offense, limiting Indy to 307 yards of total offense at 5.1 yppl. On offense for Jacksonville, they had more first downs (19-18), had more yards rushing (118-104) and had more yards passing (225-203). They beat Indianapolis in every facet. One of Indy's touchdowns was an interception return. Another score was a three play, 19 yard drive and another was an eleven play drive but for only 48 yards. Jacksonville also had a couple of short drives for touchdowns. The point here is the Jacksonville defense held the Indy offense down pretty good, allowing just one long drive in that game. On the other hand, KC may have won their game last week but it took a bone headed play by Dwayne Rudd to give the Chiefs another chance at the game winning field goal and the Chiefs spent most of the day coming from behind. As long as Fred Taylor can run the ball for Jacksonville, they have a chance because it allows Mark Brunell the chance to throw the ball. And it doesn't appear having only Jimmy Smith left in the receiver department is going to keep the passing game down. They averaged 6.1 yps and all Smith did was catch eight balls for 104 yards. Tom Coughlin is only 1-4-1 on the road as a dog of less than seven points against greater than .500 teams. Conversely, Dick Vermeil is only 1-4-1 with the Rams and Chiefs as a home favorite of less than or equal to four points versus less than .500 teams. Kansas City qualifies in a couple of horrible negative situations. The fact that KC gave up so many points last week with their defense and are now favored puts them in a negative 81-132-10 situation and another negative 34-75-6 situation. Those two situations are worth about 7.5 points in favor of Jacksonville. Jacksonville showed last week they can still throw the ball and the Chiefs defense showed it might be very vulnerable against the pass. Couple that with the two situations listed above and Jacksonville becomes a play. This game also qualifies in a 68-37-4 under situation. **JACKSONVILLE 20 KANSAS CITY 17**

#### **Green Bay –2.5 NEW ORLEANS 45**

We'll find out this week if GB's defense allowed 34 points because of Michael Vick or because their defense might not be as good as advertised. I would tend to believe it is the former but time will tell. The Packers defense allowed 180 yards rushing at 6.0 yards per rush and another 194 yards passing but at 7.2 yards per pass. The Packers defense did sack Vick four times and it could have been many more but he escaped pressure on numerous occasions. Vick did have nine rushes for 72 yards last week and when you take those stats out of the rushing numbers, GB still allowed 108 yards rushing at 5.1 ypr. Those numbers don't bode well for a team about to lay points on the road against a good Saints team. From an offensive standpoint, the Packers offense didn't seem to miss too many beats. They tallied 29 first downs, 211 yards rushing and another 273 yards passing, while averaging 6.4 yards per play in their 484 total yards of offense. Meanwhile, the Saints were taking on Jon Gruden and the Bucs. The Saints thoroughly outplayed Tampa Bay, winning 26-20 and out gaining TB 368-333 total yards. The Saints offense wasn't fantastic, gaining only 3.5 ypr and 5.7 yps but they did eventually gain 118 yards rushing and pass for 250 yards. They held TB to only 72 yards rushing (although TB was passing, in catch up mode, most of the day) at 3.4 ypr and only 4.7 yps. Much has been made of GB's inability to play on the road on artificial turf and they'll get another chance to disprove that theory this week. GB is now just 3-9 as a road favorite of four or less points on artificial turf including 0-3 since 1998. On the flip side, Jim Haslett is 0-4 as a home dog and 0-2 as a home dog of three or less points. NO qualifies in a terrific momentum situation based on their road win last week. That situation is now 71-37-2. They also qualify in another terrific situation that is 39-8-1 since 1990 based on their upset win last week. In addition because of the Packers inability to stop the run and the Saints good run defense, the Saints qualify in an outstanding 97-47-6 fundamental situation that plays on home dogs who can stop the run versus road favorites who can't stop the run. Most of my fundamental situations wait until teams have played at least four games but this particular fundamental system is 8-4 during week two so the week number doesn't seem to matter. If a team can stop the run versus a team who can't stop the run, they stand an excellent chance at covering whether it is week two or sixteen. My numbers when matching up GB as a top team and NO as a below average team (based on last year's numbers) show GB only winning by two points. I think NO might be an above average team which would make those numbers even better for NO and they don't take into consideration the strong situations which apply to NO. I bleed Green and Gold and it pains me to go against them but when the situation is right, I must do so. I am fully aware NO is hurting in the defensive backfield, missing probably two of their starters, but the GB defense has not shown the ability to stop other teams offenses and on the carpet, it may get a little harder. This game also qualifies under a 68-37-4 under situation. **NEW ORLEANS 21 GREEN BAY 17**

#### **NY JETS -1 New England 41.5**

Huge game in the Meadowlands this weekend. We have NE coming off an emotional win on Monday night over Pittsburgh and the Jets coming off an overtime win last week in Buffalo. There are three teams who can all set their sight on winning this division and winning these games is a huge step in doing so. The Jets have not fared very well in recent meeting against NE at home. They have now won only one of the past seven meetings between these two here by more than one point and that was way back in 1997. Last year, NE won the game 17-16 as three point dogs. Much will probably also be made of the Jets terrible home record which now stands at 7-17-2 as home favorites of three or less points and just 3-7 as home favorites of three or less points against greater than .500 teams. But you should know the Jets are actually 4-3 since 1998 as home favorites of three or less points and 3-1 as home favorites of three or less points against greater than .500 teams since 1998 so don't let old history skew your viewpoint. A close look at the stats from last week reveals the Jets allowed 142 yards rushing and 242 yards passing for a total of 384 yards and only gained 266 yards themselves. In addition skeptics will point out they scored two touchdowns last week from their special teams via kick off returns. A closer look at the yards per play stats shows the Jets may have played a little better than some people think. Buffalo had many more plays from offense due to the Jets kick off returns and two roughing penalties against the Jets for roughing the Bills punter. But the facts say the Jets averaged 5.2 ypr to Buffalo's 4.4 ypr and 5.8 yps to Buffalo's 5.6 yps and 5.7 yards per play to Buffalo's 5.1 yards per play. So, the Jets did a pretty decent job against Buffalo. NE, meanwhile, was causing five Steeler turnovers and sacking Kordell Stewart another five times. The Patriots only rushed the ball for 63 yards at 3.5 ypr but did throw for 280 yards at 6.2 yps. They held the Steelers to just 74 yards rushing at 3.1 ypr and 209 yards passing at 4.9 yps. This is a good game to pass, in my opinion. My numbers indicate a Jets victory by one point and I'll stay with that and let the line decide which way I would lean. I will offer this however. The Patriots look like they may have upgraded their offense with some quality receivers and more speed along with some production out of the tight end position, which could make NE a very good team this year. Time will tell. **NY JETS 21 NEW ENGLAND 20**

### **ATLANTA -3 Chicago 43.5**

Michael Vick sure looked good last week. The Packers put plenty of heat on Vick and he was able to side step much of it. The Bears will have their hands full this week, especially seeing they appear to have lost Phil Daniels and R.W. McQuarters from the defensive side of the ball. The Bears were out played for much of the game last week before finally turning it on in the fourth quarter. For the game they were out rushed by Minnesota 136 yards to 80 yards and 4.3 ypr to 3.1 ypr. They did throw for 288 yards and 8.5 yps against a porous Vikings pass defense. But they also allowed 228 yards passing at 7.6 yps. Overall, their defense allowed 5.9 yppl and now they must face Atlanta, who averaged 6.6 yppl last week at Green Bay. The Falcons rushed for 180 yards and 6.0 ypr last week against a good GB defense and even if you take out Vicks scrambling numbers, they still averaged 5.1 ypr. These two teams met last year in week four and the Bears destroyed Atlanta, 31-3, in Atlanta as three point dogs. A closer look at the game revealed Chicago only gained 300 yards while allowing 335 yards to Atlanta. The big difference in that game was five Falcon turnovers to only two for Chicago. My numbers indicate Atlanta wins this game by four points but Atlanta qualifies in a couple of very bad negative situations. The Falcons qualify in a 34-75-6 situation based on their poor performance from their defense last week. Atlanta also qualifies in a 25-59-4 early season situation based on their loss last week. Atlanta has also lost cb Ray Buchanan for four games due to a suspension. Bears coach Dick Jauron is now 16-7-1 on the road and 3-0 as a road dog of three points or less. Dan Reeves is 4-2-2 off a loss as a home favorite of three or less points with Atlanta. Atlanta is a much better team this year, especially with Michael Vick but I think the Bears will be able to run the ball with success as well as throw it with success and Atlanta is in a couple of pretty poor situations this week. Value and situations lie with Chicago. **CHI-CAGO 20 ATLANTA 13**

### **Tampa Bay -3.5 BALTIMORE 33.5**

It shouldn't be but a couple of more games and we'll all realize TB just isn't that good of a team. I said last week I rated them as a below average team last year. They didn't show me anything last week that would change my mind. Fortunately for them this week they face Baltimore, who I rated as an above average team last year but is now rated a below average team. Jon Gruden is now 3-0 as a road favorite off a loss and I expect him to have TB ready to bounce back this week. That might be easier said than done. Brian Billick is 11-4 as a home favorite of more than four points but only 3-3-3 as a home favorite of less than four points or a dog. It appears that good old Brian likes to be the class bully and beat up on the inferior opponents but when push comes to shove and he faces someone who can fight back, it's a different story. If this line would go back to -3, which I doubt it will, Baltimore would qualify in a negative situation that is 25-59-4 based on their loss last week. In their game last week, Baltimore out gained Carolina 289-265 at 5.3 yppl to 4.6 yppl. While Carolina is a bad team, it appears Baltimore still has a pretty good defense. TB only gained 3.4 ypr last week against NO and they will face as good, if not better, of a defense this week in Baltimore. TB also only averaged 4.7 yps last week. The Bucs offensive line has been terrible and allowed three more sacks last week. At the rate they are going, Brad Johnson will be in the best shape any quarterback can be in. He ran for his life last week and will continue to do so this week. My numbers suggest Baltimore wins this game by three points but Baltimore would qualify in that negative situation if the line comes down a half point, which would make this game about a pick 'em. I'll lean with Baltimore simply because it's awful tough to lay points on the road with a team that doesn't appear to possess a very good offense against a still very tough defense. **BALTIMORE 19 TAMPA BAY 16**

### **CAROLINA -3 Detroit 37**

A game with two teams such as these doesn't really deserve too much attention. I've said it for over a year now and I'll continue to say it. As long as Marty Mornhinweg is the Lions head coach and Matt Millen is their leader in the front office, this team is going nowhere. Last week the Lions allowed 182 yards rushing at 4.4 ypr and another 207 yards passing at 7.7 yps. On their side of the ball, they only gained 51 yards rushing at 2.7 ypr and 206 yards passing at 5.3 yps. Carolina was respectable last week against Baltimore, averaging 4.0 yards per rush and gaining 145 yards on the ground. They also passed the ball much better than last year, averaging 5.7 yps but only gaining 120 yards passing. It was obvious John Fox decided to run the ball and he will probably try and do that again this week to protect his defense and shorten the game. The real value in this game is on the total, I believe. This game qualifies in a very good 72-39-5 early season under situation. This game also qualifies in a 67-37-4 week two un-

der situation and it does qualify in the subset of that situation which is 40-16-3. My numbers predict a 17-14 Carolina victory, which gives us some value with the under. As for the side, I think it's too close to call. I don't want a Carolina team laying points and I don't want a Detroit team on the road with such a short number. Mornhinweg is now 0-2 as a road dog of less than or equal to six points. **CAROLINA 17 DETROIT 14**

#### **CLEVELAND -4.5 Cincinnati 38.5**

Trying to decide on who to take in Bengal's games this year comes down to this, as I mentioned last week. The Bengals are just 6-40 SU since 1998 when Corey Dillon fails to gain 100 yards and 10-7 SU when he gets 100 yards. If you think Dillon can get his 100 yards this week, take Cincinnati. If not, go against them. My numbers project Cincinnati to rush for 140 yards and that probably means Dillon gets his 100 yards and Cincinnati has an excellent chance at covering this game. In addition, my numbers project only a three point Cleveland victory. It might seem even more possible for Dillon to get his 100 yards this week because Cleveland allowed 194 yards rushing last week at 6.5 ypr. They also allowed 276 yards passing at 9.5 yps. We could be in for another high scoring game this week (although I expect both defenses to bounce back) as Cincinnati allowed 241 yards rushing last week at 5.4 ypr and 160 yards passing but at 8.0 yps. Neither one of these teams ran the ball very well last week but I think that is more disconcerting for Cleveland than Cincinnati. I projected Cleveland to rush for 127 yards and 4.7 ypr last week but they only ran for 59 yards and 3.0 ypr. Cincinnati, meanwhile, only ran for 36 yards and 2.8 ypr but I only projected them to rush for 75 yards and 2.9 ypr so their poor performance was expected. This week I expect Cincinnati to gain 140 at 4.1 ypr but Cleveland to only gain 45 yards and 1.7 ypr. This game also qualifies in a very strong 68-37-4 under situation which also fits the subset of this situation that is now 40-16-3. In addition, these teams have played three games here since Cleveland came back into the league and they have scored a total of 18, 15 and 35 points. **CLEVELAND 17 CINCINNATI 16**

#### **Tennessee -3.5 DALLAS 37.5**

Well, how could you possibly consider taking the Cowboys after last week's fiasco? Winning in the NFL is about contrarian type thinking. I'll be on the 'Boys this week but it's not entirely because of contrarian type thinking. Tennessee came back from 14 points down last week to defeat Philadelphia. The Titans did throw the ball well last week, averaging 7.6 yps by throwing for 267 yards. That was probably out of necessity because they were behind but they only averaged 2.4 ypr and gained but 61 yards rushing the ball. Dallas, on the other hand, well, they looked bad. But the numbers tell a little bit of a different story as Dallas averaged 6.5 ypr and gained 155 yards rushing. Yes, 46 of those yards were accumulated on one play but even if you take out that play and another 21 yard gain by Joey Galloway, Dallas still averaged 4.2 ypr while allowing only 2.2 ypr on defense. Remember, in the NFL, if every team was as bad and as good as they look each Sunday, we would have an awful lot of winless and undefeated teams in the NFL. Well, we've only had one of each in the NFL in over 30 years. Dallas also held Houston to only 123 yards passing and 4.4 yps. If you take away their 65 yard pass to Corey Bradford in the fourth quarter, they would have gained only 58 yards passing at 2.1 yps. And let's remember Dallas was laying nine points last week and this week they are getting 3.5 points. Yes, it's Tennessee this week but Dallas will play better at home as they have recently. Tennessee and Jeff Fisher is now just 3-8-1 as a road favorite of four or less points since his team moved to Tennessee and 1-5-1 off a win as a road favorite of four or less points. Meanwhile, Dave Campo is 7-3-0 as a home dog but only 3-3 off a loss. Dallas also qualifies in a very good bounce back 67-35-2 situation off of their loss as a favorite last week. They also qualify in a very good fundamental situation that is 97-47-6 that plays on good rushing teams at home who can rush the ball and stop the rush and are getting points. Those types of teams have made excellent home dogs since 1985 and the proof is in the pudding by the 97-47-6 record of that situation. As I said at the beginning, this is a bit of a contrarian type play because nobody wants Dallas this week but also it is a solid fundamental play based on the 97-47-6 situation. My numbers project a Dallas win by four points without the positive situations and those situations only make Dallas a stronger play. Lots of value and the situations favor Dallas greatly. **DALLAS 24 TENNESSEE 14**

#### **ST LOUIS -12.5 NY Giants 46.5**

Even though this is a pretty big game, I don't have much to say about this game. The Rams won 15-14 last year here as 12 point favorites and they have been installed as 12.5 point favorites this year. The Rams averaged only 2.5 ypr last week and gained only 32 yards rushing but did throw for 295 yards at 6.7 yps. The Giants struggled

running the ball last week, averaging only 2.0 ypr and gaining only 43 yards. They did throw for 318 yards and 6.5 yps. Road underdogs of three or more points when both teams have winning percentages of .500 or worse and the total is more than 44 points, are 37-17-1. That particular situation implies that two bad teams who are playing in what is expected to be a high scoring game, usually sees the dog cover. My numbers do indicate the Giants can stay in this game and I'll lean with them based on that and the situation they are in. Expect a low scoring game. **ST LOUIS 20 NY GIANTS 14**

#### **SEATTLE -3.5 Arizona 40**

What can you say. Maybe Trent Dilfer will make this team better. Last week's performance by Seattle was horrible. They rushed for 43 yards at 2.7 ypr and passed for a measly 143 yards at 4.1 yps. Meanwhile, they allowed Oakland to run for 221 yards at 5.5 ypr and pass for another 202 yards and 6.7 yps. I don't see it getting much better for Seattle this week. They lost Anthony Simmons last week and he was a main clog in the middle of that defense. For Arizona, they lost to Washington and the numbers didn't look too spectacular either but at least it was against a good defense and what appears to be a decent passing game. I'm not sold on Oakland being as good as the numbers they put up. Arizona allowed no sacks while Seattle allowed three sacks. My numbers predict a three point win for Seattle and that would mean a cover for Arizona. Dave McGinnis is 3-0 as a road dog of less than seven points. Mike Holmgren was 16-3 as a home favorite of less than or equal to six points with Green Bay. But with Seattle he is only 4-5-2 and only 1-3-2 if his opponent is under .500. If this line would creep back down to three, Seattle would qualify in a negative situation that is 25-59-4. **SEATTLE 20 ARIZONA 17**

#### **MINNESOTA -5.5 Buffalo 47**

This should be a very intriguing game. Mike Tice has openly stated his team will look to stop the run first each week and establish the run each week. He stated last week the Jets played a "cover 2" defense and the Bills took advantage by running the ball. The Bills won't see that this week. I understand the philosophy of taking away one part of the game but the Bills should have a field day throwing against the Vikings secondary. Last week the Vikings took away Chicago's running ability and allowed the Bears only 80 yards rushing at 3.1 ypr and allowed the Bears 288 yards passing at 8.5 yps. I have to believe Moulds and Price can light these guys up. And once they have established the pass (unlike the Bears who continued to try and run the ball last week until the second half) the Bills will then be able to run the ball as well. The Vikings did establish the run for themselves last week, gaining 136 yards at 4.3 ypr and they did a good job throwing the ball as well, gaining 228 yards at 7.6 yps. The biggest thing to watch for here is after halftime. Mike Tice did a nice job preparing the game plan last week but at halftime, Dick Jauron made the adjustments and the Bears did a good job in the second half. We will see if Greg Williams has to and does make the necessary adjustments at halftime this week. Buffalo didn't perform all that well on the road last year and they went 2-2-1 as road dogs of seven or less points. A closer look reveals they were 0-0-1 as road dogs of seven or less points against teams below .500. This means they played an awful lot of very good teams last year. They are better this year (as probably are the Vikings) and should be able to stay within a field goal and probably win this game. My match up projections actually predict a Bills victory and I'll stay with that. In addition road underdogs of three or more points when both teams have winning percentages of .500 or worse and the total is more than 44 points, are 37-17-1. **BUFFALO 21 MINNESOTA 20**

#### **SAN FRANCISCO -3.5 Denver 44.5**

Big game for both teams this week. The game became a little less important to Denver after their win last week. A loss to St. Louis last week would have made this week almost a must win to avoid an 0-2 start. Having said that, I'm quite sure Mike Shanahan doesn't want to lose this game. The Broncos defense played outstanding ball again last week. After allowing only seven points on average during the preseason, they held down the Rams offense, allowing them only 16 points on 327 yards at 5.7 yppl. Interesting, however; Denver only averaged 5.1 yppl themselves by gaining 291 yards. They were able to run for 104 yards and 4.0 ypr and throw for another 187 yards at 6.0 yps. San Francisco had their own struggle last week in beating the Giants and they only averaged 5.5 yppl themselves by gaining only 279 yards on offense. They allowed 361 yards but only at 5.1 yppl. My match up projections predict a San Francisco victory and cover in this game. Shanahan is very good as a road dog of seven or less points, going 14-7-1. However; a closer look tells us that he is only 8-6-1 as a road dog of four or less points and an even worse 5-5-0 if he is off a win. So, the better situation for Shanahan is either off a loss or getting be-

tween four and seven points. Put him in a competitive situation (short number), off a win and he is no better than .500. There are no specific situations applying to either side. This game does qualify in a 299-222-18 under situation so I will lean with SF and the under. **SAN FRANCISCO 24 DENVER 16**

#### **SAN DIEGO –13 Houston 34.5**

Oh those Texans. They got their first win in their first game last week becoming only the second NFL franchise to do that. And they got it against their newly hated rival, the Dallas Cowboys. Nothing could be sweeter than that. While the score didn't reflect a new franchise, their numbers certainly did and they indicate they could be in for a long day against Marty and his running Chargers. Houston was sacked six times last week and only gained 78 yards rushing at 2.2 ypr. They also only gained 123 yards passing at 4.4 yps but over half of that (65 yards) came on one pass play. Without that play they would have averaged only 2.1 yps and only passed for 58 yards! That's not a good sign coming into San Diego and a good Chargers defense. I predicted SD would shut down Corey Dillon and in doing so, defeat the Bengals last week. They did an even better job than I thought, holding the Bengals to 36 yards rushing at 2.8 ypr and only 167 yards passing at 4.8 yps. They also had four sacks against the Bengals. I expect them to put an awful lot of pressure on David Carr and the Texans on Sunday. And they should be able to run the ball at will on Houston. SD averaged 5.4 ypr last week and gained a whopping 241 yards rushing. They were also very efficient in the passing game, throwing for only 160 yards but at 8.0 yps. They should be able to do what they want, when they want to this week. That will allow them to run the ball in the second half, much like last week. Dom Capers is 15-8-1 as a road dog in his days at Carolina and 3-0 as a road dog of more than 10 points. In addition, Schottenheimer is only 1-4 as a home favorite of more than 10 points off a win. Thirteen points is an awful lot of points and I'll call for the game to end right around the spread. A good game to pass. **SAN DIEGO 20 HOUSTON 7**

#### **PITTSBURGH –3.5 Oakland 40**

One team looked very good last week while one team looked very bad last week. The Steelers were absolutely throttled in a revenge mode (revenge isn't that big of a factor in the NFL), where you would think they would have played better for their first game of the season. That has to be a little worrisome for Cowher, although his team was beaten badly the first week last year as well. The Steelers averaged only 3.1 ypr on 74 yards rushing and only 4.9 yps on 209 yards passing. They also turned the ball over five times and were sacked five times. Yuck! That's just a putrid performance for a team that was supposed to make it to the SB last year and is/was the favorite to go to the SB this year. As bad as it was for Pittsburgh, it was just that good for Oakland. The Raiders were destroying Seattle and gained 423 yards in that game and averaged 6.0 ypr. They gained over 200+ yards, both rushing and passing. That's something that is usually reserved for your local college team on Saturday. Some of this is due to Oakland playing a really bad team in Seattle and Pittsburgh playing a really good team in New England, but you can't completely overlook the flaws and the positives for both of these teams. Surprisingly my match up projections only favor Pittsburgh by two points. I would also think Cowher would have his team ready after a loss but research doesn't necessarily indicate that. Cowher's teams are 47-31-2 at home, 40-24-2 as a home favorite and 14-7-1 as a home favorite of four or less points but only 4-4-1 as a home favorite of four or less points and off a loss. It seems if his teams are winning, he does an excellent job of keeping the momentum going but if they are losing, he has a tougher time getting this team prepared to play. **PITTSBURGH 17 OAKLAND 14**

#### **Philadelphia –3 WASHINGTON 44.5**

Philadelphia won here last year 20-6 but that was only the second time in the last 10 years they have won in Washington by more than three points. Philly's offense was manhandled last week by Tennessee, as they were held to just 261 total yards of offense at 4.1 ypr. Meanwhile, their defense did a pretty good job limiting Tennessee to 328 yards and 5.5 ypr. They did allow the Titans 267 passing yards at 7.6 yps and that could be a little disconcerting for Eagle fans, knowing they now have to take on the Fun-N-Gun offense of Steve Spurrier. For Spurrier, in his debut, his offense was rolling right along, gaining 320 yards passing at 7.8 yps and they picked up another 122 yards rushing at 3.8 ypr. Bill Parcells made a good point last Sunday when he said he doesn't think the Eagles will be as good this year because of three factors. They lost Jeremiah Trotter, they wanted to run Buckhalter at rb this year but he is now hurt and out for the season and to be honest I forgot the third factor. I think the biggest factor is losing Trotter. He was a staple in the middle of that defense and that will hurt the Eagles and I don't think they

have done much or enough on offense to help their offensive deficiencies. Andy Reid is now 4-0 as a road favorite of four or less points and 3-0 as a road favorite of four or less points off a loss. My match up projections predict a close Philadelphia win but it's hard to get a gauge on Washington with those numbers. They are numbers from last year and they reflect a Marty Schottenheimer running philosophy as opposed to a Steve Spurrier philosophy. I've made some adjustments to them to reflect Spurrier and his offense. The biggest value in this game, I believe, is in the total and playing the under. My numbers indicate only about 30 points being scored in this game. Based on Washington's win at home last week, they set up nicely in a 43-12-2 early season total situation that favors the under. This game also qualifies in a 299-222-18 total situation that favors the under and Philadelphia also qualifies in another 68-37-4 total situation that plays to the under. Plenty of value along with plenty of strong situations that tell us this game will be low scoring. These two teams have only played two games out of the last ten games played in Washington that have totaled more than 44 points. And only once has this total even been set this high. Back in 1999 they set it at 44 and the final tally was only 37 points. Two good defenses in what should be a close battle help this game go under. **PHILADELPHIA 17 WASHINGTON 16**

### **BEST BETS**

**YTD 0-1 -3.3%**

**3% JACKSONVILLE +4.5**

**3% NEW ORLEANS +2.5**

**3% CHICAGO +3**

**3% DET/CAROLINA UNDER 37**

**3% DALLAS +3.5**

**3% PHIL/WASH UNDER 44.5**

## **WEEK 3**

Last week, when I wrote the weekly analysis, the Philadelphia total was 44.5. By the time I bet the game and most, if not all of the day on Monday, the total was 44. Good shopping could have found you a 44.5 but the consensus line was 44 and therefore, I will call that game a push instead of a win. Either way, it was a very good week for these pages, as the Best Bets went 4-1-1 or 5-1 if you found a 44.5. For the season now, I have had five best bets on sides and two on totals and the record stands at 4-2 +5.40%. Of course, if you found a 44.5, you would be 5-2 +8.40%. Removing the five side best bets, that leaves us with another 27 possible bets on the remaining sides for the first two weeks. Five of those 27, I have picked to end right at the spread, in essence, choosing to pass on the game. Of the remaining 22 games, my analysis has been correct in 14 (64%) out of those 22 games. The point being I am off to a very nice start (knock on wood) and the analysis, as a whole, is doing very well too. The thinking, at this point, is very good and I'll look for that to continue this week.

Home team in caps. All records as unless otherwise noted.

Week three byes (Baltimore, Jacksonville, Oakland and Pittsburgh)

### **MIAMI –6 NY Jets 40**

This is a series that you will hear all week about how the Jets have dominated it. Going back for the last 10 seasons, the Jets have now covered 14 of the 20 games with one game being a push, making them 14-5-1, including being 7-0-1 in the last eight games. It gets even worse for Miami as the Jets have won ALL eight of those games straight up as well! The biggest question in this game is if the Jets can rebound and start playing much better than they have in the first two games. And they will have to do it against a Miami team that appears to be threatening for a super bowl with Ricky Williams now anchoring the running game and Norv Turner drawing up the plays for a more potent offense. The Jets are in their best role this week, as an away underdog. They are now 37-20-3 as an away underdog since 1992, including 23-6-1 since 1997. They are also 15-5-1 against teams above .500 as an away underdog and an even better 11-2-1 when facing a team above .500 as an away underdog of more than three points. The real question, now that we know the Jets are in a terrific spot, from a technical basis, is can they stop the Dolphins rushing and passing attack? For the season, the Jets have now allowed 152 yards per game rushing at a 4.2 ypr clip. That rushing defense will have to face a Dolphin offense that is averaging 172 yards rushing per game at 4.6 ypr. Despite an awful lot of yards given up (which is more of a sign they were behind and teams were rushing the ball with the lead), their ypr on defense isn't that bad, at 4.2 ypr. The bigger problem might be the pass defense, which is allowing 6.6 yps and 256 yards per game. That defense allowed NE last week to throw for 269 yards at 7.7 yps. That doesn't bode well for the Jets as they now take on Miami who is averaging a whopping 8.4 yps, after gaining 9.4 yps last week against Indianapolis. The Dolphins are only averaging 193 yards per game passing, choosing their spots very efficiently and then relying on the running game the rest of the time. If the Jets get behind, it may be tough to come back. Their offense, which has gone to more of a passing game, has been terrible so far. They are averaging only 52 yards rushing (at a very good 4.6 ypr) and only 180 yards passing at only 5.1 yps. Miami's defense has been about average, allowing 97 yards per game rushing at 3.9 ypr and 248 yards passing at 5.9 yps, including allowing Indianapolis 4.6 ypr last week and 6.4 yps. So there is hope that the Jets can move the ball if they can get their offense straightened out. Herm Edwards has said he is in favor of going back to a running attack to get Curtis Martin more involved in the offense again. There are no general situations in this game that favor either team Herm Edwards is now 3-1 as a road dog but Dave Wannstedt is now 8-4-1 as a home favorite of seven or less points with Miami and 5-0-1 as a home favorite of seven or less versus a .500 or below team, with Miami. I'll lean with the Jets in this game based on their great history as a road dog and good teams tend to bounce back when faced with adversity. **MIAMI 17 NY JETS 13**

### **MINNESOTA –6 Carolina 45**

From a fans point of view, the Minnesota-Buffalo game last week was a terrific game. Mike Tice has openly stated this year his teams will look to stop the opposing teams running game and look to establish his own teams running game first. Sounds like a good plan as we all know games are won and lost at the line of scrimmage. Through the first two weeks, his plan seems to be working, maybe. His team has now rushed for an average of 174 yards per game (after rushing for 213 yards last week) and an outstanding 4.9 ypr. On defense, his team has limited the opponent to only 56 yards per game at a very stout 2.8 ypr. That's a 2.1 differential (4.9-2.8) and that, my friends, is outstanding in the NFL. Here's the problem. They have done this at the expense of the passing game, both on-

fense and defense. It is also obvious he wants to run more clock (they had the ball for 19 more minutes in the Buffalo game and 3 more minutes in the Chicago game) to keep his below average defense off the field. The Vikings allowed the Bears to throw for 288 yards at 8.5 yps and last week allowed Buffalo and Drew Bledsoe to throw for a whopping 437 yards at 8.4 yps. So, for the season, they are allowing 362 yards per game at 8.4 yps. That's not good, when you consider the NFL average is 216 yards per game at 5.9 yps. And on the offensive side of the ball, they are only averaging 5.7 yps, which is below the NFL average. Their new offensive scheme is designed for more crossing routes than deep routes. That takes more time to move the ball down the field and opens the door for more turnovers and penalties, etc that can kill drives. Meanwhile, they will take on the Carolina Panthers, who are 2-0. A team who has already won more games than last year. Actually they have won twice as many games than they did last year. And last year, while Carolina was winning only won game, it was their first game of the season (they then went on to lose 15 straight) against these Minnesota Vikings here in Minnesota. So, the Vikings should be ready for revenge and needing a win at 0-2 for the season, right? Well, yes and no. It's just not that easy or as Lee Corso would say. "Not so fast my friend." This isn't a super bowl threatening Carolina team but they are much better on the defensive side of the ball. This is a team who lost only seven of their 15 losses by more than seven points last year. And part of their problem last year was Chris Wienke throwing the ball. They only averaged around 4.6 yps last year. This year they have Rodney Peete throwing the ball. While Peete is not your next Joe Montana, he is a veteran who knows the value of each possession. Carolina is yet to turn the ball over this year. Peete also has the receivers to throw to against this very porous Viking defense. Muhammad and Steven Smith should be able to find open holes in the Viking defense to move the ball with success. And Carolina is averaging 215 yards per game passing at 8.0 yps. They have averaged 110 yards rushing but at only 3.3 ypr. But that shouldn't really matter as the Vikings will look to take that away anyway. The key is being able to throw the ball and they should be able to do that. On the defensive side of the ball, head coach John Fox (former defensive coordinator for the Giants) has reshaped this Panthers defense that is allowing only 75 yards per game rushing at 3.7 ypr and 130 yards per game passing at only 3.6 yps. Yes, I know Carolina has only done this against the Ravens and the Lions, perhaps the two worse teams in the league after the expansion Texans. But they are still doing the right things. Based on their record and the fact they are now laying points, Minnesota qualifies in a negative situation that is now 43-76-3. And based on their defensive performance last week and the fact they are now laying points, Minnesota also qualifies in a negative momentum situation that is 35-77-6 after going 1-2 last week by playing against Kansas City, Atlanta and Cleveland. You might think because Carolina played their first two games at home, that they are due for a loss here but you should know all road teams in week three that opened the season with two home games are now 41-27-3 since 1983. Carolina qualifies in a subset of that which is now 32-8-2. Carolina is also 8-4 as a road dog of seven or less versus .500 or below teams. Meanwhile, Minnesota is 6-4 as a home favorite of more than three points but less than or equal to seven points versus less than .500 teams but only 4-12-2 as a home favorite of more than three points but less than seven points versus .500 or better teams, since 1992. My numbers also indicate Carolina stays within the number in this game. Plenty of terrific situations, value and getting points with a team who might be better than Minnesota against a very weak defense. That adds to points spread success for Carolina. **CAROLINA 21 MINNESOTA 17**

#### **NEW ENGLAND -6 Kansas City 43.5**

Where's the love for these super bowl champions? Well, now they are getting some love as they have been installed as nine point favorites against the Chiefs. Now the question becomes can they handle the success and respect they have been given. They certainly look very good so far with the upgrades on offense, a more mature and experienced Tom Brady, a very good defense and the best game plan coach in the league in Bill Belichick. NE stifled the Steelers in week one on Monday night and then came off a short week and thoroughly dominated the Jets last week. NE had 24 first downs to only 9 for the Jets. They rushed for 163 yards at 4.1 ypr while limiting the Jets to a measly 32 yards rushing at 3.6 ypr. And then they passed for another 269 yards at 7.7 yps and allowed the Jets only 168 yards passing at 4.4 yps. They sacked Vinny five times after sacking Kordell a week earlier five times and didn't allow the Jets to sack them at all. A complete domination of the game by the Patriots who are now allowing only 53 yards per game rushing at 3.2 ypr and only 188 yards passing at 4.7 yps. Now they take on Kansas City who hasn't had too many problems moving the ball but is having all kinds of problems stopping teams. The Chiefs lost last week as a home favorite to Jacksonville, 16-23 but they did gain 140 yards rushing the ball at 5.0 ypr. That followed up their 194 yards and 6.5 ypr game against Cleveland. This should be a good test for them. We saw a little more of the 2001 Trent Green last week as he was intercepted two times and again passed the ball into double and triple coverage and made some real errant passes. That won't get it done against NE this week. NE fig-

ures to put plenty of pressure on Green, which is when he is at his worse. But the real problem for KC is their defense. Their rush defense, despite allowing 130 yards last week at 4.5 ypr (63 yards were gained on one play by Fred Taylor or they would have only allowed 67 yards at 2.4 ypr) has been pretty good. For the season, they are allowing only 94 yards at 3.9 ypr. It's been the pass defense that has been so bad. They are now allowing 336 yards per game at a whopping 8.7 yps. NE figures to step right in with their speedy receivers and take advantage of that with their 6.9 yps average on the season. The points become the great equalizer in this game. There is no doubt NE possess the better defense and also has a very capable offense. KC does bring the better offense but will be hard pressed to make it work against this NE defense. But, getting nine points makes this a tougher call. KC certainly does have enough passing offense to get a back door cover or perhaps stay in the game. KC also qualifies in a very good 114-60-5 bounce back situation that had Dallas last week. And my numbers indicate KC can stay in this game also. **NEW ENGLAND 24 KANSAS CITY 21**

#### **PHILADELPHIA -9 Dallas 36.5**

Another situation much like above. We have a very good team who looked terrific last week in Philadelphia against a team who looked pretty good last week but, at home, not on the road where they have struggled. And unlike the defense which is a problem for KC, the Cowboys defense is very good but their offense is extremely stagnant and faces a very good Philadelphia defense. Philadelphia had some problems with their pass defense in their opener against Tennessee but they had no problems last week. They allowed the Redskins a total of 179 yards in that game, allowing Washington to cross midfield only once in the entire game. The Redskins only score came on a 90 yard punt return for a touchdown. Philly held Washington to only 2.6 yps last week. That is outstanding. Meanwhile, they drew up a beautiful game plan that was mostly passes and then runs once they had put the game out of reach. The Eagles totaled 168 yards rushing at 6.0 ypr and another 283 yards passing at 7.1 yps. What has happened to the Redskins defense? A total of 451 yards to only 179. They now take on a Dallas team who is averaging 111 yards rushing per game at 4.4 ypr. They were shut down by Tennessee last week after doing very well against Houston the week before. That's nothing new as Tennessee has shut most teams down rushing the ball. But the Cowboys did take advantage of the weak Tennessee passing game by throwing for 230 yards at 9.2 yps. That got them up to a season average of 5.9 yps, which is the league average. On defense, the Cowboys have now faced a terrible offense in Houston and a pretty good offense in Tennessee. They have really shut both teams down, allowing only 88 yards per game rushing at 2.9 ypr and 179 yards per game passing at 4.8 yps. Dallas has had trouble winning here in Philadelphia when they weren't supposed to win. Since 1992, they have been installed as a dog of more than three points twice and lost both of those game rather handily. If you count their home games as well, they have been installed as a dog of more than three points three times and lost all three of those games handily, losing twice last year to Philadelphia. Last year they lost in a rainstorm in Philadelphia as 14 point dogs, 18-40 and then lost again at home as seven point dogs, 3-36. The third occasion goes all the way back to 1992 when they were 5.5 point dogs and lost 7-31. Throw out those two losses in Philadelphia and they have never lost by more than three points in the other eight games played in Philly since 1992. Granted they were the better team in most of those games and went 4-2-2 ats in those games. Dallas has also had some problems as a road dog following a straight up win as they are now just 2-10-1 as a road dog after winning straight up in their previous game. There are no real solid situations applying to either team here and, once again, my numbers lean towards the underdog. I'll take the solid defense of the Cowboys getting a host of points in this game, remembering no team is as good or as bad as they looked in their previous game. Despite the 58 points scored in the game last year, these two teams have totaled in the twenties in the four games previous to that in Philadelphia, except for one game that totaled 34 points. Expect more low scoring in this game. **PHILADELPHIA 17 DALLAS 10**

#### **TENNESSEE -4 Cleveland 38.5**

A little tough to call this game this early in the week with both, qb Steve McNair and rb Eddie George listed as questionable. I expect both to play, however. And, whether qb Tim Couch plays for Cleveland doesn't seem to matter as Kelly Holcomb seems to have filled in very nicely. I, too, expect Couch to play. Despite beating Cincinnati pretty badly last week, 20-7, the Browns were actually out gained in that game, 357 yards to only 265 yards. But, as always, the more telling stat is the yards per play. That tells us Cleveland averaged 4.6 yppl to Cincinnati's 4.3 yppl. But, to switch sides again, this also tells us the game was played a little more evenly than the final score might indicate. Let's remember, Cleveland was leading towards the end of the first half 10-0 when Gus Frerotte all of a sudden thought he could throw left handed. Rather than knocking on Cleveland's door from the 25 yard line, a

71 yard interception return on his left handed throw to avoid a sack, shortly thereafter turned into another seven points for Cleveland and a 17-0 halftime lead, rather than maybe a 10-7 halftime lead. Cleveland only gained 2.8 ypr on 75 yards rushing and are now averaging only 2.9 ypr and 67 yards per game, for the season. There figures to be more tough sledding this week against a Tennessee defensive front that is allowing only 3.1 ypr and 74 yards per game rushing. They should have some success through the air as they are averaging 271 yards passing at 7.5 yps against a Tennessee pass defense that is allowing 206 yards passing at 6.1 yps. Last year in their 41-38 win over Tennessee here, the Browns passed for 11.9 yps. They might do that again as Butch Davis has shown a propensity to take advantage of weak pass defenses in the past. In week one of this year, he passed the ball over 67% of the time (with the lead most of the game) against a weak KC pass defense. His team was successful too, as they averaged 8.6 yps on 352 yards passing. Although Tennessee is averaging just 80 yards rushing and only 3.1 ypr (they have faced two pretty good run defenses in Philadelphia and Dallas) the Titans figure to have some success against Cleveland. Cleveland is allowing an astounding 5.7 ypr and 175 yards rushing per game. Their pass defense has been average, allowing 238 yards passing and 5.9 yps while Tennessee has thrown the ball pretty well, averaging 251 yards per game at 6.2 yps. Cleveland's Butch Davis is just 1-4 as a road dog of six or less points and Tennessee's Jeff Fisher is 8-4-1 as a home favorite of six or less points versus .500 or better teams, including 3-1-1 off a loss, since the team has moved to Tennessee. Cleveland does fall into the same 32-8-2 scheduling situation that Carolina falls into and despite some bad team trends and perhaps the worse defense, I will lean with Cleveland to keep this game close. **TENNESSEE 20 CLEVELAND 17**

### **CHICAGO -1 New Orleans 40.5**

All Chicago does is win. And sometimes you are left scratching your head by how they do it, but they certainly do keep winning. Despite some average numbers, their defense continues to rise to the occasion when they have to. That task will get a little tougher as they have now lost their main plug in the middle, Ted Washington, for perhaps the rest of the year. In addition, they are already without another defensive lineman, Phillip Daniels and cornerback R. W. McQuarters. The strong point of this team, the defense will be severely tested, especially this week against a quick, explosive Saints offense. In reading stats, you must consider what transpired throughout the game to establish the stats that you are seeing. In week one, Chicago allowed Minnesota 136 yards rushing while gaining only 80 yards themselves. Like I said earlier, Mike Tice has noted he wants to establish the run while taking the other teams running game away. If you want to shut down one part of a team's game, you can do it. You'll probably give something up in return but you can usually stop one phase if you are determined to do so. Last week, quite honestly, it didn't get any better for the Bears, as they only averaged 3.4 ypr while allowing 4.1 ypr to Atlanta. The Bears pass defense did play very well last week, allowing Michael Vick and company to only gain 135 yards passing and 4.2 yps after allowing Minnesota 228 yards and 7.8 yps the week before. This was after Atlanta scorched Green Bay for 7.2 yps the week before. New Orleans, meanwhile, has been nothing short of fantastic in their first two games. They have won both games as underdogs, one in Tampa Bay as a road underdog and last week at home as a home underdog against Green Bay. I expected big numbers out of them last week as the Saints were in some very favorable situations and had a terrific match up with Green Bay. This week, however; the Saints, despite very solid numbers, are in a bad situation. For the season, the Saints are averaging 132 yards per game rushing at 4.3 ypr and 230 yards passing at 6.3 yps. Both of those are above league averages. On defense, they have been very good also. They are allowing only 84 yards per game rushing at 4.0 ypr and 262 yards per game passing at only 5.2 yps. The Bears defense, which has risen to the occasion, has been about average overall, allowing 4.2 ypr and 5.9 yps. Their offensive running game has just not been that good, averaging only 3.3 ypr but they are throwing the ball for 7.2 yps and should continue to have some success again this week. Jim Haslett is 8-3 as a road dog but he is only 1-2 as a road dog of three or less points versus .500 or better teams. Thus, given a short price against a good team, his success is not as good as when he gets many more points. Like I said earlier, New Orleans qualifies in a couple of let down situations that are 8-28-3 and 102-155-9. In addition, my numbers favor the Bears in this game, laying the short price. Once again, value and the situations applying to one team. **CHICAGO 24 NEW ORLEANS 14**

### **Indianapolis -11.5 HOUSTON 39.5**

If you look at Houston's numbers, especially on offense, they are a joke. Somehow, they are still averaging 11 points per game with these numbers. Last week against San Diego, they completed only six passes. The week before against Dallas, they completed only 10 passes. They have completed only 16 passes for an average of eight

completions per game. Good passing teams sometimes average eight completions in one quarter! On top of that Houston gained only 123 yards passing in their first game and as I noted last week, 65 of that came on one play, other wise they would have only gained 58 yards passing. Well, that's probably what it should have been seeing last week they only gained 29 yards passing, for the whole game! The whole game, they only gained 29 yards passing! And, of course, that averaged out to 0.9 yards per pass. Unbelievable, simply unbelievable. In addition, they have been sacked 15 times in two games now. Indy only has two sacks this year so I doubt they will take advantage of that too much. I certainly hope you don't have any Texans on your fantasy leagues. The rushing game isn't much better as they are only averaging 2.8 ypr and 84 yards per game. Is there a bright spot to talk about with Houston? Well, not really but their pass defense is allowing only 4.1 yps and 128 yards per game. But that is mostly because they have played Dallas (who doesn't throw the ball real well) and because they have played two teams who have found success on the ground against the Texans and have averaged 4.7 ypr and 140 yards per game rushing. For Indianapolis, well their offense is in pretty good gear, averaging 124 yards per game rushing at 4.2 ypr and throwing for another 246 yards at 6.4 yps. But their defense, which is supposed to be getting better with Tony Dungy now in control, is still allowing too many yards. They are allowing 140 yards per game rushing at 4.3 ypr and 202 yards passing at 7.0 yps. I would expect Houston, playing at home, to be able to move the ball some against Indy. My numbers predict about a 11 point victory for Indy but Houston does qualify in an outstanding scheduling situation that is 90-47-3 since 1983. The best value in this game might be teasing Houston. Home underdogs of 8.5 or more points, when teased with six points, are now 111-43-0. Of course, you still have to find another team to tease with Houston but getting over 17 points at home with the Texans looks pretty attractive. First, road teams tend to let up after getting up by more than 14 points in a game they are supposed to win easily anyway. And, second with this many points, Houston could be down by over 21 points and still backdoor the teaser late in the game. And past history suggests it's an excellent chance for the Texans to do so. I lean with Houston against a below average defense in Indy and also suggest the teaser. The last piece of evidence you might need is this. Indianapolis has been favored on the road by double digits twice in the past 10 years. Both times they have failed to cover, including losing outright last year at New England. You say New England was a pretty decent team last year so this doesn't apply. Well, their other game was in 1999 against Cleveland (yeah, that Cleveland, the expansion team) and won 29-28 as 13.5 point favorites. Remember, 1999 was the year Indianapolis went 13-3 SU so they were a very good team that year. **INDIANAPOLIS 24 HOUSTON 17**

#### **DENVER -9 Buffalo 47.5**

Not only is Denver 2-0 but they have done it against two of the best, or so we thought, teams of the NFL. They have beaten St. Louis and San Francisco, including going to SF last week and shutting down the high octane 49er offense. The Denver defense, which allowed only seven points per game during the preseason, has now allowed only an average of 15 points to the Rams and Forty-Niners. They are allowing only 52 yards rushing at 3.1 ypr (held Marshall Faulk to only 19 yards rushing in week one) and they are allowing 242 yards at 5.9 yps. On offense, the Broncos are up to their old tricks again, averaging 152 yards rushing at 4.9 ypr. They have certainly sacrificed the passing game for their running game, averaging only 142 yards passing at 5.4 yps. There is reason to be concerned with the passing game but with a stout defense and a solid running game, they will still go far. Buffalo, meanwhile; is having plenty of success throwing the ball, as Drew Bledsoe is averaging 340 yards per game (thanks to 437 yards last week against Minnesota) at 7.2 yps. They are allowing 143 yards per game rushing at 5.4 ypr but their pass defense has been solid, allowing only 214 yards at 5.1 yps. But I see problems with a Bills defense that can't stop the rush against an offense that loves to run the ball hard. Mike Shanahan is only 4-7 as a home favorite of more than six points but less than or equal to 10 points against .500 or less teams. My numbers suggest about a nine point Broncos victory but I think the match up favors Denver and I will lean towards them. There is also a 302-224-19 situation that applies to the under in this game. **DENVER 27 BUFFALO 14**

#### **San Diego -1.5 ARIZONA 39**

Looking at the numbers, SD looks very good, especially on defense, where they are allowing only 3.3 ypr and 62 yards per game rushing and only 2.8 yps and 98 yards passing per game. As a whole, they are allowing 3.0 yppl. We also know they have faced only Cincinnati and Houston. Those two teams have combined to average 3.5 yppl for the season so the fact that SD is only allowing 3.0 yppl shows that their defense is above average, despite the lack of talent they have faced. On the other side of the ball, those two teams have allowed 4.9 yppl on defense while SD has averaged about 5.1 yppl on offense. This would indicate their offense is about average. So, from that

we can now gauge how good SD is based on the talent they have faced. Arizona, meanwhile, is coming off of a very good outing over Seattle, where they averaged 7.1 ypr and gained 249 yards rushing. They only passed for 98 yards and 4.1 yps but it was clear they wanted to establish their running game. Dave McGinnis has stated he wanted to show the opposition they can run the ball to force them to have to plan to defend that area of their offense as well. The Arizona defense has been pretty good against the run, allowing only 3.3 ypr on 102 yards per game rushing but their passing game has been pretty sub par, allowing 332 yards per game and 7.5 yps. They may not get exploited as much as they should this week by a Charger offense that is running the ball about 62% of the time. That is Marty Schottenheimer ball and I doubt he'll deviate too much from that for this game, despite the poor pass defense the Cardinals have shown. Marty is 15-5-2 as a road favorite of three or less points but only 2-3-1 as a road favorite of three or less points versus .400 to .500 teams. That is where I consider Arizona to be. So, it looks like Marty has done very well as a short road favorite against inferior opponents but struggled against the more competitive teams he has faced. Meanwhile, McGinnis is only 1-4 as a home dog versus .500 or greater teams but only 0-1 as a home dog of three or less points versus .500 or greater teams. So, when his teams have been installed as bigger home dogs, obviously indicating they are the inferior team, they have not fared that well but they haven't played that many games as a home dog against competitive competition. Arizona also qualifies in a terrific momentum situation that is 72-37-2 after winning with New Orleans last week. They also qualify in another momentum situation that is 144-94-9 which also won with New Orleans last week and they qualify in a scheduling situation that is 90-47-3. Along with the positive situations they qualify in, my numbers predict a tie in this game indicating value with Arizona, before we account for the positive situations. I'll side with Arizona based on the value and the situations and look for a SD to come back to earth against a little better competition this week.

**ARIZONA 24 SAN DIEGO 17**

#### **SAN FRANCISCO -9 Washington 45**

The Redskins offense was shut down completely on Monday night. As mentioned earlier, their offense only crossed midfield once during the game Monday night. Not only did they only average 3.4 yppr and 179 total yards but their defense was terrible again, allowing 451 yards at 6.6 yppr. For the season, they have now allowed 5.7 yppr while allowing 4.9 ypr and 119 yards rushing and 6.2 yps and 235 yards passing. The defense was supposed to be their strength while I expected the Washington offense to struggle some. The offense has struggled, at least against Philadelphia, but their defense has been well below average. They'll now take on a 49er team who is eager to get another win after losing at home last week to Denver. While they were shut down by Denver, the 49er offense didn't exactly light it up in their first game against the Giants. In that game they were about average, gaining 5.5 yppr on 279 yards. Washington applies to a 40-15-0 general league wide situation this week as well as a 32-8-2 scheduling situation. In addition, road teams who are underdogs of three or more points when both teams are at .500 or worse and the total is 44 or higher, are 39-17-1 after winning with both, Buffalo and the Giants last week. This isn't a great match up for the Redskins if they can't stop the run but if Steve Spurrier decides to let S. Davis run the ball some, they should be able to gain some yards on the ground and then through the air against an average SF defense, that is allowing 4.2 ypr and 5.9 yps. This is a lot of points to be giving a team who can strike through the air and the back door is wide open along with some positive situations applying to Washington. This line was 6.5 before Monday's game and has now been raised 2.5 points because of Washington's poor performance on Monday. This game also qualifies in a very good 42-17-6 under situation so I will lean towards the under as well.

**SAN FRANCISCO 23 WASHINGTON 20**

#### **NY GIANTS -6 Seattle 38.5**

Not much interest for me in this game. I certainly have no interest in a Seattle team that is allowing a whopping 235 yards per game rushing at 6.3 ypr or in a Giants team laying this many points with a rushing attack that is averaging only 2.4 ypr. The Giants passing attack is averaging 7.9 yps and 304 yards per game passing and should have some success against an injury depleted Seahawks defense. Mike Holmgren is only 17-24-1 as a road dog, including just 7-10-1 with Seattle. On offense, Seattle is averaging just 2.8 ypr but that figures to improve this week with Walter Jones signing and helping out their offensive line. Along with that Trent Dilfer begins his second week of action and he passed for 7.2 yps last week and 345 yards. He'll be passing into a Giants defense that is allowing 6.5 yps, albeit against two pretty good passing offenses in San Francisco and St. Louis. My numbers lean towards Seattle in this game and I would never take them until I see some improvement but I will lean with them here. This game also qualifies in a 302-224-19 under situation so I will lean with the under as well despite the seemingly low

total. **NY GIANTS 20 SEATTLE 17**

### **Green Bay –8 DETROIT 45**

Well, could it get any worse for the Lions. After all, they were smoked by Carolina last week 31-7 and are averaging only 3.0 ypr and a paltry 3.4 yps and 128 yards per game passing. Their rushing defense has been pretty good, allowing only 3.6 ypr but their passing defense has been terrible, allowing 258 yards per game at 8.6 yps. That defense will now take on a Packer offense that has really had no problem moving the ball so far this year. They are averaging 153 yards per game rushing at 5.2 ypr and 268 yards passing at 6.5 yps. The problem for Green Bay, other than probably losing Ahman Green for this week and offensive lineman Mark Tauscher for the year, has been their defense. This defense was supposed to be outstanding this year and so far they have allowed a whopping 163 yards per game rushing at 5.6 ypr and another 202 yards passing at 7.2 yps. That must improve if the Packers are going to have any success at all this year. It should get better against an anemic Detroit offense that will start Joey Harrington for the first time this year. And the Packers offense should continue to thrive, despite some of their injuries as Rondell Mealy is a very capable back up to Ahman Green and Earl Dotson should fill in nicely for this game. After all, Detroit has yet to sack the quarterback this year. The Lions have been sacked nine times this year and have zero sacks themselves. My numbers indicate a Green Bay victory by about seven points, thus leaning towards the Lions slightly. But, again like the Houston game, the best value in this game is probably teasing the Lions. Home dogs of 8.0 or more points, using a 6.5 point teaser are now 137-47-0 since 1983. I wouldn't recommend teasing the Lions if they become a dog of less than eight points because I'm not too fond of using seven point teasers but I will consider teasing the Lions with Houston to get the Lions as greater than 14 point home dogs in this game. Mike Sherman is 5-5 as a road favorite but 0-3 as a road favorite in domes. Meanwhile, Marty Mornhinweg is now 5-2 as a home dog but only 1-2 versus .500 or greater teams. The Packers have only won in Detroit three times in the last ten years. And only once have they won those games by more than 14 points. That was all in the Pontiac Silverdome and they now move to Ford Field so we'll have to see what's in store for GB there. But, it is another turf field on the road for Green Bay and that doesn't bode well for them. **GREEN BAY 33 DETROIT 26**

### **ATLANTA –7 Cincinnati 42**

Another game that doesn't do much for me. The Bengal's rushing attack has been pretty good, overall, averaging 96 yards per game at 4.4 ypr but their passing game as been horrible, averaging only 4.2 yps. Meanwhile, their defense, which I thought was going to be pretty good this year, is allowing 4.4 ypr and 158 yards per game rushing and 6.9 yps on 175 yards per game passing. Their offense has generated just six and seven points in their first two games. That won't get it done. But they will take on an Atlanta defense that is allowing 158 yards per game rushing themselves and 4.6 ypr and also 204 yards passing and 6.5 yps. The Falcons offense is doing just fine running the ball averaging 151 yards rushing per game at 5.0 ypr through the combined efforts of Michael Vick, Warrick Dunn and T.J. Duckett. With no situations applying to either team, I'll lean with Cincinnati because their rushing game should find some success against the Falcons and when Corey Dillon can rush for 100 yards, his team is now 10-8 SU since 1998. **ATLANTA 21 CINCINNATI 20**

### **St. Louis –2.5 TAMPA BAY 43**

This is an interesting game for all of the obvious reasons but I think the biggest reason is if the Rams lose, they will be 0-3 and if TB loses, they will be 1-2. Neither team can really afford to lose, thus making this game a huge game. So what's wrong with the Rams? Well, their offense seems to be doing just fine, averaging 4.1 ypr and 6.6 yps, although those numbers are both down from last year. In addition, they are only averaging 62 yards rushing. Whether it is because they have played from behind or not, they are not gaining as many yards rushing the ball as they used to. Their rushing defense is still solid, allowing only 104 yards per game at 3.2 ypr. But their passing game has given up big numbers, allowing 239 yards per game at 8.1 yps. Can Tampa Bay take advantage of that? The TB offense hasn't exactly been explosive themselves. John Gruden says his team shut it down last week after getting out to their big lead, but his offense didn't score a touchdown last week. It was the defense against an anemic Baltimore offense that did the job. Their offense is averaging only 73 yards per game at 2.9 ypr and 233 yards per game passing at 5.3 yps. The defense has been very solid, allowing only 3.2 ypr on 86 yards per game and 4.3 yps on just 184 yards passing. TB has played the Rams tough in every game they have played the last three years.

Three years ago, they just about beat the Rams in St. Louis in the NFC Championship game, two years ago they beat the Rams in TB on a Monday night and last year they went to St. Louis and beat the Rams on a Monday night. They have been able to get pressure on Kurt Warner and that has caused problems for St. Louis. TB qualifies in a very good momentum situation that is now 144-94-9 after New Orleans won in this same situation last week. Mike Martz is only 3-7 as an away grass favorite and just 2-4 versus .500 or greater teams including losing at Denver in week one this year. In addition, the Rams are just 5-8 as road favorites on grass since 1999 and just 2-6 versus .500 or greater teams. TB is 9-4 as home dogs since Tony Dungy arrived in TB (that marked the time TB turned the franchise around), including winning nine of the last ten times they have been installed as home dogs. They are also 4-2 as home dogs of three or less points, which includes a victory over St. Louis in 2000 as two point dogs. Every thing points towards the Bucs here but I'll keep from making them a best bet because of the need for a victory for the Rams and I need one more solid system to apply to TB to make them a best bet. For now, just a strong lean. **TAMPA BAY 24 ST. LOUIS 16**

### **BEST BETS**

**YTD 4-2 +5.40%**

**3% CAROLINA +6**

**3% CHICAGO -1**

**3% ARIZONA +1.5**

**3% WASHINGTON +9**

**TWO TEAM TEASER** (Use either a 6 point or 6.5 point teaser to get both teams over +14 points or other wise pass)

This situation has happened 25 times since 1983 where exactly two teams have been home dogs of eight or more points, and they would have covered the tease in 16 of those 25 games.

**3% HOUSTON +18**

**DETROIT +14.5**



## **WEEK 4**

A tough week in the NFL last week, going 1-4 and dropping the record for the year to 5-6-1 -4.80%. Despite the bad week, there is a bright spot to all of this. Bad luck or lack of it, which is certainly part of the game, was a big part in my debacle last week. I lost on my teaser by 2.5 points when Indy kicked a field goal with just over one minute left in the game. This came after a Houston fumble inside their own 25 yard line, which came after a deflected 43 yard pass (which should have been intercepted) was caught by Reggie Wayne with four minutes left in the game. In Chicago, I lost by 4 points (line moved to +2 on Sunday morning) when the Bears, who were covering the entire game until the last minute, gave up a 23 yard touchdown pass to Dante Stallworth as he maneuvered through the Bears secondary for the winning score. In Arizona, the Cardinals had the ball inside the Chargers 10 yard line with two minutes to go and first and goal and couldn't get the ball in the end zone, losing by 8 getting 2.5 points. And finally there was the one point loss with Washington (the line actually moved to 10 before game time but I had +9) who had the ball first and ten on SF's 40 yard line to start a drive with about 8 minutes left in the game but went for the homerun and through an interception on the goal line on their first play. SF then proceeded to run the clock out as they held onto the ball the rest of the game. That was after a 1 point loss the week before on the Carolina total and a .5 point loss on the Bears game in the first week. Bottom line is the record currently stands at 5-6-1 -4.80% and we will get the breaks to come our way as the year progresses. But more importantly, all of the losses would have covered any teaser so the losses are very close and that bodes well for the rest of the year. On the flip side, the wins have been pretty easy. I have won my games against the pointspread by 17 points with NO (week 2), by 10 points with Jacksonville (week 2), by 5 points with Chicago (week 2), by 11 points with Dallas (week 2) and by 13.5 points with Carolina (week 3). So hang in there and things will be just fine. All right, enough of the whining. This week we have some outstanding situations in our favor.

Home team in caps. All records are against the spread unless otherwise noted.

League averages for comparison to the stats that will be listed below.

Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1

Yards Per Pass (YPS) 5.8

Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.1

### **Miami -3 KANSAS CITY 44**

Prior to their 21-13 win over Indianapolis on the road two weeks ago, Miami had gone nine consecutive games where they allowed 20 points or more on the road. Maybe the defense is better this year and maybe the defense is better this year because the offense is much better this year. Time will tell on all of that. Other than a brief spell in 2000 where their defense played better, they have now gone 31 out of the past 46 road games where they have allowed at least 20 points per game. Meanwhile, Kansas City has now scored at least 17 points at home in 63 out of their last 80 home games (regular season). The offenses should be in fine form here, knowing that KC averages a whopping 185 yards rushing per game at 6.0 ypr. The Dolphins are not to be outdone, averaging 185 yards rushing at 5.1 ypr themselves. Both teams are doing just fine in the passing game as well, with KC averaging 6.7 yps and Miami averaging 7.4 yps. The difference in this game should come with the defense. Both teams are allowing less than 100 yards rushing but KC is allowing a whopping 357 yards passing at 7.9 yps. Miami is certainly a different team on the road and Kansas City qualifies in a pretty good situation that is 36-14-1 based on their poor defensive performance last week. Miami, however; qualifies in an early season situation that is now 60-26-4. The Miami situation is a little stronger and my numbers make Miami a six point favorite and I will lean that way. Dave Wannstedt is now 20-10-2 with Miami and 9-6-1 on the road but just 5-5-1 on the road when favored by four or less to a dog of four or less. Meanwhile, Dick Vermeil is just 4-8-1 as a home dog and just 4-5-0 with KC. He is also just 1-3 as a home dog against a team greater than .666 and 0-1 as a home dog of four or less against a greater than .666 team. Also, KC is 8-5-1 as a home dog since 1992 but 0-3-1 last year. **MIAMI 27 KANSAS CITY 24**

### **BUFFALO -3 Chicago 44**

Hard to believe the Bills are actually favored here. Is this like week two where Atlanta played pretty well in Green Bay and returned home as a three point favorite over the Bears, only to lose that game 13-14? Buffalo looked decent last week as they averaged 4.9 yppl to Denver's 5.1 yppl. Meanwhile, Chicago was playing a pretty good New Orleans team even. For the season, Chicago is averaging 5.1 yppl and allowing 5.0 yppl while Buffalo averages 5.7

yppl and allowing 5.2 yppl. Chicago qualifies in the same early season situation that Miami is in which is now 60-26-4. Also Dick Jauron is now 17-7-1 as a road dog and 4-0 as a road dog of three or less points. Greg Williams has only been favored once in his short tenure and he is 0-1 and Buffalo is just 2-6 as a home favorite the last two years and 0-3 as a home favorite of three or less points the last two years. Even with the defensive problems for Chicago with their injuries, I will lean with Chicago who still sports the better defense. My ratings make Buffalo either a three point favorite or even, depending on which rating I use and Chicago qualifies in a pretty good situation. **CHICAGO 20 BUFFALO 17**

#### **New Orleans -7.5 DETROIT 46**

I'm never thrilled going with the obvious choice in this game, which is New Orleans but I feel that is the only side to take. Detroit looked a little better last week against Green Bay but the Packers defense is really struggling right now and they will face a Saints defense that is much better and has more explosiveness on offense than the Packers put on the field last week because Ahman Green missed the game. Deuce McAllister will provide the break away game breaking runs that the Packers were missing last week without Green. Detroit does qualify in a pretty good situation in this game which is 50-18-1 but my numbers suggest a New Orleans route and I will pay more attention to those numbers than the great situation Detroit is in. The Lions are averaging only 3.9 yps this year and they will find it much tougher to throw this week against a Saints pass defense that is allowing only 5.3 yps compared to Green Bay's 6.3 yps. Even with that said, Detroit only averaged 4.9 yps last week anyway so I don't see them breaking through with a great game this week throwing the ball. The Saints offense is a little above average this year, averaging 5.3 yppl but their defense has been very good, allowing only 4.9 yppl. That will go up against a Detroit offense that is averaging only 3.8 yppl and their defense, which is allowing 5.8 yppl. Despite the positive situation Detroit is in, my ratings make New Orleans about a 19 winner. Even allowing Detroit about four points for the great situation, still leaves New Orleans with a lot of room to spare. This game also qualifies in a 303-225-19 under situation. Detroit's Marty Mornhinweg is now 6-2 as a home dog but just 1-2 as a home dog against greater than .500 opponents. Detroit, as a team, is now 19-11-1 as a home dog since 1992 and 14-5-41 since 1998 but only 4-4-1 as a home dog of seven or more points so they have struggled against the better teams, just like Marty Mornhinweg has. **NEW ORLEANS 24 DETROIT 10**

#### **GREEN BAY -7 Carolina 43**

How 'bout them Panthers. Fortunately or unfortunately, they were my only winner last week but they played a great game against Minnesota. They were able to run on the Vikings to the tune of 164 yards and 5.0 ypr. Meanwhile, they shut down the Vikings pass attack, allowing only 177 yards passing at 5.1 yps. Most of those passing yards were accumulated late in the game when the Vikings were playing catch up ball. This week, Carolina, who has now won three times as many games as last year, takes their show to Green Bay. I think it will be much tougher this week for Carolina for a couple of reasons. First, Carolina will probably be playing without their star wr Mushin Muhammad and very likely their star LB Dan Morgan. Second, Carolina will now play by far and away the best offense they have faced this year. After facing Baltimore, Detroit and Minnesota, the Packers will provide a very tough test for them. Carolina also qualifies in a negative 22-57-4 situation that has been very good to me over the years. The Packers certainly have their own problems, losing Vonnie Holiday, Antuawn Edwards and probably most importantly, William Henderson. Despite all of that, my ratings still predict about a 12 point Green Bay victory. For the season, GB is averaging 134 yards rushing at 4.5 ypr and 294 yards passing at 6.7 yps for a total of 428 yards per game at 5.8 yppl. They have now scored an average of 31 points per game. But, their defense is allowing 33 points per game and 5.9 yppl. The Carolina defense is allowing only 4.0 yppl but that is against some pretty weak offenses. John Fox is now 2-0 as a dog (1-0 as a road dog) and Carolina is now 25-18-1 as a road dog and 18-10-1 as a road dog of six or more. However, they are only 8-9-1 as a road dog of six or more against greater than .500 opponents. Mike Sherman, meanwhile, is just 5-8-1 as a home favorite but 2-0-1 as a home favorite against better than .500 teams. The situation and the value lie with Green Bay and I'll side with them. This game also qualifies in the same under situation as the Detroit/New Orleans game. **GREEN BAY 24 CAROLINA 13**

#### **JACKSONVILLE -3.5 NY Jets 42.5**

When I rate the NFL teams, I look at what the teams are averaging on a yards per play basis and what they are al-

lowing and compare that against the competition they have faced. I feel this gives me a pretty accurate reading as to how good or bad a team really is by factoring in the competition. I add the offensive and defensive numbers together and get my final number, of which I apply a standard deviation and break the teams out into a top, above average, below average and poor teams. As of this writing, there are six top teams, six bottom teams, eleven above average teams and nine below average teams. So, those numbers represent a pretty decent bell curve distribution. The point of all of this is Jacksonville, although only having played two games so the jury is still out, ranks as a top team by averaging and allowing .7 yards per play better than the competition they have faced. These numbers will stabilize once the teams have played a few more games but it does show Jacksonville, even if it's a bit premature, as lying in the weeds as a decent team. Meanwhile, they will take on the Jets who rate as an below average team, gaining and allowing -0.1 yards per play less than the competition they have faced. The Jets are really struggling, averaging only 4.5 yppl while allowing 5.6 yppl. Jacksonville is doing just fine on offense, despite the loss of some key players, as they are averaging 5.9 yppl while allowing only 5.3 yppl on defense. I don't have any specific situations that lie with either team. Herman Edwards is now 3-2 as a road dog and the Jets, as a team, are 37-21-3 as a road dog since 1992 and 19-6-1 as a road dog since 1998 and 6-2 as a road dog of three or less since 1998. My ratings make Jacksonville a seven to nine point favorite and Jacksonville has the better defense and the more explosive offense, laying a short number at home. **JACKSONVILLE 19 NY JETS 12**

### **PHILADELPHIA -19 Houston 36**

Well, congratulations to Houston are in order. They completed 12 passes last week, which was four passes above their season average of eight completions per game. Once again, their offense was absolutely horrible, averaging just 0.9 ypr and 3.0 yps, while giving up another four sacks to make it 19 sacks on the year. Their defense was serviceable, I guess, allowing only 88 yards rushing and 3.3 ypr but they did allow 8.1 yps although 43 yards came on a tipped pass that should have been intercepted so the numbers might be a little deceiving. Now they have not only go on the road, but go on the road and face a Philly team that seems to be hitting on all cylinders. Philly is coming off a 37-7 whitewashing of Washington, followed by their 44-13 thrashing of Dallas last week. In that game, they averaged 6.5 yppl while allowing only 4.7 yppl. Clearly, it's very hard to take Houston in this situation. And I can't say I'm thrilled with recommending Houston but it's probably the lesser of two evils. My ratings do favor Philadelphia by a score of 23-0 but Houston does fall into a couple of pretty decent situations that will get me leaning their way, slightly. Houston qualifies in a 97-43-5 situation and home favorites of more than 14 points with a win percentage of .900 or less are just 21-39-0. Very tough to lay this many points so I will side with the big dog, even though I'm not sure they will score and the Philadelphia offense (combined with their defense) may score over 30 points just by accident. The better play (although it could blow up too because the Philly defense might put the offense in situations they can't help but score) is probably the under. This game qualifies in a 72-40-6 under situation and as you can see by my projections, the numbers do support the under. For the year, Houston is averaging only 2.4 yppl on 141 total yards of offense but their defense is allowing just 4.9 yppl, which is below the league average. One other interesting note on Houston, they are almost averaging more yards rushing than passing, 64-77. **PHILADELPHIA 23 HOUSTON 6**

### **PITTSBURGH -6 Cleveland 43.5**

Pittsburgh comes back after a week off with their 0-2 record. Truth be told, it hasn't been terrible for Pittsburgh if you could take out their 10 turnovers. But, in the same breath, their numbers just aren't that good. They are averaging only 4.7 yppl and their defense is allowing 5.4 yppl. As far as my rankings go, which I talked about in the Jacksonville analysis, Pittsburgh does rank as an above average team because they are actually averaging 0.4 yppl better than the competition they have faced. Cleveland, rates out as a below average team, as they are averaging -0.3 worse than the competition they have faced. Having said that, my projections predict Pittsburgh to win this game by about 10 points before accounting for the negative situation they qualify in this week. Pittsburgh, with their record and inserted as a favorite, qualify in a 16-44-1 situation that won with Carolina last week. In addition, Cleveland's Butch Davis is only 2-4 as a road dog of six points or less but every road dog situation he has been in, when a dog of six or less has been against a .500 or better team. The biggest question here is if Pittsburgh is a .500 team or not. They certainly are not as of this writing, which I think is most important, but some people may few them as a .500 or better team. Bill Cowher is 16-8-1 as a home favorite of seven or less points versus .500 or better teams but only 4-5-1 off a loss and just 1-4 off a bye and a loss. So, when his teams are winning, he is much better than when his teams are struggling. Neither teams rushing defense is doing the job as Cleveland is allowing 4.6 ypr and

Pittsburgh 4.5 ypr but only 79 yards per game to Cleveland's 145 yards per game. But the Steelers haven't shown the ability to run the ball this year, averaging only 3.5 ypr as Jerome Bettis looks to be a bit older. Maybe that will change this week but until I see it, I can't believe it. I'll lean slightly with Cleveland based on the negative situation Pittsburgh is in. **PITTSBURGH 17 CLEVELAND 14**

### **ST. LOUIS -12 Dallas 43.5**

Well, if you have had the balls to go against the Rams this year, you would be 3-0. I haven't seen them in a good enough situation to go against them yet but I'll lean against them for the fourth straight week this week. Oh, I know, they can't start out 0-2. Oh, they did. Oh, I know, they can't start out 0-3. Oh, they already are. Oh, I know, they can't start out 0-4. Well, I don't think they will start out 0-4 but I also don't think they will cover this game, either. Besides the fact they have lost some of their depth, good old Mike Martz might just be getting out coached here and there. I'm not sure Dave Campo is the guy to out coach Mike Martz, especially after seeing his debacle on Thanksgiving last year regarding the two point conversion that he messed up on and then not having the balls to just say I screwed up. Instead he tried to make it look like he was making a "reasonable, thought out" decision. C'mon Dave, we're just a little smarter than that. Anyway, Dallas's numbers look decent, averaging 5.0 ypr while allowing only 4.8 ypr. Meanwhile, St. Louis is averaging 5.6 ypr but their defense, which is still playing pretty well, is allowing 5.4 ypr. It's their pass defense that has let them down, allowing 222 yards per game and 7.3 yps. My numbers suggest the Rams should be anywhere from a five to eleven point favorite but Dallas also qualifies in a pretty decent 40-16-0 situation. I don't think Dallas can take advantage of the poor pass defense that the Rams have been playing but I still think the number is just a little too high. **ST LOUIS 24 DALLAS 17**

### **NY Giants -3 ARIZONA 38**

I have a bit of a hard time understanding this line. I consider the Chargers to be a better team than the Giants and SD was a -2.5 point favorite here last week. I may be underestimating the Giants who have played the 49ers tough at home, beat the Rams in St. Louis and then barely got by Seattle last week at home in a definite letdown situation for NY. Meanwhile, Arizona (who is banged up with Boston and Thomas Jones nursing sore ankles) was playing SD pretty tough, except for a key fumble, two Jake Plummer interceptions and a blocked punt. Arizona actually out gained SD 297-289, averaging 4.6 ypr to only 3.7 for SD and averaging 5.1 yps to 5.0 for SD and averaging 5.0 ypr to only 4.3 for SD. But losing the turnover battle 1-3 proved costly for Arizona. The Giants struggled to run the ball but kept their passing game in fine form, throwing for 257 yards while limiting the woeful Seahawks to only 105 yards passing. That will prove to be a tough match up for Arizona this week. On the season, Arizona is allowing 6.8 yps but they have continued to be tough against the run, allowing only 3.5 ypr. Arizona also continues to run the ball pretty well, averaging 5.4 ypr and they should have some success against the Giants who have been average against the run, allowing 4.1 ypr. The Giants have also played very well in Arizona, winning six of the last eight games here by more than three points. But I see a different story this week. The Giants fall into a negative scheduling situation that is now just 78-148-8 and Arizona falls into three separate fundamental situations based on their strong ability to run the ball and stop the run. Those situations are 99-47-6 (won with both NO and Dallas in week two), 68-25-3 and 236-138-11. In addition, my ratings favor Arizona by one or the Giants by only one so we have value on their side as well. Technical situation goes against the Giants, fundamentals go with Arizona and value lies with Arizona. My only concern with this game is the injuries Arizona has at their skill positions but those guys should be ready to go come Sunday. **ARIZONA 24 NY GIANTS 17**

### **Tampa Bay -7 CINCINNATI 34**

Get ready to hold your nose because this one's going to be ugly. Yes, I am on the Cincinnati Bengals in this game. I had the Bengals here last year as 5.5 point underdogs and they got the cover, losing the game 13-16. It's pretty hard to be impressed with the TB numbers, averaging just 70 yards per game rushing at 3.1 ypr and 218 yards per game passing at 5.7 yps. For the season, TB is averaging 288 yards per game but at only 4.6 ypr. Their defense has been very solid, limiting their opponents to just 299 yards but at only 4.3 ypr. Then there is Cincinnati. Cincinnati is averaging a whopping 251 yards of total offense at a measly 3.9 ypr. Their rushing game is still decent, gaining 87 yards per game (which isn't so great) but at 4.1 ypr. They start Akili Smith this week at qb. You draft this guy as the third pick in the first round and instead of playing him and seeing what he has, they continued to go with stiffbacks that are no better than second and third string qb's. Find out if this kid can play qb or not so you can go

forward. Now, Smith hasn't necessarily looked good in the past but he does give Cincinnati something that the other two qb's couldn't give Cincinnati and that is a scrambling ability. That should help this offense be just a little more productive. Cincinnati is a bad team but when TB went on the road to Baltimore (another team that might be as bad) their offense couldn't score a single touchdown. TB scored on a punt return, had a defensive score and also got a safety. That accounts for 16 points and they scored nine more points on field goals. The final score was 25-0. But let's also remember their defensive touchdown was a 97 yard interception return by Derrick Brooks (who has a hamstring injury and may not play or be very effective in this game) which means Baltimore was on their way into the end zone. Turn that situation around and the score is all of a sudden 18-7. The game looks a little different. TB is extremely banged up right now on the offensive line. They lost two more starters Monday night who will now miss about a month and this offense that was having trouble moving the ball is going to struggle even more. Baltimore's numbers are pretty similar to Cincinnati's numbers. Consider TB was coming into Baltimore after a home loss to NO. This week they go to Cincinnati (that should fire them up) after a home win on Monday night over the Rams. Do you really think they will be fired up for this game, knowing they also have a divisional match up with Atlanta next week? TB is now 0-5 as a road favorite in their last five road games. Dick LeBeau is 6-3 as a home dog of more than three points but just 2-3 as a home dog of more than three points and seven or less points so he is 4-0 as a home dog when a dog of more than seven points. All of that is enough to at least lean with Cincinnati and not play TB. But the real reason I am playing this game is because Cincinnati qualifies in a couple of outstanding situations this week. Since 1992 and beginning in week four, home underdogs with a winning percentage of .200 or worse (real bad teams) when an underdog of more than five points are facing a team with a winning record (a good team), they are now 50-18-1. Cincinnati also qualifies in contrary situation that is 108-56-4 based on their non-cover last week and TB's decent size cover last week. Those two situations are very strong situations and despite all of the bad play of the Bengals and the decent play of TB so far, my ratings only make TB a four point favorite in this game and that's before I account for the great situations that Cincinnati is in. So, we have banged up offense on the road that can't score points, laying a touchdown. This team also has a past history of not succeeding in this role (0-5 their last five tries) including at this venue against this same bad team. It should also be noted TB came off a Monday night victory over St. Louis last year in this same spot so the same letdown is probably going to happen. In addition, we have value on the home team and two fantastic situations that go with the home team as well. And let's not forget that we could be down by 10-13 points and still get the back door cover in this game. I think Cincinnati may win this game straight up. All right, I know, you're still not convinced because Cincinnati is a bad team. Well, I already told you about the same situation as last year with TB winning on Monday night over the Rams and coming to Cincinnati. Consider coming into that game last year, Cincinnati had just lost 0-18 at Cleveland, 7-20 against Tennessee and 13-30 at Jacksonville. Do you see any similarities here? Cincinnati has just lost 3-30 at Atlanta (0-18), 7-20 at Cleveland (7-20) and 6-34 against San Diego (13-30). Kind of scary isn't it. Teams don't go 16-0 and 0-16 in this league. Teams do win on occasion and they are more likely to do it at home, facing a team coming off a big national television type game. **CINCINNATI 17 TAMPA BAY 14**

### **OAKLAND -7 Tennessee 43**

This game is tough to call and I'm going to lean to Tennessee but not with great confidence. Tennessee has really been disappointing so far this year. They blew the lead last week and are now in danger of falling to 1-3 with a loss here. Most disappointing here is their running game, which is averaging just 2.9 ypr despite a supposedly healthy Eddie George. And the other part of their game that I thought was going to get better was their pass defense but that unit is surrendering 241 yards per game at 6.0 yps. That's not terrible and is better than last year but I thought they might be better than that. On the other side, Oakland is looking much better than I thought they would. They are running the ball in outstanding fashion, gaining 158 yards per game at 5.5 ypr and throwing the ball for only 5.7 yps but at 286 yards per game. So, their running game is setting up their passing game for the short routes, although I realize their passing game really set up their running game at Pittsburgh. Defensively is where the biggest surprise is for Oakland. They are limiting opponents to only 3.5 ypr and 58 yards per game, which is a drastic improvement over last year and their pass defense has been excellent too, allowing only 5.0 yps and 172 yards per game. Now, the Raiders have only played two games this year and one game was against Seattle so their numbers might be a little skewed because of that. In addition, they got up early on Pittsburgh and were able to play their game so that may have helped too. But let's give them credit where credit is due. They have prepared very well for their games and now they come off of a bye week. The match up for Tennessee here isn't bad as their rush defense continues to be very good, allowing only 3.5 ypr on 80 yards rushing per game. Oakland also qualifies in a negative situation that is now 43-97-5. My ratings do favor Oakland in this game but the situation favors Tennessee.

Jeff Fisher's teams are now 23-13 as a road dog but just 12-10 as a road dog versus greater than .500 opponents. With not a lot of confidence, I'll grab the points with Tennessee. **OAKLAND 24 TENNESSEE 20**

### **New England –3 SAN DIEGO 41**

The Tom Brady show continue to roll right along as he is now 17-3 SU since becoming the starter in week three of last year. Surely, NE can't go 16-0 can they? And is their a better time to see them hit a bump in the road than the week before their much anticipated match up with Miami? I think not. NE is really excelling in two areas this year. Their pass offense has been fantastic with the additions of some athletic receivers and tall receivers (Donald Hayes), they are now averaging 6.8 yps and a whopping 316 yards per game passing. When's the last time a NE team threw the ball with that much success? The other area is pass defense, where they are allowing only 168 yards per game at 4.6 yps. And consider the big leads they have had over Pittsburgh and the Jets and at times over KC last week. With all of those big leads you would expect them to be giving up more yards in the passing game but they are not. So, with a terrific passing game and a terrific pass defense, where does SD have an advantage here? Besides being a home underdog (remember NE wasn't getting any respect when they were dogs to Pittsburgh and the Jets but they have that respect now – failing to cover as a favorite last week and are now a favorite again this week), the Chargers and Marty Schottenheimer thrive in the running game. SD is now averaging 163 yards per game running at 4.3 ypr. They'll run that machine (which is without their starting center and could be a problem) right into a Patriots rush defense that has been very soft this year, allowing 109 yards rushing per game at 4.9 ypr. Meanwhile, SD is allowing only 74 yards rushing at 3.8 ypr and 132 yards passing at 3.7 yps. I know you're saying the Charger haven't played anybody yet. Well, I realize that but the teams they have faced average 4.2 ypr to the Chargers allowing 3.8 ypr and they average 3.8 yps to the Chargers 3.7 yps that they are allowing. That tells me the Chargers rush defense is above average and the pass defense is about average, so the numbers are still solid. So, we have a good match up for SD against NE and we are getting points at home. SD qualifies in a number of great situations this week. They qualify in home momentum situation that is 72-38-2 and another one that is 145-95-9. In addition NE qualifies in a negative scheduling situation that is now 49-91-3. And the real kickers here are SD qualifies in the same three fundamental situations that Arizona qualifies in which are 99-47-6, 68-25-3 and 236-138-11. They also qualify in a subset of the last one mentioned that is 133-60-7. My ratings predict SD by two so we also get value here. The last item to mention is Bill Belichick is now just 1-3 as a road favorite and has NEVER been a road favorite against a winning team. In addition, Marty Schottenheimer is now 13-4-2 as a home dog and 11-2-1 as a home dog of three or less points and 8-1 as a home dog of three or less points versus greater than .500 teams. Over the years, SD is only 10-18-1 as a home dog and just 8-10 as a home dog of three or less points but they are 5-3 as a home dog of three or less points versus greater than .500 teams. What this says is most of their failures as a home dog have come when they were bigger home dogs and just didn't have the talent. But when installed as a home dog of three or less against good opponents, they are a better team and succeed more often. NE gets upset peaking ahead towards Miami. This game also qualifies 303-225-19 under situation. **SAN DIEGO 21 NEW ENGLAND 17**

### **SEATTLE –3 Minnesota 44**

Randy, Randy, Randy. For those of you that don't know, I live here in Minnesota. I despise the Vikings and bleed Green and Gold. Four years ago, when Minnesota drafted Moss I told my friends that I thought he would be a pretty good player but he wasn't too keen on going over the middle of the field and getting hit based on what I had seen in their bowl game against Mississippi the previous year. I also thought he was a thug and would cause problems down the line as well as Red McCombs once they started losing. A few weeks into that first season, Minnesota traveled to Green Bay to play the Packers on a Monday night. Remember the Packers were coming off of two consecutive Super Bowl appearances, winning one and losing one. This was just another game for the Packers but it was a huge game for the Vikings. Well, that's the night where Randy Moss, in rain, had his coming out party as he scored what seemed like 18 touchdowns and made it look like he was playing against my nephews or something and the Vikings spanked the Packers on Monday night, 37-24 and the game wasn't even that close. My phone rang off the hook that night and I remember the messages I got were "Oh, Randy Moss will probably take a year to become a decent player, blah, blah, blah." Well, I think I'm getting the last laugh in all of this as the Vikings have sunk to new lows and Randy doesn't look too good as we speak and he is certainly still shy about going across the middle of the field and catching a ball. Having said all of that, I am on Minnesota this week in what is a fantastic opportunity for Mike Tice to go back home to Seattle and get his first win of the season. At least with Minnesota,

you can find some bright spots on their team. They are still only allowing 92 yards rushing per game at 3.8 ypr and they are averaging 141 yards rushing themselves at 4.7 ypr. The passing game has really suffered for a number of reasons but Moss is still there and still a big play threat. Mike Tice said this week they will go back to throwing the ball long to Randy Moss at least once a quarter again. He also felt they tried to throw too much last week and he wants to get back to running the ball like they did the first two weeks. That should match up just fine with a Seahawks defense that is now allowing a staggering 188 yards per game rushing at 5.1 ypr. Their pass defense has been just below average, allowing 186 yards per game at 5.9 yps. On offense, well, they're anemic. Last week they gained a whopping 145 total yards on only seven first downs. Their rushing offense is gaining only 55 yards per game at 2.6 ypr. And their passing offense is gaining 198 yards per game at only 5.4 yps. Despite the Vikings allowing 310 yards per game passing and 7.8 yps, I'm not sure Seattle can take advantage of that. Two weeks ago, Seattle faced Arizona at home laying three points against a similarly bad pass defense Arizona team and good rush offense Arizona team. In that game, Arizona rushed for 249 yards at 7.1 ypr and allowed Seattle to take advantage of their porous pass defense, surrendering 345 yards passing at 7.2 yps. But Arizona still won the game 24-13. Minnesota qualifies in the same three fundamental situations that SD and Arizona qualify in this week and those situations are extremely solid. In addition, my ratings favor Minnesota by one point so we get value. Mike Holmgren was 16-3 as a home favorite with Green Bay but he is just 4-6-2 with Seattle, including 1-4-2 if the opponent is under .500. Playing against home favorites of six or less with a winning percentage of .200 or less is a 43-77-2 negative situation. Although Minnesota doesn't qualify in the best part of that situation, Seattle is not in a position to be laying points in this game. If you read enough information this week, you will hear all about Minnesota's road troubles. But I doubt you will find anywhere but here the real story about their road woes, or should we say road SUCCESS. Yes, that's right they have actually had road success. No, I'm not out of my mind. This team is actually VERY GOOD on the road. Minnesota is just 3-9 as a road dog since 1999 and just 1-5 as a road dog of three or less since 1999 BUT they are 3-0 as a road dog of three or less versus less than .400 opponents since 1992. Many people will tell you how the Vikings have lost 10 straight regular season games SU on the road and 12 of their last 13 regular season road games. But let's look at that a little closer. Out of their last 38 regular season road games (eliminating first and second week games where winning percentage doesn't mean anything), only three games were against teams with a winning percentage of less than .400 where they are installed as a road dog. Only 8% of their road games have been against really bad teams when they have been a road dog. All of their other games have been against good to very good teams or if they have played bad teams they were favored. No wonder they have struggled on the road. In those three games, Minnesota has gone to NE in 2000, week three, as three point dogs and won 21-13. In 1997, week six, they went to Arizona as two point dogs and won 20-19 and in 1996, week 15, they went to Detroit as two point dogs and won 24-22. The winning percentages of those three teams were .000, .250 and .380. So the next time someone tells you Minnesota can't play on the road, ask them what kind of competition are they talking about and what's the line. **MINNESOTA 27 SEATTLE 21**

### **Denver -7 BALTIMORE 35**

I don't have much to say on this game. No situations favoring either team. Denver is rushing the ball pretty well, averaging 156 yards per game at 5.0 ypr but Baltimore is stopping the rush very well, allowing only 3.3 ypr. Hard to figure where Baltimore will get their offense from, averaging only 66 yards rushing per game at 3.4 ypr and facing a Denver stop unit that is allowing only 47 yards per game at 3.0 ypr. Also consider who Denver has faced this year. The Rams, SF and Buffalo. Two pretty good rushing teams. My ratings favor Denver by about eight points in this game. Mike Shanahan is only 12-19 as a road favorite with Denver but he is 4-3 when favored by more than six points but 10 or less points. Meanwhile, as I stated two weeks ago, Brian Billick likes to beat up on the inferior opponents but has trouble with the superior opponents. He is now 11-4 as a home favorite of more than four points but just 3-4-3 as a home favorite of four or less or a home dog. Not much interest for me here. **DENVER 17 BALTIMORE 10**

### **BEST BETS**

**YTD 5-6-1 -4.80%**

**3% ARIZONA +3**

**3% CINCINNATI +7**

**3% SAN DIEGO +3**

**3% MINNESOTA +3**

## **WEEK 5**

Home team in caps. All records against the spread unless otherwise noted.

League averages for comparison to the stats that will be listed below.

Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1

Yards Per Pass (YPS) 5.9

Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

### **MIAMI –3 New England 43.5**

Two teams that may not have been totally “looking ahead” last week but were still beaten to set up this match up between division leaders as 3-1 teams rather than 4-0 teams. For Miami last week, two areas stand out in their defeat. They turned the ball over five times to zero for Kansas City and they were destroyed in the passing attack by KC. They allowed the Chiefs to throw for 328 yards at 9.6 yps. That might not bode well for the Dolphins this week because they take on Air Belichick. NE is now averaging throwing the ball 47 times per game. And consider that in their games they have had big leads against Pittsburgh, the Jets and were in tight games with KC and SD. So, it’s not like they are throwing because they are always behind in their games. Belichick has assembled a very talented and athletic wide receiver core who are very tough to stop. The problem area for NE in this game is their rush defense. Last week they allowed SD to run for a whopping 238 yards. They have now allowed consecutive teams to run for over 200 yards against them and they are now allowing 5.6 ypr and 141 yards per game. That might not bode too well this week against a Miami team who is not only rushing for 5.1 ypr and 165 yards per game but they are rushing for 5.1 ypr against teams allowing only 4.2 ypr, so their rushing offense is really playing well. NE is allowing only 4.8 yps and they will face an average Miami passing attack that is averaging 7.0 yps but against teams allowing 6.9 yps. Home favorites that allow as many points as Miami last week usually don’t perform very well and Miami qualifies in a negative 35-78-6 situation here that is 1-3 this year. But Miami also qualifies in a very sound fundamental rushing situation that is now 466-354-30 and I prefer the fundamental situation over the technical situation. In addition, my ratings favor Miami by six points in this game so I think there is some value with Miami as well. Dave Wannstedt is 5-2 as a home favorite of three or less with Miami but just 2-2 in that same range versus greater than .500 teams. Miami has failed to win only two of the past ten games played here between these two by fewer than three points and covered four straight and five out of six. **MIAMI 24 NEW ENGLAND 16**

### **NEW ORLEANS –3 Pittsburgh 43.5**

Steelers come in after getting their first win of the season last week against Cleveland. The win didn’t come easy, however; as the Steelers needed not only overtime to do so but an extra field goal try after their first attempt was blocked in overtime. The same problems that have plagued Pittsburgh so far this year continued to give them problems last week. They only rushed for 85 yards and 2.8 ypr while allowing Cleveland to rush for 123 yards and 5.1 ypr. Their pass defense continued to shine, as they only allowed Cleveland to throw for 122 yards and 3.8 yps and sacked Tim Couch three times. For the season now, Pittsburgh is averaging only 3.1 ypr against teams allowing 4.5 and they are allowing 4.8 ypr against teams averaging 4.3 ypr. They have played great pass defense as they have allowed only 5.2 yps against teams averaging 6.6 yps. For NO, they come in after overlooking the Lions last week. For the second straight week, they found themselves down by 20 or more points. This time they couldn’t complete the comeback. The Saints are 3-1 on the year but their numbers are just about average. They average 4.4 ypr against teams allowing 4.0 ypr and 5.9 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps. On defense, they are allowing 3.7 ypr against teams averaging 3.6 ypr and allowing 5.8 yps against teams averaging 5.9 yps. So, all in all, pretty average. Pittsburgh, coming in off their win last week after losing their first two games, does qualify in a couple of game four situations that are 20-4-2 and 30-7-2. The Steelers also qualify in my turnover table situation but not the best parts of that situation. The turnover table plays are a contrary play which focuses on teams who have turned the ball over in the past and are due for a turnaround against teams who might have benefited from the turnovers in the past. NO, however; qualifies in probably my best system ever. It is a fundamental system which takes into account their rushing offense and defense and their defense as a whole, as well as their opponents rushing offense and defense. It also takes into account the scheduling situation at hand. It is a complete and sound system with a record of 100-34-7. That’s almost 75% success on well over 100 plays. That situation applies if NO is favored by three or less or a dog. But I can’t play NO this week for a couple of reasons. First, Pittsburgh does qualify in the

situations listed above and I would be willing to over look those situations but NO is banged up. Dante Stallworth will miss this game and Joe Horn may not be 100% for this game either. Bill Cowher is 26-17-1 as a road dog but just 12-10-1 as a road dog of three or less and just 6-6-1 as a road dog of three or less versus better than .500 teams. Jim Haslett is just 1-3 as a home favorite of three or less. The line value does sit with NO in this game and the fantastic situation also sits with them but I will pass on them as a best bet. **NEW ORLEANS 21 PITTSBURGH 13**

#### **TENNESSEE – 5.5 Washington 45**

I really thought Tennessee would be much better this year but they are having some of the same problems as last year. Last year they couldn't run the ball, they did stop the run very well but couldn't stop the pass. The same thing has happened this year. They are only averaging 2.9 ypr against teams allowing 3.9 ypr and they are allowing only 3.7 ypr against teams averaging 4.6 ypr. In addition, as mentioned, their pass defense is allowing 6.8 yps against teams averaging 6.1 yps. Now the injuries are also starting to pile up against Tennessee. They have already lost Jevon Kearse and last week lost Derrick Mason and Samari Rolle. Their pass defense will probably only get worse without Rolle. Luckily they play Washington, a team who also has their own problems. Washington has been a pretty average team on offense, averaging 4.8 yppf against teams allowing 4.9 yppf. But on defense, they are allowing 6.0 yppf against teams averaging only 5.3 yppf, with deficiencies in both the run and pass defense. Tennessee qualifies in a negative situation that is 35-78-6 based on their debacle last week and Washington would qualify in a general situation that is 41-16-0 if they would become a dog of more than six points. The Redskins also qualify as a turnover table play but much like Pittsburgh they don't qualify in the best parts of that. My numbers make Tennessee only a 4.5 point favorite and I will lean with Washington. Tennessee does qualify in a game five situation that is 61-27-2 and a subset that is 52-17-2 but they don't qualify in the best part of that situation, which is 34-5-2. If the Redskins become a dog of more than six points, I would consider making them a best bet. **TENNESSEE 28 WASHINGTON 27**

#### **Tampa Bay –1.5 ATLANTA 39.5**

Tampa Bay is now 1-5 in their last six games as a road favorite after destroying Cincinnati last week. Unfortunately, I had Cincinnati. And I would chalk up that loss to Cincinnati being even worse than I thought and TB being better than I thought. The TB offense has been about average this year, gaining only 4.9 yppf against teams allowing 5.1 yppf but their defense has been extremely tough, allowing only 3.9 yppf against teams averaging 4.7 yppf. For Atlanta, they have had two losses that they could have easily won and they too, destroyed Cincinnati the week before Tampa Bay did. But from a numbers standpoint, they are about average, gaining only 5.1 yppf against teams allowing 5.5 yppf and allowing 4.7 yppf against teams allowing 4.7 yppf. At home, as a dog on the carpet, one would figure Michael Vick could take advantage of his speed against the fast TB defense. Atlanta qualifies in a game number four situation that is 30-7-2 and my ratings make them the favorite in this game. Dan Reeves is 23-16-5 as a home dog but just 6-10-2 with Atlanta and just 1-4 with Atlanta as a home dog of three or less against greater than .500 teams. I'll side with Atlanta, who seems to be in a pretty good spot off of a bye. **ATLANTA 20 TAMPA BAY 16**

#### **Oakland –3 BUFFALO 52**

This should be another exciting game for the Bills. And why not. After all, they have seen three of their first four games go into overtime. In addition, they are averaging 389 yards per game on offense at 5.9 yppf. That 5.9 yppf comes against teams allowing 5.6 yppf so their offense is just above average for the year. They now take on an Oakland offense, which is clicking on all cylinders. They are averaging 450 yards per game at 6.2 yppf against teams allowing only 5.4 yppf. Oakland is averaging 5.2 ypr and will take on a Bills defense that is allowing 4.5 ypr. While Oakland has played terrific ball so far this year, their defensive woes have been covered up by their big leads, turnovers created and special teams play. But their defense is allowing 5.3 yppf to teams who only average 4.9 yppf. And while they are only allowing 3.2 ypr it is against teams who are only averaging 3.1 ypr so their rush defense is really about average as is their pass defense. Much is also made about Buffalo having a bad defense but their defense is only allowing 5.0 yppf against teams averaging 5.0 yppf so it is about average. Buffalo qualifies in a home momentum situation that is 146-95-10 (3-1 this year) and Oakland qualifies in a negative scheduling situation that is 49-92-3. Buffalo is also a turnover table play but again doesn't qualify in the best parts of that situation.

Along with all of that, I was surprised to see Oakland only favored by 2.5 points by my ratings. But the problem with playing Buffalo here is Oakland qualifies in a 466-354-30 fundamental rushing situation and also subsets of that which are 376-264-24 and 314-210-18 and I always respect the fundamental situations before the technical situations. That makes this game a great game to watch but not play for me. My take on this is Oakland is ripe to be upset but the fundamentals are too great to go against them here as a best bet. This also looks like a very good game to go over the total but I do have a 305-226-18 situation on the under here, which is 6-4 this year. One last item, Greg Williams is now 0-4-1 as a home dog of three or less. **OAKLAND 24 BUFFALO 23**

### **CAROLINA -3.5 Arizona 36.5**

I had Arizona last week and they won as I had hoped they would but, truth be told, their win was a bit lucky. Arizona trailed 7-0 just before the half, after having missed a field goal try with about 15 seconds left in the half. For some reason, Jim Fassel decided to try and move the ball down the field with about 15 seconds left in the half, from his own 25 yard line. The result was a little down and out pattern that was intercepted and returned for a touchdown with four seconds left in the half. That helped Arizona get some momentum going and they played much better in the second half. But, for the game, the Giants out gained Arizona 4.9 ypl to only 3.8 for Arizona. This week, Arizona takes on Carolina, who is 3-1 and stood a very good shot at winning at Green Bay last week but came up just short. One could say Carolina hasn't really played anybody yet but I think that's becoming a bad excuse. After all, Baltimore is a pretty good defensive team as we saw on Monday night and it's never easy to go into Lambeau and win but they almost did. And it's not like they are taking on the defending SB champions this week. For the season, Carolina is about average on offense, gaining 5.4 ypl against teams allowing 5.7 ypl and they have been pretty good on defense, where they are allowing only 4.3 ypl against teams averaging 4.9 ypl. Arizona, meanwhile, is averaging just 4.8 ypl against teams allowing 5.1 ypl and allowing 5.2 ypl against teams averaging just 5.0 ypl so they are just below average on both offense and defense. But within all of those numbers, Arizona still rushes the ball pretty well and stops the rush pretty well while Carolina still doesn't rush the ball very well and is just average in stopping the rush. All of that puts Arizona into my 466-354-30 fundamental rushing system and they fit all the qualifying subsets all the way down to the final subset which is 134-60-7 and 2-0 so far this year. Arizona does also qualify in a negative scheduling situation that is 103-155-9. My ratings make Carolina a three point favorite here. Dave McGinnis is now 6-2-1 as a road dog with Arizona and 2-0 as a road dog versus greater than .500 opponents and 2-0 as a road dog of four or less points. However; he has never been a road dog against greater than .500 opponents with such a short price, which means he could very well lose by four points or so but not get the cover because he is facing a more talented team now with a shorter price tag. Carolina's John Fox is 1-0 in his short tenure as a home favorite and 2-0 at home overall. I would think about siding with Arizona here but Marcel Ship who filled in for Thomas Jones last week is out and Thomas Jones may not play either. Too many injury question marks for me here to recommend Arizona. **CAROLINA 20 ARIZONA 16**

### **DALLAS (PK) NY Giants 35**

As mentioned, the Giants actually played pretty well last week in their loss. Their problems continue to be no rushing game and it really shows when you look at the numbers. They are averaging only 2.7 ypr against teams allowing 4.2 ypr. I forget the number but I think they have now been stopped on five or six third down and one situations this year and they tried to run the ball each time with Tiki Barber. Their rushing defense has been solid, allowing just 3.6 ypr against teams averaging 4.3 ypr. And their pass offense has been very good averaging 6.9 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps and the pass defense has been just above average. They'll get a good test against a pretty Cowboy's team, when playing at home, especially against the Giants. Dallas has now covered eight out of the last ten against the Giants here, including four straight and five out of six. Dallas played a pretty good game last week, despite getting out gained 5.9 to 4.8 ypl against St. Louis. Their biggest problem was in the passing offense but their running game should be good enough at home to overcome their passing deficiencies. Dallas qualifies in a number of solid situations this week, including a 73-38-2 home momentum situation and another situation that is 40-8-1 that won with NO in week two against Green Bay. They also qualify in a couple of very, very solid fundamental situations that are 101-47-6 (including 4-0 this year, winning with SD and ARZ last week) and the same 466-354-30 situation with all the subsets including the final subset, which is the best situation that is 134-60-7. My ratings, before accounting for the situations make the Giants about a .5 point favorite. Past history, solid situations on both a fundamental and technical basis make this a solid play on Dallas. I'll play Dallas at -1 or less. **DALLAS 20 NY GIANTS 10**

### **INDIANAPOLIS –13.5 Cincinnati 44**

Well, the Bengals were in a great spot last week and not only did they lose, but they stunk up the joint. Their only score was an interception returned for a touchdown and quite frankly, I don't think they ever really got close the rest of the way. They are now averaging just 3.5 yppl against teams allowing 4.5 yppl (including just 3.5 yps versus 4.9 yps) while their defense is allowing 5.4 yppl against teams averaging 5.2 yppl. They'll take on Indianapolis, coming off a bye (Dungy 0-2 off bye as home favorite of more than seven points and less than or equal to 14 points), whose numbers are looking pretty good so far. They are averaging 5.6 yppl against teams allowing just 5.2 yppl but most impressive is their defense, which is allowing just 4.4 yppl against teams averaging 4.9 yppl. And those numbers are not just because they played Houston, as they did a pretty good job against both Jacksonville and Miami. Cincinnati is now 1-16-1 as road dog of 14 or less points when facing a team that is .666 or better. My ratings favor Indy by 13.5 points which is right at the number. With the terrible past history of Cincinnati against good teams on the road and their current state, I'll lean with Indy. I have no situations that favor either team here.

### **INDIANAPOLIS 30 CINCINNATI 10**

### **Kansas City –3 NY JETS 45**

This is a very, very good game to stay away from. As expected, if you believe in situations that are contrary, the Jets qualify in a number of those this week. But, as expected, if you look at stats at all, the Chiefs qualify in a very good fundamental situation. All of that adds up to a pass for me. Both these teams have now played the same three teams in their last three games. They have both played Jacksonville, New England and Miami. KC averaged a 34-31 score against those three teams while the Jets averaged a 4-34 score. And it probably could have been much worse except Jacksonville and Miami put it in cruise control. So not only are the Jets losing these games, but they aren't even playing close to competitive games. Their numbers really aren't terrible, however. They are averaging 4.8 yppl against teams that are allowing 5.2 yppl and on defense they are only allowing 5.8 yppl against teams that are averaging 6.0 yppl. So their defense is actually above average. They have just played great offensive teams. But, we have a good comparison here because these teams have played similar teams. KC is averaging 6.4 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl but as good as they have been on offense, they have been just about as bad on defense. They are allowing 6.5 yppl against teams averaging 5.8 yppl. The Jets are not that bad but they are committing too many turnovers and as expected, they qualify as a turnover table play this week. And they also qualify in some pretty good subsets of that turnover table that are 114-55-4 and 129-71-4. In addition, the Jets also qualify in another contrarian situation that is 108-57-4 and some game five situations, including one that is 26-1-1. But, KC qualifies in my 466-354-30 fundamental situation including one subset that is 376-264-24. In addition, my ratings favor KC by 9.5 points so there is clearly not enough value to take the Jets. The situations that the Jets are in this week are very solid but no line value and the fundamentals going against them make me pass this game. But, KC, off a big win last week, with San Diego, Denver and Oakland on deck, laying points on the road with a bad defense against what we can see is a decent defense, makes them ripe for the upset. Stay away, unless you have the guts to take the Jets, which I don't. **NY JETS 30 KANSAS CITY 28**

### **DENVER –5 San Diego 41**

SD comes in 4-0 and, technically speaking, in first place with Oakland only 3-0. They take on Denver, who was supposed to be 4-0 until they ran into a very tough Baltimore defense last Monday. But that gives us line value with Denver in this game against a good, but not great SD team, whose strength is running the ball will play right into the hands of Denver, who stops the run better than anybody in the NFL. The Broncos are allowing just 2.9 ypr against teams averaging 4.1 ypr. And, remember, they have faced St. Louis (4.3 ypr), San Francisco (5.1 ypr), Buffalo (3.7 ypr) and Baltimore (3.1 ypr). In their games against St. Louis and San Francisco, they allowed just 2.5 and 3.6 ypr. SD has rushed the ball well this year, averaging 4.9 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr. This will be their toughest test this year. On defense, SD is allowing just 4.4 yppl but they have faced teams that are averaging just 4.3 yppl so their defense is technically below average, slightly. They won't face a great offense this week, either, as Denver is averaging just 5.1 yppl against teams allowing 5.0 yppl. But, an average defense in SD should allow Denver to reach their average and SD should find the going a little tough facing a team that takes their strength away from them. SD qualifies in a 23-57-4 negative situation based on their recent success, which gives us some line value (meaning this line would be higher if they hadn't had their recent success) and they also qualify in

another negative situation that is 103-155-9 while Denver qualifies in a bounce back situation that is 115-60-5, including 2-0 already this year. Denver is also a turnover table play but they don't qualify in the best part of that situation. Marty Schottenheimer is now just 9-15 as a road dog of six or less points versus greater than .500 teams, when Marty's teams are off a win. Meanwhile, Mike Shanahan is now 10-9 as a home favorite of six or less but 9-3 as a home favorite of six or less against greater than .500 opponents and when his Denver teams are off a loss, he is 6-0. My ratings actually favor SD but the situation greatly favors Denver and the match up favors Denver as well. I'll take Denver. **DENVER 28 SAN DIEGO 13**

### **SAN FRANCISCO -7 St. Louis 40.5**

It's kind of nice to see Mike Martz with that "deer in the headlights" look during and after each game this year. I hope I don't see that look this week, as I'll be on St. Louis, in what is a very good situation for them. This is the first game Mike Martz has been an underdog and it's the first time since week two in 1999 that St. Louis has been an underdog. That's really quite incredible, if you think about it. Based on stats alone, when comparing them against the opponents they have faced, I rate St. Louis as a top team. They are averaging 5.7 ypl against teams allowing only 4.6 ypl (so they have faced very good defenses - league average is 5.2 ypl) and they are allowing 5.3 ypl against teams averaging 5.0 ypl. Their defense, based on those numbers, is just below average and it's been their pass defense, which has hurt them. They are allowing 6.6 yps against teams averaging only 5.9 yps. That may not play right into the 49ers hands, because SF is averaging just 6.2 yps against teams allowing 5.9 yps but a very healthy 5.1 ypr against teams allowing 4.0 ypr. They may find that a little tougher this week, however; as St. Louis is allowing just 3.7 ypr against teams averaging 3.9 ypr. So, what we have here are two very good offenses (with or without Kurt Warner, in my opinion) and a little better defense by SF but not that much better. The biggest problem for St. Louis this year is they are turning the ball over, and as expected, they qualify as a turnover table play. They also qualify in one of the better subsets of the turnover table that is 111-66-4 since 1983. In addition, they qualify in a bounce back situation, after their loss last week to Dallas, that is now 115-60-5 and they also qualify in another bounce back situation that is 68-35-2. My ratings favor SF by only six points and that's before I account for the situations that the Rams qualify in. Mike Martz is now 6-3 on the road against better than .500 opponents and remember, he was a favorite in all of those games. The Rams have also won six consecutive games against SF. SF will surely be looking for blood in this game but the situation, value and match up favor St. Louis and I'll be on them. **ST. LOUIS 17 SAN FRANCISCO 16**

### **Philadelphia -3 JACKSONVILLE 41.5**

Very interesting game here and I'll side with Jacksonville, who I believe is still very underrated. For the season, Jacksonville is averaging 6.2 ypl against teams allowing 5.7 ypl and they are allowing only 5.4 ypl against teams that are averaging 5.6 ypl so they are above average on both sides of the ball. Philadelphia, meanwhile, is 3-1 and has won three straight games. In those games, they have outscored their opponent by a 116-37 margin. Looks pretty good, huh? But a closer look tells a little different story. Philadelphia is averaging just 5.6 ypl against teams allowing 5.4 ypl and on defense, they are allowing only 4.4 ypl but against teams averaging 4.4 ypl, which makes them just average on defense. I think Philadelphia is better than average on defense but the 4.4 ypl is a bit misleading because they have faced weak offenses. They'll get a good test against Jacksonville this week. Jacksonville qualifies in a home momentum situation that is 146-95-10 (3-1 this year) and Philadelphia qualifies in a negative scoring situation that is 39-74-5. Andy Reid is 6-1 as a road favorite, 4-0 as a road favorite of four or less points and 1-0 as a road favorite of four or less points against better than .500 teams. Tom Coughlin has been a home dog over the years but he has never been a home dog when his team has been above .500. My ratings make Jacksonville a .5 point favorite so the situation and the value lie with Jacksonville and so do I. **JACKSONVILLE 23 PHILADELPHIA 13**

### **CLEVELAND -7 Baltimore 36.5**

Baltimore, despite their offensive woes, still has a pretty good defense and they showed it last Monday night. They are now averaging just 4.0 ypl (league average is 5.2) against teams allowing 4.3 ypl but their defense is allowing just 4.8 ypl against teams averaging 5.2 ypl. They'll face a Cleveland team that is averaging just 5.3 ypl against teams allowing 5.7 ypl and allowing 5.0 ypl against teams averaging 4.9 ypl. There are no situations which apply to either team. Brian Billick is 8-2 as a road dog and 5-2 as a road dog against greater than or equal

to .500 teams and 2-0 against those teams when getting more than four points and ten or less points. My ratings favor Cleveland only by 4.5 points and I'll side with the team with the better defense. **CLEVELAND 21 BALTIMORE 17**

#### **CHICAGO -1.5 Green Bay 44**

Green Bay comes in here just trying to get healthy. Their offense continues to click, despite only scoring 17 points last week. They are now averaging 5.6 yppl against teams allowing 5.0 yppl but their defense continues to have problems. They are now allowing 5.7 yppl against teams averaging only 5.0 yppl. That should help a bit of an anemic Bears offense that is only averaging 4.9 yppl against teams allowing 5.3 yppl. The Bears defense has been just average this year allowing 5.4 yppl against teams averaging 5.4 yppl. The Packers have dominated this series, especially in Chicago (in Champaign this year) by winning the last eight games in Chicago. The Packers just seem to match up very well with Chicago and this game gives the Packers a chance to create a pretty good separation between the only two clubs that will challenge for the NFC North division. I look at the game this way. Green Bay has the better offense. I would much rather have Brett Favre trying to win for me than Jim Miller. The Bears defense is better but very banged up balancing out the better Bears defense a little bit. I will side with the playmaker, Brett Favre. Both teams qualify in good situations so those are even and my ratings do favor the Bears by 4.5 points but I'll take series dominance and Favre on prime time to get the job done. **GREEN BAY 24 CHICAGO 23**

#### **BEST BETS**

**YTD 7-8-1 -5.40%**

**3% DALLAS PK (A play at -1 or less)**

**3% DENVER -5**

**3% ST. LOUIS +7**

**3% JACKSONVILLE +3**

