



2002 NFL SEASON
SIXTH SENSE SPORTS
WEEKS 6-10

WEEK 6

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) 6.0

Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

No less than four different games this week where the technical situations lie with one team but the fundamental situations lie with the other team. In these situations, I usually have to pass but I will lean to what I think the stronger situation is.

New Orleans –1.5 WASHINGTON 45.5

This is one of those games I was talking about. NO qualifies in a terrific 470-355-31 fundamental rushing situation (10-6-1 TY) including all of the subsets down to the best subset, which is 135-61-7 (3-1 TY). Unfortunately, Washington qualifies in some very good technical situations of their own. They qualify in a home momentum dog role which is now 73-39-2 and another home dog momentum situation that is 147-96-10 and NO does qualify in a negative road scheduling situation that is 50-92-3. So all of that makes this a no play as NO certainly qualifies as a play from a statistical perspective but Washington fits the bill as a team that may be on the rise and NO is in a let-down situation. Washington is coming off of their upset road win last week as they blasted an injury riddled Tennessee team, 31-14. They rushed for 156 yards at 5.2 ypr and ended up averaging 6.4 yppl in that game to Tennessee's 5.0 yppl. What was most impressive was their ability to run the ball on Tennessee. The Titans defense hasn't been very good this year but their rush defense was something they could hang their hat on. They are still allowing only 4.1 ypr against teams averaging 4.6 ypr. But, on the flip side, Washington did allow Tennessee to run for 3.9 ypr and that is something Tennessee was struggling doing, gaining only 3.0 ypr on the year against teams allowing 4.2 ypr. The Redskins rush defense is allowing 5.2 ypr against teams averaging only 4.5 ypr so their rush defense is having problems. Those problems could be used against them this week as NO is averaging 4.4 ypr against teams allowing only 4.1 ypr. The Saints defense is pretty average, allowing 5.1 yppl to teams averaging 5.1 yppl. This game comes down to this. The Saints defense is pretty average and the Redskins offense is pretty average (5.2 yppl vs 5.1 yppl). But the Saints offense is a little above average and the Redskins defense is well below average, allowing 5.8 yppl to teams averaging only 5.2 yppl. My ratings make this line NO by 1 so the number is pretty fair. Will the NO fundamentals win out or will the possible momentum and letdown situations win out? Tough call. This game also qualifies in a 305-227-18 under situation. I'll lean ever so slightly towards the fundamentals. Jim Haslett is 3-1 as a road favorite of three or less points. **NEW ORLEANS 24 WASHINGTON 21**

Pittsburgh –6 CINCINNATI 41.5

Cincinnati finally came to life last week, if you call scoring a late touchdown to lose by seven points, coming to life. The Bengals numbers were respectable last week. They averaged 7.2 ypr by gaining 173 yards rushing as Corey Dillon finally had a break out game. While their passing game only averaged 5.4 yps, it was a huge improvement over the 165 yards and 3.9 yps numbers they are averaging. Meanwhile, Pittsburgh was trailing by double digits most of the game before finally scoring late and getting a two point conversion to lose by only three points. The Steelers played respectable from a standpoint that they were finally able to run the ball, gaining 120 yards at 4.6 ypr. That was against a Saints team who is now allowing 3.9 ypr against teams averaging only 3.5 ypr. They'll face a little tougher rush defense this week as Cincinnati is allowing 4.0 ypr but to teams averaging 4.1 ypr so they are just above average in that area. The Bengals pass defense has been horrible, allowing 6.9 ypr to teams averaging only 6.1 yps. Can Pittsburgh take advantage of that? It's doubtful. The Steelers are only gaining 3.5 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr and 4.9 yps against teams allowing 5.2 yps. Their offense has been below average all year. The defense, overall, has been pretty good, allowing only 5.3 yppl to teams averaging 5.8 yppl. The strength of their defense has been the pass defense, allowing only 5.6 yps to teams averaging a whopping 6.6 yps. But their rush defense has been below par, allowing 4.7 ypr to teams averaging only 4.3 ypr. The Bengals will definitely try to take advantage of that on Sunday. Cincinnati is averaging 4.3 ypr against teams allowing 3.9 ypr but they are only averaging 3.9 yps against teams allowing 5.3 yps. I'm sure Pittsburgh will try and take away the run, forcing Cincinnati to throw the ball. Maybe last week's success will help the Bengals throw the ball. Pittsburgh

does qualify in a game five situation which is 52-19-2 (0-2 LW) which primarily plays on teams that lose to fall to 1-3 and realize their season is about to go down the drain if they don't win this game. But, Cincinnati is winless on the year and teams who are winless and are a dog, from week six on are now 72-40-5, so there might also be some value with Cincinnati in this game. Cincinnati also qualifies in the 470-355-31 fundamental rushing situation, including subsets that are 380-265-24 and 317-211-18. My ratings make this game a pick 'em, showing tremendous value with Cincinnati. But I also rate teams as Top, Above Average, Below Average and Poor based on their yards per play gained and allowed versus the competition they have faced. Pittsburgh rates out as an Above Average team and Cincinnati rates out as a Poor team. That means Pittsburgh is two levels ahead of Cincinnati and coming off a loss should have them plenty motivated. Those yppl ratings don't take into account the turnovers, which has really been Pittsburgh problem this year. So, with all of that, I will still lean with Cincinnati plus the points because of the rushing fundamental situation and the perceived value with them as well. I can't make this a best bet, however; because of the big difference in my yppl ratings which indicate Pittsburgh is still a pretty decent team if they can avoid the turnovers. **PITTSBURGH 21 CINCINNATI 20**

DALLAS -1.5 Carolina 34

I really have to question the coaching ability of Dave Campo. This isn't the first time he has made some questionable calls. Last week, early in the game, the Cowboys drove the length of the field and had to attempt a short field goal. Instead they tried to fake the field goal on a fourth and nine and were tackled and turned the ball over. Campo later said that there was a communication error and the fake field goal should have been called off. All right, I'll give you that Dave but who is responsible for making sure there are no communication errors? And why try that when you are very capable of beating the Giants at home, especially when you have all of the momentum in the game. Then, very late in the game, with less than two minutes remaining and facing a fourth and nine from inside the 50 yard line, Campo decided to punt the ball with only two timeouts remaining. Let's think about this for a second. You don't want to go for it because you think you can stop them and get the ball back and drive for the winning score, trailing by four points. Well, you don't know for sure you are going to get the ball back. You only have two timeouts remaining, which means if the Giants run the ball three straight times and there are less than two minutes remaining, you are only going to have about one minute left to go from your own 30 yard line to score. But if you really think you can stop the Giants, then why not go for the first down. If you fail to make it, you still have to stop the Giants (which you clearly think you can do because you are punting the ball) and then would probably get the ball back around your own 20 yard line. So, you give up a chance at making the first down for maybe 10 yards of field position. And, realizing if the Cowboys would have gone for the field goal early in the game that the game would have played out differently the rest of the way, but they maybe would have only been down by one point and only needed a field goal at the end. By the way, they never got the ball back. These kind of coaching decisions will cost you your job very quickly in the NFL, where there are plenty of coaches who know what they are doing. Can you tell I had the Cowboys last week? As for this game. I have no situation which apply to either team. The Carolina offense is just below average, gaining 5.2 yppl against teams allowing 5.5 yppl but their defense has been outstanding, allowing only 4.3 yppl to teams averaging 5.0 yppl. Dallas, meanwhile, is below average on both offense and defense, gaining only 5.0 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl and allowing 5.1 yppl to teams averaging only 4.9 yppl. John Fox is now 3-0 as a dog in his first year coaching and the reason is his defense. My ratings show Carolina by 3.5 and I'll lean that way. **CAROLINA 17 DALLAS 13**

Buffalo -7.5 HOUSTON 44

The Bills tried their hardest last week to defeat Oakland but came up short 31-49. Oakland is just steam rolling anything and everything in their way right now. Buffalo actually led in that game 24-21 in the second half but Oakland is a scoring machine right now. This is an intriguing game from the stand point that Buffalo has never been a road favorite with Greg Williams at the helm, and they have barely won any games on the road, period. In fairness, most of those games last year were against pretty solid teams and they did lose to Atlanta by three last year and did beat Minnesota this year in OT. But, for them to win by more than seven points, which is a something they haven't done since the last week of the 2000 season, covering this number could be difficult. Buffalo is a pretty average team all around, despite their gaudy numbers of 407 total yards per game and 6.9 yps and 327 yards passing. They are averaging 6.0 yppl on offense but against teams allowing 5.8 yppl. Remember, if the league average is only 5.2 yppl, they have faced some terrible defenses in the Jets, Minnesota and Oakland. But, on the other hand, it might appear that their defense isn't very good either. In truth, it's about average, just a bit below average, allowing 5.5

yppl to teams averaging 5.4 yppl. In steps the Houston Texans, fresh off of their bye week. I'm always willing to back a good defensive home team getting plenty of points. Houston is allowing only 4.9 yppl this season to teams averaging 5.3 yppl. Their pass defense, which seems to be Buffalo's strength, is allowing only 5.6 yps against teams averaging 5.8 yps. The problem with Houston is their offense. It is absolutely horrible. They are averaging only 2.8 yppl against teams allowing 4.8 yppl. That's a full two yards below average, which is really, really bad. My ratings make Buffalo only a two point favorite in this game. They do qualify in my turnover table play, but not the best part of that system. I will take the better defensive team, at home, getting points. **BUFFALO 23 HOUSTON 17**

INDIANAPOLIS -6.5 Baltimore 44

Break up the Ravens. They have now won two games in a row and scored 34 and 26 points respectively in their last two games. Wow! Baltimore really took it to Cleveland last week, gaining 201 yards rushing at 5.9 ypr and throwing the ball for another 6.9 yps. Their offense averaged a very nice 6.4 yppl. But their defense did allow 6.4 yppl as well. That was, in part, because they allowed Cleveland to pass late in the game and establish some yards of their own. They also lost Ray Lewis for part of that game which also helped out Cleveland. But, that is important because it doesn't look like Lewis will play this week either. What once looked like a terrible Baltimore offense and a very good Baltimore defense, has all evened out and they are now rated as about average on both sides. I still think their defense is better than average but without Lewis, they may be just average. They are gaining 4.7 yppl against teams allowing 4.6 yppl and their defense is allowing 5.2 yppl to teams averaging 5.3 yppl. For Indianapolis, I thought their defense was starting to play better but they then allowed Cincinnati to move the ball on them last week. That's not a good sign. Maybe they just overlooked Cincinnati coming out of their bye week. Their offense is still clicking along, averaging 5.5 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl but their defense is now allowing 4.9 yppl against teams averaging only 4.7 yppl. Brian Billick is now 9-2 as a road dog, 6-2 as a road dog against .500 or better teams and 3-0 as a road dog of more than four but ten or less points against .500 or better teams. Tony Dungy, meanwhile; is just 6-14 as a home favorite of more than four points. My ratings, however; favor Indy by 7.5 points and if Lewis doesn't play, I would like Indy even more. Good game to pass but I will lean with Indy. This game also qualifies in a 305-227-18 under situation. **INDIANAPOLIS 24 BALTIMORE 14**

MINNESOTA -4.5 Detroit 48.5

Another game where the technical situations go one way and the fundamental situations go another way. Minnesota qualifies in the 470-355-31 rushing fundamental situation which is 10-6-1 this year. The Vikings are coming off of their bye week after their embarrassing game in Seattle, where they allowed 10 million points in about three minutes. I guess it wasn't 10 million points, it just seemed like it. I really think Mike Tice might be in over his head. He may end up being a decent coach, but at this point in time, he might be getting schooled a little too often. Fortunate for him, he faces Marty Mornhinweg, who might be even worse of a coach. Good old Marty does have a year under his belt which may give him a little advantage. If it weren't for Houston, Minnesota would rate as the worse team in the NFL in my yppl comparison ratings. Of course, if it weren't for Houston and Minnesota, Detroit would rate as the worse team. Pick your poison. On offense, Minnesota has been average, gaining 5.1 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl. But, on defense (and I don't have to tell you this after watching the Seattle game) they are allowing 6.3 yppl to teams averaging only 5.3 yppl. That's a full yard worse than what they are facing. Detroit, on the other hand, is just the opposite. They have been pretty poor on offense, averaging only 4.2 yppl against teams allowing 5.1 yppl. But their defense is doing decent, allowing 5.7 yppl against teams averaging 5.5 yppl. Based on their poor defensive performance, Minnesota qualifies in a negative 36-79-6 (2-4 TY) situation and another 81-134-10 negative situation, which is 0-2 TY. Teams such as Minnesota, with their poor record, shouldn't be favored and they also qualify in a negative 44-78-2 situation based on that. The bye week may not help Minnesota, as home favorites of less than five points that lost on the road the week before are just 3-17-2. Again, it's a question of fundamentals or technical situations. I'll side with the fundamentals here and my ratings favor Minnesota by 5.5 points, giving us some value. Minnesota also qualifies in my turnover table system, although again not the best part of that system. But, that system is basically saying if the Vikings can stop turning the ball over, they stand a chance to get the cover. Mornhinweg is 0-3 as a road dog of six or less points. Detroit has only won twice in the past ten years here but they have also lost only two of the past nine games by more than seven points. Mike Tice is now 0-2 as a home favorite. Detroit is pretty banged up and the Vikings will look to take advantage of that. This game also qualifies in a 305-227-18 under situation. **MINNESOTA 27 DETROIT 20**

NEW ENGLAND -5.5 Green Bay 47.5

GB and Brett Favre looked terrific on Monday night. But, they might be stepping into a hornet's nest this week. NE comes in off of two disappointing losses at San Diego and Miami and needing a win pretty badly. GB, while they will never admit it, has total and complete control of their division. Of course, they want more, but that division is now their division to lose. The Patriot's offense is still pretty good, although looking just average by gaining 5.7 yppl against teams allowing 5.6 yppl. Their defense, however; is allowing only 5.0 yppl against teams averaging 5.6 yppl. They actually out gained Miami last week 4.8 yppl to 4.4 yppl. They are allowing 4.8 ypr but against teams averaging 4.7 ypr which makes them an average rush defense, not a bad rush defense, which some people may think. They did also hold Miami to just 3.1 ypr last week. As good as NE's defense is, they will probably give up some yards and points to GB, who is averaging 5.9 yppl against teams allowing 5.1 yppl. It is the Packers defense which has and is a problem. They are allowing 5.7 yppl to teams averaging only 5.0 yppl. And their defense took another blow Monday night, losing DE Joe Johnson for the year. They are still playing without Vonnie Holiday on the defensive line. Gilbert Brown is still there but he is less effective when the talent around him decreases and he is not a pass rushing lineman and it figures NE will be passing a lot in this game. The Packers have plenty of depth along the defensive line but when faced against a good team that depth is not good enough. In addition, their secondary took multiple hits on Monday, too numerous to mention. And it's not known how many of those players will play in this game. But they will need all and more against the athletic and speedy Patriot receivers. Winning home teams in this price range coming off of consecutive road losses are very good bets and NE qualifies in a 27-6-1 situation based on that. They are also a turnover table play for me and if this line is four or less, which it isn't currently, they would qualify in a terrific subset of that which is 129-72-4. NE rates a Top team in my yppl comparison model and they are coming off a loss. That's pretty strong. But, my ratings only favor NE by two points in this game. If the line comes down to four points or less, I would take NE as a best bet because they would then qualify in the strong turnover table system. Otherwise, I will just lean with NE as a strong opinion. Mike Sherman is just 1-4 as a road dog of seven or less points. **NEW ENGLAND 31 GREEN BAY 20**

NY GIANTS -5.5 Atlanta (No Total)

No line on this game yet. I anticipate the line to be around seven points. It looks like Michael Vick will probably miss this game. Everything I have points towards Atlanta in this game and I may make this game a best bet but I need to see who is starting and what the line is. TB really stuffed the Falcons offense last week, although part of that was because they lost Vick. They might be without him again this week but at least Johnson will have had time to prepare for this game. Atlanta is pretty average on both sides of the ball. The Giants offense is about average as well, averaging 6.9 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps but their rushing offense is averaging only 2.9 ypr against teams allowing 4.2 ypr. While Atlanta's defense is average overall, their pass defense is a little better, allowing only 5.6 yps against teams averaging 5.8 yps. The Giants defense is playing pretty well, allowing only 3.6 ypr against teams averaging 4.4 ypr and 5.5 yps against teams averaging 5.7 yps. The strength of the Atlanta offense is their rushing game, averaging 4.4 ypr against teams allowing 4.0 ypr. I'll have to wait and see what the line is and if Vick plays or not. Either way, I favor Atlanta. Atlanta qualifies in a 271-193-11 contrary situation and the same week five situation that Pittsburgh qualifies in, which is 52-19-2. Atlanta also qualifies in my 470-355-31 fundamental rushing situation. The Giants won last week to go one game over .500. That usually signals a letdown as teams that win to go one game over .500 and are now favored by five or more points and facing a team at .500 or below, are just 20-47-1. Dan Reeves is 34-20-1 as a road dog of more than three points and seven or less points. **NY GIANTS 20 ATLANTA 17**

Jacksonville -2 TENNESSEE 43.5

The Titans are really hurting. They have lost many of their key players (Jevon Kearse, Derrick Mason and Samari Rolle) and the same problems they had last year are showing again this year. They can't rush the ball, averaging only 3.0 ypr against teams allowing 4.2 ypr and overall on offense they are averaging 5.0 yppl against teams allowing 5.3 yppl. Their rush defense does continue to play well, although last week it did allow 5.2 ypr to the Redskins who were only averaging 4.4 ypr. But, on the year they are allowing only 4.1 ypr against teams averaging 4.6 ypr. But their pass defense continues to be sieve like, allowing 6.9 yps against teams averaging 6.1 yps. They currently rate out as a Poor team in my yppl comparison ratings. Jacksonville comes in off their terrific win over Philadel-

phia at home last week. They did throw for 8.2 yps last week but only ran for 2.6 ypr and allowed Philadelphia to rush for 6.6 ypr, although many of those yards were Donovan McNaab. For the year, Jacksonville is averaging 6.0 yppl against teams allowing 5.6 yppl and allowing only 5.2 yppl against teams averaging 5.7 yppl. Tennessee qualifies in a great bounce back situation that is 116-61-5 (3-1 TY) and they are also a turnover table play. They qualify in a terrific subset of that turnover table situation that is 114-56-4. The problem with playing the Titans, who have a lot of injuries, is my ratings make Jacksonville a 5.5 point favorite. In addition, the yppl comparison ratings make Jacksonville a Top team and, like I said earlier, Tennessee is a Poor team. So, there is no value in playing Tennessee and Jacksonville is rated in the best category (Top) and Tennessee is rated in the worse category (Poor). And the line is just two points, which gives me no breathing room for error. I think Jacksonville is still underrated. Having said all of that, I do respect my situations and will lean with Tennessee to bounce back but I can not make them a best bet. This game also qualifies in a 305-227-18 under situation. **TENNESSEE 21 JACKSONVILLE 20**

Oakland -8 ST. LOUIS 48.5

Another game where the fundamentals line up on one side and the technical situations line up on the other side. As you might expect, St. Louis, now 0-5 is starting to qualify in some contrary situations and it's just a matter of time before they finally cover a game. On the other side, Oakland is rolling along, covering every game and it's just a matter of time before they finally don't cover as the numbers start to favor the Rams more and not favor Oakland. The Rams qualify in two different contrary situations that are 57-26-2 and 59-29-2 and a turnover table contrary situation that is 61-24-3 and one which is 111-67-4. Oakland, based on their high scoring offensive performances recently (52 and 49 points the last two weeks) qualify in a negative 39-75-5 (0-2 TY) situation and they also qualify in the better part of that negative situation which is just 19-46-2. But, Oakland also qualifies in my 470-355-31 fundamental rushing situation as well but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. I respect those fundamental situations an awful lot and even though the Rams are 0-5, they have been enough of an elite team in recent years, that the Raiders should still respect them. As you might expect, the Raiders rate out very high, and mostly because of their offense, which is now averaging 6.5 yppl against teams allowing 5.5 yppl. Their defense is not great, however; allowing 5.6 yppl against teams averaging only 5.3 yppl. The Rams defense has the same numbers but their offense has been very good, averaging 5.5 yppl against teams allowing only 4.7 yppl. When you look at these numbers you see the following. Oakland is averaging 1.0 yppl more on offense than they are facing. St. Louis is averaging 0.8 yppl more. On defense, the numbers are exactly the same. So, why is one team 4-0 and one team 0-5. Turnovers and special teams. If you believe those things will even out, then the Rams are your play here. If not, then the Raiders are probably your play. My ratings favor Oakland by eight points so the line is fair but I think the situation greatly favors the Rams. The numbers are about even and I look for the breaks and turnovers to turn around. We are getting an awful lot of points at home for a team who has lost just one home game by more than seven points in the last three plus years. I realize this team isn't the same team as the previous three years, but they are still just a tad bit better than the 0-5 Bengals. And consider this. The Raiders were only three point favorites at Buffalo last week and Buffalo played them pretty competitively in that game until the end and now they are eight point favorites over the Rams. I do expect a high scoring game here. If Jaime Martin would have started this game I would have taken the Rams but now I will just lean their way. **OAKLAND 31 ST LOUIS 28**

SAN DIEGO -3 Kansas City 46.5

A very good match up here. Both teams run the ball very well. KC averages 5.8 ypr against teams allowing 4.7 ypr and SD averages 4.9 ypr against teams allowing 4.0 ypr. KC throws the ball better, averaging 7.7 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps while SD averages only 5.6 yps against teams allowing 5.9 yps. SD makes up for their offensive passing deficiency by playing average defense, while KC is very bad on the defensive side of the ball. In fact, while KC rates as the best offensive team in the league averaging 1.4 yppl more than their opponent is allowing, they rate as the second worse team in the league defensively, allowing 0.8 yppl more than their opponent is averaging. SD, meanwhile, is allowing 4.7 yppl to teams averaging 4.6 yppl. So, while many people think the SD defense is very good, they rate out as about average, but in the scheme they play (with the rushing attack by SD) they are put in a situation to succeed. They will be tested this week by the Chiefs offense but the SD offense, and in particular their rushing game, should have a field day against the Chiefs defense. And if they can get their rushing game going (which all Marty Schottenheimer teams seem to be able to do) they will also get their passing game going, just like every other team has this year against KC. Even the Jets succeeded last week by running for a season high

139 yards at 5.3 ypr and passing for 220 yards at 6.7 yps. The Jets totaled 359 yards of offense at 6.1 yppl. That's a team that came in averaging only 4.8 yppl. My ratings favor SD by six points so there is plenty of value in this game. SD qualifies in my very best system I have. It is a fundamental rushing system that takes into account both teams offenses and defenses and the scheduling factors. It is 100-34-8 after pushing with New Orleans last week. That's 75% on over 140 games. That's very solid. This situation only applies at -3 or less so it is in your best interest to either get this game now at -3 or buy it down to -3 if the line moves. Marty Schottenheimer is 20-10-1 as a home favorite of four or less points. This game also qualifies in a 305-227-18 under situation. **SAN DIEGO 28 KANSAS CITY 17**

TAMPA BAY -7 Cleveland (No Total)

While the TB offense hasn't done much this year (5.1 yppl vs 5.2 yppl), their defense has been just short of brilliant. The Bucs defense is allowing only 3.9 yppl against teams averaging 4.9 yppl. That's a full yard short of what their opponents are averaging. And that gives them the best defense in the league. For Cleveland, they sometimes look pretty good and sometimes look pretty bad. They are coming off their upset loss to the Ravens last Sunday night, 21-26 as 6.5 point favorites. That loss does set them up in a couple of bounce back situations which are 68-36-2 and 116-61-5 (3-1 TY). Both, their offense and defense are pretty average, if that, averaging 5.6 yppl against teams allowing 5.7 yppl and allowing 5.3 yppl against teams averaging 5.1 yppl. But this is a team who has been in every game they have played this year. They lost the season opener to Kansas City because of a bone headed move by Duane Rudd but were neck and neck with KC the whole game. They then beat Cincinnati pretty handily, came back to win at Tennessee in a game they trailed most of the way, led Pittsburgh most of the game before finally losing in OT and lost to Baltimore last week by five points after falling behind early on. They have the offense to come back and back door a team and also have the type of offense that can keep them in the game if they are focused. My numbers make TB only a 5.5 point favorite in this game and Cleveland qualifies in the two bounce back situations and we are getting a decent amount of points. I'll take a shot with Cleveland here. **TAMPA BAY 21 CLEVELAND 20**

DENVER -3 Miami 41

Both teams come in off impressive wins last week at home. Miami soundly beat NE, 26-13 and Denver did the same to SD, 26-9. My yppl ratings make Denver a Top team here and Miami an Above Average team. The Denver offense has been about average, gaining 5.3 yppl versus teams allowing 5.2 yppl but their defense is rated third best, allowing only 4.9 yppl against teams averaging 5.5 yppl. And their run defense (very important against Miami) is allowing only 3.2 yppl against teams averaging 4.5 yppl. For Miami, they appear to be about average on both sides of the ball, with their defense playing a little better. Miami is averaging 5.7 yppl but against teams allowing 5.7 yppl (4.6 ypr versus 4.7 ypr so average in the rushing game as well) and their defense is just a bit above average, allowing 5.2 yppl versus teams averaging 5.5 yppl. Miami, in off their win last week, qualifies in a negative 104-156-9 letdown situation. Meanwhile, Denver qualifies in a terrific home momentum situation which is 96-58-10 and they qualify in the subset of that situation which is 59-19-6. That last situation only applies if Denver is favored by three or less points so I recommend either taking them now at -3 or buying them down to -3. My ratings favor Denver by two points but the situations are worth some points so this line appears to be fair and I like Denver to be able to shut down the Miami offense. And I think the Denver offense can score enough points to cover the short number here. Mike Shanahan is now 8-2 with Denver as a home favorite versus .666 or better teams. **DENVER 23 MIAMI 13**

San Francisco -3 SEATTLE 42.5

Seattle comes in here off a bye and now a home dog on Monday night football. That would usually seem like a good combination. And maybe it is, but I will lean with the visitor here. Seattle does qualify in a home dog momentum situation which is 147-96-10 (4-2 TY) and my ratings make this line three points, suggesting the line is fair. That surprised me as I thought my ratings would favor SF a little bit more. Keeping in mind, my yppl ratings only look at raw stats and nothing else, including not looking at turnovers, those ratings make SF the top team in the league. The 49ers have been doing it with an unbelievable two headed monster rushing game and mixing in a pass here and there. They are now averaging 154 yards per game rushing at 5.4 ypr. And that 5.4 ypr comes against teams allowing only 4.1 ypr. That should bode very well against a Seattle rush defense allowing 5.3 ypr to teams

averaging only 4.3 ypr. Their offense, overall, is averaging 6.0 yppl versus teams allowing 5.3 yppl. Their defense has been very good also, allowing just 4.9 yppl to teams averaging 5.3 yppl. For Seattle, my yppl ratings just barely keep them out of the Poor category and instead make them a Below Average team. They are gaining only 4.9 yppl versus teams allowing 5.4 yppl and are allowing 5.3 yppl against teams averaging 5.3 yppl. So their offense has played below par and their defense has been about average. SF also qualifies in my 470-355-31 fundamental rushing situation and they qualify in all of the better subsets all the way down to the best one which is 135-61-7 (3-1 TY). So, we have a team who is better fundamentally, laying a short price on the road and rating out about two levels and almost three levels better than their opponent (Top-Below Average). With all that said, I do respect the technical situation that Seattle qualifies in and also respect a home dog on Monday night. Home dogs, in general, on Monday night have slowed down in recent years and are now only 48-37 56% but short home dogs (of less than six points) are 38-20 66%, leaving home dogs of six or more points to be just 10-17. **SAN FRANCISCO 21 SEATTLE 13**

BEST BETS

YTD 9-10-1 -6.00%

3% CLEVELAND +7

3% SAN DIEGO -3 (Buy down to -3 if you have to)

3% DENVER -3 (Buy down to -3 if you have to)

Possible Best Bets

3% NEW ENGLAND -4 or less (If this line comes down, I would make NE a best bet and I would buy it down from -4.5 if you get a chance)

WEEK 7

A tough week last week going 0-3 to drop the record for the season to just 9-13 – 15.90%. The Cleveland loss last week was deserved as Cleveland simply could not move the ball and really had no chance of covering that game. But the other two losses, San Diego and Denver, were the correct sides in those games and I should have won those games. San Diego out gained KC, 465-319 yards – 6.6 yppl to 5.4 yppl. The turned the ball over five times to only once for KC (KC actually turned the ball over twice but the last interception came on a hail mary on the last play of the game). Add in a blocked punt that went out of bounds at the one yard line for KC and you have the makings of a loss.

In the Denver game, the Broncos out gained Miami, 410-259 - 5.5 yppl to 4.9 yppl - but had an interception returned for a touchdown and fumbled the ball going in for a touchdown, on the one yard line. In addition, Denver had a field goal taken off the board because of a holding penalty and had to settle for five other field goals.

No sour grapes here. But, if I continue to take teams at home, laying three points or less, and they out gain their opponents by over 150 yards in each of those games, I am going to win just about every one of those games, going forward.

So, despite the bad week, the thinking and the fundamentals are working just fine, I just need to have a little luck go my way. Hopefully that will start this week. Someone pointed out how close most of my losses have been this year. I went back and looked and noticed 9 of the 13 losses have been within six points of the line.

Meanwhile, 7 of our 9 wins have been by more than six points and one of those two was by six but only because Philadelphia scored a couple of times late in the game to lose by three. My wins have been good, solid wins and my losses, for the most part, have been close losses that could have gone either way. I expect that to turn around very soon and start going my way.

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) 4.2

Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.0

Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

Denver –3 KANSAS CITY 49.5

Interesting game here because KC was out played last week but won their game and Denver out played Miami last week but lost their game (see above). And, as in most KC games, we have a case of one team with a great offense and one team with a great defense. KC sports a top offense (actually rated number one in my rankings) by averaging 1.3 yppl more than their opponents are allowing. Denver sports a top defense (rated number three in my rankings) by allowing 0.6 yppl less than their opponents are averaging. The biggest difference here is Denver rates an above average offense (gaining 0.1 yppl more than their opponents are allowing) and KC rates a bottom defense (actually second to last, only ahead of Minnesota) by allowing 1.0 yppl more than their opponents are averaging. Having said all of that, I will still lean with KC here. This is a very tough home field (ask Miami a few weeks ago) and KC has won 8 of the past 10 contests between these two here and only one of those two losses were by more than three points. That includes winning the last three in a row here. Trent Green is questionable here and that could make a difference. I think this is a great game to watch but I would pass. The team with the worse defense is very tough on this field and I wouldn't want to go against that but I also don't want to go against the team with the better defense. **KANSAS CITY 30 DENVER 29**

MIAMI –4 Buffalo 47

Buffalo got a scare last week, trailing Houston by 14 points before finally coming back to win 31-24. The biggest problem for Buffalo, as most people know, is their defense. They allowed Houston to run for 141 yards at 4.9 ypr and pass for another 197 yards at 6.8 yps. Keep in mind, entering last weeks game, Houston was averaging 71 rushing yards per game at 2.5 ypr and 95 yards passing per game at 3.1 yps. That doesn't hold too well against Miami, with or without Jay Fielder and Chris Chambers. As badly as Miami was out gained last week, they gained 4.9 yppl against a Denver defense that was allowing 4.9 yppl and they allowed Denver to gain 5.5 yppl against a Den-

ver offense that was averaging 5.3 ypl. So, they were out played by Denver, but it was in Denver and it was also pretty close to what Denver has been averaging, meaning Miami played about an average game. The match up this week is a mismatch. Miami is averaging 4.4 ypr (144 yards per game) and Buffalo is allowing 4.7 ypr (131 yards per game). To be fair, those 4.4 ypr that Miami is averaging, does come against teams allowing 4.5 ypr so they are about average or just below average running the ball. But Buffalo is allowing those 4.7 ypr to teams averaging only 4.2 ypr so Miami should have no problem taking care of business in this game. And with Ray Lucas's scrambling abilities, their rushing numbers might even be better. Buffalo's offense, as good as it might seem to be, is just a bit above average, when you consider who they have played. They are averaging 4.2 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr and 6.9 yps but against teams allowing 6.7 yps, which makes them just above average. Miami has shut down other teams running games, allowing just 3.5 ypr to teams averaging 4.3 ypr and they have been just average against the pass, allowing 6.3 yps to teams averaging 6.2 yps. Let's take a look at this game in another way. Buffalo opened against the Jets and lost in OT 31-37, at home. Miami beat the Jets 30-3. Buffalo then went to Minnesota and won in OT 45-39. They followed that up with a loss in Denver, 23-28, scoring late in that game to lose by five points. Of course, we know Miami won at Denver last week 24-22. Buffalo then beat Chicago at home, in OT 33-27 and then hosted Oakland the next week, losing 31-49. The bottom line here is Buffalo has had a pretty easy schedule and when their schedule has gotten tough, they have failed to get the job done. Meanwhile, when Miami has been tested, they have succeeded, beating Denver, New England and Indianapolis, while only losing to KC on the road. Dave Wannstedt is now 10-4-1 as a home favorite with Miami of seven or less points, including 6-0-1 as a home favorite of seven or less when their opponent is at .500 or below. Most importantly for this game is a fundamental situation that plays on Miami. That situation is now 474-356-31 (14-7-1 TY) and it also includes two other subsets which have gone 13-6 TY and 11-5 TY. My numbers also show Miami should be about a nine point favorite here. I don't think Ray Lucas will make that much of a difference. Miami will still play the same tenacious defense they always play and Ray Lucas can still hand the ball off to Ricky Williams. Finally, Miami has now won 4 of the past 6 games played here by more than today's line, winning 34-7 last year. This game also qualifies in a 307-230-18 under situation. **MIAMI 28 BUFFALO 17**

NEW ORLEANS -2.5 San Francisco 50

This should be a very interesting game. Both teams defenses are about equal, in terms of comparing them to their opponents they have played. SF is allowing 0.3 ypl less than their opponents are averaging and NO 0.2 ypl less. The bigger difference is the offenses, where SF is averaging 0.7 ypl more and NO only 0.2 ypl more. But the great equalizer here is the home field. The NO win last week was a bit fluky, seeing Washington turned the ball over four more times than NO did. But NO did not gain Washington, on average, 5.3 ypl to only 4.7 ypl for Washington, so they still played a very solid game. Last year, NO hung tough with SF in SF, losing 27-28. They were out gained in that game, 336-488 but were in the game the whole way. Back in NO during the final week of the season, SF put a whipping on NO, winning the game 38-0. But NO had packed it in for the season, losing their final four games, 21-34, 21-48, 10-40 and 0-38. They have already avenged their 21-48 loss to TB, winning at TB by a score of 26-20 in OT and last week they avenged their 10-40 loss to Washington, winning 43-27. This week I expect them to avenge that loss to SF. NO qualifies in a couple of great situations. First, they qualify in the best situation I have. It is a fundamental situation that is now 100-35-8. It is 0-1-1 this year, pushing with NO against Pittsburgh two weeks ago. That was a game NO controlled the whole way before finally allowing Pittsburgh to score in the final minutes and convert a two point conversion for the push. And last week it lost with SD but I've already talked about how much SD really dominated that game. So you can see, not only does this fundamental situation have incredible numbers but it works. It has just had some bad luck in it's two games this year. NO also qualifies in a home momentum situation that is 96-59-10 and they qualify in the subset of that, which is 59-20-6. That same situation had Denver last week and that was another game that should have covered. The number in this game, before accounting for the great situations that NO is in, is fair. NO is in some great situations this week. SF is coming off a short week after their Monday night victory in Seattle and they are also a little banged up. This game also qualifies in a 307-230-18 under situation. **NEW ORLEANS 30 SAN FRANCISCO 17**

NY JETS -3 Minnesota 47.5

Who to take in this classic barn burner of two teams who need wins desperately. I think the lesser of two evils here are the Minnesota Vikings. Yes, the Vikings bring in the league's worse defense but then again, should the Jets be favored over anyone? And Minnesota has now lost 13 straight on the road. I talked a few weeks ago about how they had played mostly good teams on the road and when they played poor teams, they actually fared pretty well. Of course, about two quarters into their game at Seattle, they were down 45-10 and that analysis was looking pretty

stupid. I won't rehash it again here, for fear of embarrassment. But once again, I think they stand a decent shot of staying within the number. One could argue that the Jets have played a pretty tough schedule and that is the reason for their demise so far this year. That is probably true but bad teams should not be laying points. In fact, teams with winning percentages of .200 or less, who are favored by six or less, are just 44-76-2. There is a subset of that situation which is just 17-45-1 but that subset does not apply in this game. Minnesota also qualifies in a terrific fundamental situation which is 474-356-31 (14-7-1 TY) but they don't qualify in any of the subsets. The Vikings are running the ball very well this year, averaging 5.0 ypr against teams allowing 4.5 ypr and that number figures to only improve against a Jets team who is allowing 5.5 ypr against teams averaging only 4.5 ypr. And while Minnesota might be allowing 4.0 ypr to teams averaging only 3.6 ypr, the Jets have only managed 4.1 ypr against teams allowing 4.5 ypr this year. So I don't think Curtis Martin will go off in this game. I expect Curtis to get his yards but nothing like Shaun Alexander did a few weeks ago. I think the real play in this game is the under. Yes, I said the under. This game qualifies in two very good under situations that are 307-230-18 and 43-17-6 to the under. Also, the average points scored in games this year is about 46 points (up from about 40 points last year). But the number in this game is 47.5 points. So, we have a lot of points that have to be scored and that number is over the league average. I realize we are dealing with a couple of defenses here that are allowing 33 and 32 points per game. But those numbers were achieved against good offenses. Neither one of these teams have good offenses. Minnesota is averaging 5.4 ypr against teams allowing 5.4 ypr. The Jets are averaging 5.1 ypr against teams allowing 5.5 ypr. KC has the league's second to worst defense, allowing 1.0 ypr more than their opponents are averaging. Minnesota is right behind, bringing up the rear, allowing 1.1 ypr more than their opponents are averaging. But the difference between these two teams is their offenses. KC has the best offense in the league, averaging 1.3 ypr more than their opponents. Minnesota, meanwhile, is just 15th in the league, averaging exactly what their opponents are allowing. Two weeks ago, KC visited NY and won that game 29-25, scoring a touchdown with less than a minute left in the game. If the Jets poor defense (6.3 to 5.9 ypr) can hold the league's best offense to 29 points, how many points will it allow the league's 15th best offense? I guess maybe 24, at most. And if the Jets could only score 25 points against the league's second to worst defense, how many points will they score against the league's worst defense? Probably the same 25 points. That would put this game right around the number. But I think I will be off on at least one of those numbers. It's a lot of points to score and both of these teams should want to establish the run. As a matter of fact, Mike Tice said in his weekly radio show this week, that he wants to run the ball and stop the run this week. He said he expects the Jets to give Curtis Martin a healthy dose of the football this week. And he added, "I expect this game to be played very fast, with both teams running the ball an awful lot this week." In addition to the situations which play the under, my numbers show this game ending at about 44 points, giving us some value as well. And when you are getting value with an awful high number to start with, that value is worth even more. I don't expect this under to be easy, but I do expect it to win. **MINNESOTA 24 NY JETS 20**

PHILADELPHIA -3.5 Tampa Bay 37

Great game here between two of the probably five teams in the NFC who stand a chance to get to the SB. Forget about the regular season final at TB last year, where both teams pulled their starters early (Philly won that game 17-13). Instead focus on the two playoff games in Philadelphia, where the Eagles stuffed TB both times, winning 21-3 and 31-9. I expect John Gruden to orchestrate a better offensive game plan than Tony Dungy brought to town but I still like Philadelphia in this game. It won't be easy, however; as TB brings the league's best defense to town. They are allowing 1.2 ypr less than their opponents are averaging. Philadelphia is allowing 0.3 ypr less than their opponents are averaging. However; the Philadelphia offense is a little better, averaging 0.1 ypr more while TB is averaging 0.1 ypr less than their opponents are allowing. This is a tough game to call because both teams qualify in some great situations. Philadelphia qualifies in a 28-9-3 home momentum situation and another 58-23-4 home momentum situation. TB qualifies in a letdown situation which is 105-156-9. But Philadelphia also qualifies in a couple of negative situations, which deal with playing against teams coming off of their bye week. Those situations are 4-17-2 and 11-42-2. My numbers also disagree here, with one set favoring Philadelphia and one set favoring TB. Past history and more situations on Philadelphia will get me leaning their way. **PHILADELPHIA 24 TAMPA BAY 17**

ST LOUIS -5 Seattle 44.5

Another game where situations favor both teams. The Rams finally got off the hook last week, beating the Raiders pretty badly, 28-13. They were eight point dogs in that game but they are now favored again this week, by five

points. That might be asking too much of them again. Remember bad teams laying points are not profitable and the Rams qualify in the same 44-76-2 negative situation that the Jets qualify in. However, the Rams are a turnover table play and they do qualify in one of the very solid subsets of that, which is 32-12-0. The Rams also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation that is 474-356-31 (14-7-1 TY) and one of those subsets too, which is 13-6 TY. The Rams offense is still playing pretty well, averaging 5.6 yppl to teams allowing just 4.9 yppl but their defense is letting them down, allowing 5.6 yppl to teams averaging 5.4 yppl. Meanwhile, just the opposite for Seattle, whose defense has started to play better, allowing 5.4 yppl to teams averaging 5.5 yppl. But their offense is gaining just 5.0 yppl against teams allowing 5.4 yppl. That offense might be playing a little better since Trent Dilfer came back. They averaged 5.4 yppl last week against a SF defense that was allowing just 4.9 yppl. And their defense held a potent SF attack to just 5.7 yppl, that was averaging 6.0 yppl. I think this is a good game to pass because there is stuff going both ways. The stronger stuff actually favors the Rams but my numbers favor Seattle and with a third string qb in for the Rams, I'll take the points. **ST LOUIS 26 SEATTLE 25**

ATLANTA -5 Carolina 36

One thing you know about Carolina, who is tied for the league's third best defense, allowing 0.6 yppl less than their opponents are averaging, is they will be in every game. Their losses have been by 3, 3 and 1 point. Michael Vick should return this week, while Carolina will be without Rodney Peete, having Chris Weinke shouldering the load for Carolina this week. That could spell trouble for Carolina because Weinke has been turnover prone in the past. There are no situations that favor either team here but John Fox is now 4-0 as a dog with Carolina and in what figures to be a low scoring game, I'll take the points. **ATLANTA 20 CAROLINA 18**

BALTIMORE -1.5 Jacksonville 39

Another game which should be a close game. Both of these teams sport average numbers. Baltimore is giving up and allowing exactly the same numbers that their opponents are averaging and allowing. Jacksonville, is pretty similar, averaging 5.8 yppl to 5.6 yppl and allowing 5.1 yppl to 5.5 yppl. So the numbers are a little better for Jacksonville and Baltimore may be without Ray Lewis in this game, which hurts Baltimore. Baltimore has now won four in a row against Jacksonville, all close games, winning by 1, 3, 5 and 3 points and this game figures to be close again. The Ravens do qualify in a very good 68-25-3 fundamental situation that hasn't had a play yet this year. Because of that, I'll side every so slightly with Baltimore. **BALTIMORE 24 JACKSONVILLE 21**

Chicago -3 DETROIT 44.5

Maybe a new venue will change Chicago's luck in Detroit. The Bears have won two games in a row in Detroit, winning easily last year, 24-0 and by three points the year before, 23-20. Prior to those two wins, Chicago had lost six straight and seven out of the last eight games in Detroit. And in only one of the past ten games, have they won by more than four points. The Bears are still banged up and now Chris Miller might be giving way to Chris Chandler this week. For Detroit, I never thought I would say this, but they are starting to feel like they are going in the right direction. They lost last week at Minnesota, after jumping out to an early 14-0 lead and then losing in the final minutes, allowing a late score and throwing an interception in the end zone. Their numbers aren't as good as Chicago but they are getting better. Detroit averages just 4.6 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl and they are allowing 5.8 yppl against teams averaging 5.4 yppl. For Chicago, their offense has been anemic as well, averaging only 5.1 yppl against teams allowing 5.4 yppl and their defense has been below average, allowing 5.7 yppl to teams averaging 5.5 yppl. The Bears had high hopes for this year, after their 13-3 season last year. But they have already lost three games this year and while I'm sure they are not giving up, they have to be deflated over their start and all of their injuries. They still have tilts upcoming against Philadelphia, New England, St. Louis, Green Bay, Miami and Tampa Bay. I see maybe two wins there if they are lucky. And if they don't win all of their other winnable games, which they probably won't, that will mean about a .500 season for the Bears and home for the playoffs. For Detroit, well they are going in the opposite direction. After starting out the season with blowout losses at Miami and Carolina, they came home and turned over the reigns to Joey Harrington. Harrington lost his first game at home to Green Bay but the Lions played competitively in that game. They then spanked the Saints at home and led most of the game last week in Minnesota. They have to be feeling pretty good about themselves right now. My numbers show slight value with Detroit and I'll side with the team that feels better about themselves right now. I don't have any situations for either team. **DETROIT 25 CHICAGO 24**

OAKLAND -7 San Diego 45.5

This has been a pretty close series here in Oakland. In the past 10 seasons, Oakland has only won three of those games by more than seven points. Two of those wins were by 10 points. Last year they won by 10 but they struggled the whole game and got a score late in the game to win by 10 points or we would be talking about only two games decided by more than seven points. The high flying Oakland machine came to a halt last week against the Rams, losing 13-28. There is nothing wrong with the Raiders offense, as they rank second in the league, averaging 6.3 ypl to teams allowing 5.5 ypl. Their defense has been below average, allowing 5.7 ypl to teams averaging 5.4 ypl. I'm not sure SD can take advantage of that, however. I had SD last week and they should have covered that game but their numbers are just average, gaining 5.5 ypl against teams allowing 5.4 ypl and allowing 4.8 ypl to teams averaging 5.0 ypl. They averaged just 6.6 ypl last week against a KC defense that was allowing 6.8 ypl. The SD rush defense has been outstanding, allowing just 3.6 ypr to teams averaging 4.3 ypr. But their pass defense, which allowed KC to throw for 7.7 yps last week, is allowing 5.6 yps to teams averaging 5.5 yps. So their pass defense is average and Oakland, who is averaging 7.0 yps to teams allowing 6.1 yps should be able to take advantage of that. Oakland does qualify in a nice bounce back situation which is 117-62-5 (4-2 TY) and because of that, I'll side with them. My numbers actually support SD but I'll ride the situation over the numbers.

OAKLAND 27 SAN DIEGO 17

CLEVELAND -9 Houston 36

Cleveland needs a win badly and Houston is starting to look a little like Detroit, improving week by week. The Texans had their best offensive performance last week, averaging 5.8 ypl and gaining 338 yards of offense. Their defense has been very solid, allowing just 5.1 ypl to teams averaging 5.5 ypl, ranking them sixth in the league. The offense, which might be finally starting to jell, is another story. They have the league's worse offense, averaging just 3.4 ypl against teams allowing 5.0 ypl. That's 1.6 ypl below their competition. The next closest are Detroit and Cincinnati, who are 0.7 below. But there could be hope for Houston. Starting with week one, they have averaged 3.2, 2.3, 1.9, 4.0 and 5.8 ypl. David Carr and the offense, especially after a bye two weeks ago, might finally be getting together and I think we can start to expect better things from their offense. For Cleveland, it just seems to be getting worse. They could not do anything right last week at TB. They won't face the TB defense this week but their own defense has not been too good. They are allowing 5.3 ypl to teams averaging 5.1 ypl, including allowing 4.6 ypr to teams averaging 4.1 ypr. While Houston doesn't run the ball very well, averaging just 3.0 ypr to 4.0 ypr, I think they might be able to find some holes in this Cleveland defense. Houston qualifies in a couple of very solid contrary situations which play on below average road dogs in the right situation. Those situations are 272-193-11 and 156-101-5. My numbers also show this game to be closer than the line. I would be on Houston here but I need to see them play a closer game on the road before I can take them. They have lost by 21 and 17 so far and although those games were against SD and Philadelphia (two teams much better than Cleveland), I'll still need to see some success first. **CLEVELAND 25 HOUSTON 19**

GREEN BAY -7.5 Washington 47.5

Last week I was happy to not see the line on the Packers-NE game come down so I could take it. I didn't think there was any way GB could stay with NE in that game and not only did they stay with NE, they completely outplayed NE. Talking to a friend who is friends with a Packer coach, the Packer coach said the team was literally picking players up off the street last week to play defense for GB. I don't think the Packers expected much last week either. Mike Sherman closed practices all week as he knew it was going to be a tough week. So, GB was struggling on defense and had no players last week. They might get a couple of players back this week but if you believed they were in trouble last week, I don't think there is any reason to believe they are not in trouble this week. Imagine this thinking, which I'm sure the Packers are thinking. They knew they were in trouble last week and somehow, somehow, got that win in NE against a Patriots team that was looking to rebound from some tough losses. Now, they can start to see the light at the end of the tunnel. The division is completely their division for the taking. They are starting to get a couple of injured players back this week. After this week, they have a bye. That should allow them to get some more players back. They are playing Washington, who looked terrible last week and doesn't possess any real threat to GB. The Packers have let down before after key wins and I see it happening here again. They also lost Chad Clifton, another offensive lineman and they are hurting on the offensive line as well. Despite the great game last week, GB still allowed NE to run for 123 yards at 5.6 ypr. The Packers defense is not

performing well. Although the numbers are getting better from just a few weeks ago, they are still allowing 5.4 ypl to teams averaging just 5.1 ypl. And their rush defense is allowing 4.8 ypl to teams averaging just 3.8 ypl. While the Washington offense is just average, 5.1 ypl to 5.1 ypl, their rushing game has been pretty good, averaging 4.2 ypr against teams allowing 3.8 ypr. They should be able to take advantage of the soft GB run defense. The Redskins defense, on the other hand has been another story. They are allowing 5.7 ypl to teams averaging just 5.3 ypl. And it's equally bad for both the run and pass defense. That will spell trouble against the GB offense, which is playing outstanding ball. They are averaging 5.7 ypl against teams allowing 5.1 ypl and the passing offense is clicking on all cylinders, averaging 6.7 ypl against teams allowing 5.8 ypl. Washington does qualify as a turnover table play and they qualify in a very good subset, which is 112-67-4. GB leads the league in turnover ratio and the turnover table says these things usually even out in the long run and projects Washington to get the cover based on that. My numbers go both ways in this game but I'll side with the team getting points, looking to bounce back from their beating last week, against a defense that is still banged up and a team that might just be happy to finally be home and looking forward to the bye week. **GREEN BAY 31 WASHINGTON 24**

ARIZONA -3.5 Dallas 36.5

Each Monday I watch ESPN's news channel and listen in to each coaches press conference the day after their game. And just about each Monday after a win, Dave Campo, says it's a battle out there and we're just happy to get a win. Instead of some coaches who might say we didn't play well and we'll need to play much better in the future if we're going to expect to win another game, Campo really sounds relieved he actually won the game. And he probably should because the Dallas numbers are really not that good. They are pretty average, which is ok but their defense was supposed to be better than they are. Dallas is averaging just 5.0 ypl against teams allowing 5.1 ypl and they are allowing 5.1 ypl to teams averaging 5.0 ypl. The strength of the Dallas offense has been their running game as they are averaging 4.6 ypr against teams allowing 4.0 ypr. They will find that much tougher this week as they take on a surprisingly tough Cardinals run defense. Arizona is allowing just 3.3 ypr against teams averaging 3.9 ypr. The Cardinals weak spot on defense has been their pass defense, allowing 6.2 yps to teams averaging 6.3 yps (actually better than average but about average) and Dallas doesn't figure to take advantage of that, averaging just 5.2 yps against teams allowing 5.8 ypl. Arizona's offense has been below average, averaging 0.3 ypl less than their opponents are allowing but they should be much healthier this week after their bye week and be able to move the ball against an average Dallas defense. Arizona has won four of the last five played here in Arizona and my numbers favor them by eight to ten points. If they are laying three or less points (which is why I suggest buying this down to three), they qualify in my best fundamental situation, which is 100-35-8. Value and fundamentals all come together in this one and I will take Arizona.

ARIZONA 27 DALLAS 14

PITTSBURGH -4.5 Indianapolis 46

Fundamentals point towards Pittsburgh in this one and the value seems to lie with Indianapolis. I'll side with the fundamentals, which have been very good so far this year. Pittsburgh finally played a complete game last week, averaging 6.6 ypl to only 4.2 ypl for Cincinnati. Now, I know it was against Cincinnati but they had to be happy with their work last week. Talking to a Steeler fan this week, he said, nobody is really paying attention to this team with their poor start. If they can get everybody back and healthy, by the end of the year, they could be in fine shape. I have to agree with that assessment. The Steelers numbers are still about average, gaining 5.2 ypl against 5.3 ypl and allowing 5.1 ypl against 5.3 ypl. They take on an Indianapolis team who is quietly 4-1 and just chugging right along. The Colts numbers are pretty average as well, gaining 5.4 ypl against 5.3 ypl and allowing 4.8 ypl but against only 4.7 ypl. Pittsburgh has been pretty good against the pass this year, allowing just 5.4 yps against teams averaging 5.9 yps and if Indy has a strength, it is passing the ball. The Colts are averaging 6.5 yps against teams allowing 6.1 yps so they might find it a little tougher than usual throwing the ball. Bill Cowher is 25-15-1 as a home favorite of seven or less points. Cowher is 15-5-0 as a home favorite of seven or less off a win and 11-2-0 as a home favorite of seven or less off a win against better than .500 opponents. The Steelers also qualify in a terrific fundamental situation that is 68-25-3 and I'll ride that along with Cowher's success at home over the value that is with Indy. This is also Indy's first role as an underdog this year. **PITTSBURGH 27 INDIANAPOLIS 20**

BEST BETS

YTD 9-13 -15.90%

3% MIAMI -4

3% NEW ORLEANS -2.5

3% ARIZONA -3 (Buy down to -3)

3% MINNESOTA/NY JETS UNDER 47.5

WEEK 8

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) 4.2

Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.0

Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

Oakland -3 KANSAS CITY 55.5

Amazingly, Oakland has won each of the past three contests in KC by exactly three points. You would also have to go way back to 1988 to find a time when Oakland last won in KC by more than three points and it's only happened three times in the past 19 seasons. Denver managed to score late last week and then win the game in OT in this same spot, laying three points on the road in KC in a key divisional game. But a closer look reveals that Denver dominated the game. They gained 507 total yards of offense compared to KC's 305 and out gained KC 6.5 yppl to only 4.5 yppl. In addition, they sacked Trent Green four times to only once for KC. Meanwhile in Oakland, the Raiders were losing to San Diego in another key divisional game. But, again in that game, the Raiders got the better of it statistically, gaining 390 yards to only 336 for San Diego. They averaged 6.5 yppl to only 4.9 yppl for SD. For the season, KC continues to lead the league in overall offense, gaining 0.9 yppl more than their opponents are allowing and continue to be second from the bottom in defense, allowing 0.9 more yards than their opponents are gaining. Oakland continues to thrive on offense, gaining 6.3 yppl against 5.6 yppl and their defense has started to play better, allowing 5.5 yppl against 5.6 yppl. But Oakland qualifies in a 51-92-3 negative scheduling situation and my numbers favor KC by 1-2 points. Both teams have lost two in a row and both need a win badly. Oakland is a little banged up and hasn't shown the ability to cover this number in KC in a long time. Value and the situation go to KC. This game also qualifies in a 44-17-6 under situation and a subset of that which is 25-6-5. Statistically, this game as over written all over it but at such a high number, it could go under. My predicted total for this game is only 51 points so there might also be some value left for the under. **KANSAS CITY 28 OAKLAND 26**

MINNESOTA -1 Chicago 45

Minnesota comes in continuing to run the ball pretty well, averaging 4.9 ypr against 4.4 ypr and allowing only 3.9 ypr but against only 3.6 ypr. In their game last week against the Jets, Minnesota averaged 4.4 ypr and only allowed the Jets 3.1 ypr. That has been the story just about every week for Minnesota. The other part of the story which has also been consistent is they allow 8.0 yps against only 6.2 yps. And last week was no different as they allowed the Jets to throw for 316 yards at 10.2 yps. And there is one other part of the story which has also been very consistent. That is turnovers. For the season, Minnesota is now -14 in turnover margin. And, yes, last week was no different, turning the ball over four times and not getting any back themselves. Mike Tice complained that his team was playing too far off of the receiver and promised that will change this week. We'll see how that changes their defensive numbers, as it could allow for much bigger passing plays, or help fix the pass defense but may also open up the running game. Time will tell. And, just like every other week, he said we need to stop turning the ball over. That might actually happen this week as the Vikings qualify in my turnover table situation and qualify in a couple of the subsets, which are 112-68-4 and 115-56-4. That turnover table situation is now 18-8-1 on the year. For Chicago, injuries have taken their toll and all the luck the Bears had last year, is not showing up this year and that has reduced this Bears team to a very average team, at best. Chicago's offense is only gaining 4.9 yppl against 5.5 yppl and their defense is allowing 5.6 yppl against 5.5 yppl. And I'm not sure Chicago will take advantage of the poor Vikings pass defense, as they are only gaining 6.2 yps against 6.5 yps. Although it should be noted the Jets were even worse going into their game last week. The Bears pass defense has been their problem as well, allowing 6.9 yps against 6.3 yps but the Vikings pass offense hasn't done much, gaining only 5.9 yps against 6.1 yps. Minnesota does qualify in a great fundamental rushing situation that is 475-358-31 (15-9-1 TY) and they qualify in subsets that are 385-267-24 (14-7 TY) and 320-213-18 (11-6 TY). They just miss qualifying in another subset of that which is 243-139-11 (8-3 TY). But bad teams are not good favorites and Minnesota also qualifies in a negative 45-76-2 situation and the subset of that which is 17-45-1 and 0-2 this year. If Minnesota would become an underdog, they wouldn't qualify in the negative situations just mentioned and they would qualify in another terrific fundamental rushing situation that is 101-48-6 (4-1 TY). My numbers predict a 1 and 2.5 point victory for Minnesota. The negative situation that Minnesota is in is really a non-factor at this current price and if they would become an

underdog they would qualify in another terrific fundamental situation. Minnesota is 21-8 their last 29 games at home as a favorite of three or less or a dog so they certainly can play well at home. I'll take Minnesota at -1 or less. **MINNESOTA 27 CHICAGO 18**

NEW ORLEANS -4 Atlanta 46.5

This line certainly seems a little low and maybe it is such because Atlanta comes off of two very encouraging wins at the Giants without Michael Vick and then basically destroying Carolina last week with Michael Vick. But, if we consider the Saints were one point favorites over the 49ers and now are only four point favorites over Atlanta, something sure seems fishy with this line. Having said all of that, my numbers all indicate only a two point win for New Orleans so the line does seem about right. NO stayed right with SF last week, averaging 6.5 yppf to 6.5 yppf for the 49ers. Atlanta took apart an injury riddled Carolina offense by gaining 5.9 yppf to only 4.0 yppf and winning by a final score of 30-0. As bad as the Carolina offense has been playing, their defense was playing very well and that game just showed what Michael Vick can do to a team in just a couple of quick plays. The Saints defense has been average this year, allowing 5.2 yppf to 5.1 yppf but their offense has been pretty good, gaining 5.6 yppf against 5.1 yppf. Atlanta has been about average on both sides of the ball, gaining 5.2 yppf against 5.1 yppf and allowing 4.8 yppf against 5.0 yppf. Atlanta does qualify in a negative situation that is 105-157-9 and if this line were three or lower, NO would qualify in a very good 97-59-10 home momentum situation. That's enough to get me leaning with New Orleans in this game. This series has been road dominated, especially here in NO where Atlanta has now covered 16 of the past 18 meetings here. I'll lean with NO. **NEW ORLEANS 27 ATLANTA 20**

NY JETS -3 Cleveland 41.5

Jets come in after Chad Pennington looked like Joe Namath last week, throwing for 316 yards at 10.2 yps. They'll take on a Cleveland team who is really struggling and despite the fact that Cleveland won last week by a score of 34-17 over Houston, don't be misled by that final score. Cleveland was thoroughly dominated in that game. Remember Houston brought in the league's worse offense and left feeling like their offense was an average offense. They gained 354 yards at 5.3 yppf. They came in averaging 201 total yards of offense and averaging only 3.4 yppf. The Houston defense has played well all year and they stifled the Browns attack, limiting Cleveland to just 230 yards of offense at 4.1 yppf. For the season now, Cleveland is averaging 5.0 yppf against 5.4 yppf while allowing 5.3 yppf to 5.1 yppf. The Jets aren't much better. Their offense is average, gaining 5.4 yppf against 5.4 yppf and their defense is allowing a whopping 6.3 yppf against 5.6 yppf. And their defense has been equally bad against both the run and the pass. I'm not sure Cleveland can take full advantage of that as their offense has been equally bad with both the run and the pass. The Jets do qualify in a terrific home momentum situation that is 97-59-10 and a subset of that which is 60-20-6. My numbers indicate either a one or two point victory for the Jets so the line seems to be about fair. I'll lean with the Jets who seem to be in better form and they have the positive situation on their side. **NY JETS 21 CLEVELAND 17**

Pittsburgh -2 BALTIMORE 37.5

Great rivalry and a game that looks like it pits the only two teams who will compete for the divisional championship. It doesn't appear, as of this writing, that Ray Lewis will play in this game. Baltimore won last week here over Jacksonville, but the numbers weren't too pretty. They gained just 261 yards at 4.2 yppf against a Jacksonville squad that gained 397 yards at 5.1 yppf. Baltimore was out rushed 173-118, 5.8 ypr to 3.7 ypr. Meanwhile, in Pittsburgh, the Steelers are starting to look like a formidable team once again. They manhandled the Colts, winning 28-10 and out gained Indy 6.4 yppf to only 5.2 yppf. They gained 182 yards rushing at 5.5 ypr while limiting Indy to just 72 yards rushing and 3.4 ypr. The Steelers also passed for 7.6 yps against 5.9 yps for the Colts. For the season, both teams are just about even on defense. They both allow 5.1 yppf against 5.2 yppf and they both allow their opponent to rush the ball for the same exact amount that their opponents are averaging. The Steelers offense appears to be better and with Tommy Maddox at the helm, has really gotten much better, limiting their turnovers. They are averaging 5.4 yppf against 5.3 yppf while Baltimore's offense has been below average, gaining only 4.5 yppf against 4.8 yppf. The Steelers have now won the last five meetings in Baltimore but Baltimore sets up in a number of very good situations this week. They qualify in a couple of home momentum situations that are 147-98-10 and 149-79-8. Meanwhile, Pittsburgh qualifies in a negative scheduling situation that is 51-92-3. The Steelers do qualify as a turnover table play but they don't qualify in any of the very good subsets of that situation. In addition, my

numbers indicate about a three point Baltimore victory, giving us added value as well. Bill Cowher is now just 13-21-4 as a road favorite over the years and just 3-11-3 as a road favorite of three or less points. This is a very good situation for Baltimore and I'll ride the great situations and the value to a best bet. **BALTIMORE 24 PITTSBURGH 17**

BUFFALO -7 Detroit 49.5

Buffalo took advantage of a banged up Miami team who might have also been in a letdown spot after their exciting win in Denver the week before. Now, it will be interesting to see if Buffalo can avoid the letdown after beating Miami in Miami. That was a huge win for the Bills and could go a long way for them this season. Buffalo deserved the win but they were the beneficiary of six Miami turnovers, which greatly helped them win that game. For Detroit, they are starting to come together and they took it to Chicago last week at home. They out gained the Bears 362-224 and 5.1 yppl to 3.8 yppl. They were able to rush the ball for 192 yards at 4.9 ypr and that could be key for Detroit in this game against a Bills rush defense that is allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr. Overall, the Detroit offense has struggled gaining only 4.7 yppl against 5.3 yppl but that offense has gotten better since Joey Harrington became the starter. On defense, they are about average, allowing 5.5 yppl against 5.5 yppl. Buffalo's numbers continue to be about average, gaining 5.8 yppl against 5.6 yppl while allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.2 yppl. Detroit qualifies in a negative 105-157-9 situation as long as the line stays at seven or below. Buffalo also qualifies in a couple of negative letdown situations that are 44-98-5 and 20-48-1. My numbers disagree on this game, giving Buffalo either a three point or nine point victory. The situations favor Detroit and I'll lean that way. **BUFFALO 26 DETROIT 23**

TAMPA BAY -7 Carolina 33

Both teams come off of losses, TB to Philadelphia again, losing 10-20 and Carolina to Atlanta, 0-30. The Carolina offense has really bogged down without Rodney Peete and Chris Weinke was hurt last week and there is a good chance he won't play either. That doesn't bode too well for rookie Randy Fasani against a TB defense that is rated number in the NFL. The TB defense is allowing just 3.9 yppl against 5.0 yppl and the Carolina defense is playing well, allowing just 4.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl. But the lack of offense for Carolina may start to wear on the Carolina defense. Their offense is averaging 5.0 yppl against 5.2 yppl but gained just 205 yards at 4.0 yppl last week. The TB offense has been pretty awful too, gaining just 4.8 yppl against 5.2 yppl but their defense puts them in short yardage situations and scores enough points on their own to make up for the lack of offense. There are no situations that favor either team here and my numbers favor Carolina but they don't take into consideration the injuries. TB will be without Brad Johnson and Keenan McCardell but Rob Johnson is a better back up than Randy Fasani. The best play here, despite the low number, is probably the total. I predict about 31 points in this game but I think it will be lower than that with all the offensive injuries, etc. I will favor TB here because I believe they sport the better offense and defense in this game. **TAMPA BAY 20 CAROLINA 10**

Tennessee -5.5 CINCINNATI 41

Both teams come off a bye week, one off a win and one off a loss. Not too hard to figure out which team is coming off a win and which team is off a loss. The Bengals have been, well, the Bungles once again. Perhaps there is hope for this team this week, with the bye week giving them time to regroup and come back and attack. Tennessee has won the past four contests in Cincinnati but this isn't the same Tennessee team of old. The Titans did look better in their last game against Jacksonville but it may finally be time for Cincinnati to step up. The Cincinnati offense is averaging a pathetic 4.1 yppl against 4.8 yppl and their defense, which they once could count on, is also giving up 5.6 yppl against 5.2 yppl. For Tennessee, their offense has been about average this year, gaining 5.0 yppl against 5.1 yppl and their defense has been below average, allowing 5.7 yppl against 5.4 yppl. The Bengals pass defense has been awful this year, allowing 7.0 yps against teams averaging 6.0 yps and Tennessee has been pretty good with the pass this year, gaining 6.2 yps against 5.8 yps. They should also get Derrick Mason back this week. Meanwhile, the Tennessee rush defense has played pretty well, allowing just 4.2 ypr against 4.5 ypr and the strength of the Cincinnati offense is their rushing game. With all that said, I'm not sure Tennessee should be favored by this much. Cincinnati, as you would expect for a team playing so poorly, qualifies in a number of very good contrary situations this week. Winless teams as a dog or a pick 'em, from week six on, are 72-41-5 since 1983. They also qualify in a subset of that which is 58-21-4. Those same teams, when coming off a bye week are 17-2-0 as well.

Cincinnati also qualifies in another contrary situation, which is 60-29-2 and they are a turnover table play as well (18-8-1 TY). They qualify in two different subsets of that turnover table play, which are 62-24-3 and 115-56-4. And they also qualify in two other contrary situations which are 34-13-1 and 108-58-4. My numbers indicate about a five point line for this game so the line is fair and the situations greatly favor Cincinnati. I will take the Bengals in a best bet, hoping that the bye week finally gets them in the win column. **CINCINNATI 23 TENNESSEE 17**

DALLAS –2.5 Seattle 37.5

Cowboys will go with Chad Hutchinson this week at quarterback. Hard to tell how that move will pay off but hopefully Hutchinson will be able to throw the deep ball more accurately. Dallas certainly has the speed to run deep down the field and get their players open. It was just a matter of Carter hitting them, which he couldn't do. The Cowboys offense has been average this year, but their rushing game is still pretty solid, averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.3 ypr. That should play well against a Seahawks defense that is allowing 5.3 ypr against 4.5 ypr and was carved up for another 218 yards at 5.2 ypr last week. Meanwhile, the Dallas defense has been pretty average, allowing 5.0 ypr against 5.0 ypr. Seattle doesn't do anything spectacular on offense, averaging just 5.1 ypr against 5.4 ypr. Dallas qualifies as a turnover table play and they qualify in a subset of that which is 33-12-0. They also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation that is 475-358-31 (15-9-1 TY) and they qualify down into one of the two best subsets of that situation, which is 243-139-11 (8-3 TY). Those are two pretty strong indications that Dallas is the right side here. We have a technical situation that says if Dallas finally stops turning the ball over, they should cover. And we have a fundamental situation that says they should control the line of scrimmage and win this game. My numbers indicate Dallas wins by about three points. If this line would go to three, Seattle would qualify in a 272-195-11 contrary situation. Thus, I'll make Dallas a best bet at less than three points and just lean with them at three or higher. **DALLAS 24 SEATTLE 14**

SAN FRANCISCO –8 Arizona 40.5

This is a pretty interesting game. Both teams are tied for first place at 4-2 and they are both in the same division this year, making this a game for first place. I don't think anyone would have ever thought Arizona would be challenging SF for first place in the division. Denny Green made an interesting point this week. He said both teams are 4-2 but one team is very happy to be 4-2 and one team is very unhappy to be 4-2. Does that mean Arizona is in for a letdown while SF is due to bounce back? Hard to tell. My numbers support Arizona in this game. The SF offense has been very good this year, gaining 6.0 ypr against 5.2 ypr and their rush offense has been spectacular, gaining 5.4 ypr against 4.2 ypr. They should get a good test against an Arizona defense that has been just above average, as a whole, allowing 5.1 ypr against 5.3 ypr. But their rush defense has been outstanding, allowing just 3.5 ypr against 4.2 ypr. The Arizona offense, as a whole, is below average, gaining just 4.6 ypr against 5.1 ypr but the SF defense has been just average too, allowing 5.3 ypr against 5.2 ypr. There are no situations that favor either team here and I'll grab the points in this game with a weak opinion on Arizona. **SAN FRANCISCO 24 ARIZONA 20**

NEW ENGLAND –3 Denver 45

Should be a great game to watch and NE needs this game badly, having lost three games in a row and coming off their bye week. These two teams are tied in my ratings for the second best defense in the league. Denver allows just 4.8 ypr against 5.5 ypr while NE is allowing just 4.9 ypr against 5.6 ypr. The biggest difference between the two is Denver is solid against both, the run and the pass, while NE is below average against the run (4.8 ypr against 4.6 ypr) and very good against the pass (5.1 ypr against 6.5 ypr). On offense, however; a bit of a different story, as the Denver offense has performed much better, gaining 5.5 ypr against 5.2 ypr while NE is at just 5.4 ypr against 5.6 ypr. In addition, as said, NE has trouble stopping the run and Denver averages 4.7 ypr against 4.2 ypr. Denver qualifies in a terrific fundamental rushing situation which is 475-358-31 (15-9-1 TY) and they do qualify in a couple of the subsets but not the best two subsets of that. I think the play in this game is on the under. This game qualifies in the same two situations that the Jets-Minn under last week qualified in. Those situations are 309-232-18 and 44-17-6. In addition, my numbers indicate just 41 points to be scored in this game giving us some value as well. Plus, as said earlier, we have two of the best defenses in the league, and one offense that is below average. I think it all adds up to a low scoring game. The average score in an NFL game this year is now 44 points, so we also have more points than the average to work with, making this a solid under play. Last week, I felt the

Minnesota under would get there but be difficult. This week, I feel this is easy so that probably means we will have to sweat it out. Either way I am on the under and lean towards Denver. **DENVER 21 NEW ENGLAND 17**

JACKSONVILLE -10.5 Houston 38.5

Houston may have lost last week, 17-34, but as noted in the Cleveland write up, they completely out played the Browns last week. They gained 354 yards while allowing just 230 yards at 5.3 yppl to 4.1 yppl. I mentioned last week that David Carr and this offense are starting to put the pieces in place. Their offense is still gaining just 3.7 yppl against 4.9 yppl but it is getting better. And their defense continues to play very well, allowing just 5.0 yppl against 5.4 yppl. Jacksonville, on the other hand, as mentioned in the Baltimore write up, played very well last week but still lost the game, out gaining Baltimore 397-261 and 5.1 yppl to 4.2 yppl. The biggest difference for these teams is Jacksonville doesn't allow teams to score too many points, allowing just 18.1 yards per point against teams averaging 14.1 yards per point. So they are stopping teams, whether it is by turnovers or just good defense in the end. Houston, on the other hand, is allowing 12.1 yards per point against teams averaging just 14.9 yards per point. This tells me the Houston offense is turning the ball over and giving the opposing offenses great field position. If Houston can eliminate that part of the game, they can start winning some of these games. My numbers favor Jacksonville by about 7-8 points in this game. Houston does qualify in two very good contrary situations which are 272-195-11 and 156-102-5. They are also a turnover table play but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets of that. Like I said last week, Houston has now lost on the road in their three road games by 21, 17 and 17. Last week they didn't deserve to lose by that many but allowing nine sacks, like they did and losing the turnover battle, 0-2 will cause you to lose games by 17 points even when you completely out gain the other team. Until I can see them losing by less on the road, I won't back them, but last week may get us closer to a buy sign for this team, getting generous points on the road. **JACKSONVILLE 23 HOUSTON 16**

WASHINGTON PK Indianapolis 47

Redskins will make another switch at quarterback this week to Shane Matthews. The Washington offense has struggled this year, gaining just 4.9 yppl against 5.1 yppl but their rushing offense has been pretty good, gaining 4.2 ypr against 4.0 ypr. That should match up decent with an Indy defense that is allowing 5.0 yppl against 4.7 yppl, including 4.3 ypr against 4.1 ypr. Washington is starting to play pretty good defense as of late. Last week they allowed the Packers to gain just 4.4 yppl and that was a Packer team that was averaging 5.7 yppl. The week before they allowed NO to gain 5.3 yppl and that was a NO offense that was gaining 5.4 yppl. So, they have definitely started playing better. Their biggest problem has been turnovers. Last week, they turned the ball over four times to only once for GB, and the week before they turned the ball over five times to only once for NO. So, as you might expect, they qualify as a turnover table play and they qualify in a 115-56-4 subset of that situation. If they become an underdog in this game, they would also qualify in a scheduling situation that is 149-79-8. My numbers indicate either a one point victory for Indy or a two point victory for Washington. I will make Washington an opinion at the current line of pick 'em and if they become an underdog of +1 or more, I will make Washington a best bet. **WASHINGTON 24 INDIANAPOLIS 17**

PHILADELPHIA -7 NY Giants 38

Philly dismantled TB last week, winning 20-10 and out gaining TB 269-207 and 4.4 yppl to 3.2 yppl. The Giants are coming off a bye week and a loss previous to that game against Atlanta. The Philadelphia offense has been pretty average, gaining 5.3 yppl against 5.2 yppl. Their rushing offense is gaining 5.1 ypr against 4.1 ypr but a lot of that can probably be contributed to Donovan McNabb. That should match up very interestingly against a Giants defense that is allowing 3.5 ypr against 4.4 ypr. The Giants offense hasn't done anything spectacular this year, averaging 5.2 yppl against 5.2 yppl and their rush offense is gaining just 3.1 ypr against 4.3 ypr. Their pass offense has been pretty good, averaging 6.7 yps against 6.0 yps but they will find that pretty difficult against a Philly pass defense, allowing just 4.8 yps against 5.8 yps. Philly qualifies in a terrific fundamental rushing situation that is 475-358-31 (15-9-1 TY) and all of the subsets down to the best subset, which is 137-61-7 (5-1 TY). My numbers indicate a 10.5 point Philly win. Solid fundamental situation on Philly along with value, get me on Philadelphia. This fundamental rushing situation only qualifies if the line is seven or less. I will make Philly a best bet at -7 or less. **PHILADELPHIA 28 NY GIANTS 13**

BEST BETS

YTD 11-14 -13.20%

3% MINNESOTA -1 or less

3% BALTIMORE +2

3% CINCINNATI +5.5

3% DALLAS -2.5 or less

3% DENVER/NE UNDER 45

3% PHILADELPHIA -7 or less

Possible Best Bet

3% WASHINGTON as an underdog

WEEK 9

I mentioned last week that Washington was a best bet if the line went to +1 or more. That line became available on Sunday night at three of the four outlets I use, even seeing +1.5 at Bowman's before kick off. I will count the game as a win bringing the weekly record to 4-3 +2.10%. Earlier in the year, I counted a total (Philly-Washington) as a push instead of a win because that is what I ended up playing the game at, even though a better line was available earlier in the week. These things tend to even out over the course of the season.

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) 4.2

Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.0

Yards Per Play (YPP) 5.2

BUFFALO -2 New England 47

NE comes in having lost four games in a row. And quite frankly, they haven't been very close in many of them either. And they were again thoroughly dominated last week by Denver, gaining only 3.4 ypp to Denver's 5.4 ypp. They were out yarded 351-179. And now they must travel to Buffalo to take on a Bills team that has won three in a row. But let's take a better look at some of these games. NE has lost to SD, Miami (with Jay Fiedler), Green Bay and Denver. That means that have played teams who have a combined record of 22-6 while during Buffalo's three game winning streak, they have played teams with a combined record of 9-12 with wins over Houston, Miami (without Jay Fiedler and Miami turned the ball over six times) and Detroit. I thought the line was still a little inflated for NE last week by being installed as a favorite against a very good Denver team but this week the line is now underrating NE. I'm just not sure Buffalo should be favored over NE. The strength of the Bills team is their passing offense, throwing for 6.6 yps against 6.4 yps but that will play right into the hands of NE. The Patriots, despite all of their problems and good teams they have played, still defend the pass second best in the league, allowing just 5.5 yps against 6.4 yps. And the Buffalo defense has been weak against the run this year, allowing 4.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr. NE doesn't run the ball very well, gaining only 4.0 ypr against 4.3 ypr but I look for them to try and establish the run in this game and along with their tough defense, that should keep them in the game. NE qualifies in a couple of very solid contrary situations that are 273-195-11 and 110-78-6. Those two situations only apply if the line is three or more. NE has lost only twice by more than three points in Buffalo in the past eight years and I look for them to keep it close once again. My numbers suggest a three point win by Buffalo but if this line is three or more, along with the great situations that NE qualifies in, I think they are a solid play here. I will make NE a best bet at +3 or more. **NEW ENGLAND 28 BUFFALO 24**

TAMPA BAY -7 Minnesota 36.5

Minnesota got a win last week because they finally stopped turning the ball over. They won the turnover battle, 3-1 and that allowed them to hold onto the ball, keeping it for over 41 minutes last week. They out gained Chicago 4.9 ypp to 4.4 ypp and out yarded them 364-218. Included in that were six sacks of Chris Chandler. Their running game was stopped by Chicago, allowing the Vikings to only gain 3.4 ypr but they still managed 148 yards rushing. For TB, well, it was another ugly win. TB had to settle for four field goals in defeating a banged up Carolina team, 12-9. The TB defense was dominating once again, limiting Carolina to just 130 yards of total offense and 2.5 ypp. TB didn't do a whole lot themselves, gaining only 226 yards of total offense and 3.4 ypp. I don't see how Minnesota will be able to move the ball this week against TB. The Vikings offense is average, gaining 5.4 ypp against 5.4 ypp and their defense is the worse defense in the league, allowing 6.1 ypp against 5.0 ypp. The TB offense isn't exactly ripe to take advantage of Minnesota's defensive woes, gaining just 4.7 ypp against 5.1 ypp but their defense has been just short of brilliant this year. They are allowing teams just 3.7 ypp against 5.1 ypp. Minnesota also hasn't fared too well in TB, losing the last three times they have gone to TB by scores of 14-41, 13-41 and 17-24. The year before that they lost only 24-27 but remember that was their 15-1 season in 1998 and they were actually seven point favorites in that game. Mike Tice said this week that TB has run the ball down their throat when they have gone to TB. And he admitted that has been very demoralizing to his team. He said TB may beat them in a lot of different ways this week but they will absolutely not run the ball down his teams throat again. Well, when your pass defense is allowing 7.6 yps against 6.0 yps, he's probably right. They won't run the ball down their

throat, they'll pass it down their throat. Minnesota qualifies in a negative 106-157-9 situation as long as this line is seven or less. The Vikings are also a turnover table play (22-11-1 TY) but they don't qualify in any of the very solid subsets of that system. My numbers also make TB about a 10-13 point favorite in this game, giving us solid line value as well. TB doesn't know who will start at qb for them this week and wr Keenan McCardell is still questionable. They also lost Anthony McFarland on the defensive line this week so they are hurting on both sides of the ball. Still I only see one way to point to in this game, against a Minnesota team that has now lost 14 games in a row on the road (including playoffs) who doesn't play very good defense and has been dominated by this team as of late here. **TAMPA BAY 28 MINNESOTA 13**

ATLANTA -7.5 Baltimore 40.5

Atlanta comes off a great upset over New Orleans last week, 37-35. In that game, Michael Vick ran for 91 yards on only 10 carries. Once again he was indefensible. This week he takes on Baltimore. The Baltimore defense, now appears to be minus Ray Lewis for possibly the whole season, is becoming an average defense, allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl. In addition, their offense appears to be about average as well, gaining just 4.6 yppl against 4.8 yppl. I would expect Jeff Blake to perform a little better this week, knowing he is the starter. They'll take on an Atlanta team that is gaining 5.4 yppl against 5.0 yppl and allowing just 4.9 yppl against 5.0 yppl. Obviously the Atlanta numbers are not outstanding and they are taking on a Baltimore team that appears to be just average. But I'm not sure that is a reason to make them 7.5 point favorites. The fact that Atlanta gave up 35 points last week and are now favored puts them into a negative 83-134-10 situation that suggests defenses as such should not be laying a lot of points. Baltimore also qualifies in a contrary 273-195-11 situation and another 110-78-6 situation. Atlanta's win last week put them one game over .500. In the past, teams that win to go exactly one game over .500 and then facing a team at or below .500 have not fared very well. In fact, based on that premise, Atlanta also qualifies in a 20-49-1 situation which is already 0-2 this year. My numbers indicate either a six or nine point victory by Atlanta, but Baltimore is in too many solid situations and Atlanta is in a letdown mode. **ATLANTA 23 BALTIMORE 20**

Philadelphia -6.5 CHICAGO 39.5

Chicago appears to have slumped to a new low last week. They have now lost five consecutive games, losing to the likes of Minnesota, Detroit, Green Bay, Buffalo and New Orleans. First, they haven't been close in many of those games and second, they haven't exactly played too many teams in that list that are threatening for this year's Super Bowl. And the last two weeks, against Detroit and Minnesota, mind you, they have looked really bad. They have been out gained in those games, 3.8 yppl to 5.1 yppl and 4.4 yppl to 4.9 yppl. They have gained 224 yards and 218 yards while allowing 362 yards and 364 yards. At least they are very consistent. Now they take on a Philly team who rushed for an amazing 299 yards last week at 7.7 ypr. It wasn't very close last year in their playoff match up that Philly won 33-19 while gaining 336 yards and allowing only 184 yards. Based on these two teams from this year, I don't see this game ending up much different than last year's final. Chicago is averaging just 4.8 yppl against 5.5 yppl while Philadelphia is averaging 5.4 yppl against 4.9 yppl and allowing only 4.5 yppl against 4.9 yppl. Chicago does qualify as a turnover table play and does qualify under one of the better subsets, which is 117-57-4. But the fundamentals have been working extremely well this year and Philadelphia qualifies in a 478-359-31 (18-10-1 TY) fundamental rushing situation and all of the subsets all the way down to the best subset which is 138-61-7 (6-1 TY). That situation is an automatic play and it comes at a time when one team is heading one way and the other team is clearly heading in the wrong direction, with no signs of getting better. My numbers favor Philly by 6.5 or 7 points so the line is certainly fair and the fundamentals indicate this should be an easy Philly win and I agree. I'll take Philly at seven or less. **PHILADELPHIA 30 CHICAGO 14**

Pittsburgh -3 CLEVELAND 43.5

Speaking of fundamentals, this game also qualifies in the same fundamental situation that the Philadelphia game qualifies in. The Pittsburgh numbers are just about average, gaining 5.4 yppl against 5.3 yppl and allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.2 yppl. But those numbers have gotten much better since Tommy Maddox took over and most importantly for this Pittsburgh team, they have stopped turning the ball over. For Cleveland, they got a very much needed come from behind win at New York last week and are currently riding a two game winning streak. But their numbers are far from impressive and beating the likes of Houston and the Jets are not the kind of wins that tend to impress you. For the season, they are only averaging 5.0 yppl against 5.3 yppl and allowing 5.3 yppl

against 5.0 yppl. Even though the Pittsburgh numbers don't show it, you know they will want to run the ball and that should play perfectly against a Browns team that is allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr. And the Steelers passing offense has improved with Maddox, averaging 6.3 yps against 6.0 yps and that should also play very well against Cleveland, who is allowing 6.0 yps against 5.7 yps. My numbers do favor Cleveland here, predicting a tie but they also account for Pittsburgh's first couple of games, where Kordell Stewart was the quarterback and turning the ball over. Once again, Pittsburgh qualifies in the 478-349-30 fundamental rushing situation including all of the subsets down to the best one which is 138-61-7 (6-1 TY). And again, that is an automatic play, especially considering how well the fundamentals are doing this year. **PITTSBURGH 26 CLEVELAND 17**

DETROIT -3 Dallas 38

One thing I've learned from watching the Cowboy games lately is you just tease every game they play because they aren't going to blow anybody out and they most likely are not going to get blown out either. This Dallas team is just an average team that is gaining 5.0 yppl against 5.1 yppl and allowing 4.9 yppl against 5.0 yppl. Meanwhile, for Detroit, they are starting to play better but their numbers are still well below average, gaining just 4.6 yppl against 5.3 yppl and allowing 5.5 yppl against 5.3 yppl. Dallas does qualify in a 273-195-11 contrary situation as long as they are getting three or more points. My numbers indicate this line should be anywhere from a pick 'em to two points, suggesting there is some value on Dallas at +3. I will lean towards Dallas in this game. **DALLAS 21 DETROIT 20**

HOUSTON -3 Cincinnati 37

Well, I learned something new last week. A new reason to not play on the Cincinnati Bengals. That reason is if you need instant replay to bail you out, you might be in trouble because there usually aren't enough cameras at the Bengals games to get a good view of any replay. Such was the case last week when Corey Dillon tripped over his own offensive lineman going into the end zone on a fourth and one play with just one minute left in the game. Unfortunately the best angle on that play came from the other side of the field and because it was only the lowly Bengals and Titans, they didn't have as many cameras that they would normally have and didn't have the angle they needed to determine if Dillon got in the end zone or not. Then, of course, down by six Tennessee was just trying to run the clock out by sneaking Steve McNair up the middle. Cincinnati had enough timeouts left to force a Tennessee punt from their own end zone and I am absolutely 100% convinced that Tennessee would have taken a safety rather than try and punt out of their own end zone, and end up winning by just four points. But this is Cincinnati and they, of course, jumped off side on third and three, giving Tennessee a first down and allowing the Titans to run the clock out. Maybe I didn't quite learn my lesson well enough because I will come back with Cincinnati again this week. At least this week I can say Cincinnati sports the better offense. That's saying a lot but they do take on the NFL's worse offensive team in Houston. Houston is averaging just 4.1 yppl against 5.0 yppl but their defense is playing very well, allowing just 4.8 yppl against 5.3 yppl. For Cincinnati, their offense isn't much better but it is better. They are averaging 4.4 yppl against 5.0 yppl but their defense is much worse, allowing 5.7 yppl against 5.2 yppl. Cincinnati does qualify in a couple of very solid contrary situations that are 273-195-11 and 110-78-6 as long as the line is at least +3. As bad as Cincinnati is I just can't see this Houston offense laying points. I don't think they have advanced far enough to be laying points. I will take Cincinnati at +3 or better. **CINCINNATI 23 HOUSTON 19**

INDIANAPOLIS -3 Tennessee 45.5

Indy was beaten soundly against last week at Washington and the biggest problem for Indy is a rush defense that is allowing 4.8 ypr against only 4.2 ypr. On the other side of the ball they haven't been able to run the ball, averaging just 3.6 ypr against 4.2 ypr. Edgerrin James didn't look very good last week but Ricky Williams did look pretty good and he will most likely get the start this week with James ailing. For Tennessee, they are off back to back wins but they struggled to beat Cincinnati last week. Their offense has been average, gaining 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl but their defense has been pretty bad, allowing 5.8 yppl against 5.2 yppl. Despite the fact that Indy has lost two in a row, they are actually in a pretty good spot coming home off of those two road losses and they qualify in a 27-6-1 bounce back situation. In addition, my numbers favor Indy by 4 to 8 points and I think the value and the situation favor them greatly. They should be able to get their offense back on track, at home against a sub par Tennessee defense. Especially when you consider that Tennessee is allowing 6.9 yps against 5.6 yps and Indy is aver-

aging 6.3 yps against 5.8 yps. In fact, they even allowed the Bengals to throw for 8.4 yps last week. Meanwhile, their defense should play a little better at home against an average Tennessee offense. I will lean with Indy in what should be a high scoring game. **INDIANAPOLIS 30 TENNESSEE 20**

SAN DIEGO -7.5 NY Jets 41

The Jets started out great last week, up 21-3 and seemingly on their way to a second win in a row. But then the Jets that we all know and love appeared and they allowed 21 straight points to the Browns and lost the game 21-24, when a game tying field goal by John Hall was blocked. The Jets are really struggling, allowing 6.0 yppl against 5.5 yppl and especially in the run defense, where they allow 5.0 ypr against 4.4 ypr. Their pass defense isn't much better, allowing 6.9 yps against 6.2 yps. Those defensive numbers are almost as bad as KC and SD put up 35 points against KC. They have also played one other defense that is just as bad and that was Cincinnati and they put up 34 points at Cincinnati. The difference between this game and the KC game is that KC brings the league's best offense to town while the Jets bring a below average offense that is averaging just 5.3 yppl against 5.5 yppl. The match up in this game is not very good. I already talked about how bad the Jets run defense is and SD averages 4.8 ypr against 4.2 ypr and that doesn't bode well for the Jets. SD qualifies in the 478-359-31 fundamental rushing situation and all of the subsets all the way down to the best subset, which is 138-61-7 (6-1 TY). As I've said earlier, that is an automatic play. This fundamental rushing situation only plays at seven or less so I would buy this line down to -7. SD does qualify in a letdown situation that is 44-99-5 but the fundamentals are just too great in this game to ignore. My numbers also suggest this line should be about 10 points so we have value on our side as well. **SAN DIEGO 28 NY JETS 10**

OAKLAND -3 San Francisco 48.5

Quick now, who has the better offense in this game? How about the better defense? You're right. It's Oakland. Yes, the Raiders actually bring the better offense and defense in this game. Oakland averages 6.3 yppl against 5.5 yppl while SF is averaging 5.8 yppl against 5.2 yppl. On defense Oakland is allowing 5.5 yppl against 5.5 yppl while SF is allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.3 yppl. So both teams are very close but Oakland is actually a tad bit better on both sides of the ball. And the Raiders are in a terrific set of situations this week. First, SF is in a letdown situation off of their home win last week that is now 106-157-9. Oakland is also a turnover table play (22-11-1 TY) and they qualify in a subset of that which is 129-72-4. In addition, Oakland qualifies in a couple of outstanding fundamental rushing situations which are 70-25-3 (2-0 TY) and 101-35-8. So we have technical situations favoring Oakland and going against SF and we have fundamental situations greatly favoring Oakland. In addition, my numbers suggest this line should be about 2-3 points so the line is fair. In addition, SF has long had trouble when traveling to take on winning teams, especially when coming off a win. In fact, SF has now gone 0-9-1 when traveling on the road against a winning team. And if they are coming off a win, the 49ers are now just 5-20 ats when traveling on the road, off a win (regular season only) and that goes all the way back to 1992 showing that even during their best years, they have had trouble winning against the better teams on the road. All of this adds up to my first 4% play of the year. Oakland needs this game badly, having lost three straight and fighting for their lives in the AFC West. Meanwhile, while SF isn't going to take it easy, their path to a divisional championship seems to be much easier, making this game a little less important. I will make Oakland a 4% play at -3 or better, otherwise a 3% play.

OAKLAND 31 SAN FRANCISCO 20

St. Louis -3 ARIZONA 43

The Rams come in here off of their bye week and 2-5 on the season but their offense has played very well this year. They are averaging 5.6 yppl against 4.9 yppl. Their defense has disappointed, allowing 5.6 yppl against 5.3 yppl. For Arizona, they have been below average on both sides of the ball, gaining only 4.9 yppl against 5.1 yppl and allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.1 yppl. The Rams do qualify as a turnover table plays (22-11-1 TY) but not in any of the better subsets of that situation. Meanwhile, Arizona qualifies in a contrary situation which is 108-59-4 (0-3 TY). My numbers suggest Arizona should be favored or at least a pick 'em in this game, suggesting there is value with Arizona. I will lean with Arizona based on the contrary situation and the value but it is a weak lean, seeing I think the Rams are a much better team. **ST LOUIS 24 ARIZONA 23**

SEATTLE -3 Washington 42

Another game I don't have much interest in. Washington is probably playing without Stephen Davis and Seattle is playing without Trent Dilfer. Both teams are below average on offense, gaining 0.4 yppf less than their opponents are allowing and both teams are a bit above average on defense, allowing 0.2 yppf better than their opponents are averaging. Seattle has struggled stopping the rush, allowing 5.1 ypr against 4.5 ypr but Washington has been just average rushing the ball, gaining 4.3 ypr against 4.3 ypr. And without Davis, it's hard to tell how their rushing game will be affected. I don't have any situations in this game other than Washington qualifying as a turnover table play but not in any of the better subsets. Although the numbers are about the same, I think the Washington defense is better and my numbers suggest this line should be about 1.5-2 points, suggesting slight value on Washington. For those reasons, I will lean their way. **WASHINGTON 23 SEATTLE 22**

NY GIANTS -3 Jacksonville 35

The one bright spot for the Giants this year was their passing offense, gaining 6.7 yps against 5.9 yps. Jeremy Shockey is banged up with a bad toe and Ike Hilliard is now lost for the season. That won't help their passing game. Other than those positives, the Giants rushing game has been terrible, gaining just 3.3 ypr against 4.2 ypr and their defense, as a whole, is allowing 5.1 yppf against 5.3 yppf. Jacksonville has been below average on offense, gaining just 5.4 yppf against 5.5 yppf but their defense has been pretty good, allowing just 4.9 yppf against 5.2 yppf. Jacksonville does qualify in a very good contrary situation which is 273-195-11 as long as they are getting +3 or more. They also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation which is 478-359-31 (18-10-1 TY) although they don't qualify in any of the other subsets of that situation. My numbers also indicate this line should be anywhere from Jacksonville favored by 2 points to the Giants by 3, suggesting value with Jacksonville or at least fair value with the +3. The Giants are a turnover table play but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. I will lean with Jacksonville. **JACKSONVILLE 18 NY GIANTS 17**

GREEN BAY -3.5 Miami 41.5

Packers come in here off their bye week as does Miami. This analysis is assuming Brett Favre is playing in this game. If he isn't playing, then I definitely lean towards Miami but I'm pretty sure he will be playing. The Pack come in here averaging 5.6 yppf against 5.1 yppf and their defense has greatly improved from the beginning of the season, now allowing 5.2 yppf against 5.1 yppf. Their defense is still banged up and missing players but maybe it is much better than I thought. As I look back now, they struggled against Atlanta and New Orleans but those two offenses are rated as the fourth and seventh best offenses in the league by my ratings. But in their other games, they have allowed Detroit 4.8 yppf (they average 4.6 yppf), Carolina 5.3 yppf (4.7 yppf), Chicago 5.5 yppf (4.8 yppf), New England 4.3 yppf (5.2 yppf) and Washington 3.7 yppf (4.9 yppf). So while they allowed Detroit, Carolina and Chicago more than their averages, the numbers weren't as bad as early in the season, and they seem to have gotten much, much better the last two weeks. For Miami, everything turned a little when Jay Fiedler went down. Nobody thought Ray Lucas would be a huge drop off for them and he probably won't but his six turnovers against the Bills didn't help things in Miami. They have added Chris Carter to a receiver unit that is hurting with injuries. Miami is averaging 5.4 yppf against 5.5 yppf and allowing just 5.1 yppf against 5.4 yppf. If this line would go to three, GB would qualify in a very good home momentum situation which is 96-58-10 and a subset of that which is 59-19-6. Miami does qualify in a rushing fundamental situation which is 478-359-31 but none of the better subsets. They also qualify as a turnover table play but none of the better subsets there either. This is a tough game to call. GB is close to qualifying in a very good situation and Miami does qualify in a couple of solid situations but none of the better subsets and they are going at it with a reserve qb in a hostile environment on Monday night football. My numbers are very solid suggesting a three point line. I'll call for a three point victory and let the final line decide which way to lean. I also think this could be higher scoring than the suggested total. **GREEN BAY 24 MIAMI 21**

BEST BETS

YTD 15-17 -11.10%

4% OAKLAND -3 This becomes a 3% play if the line is higher than -3

3% BALTIMORE +7.5

3% PHILADELPHIA -6.5 Must be -7 or less

3% PITTSBURGH -3

3% CINCINNATI +3 Must be +3 or higher

3% SAN DIEGO -7 Buy down to -7 or pass

Possible Best Bet

3% NEW ENGLAND +3 Must be +3 or higher

WEEK 10

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) 4.2

Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.0

Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

PHILADLEPHIA -9 Indianapolis 42.5

Indy lost again last week for the third straight time but their numbers were pretty good. Turnovers killed the Colts as they turned it over three times to none for Tennessee. But Indy did gain 378 yards at 5.3 yppl against only 198 yards and 3.9 yppl for Tennessee. Those signs won't help us much in this game but it will help us in Tennessee's game this week. This is simply a bad match up for Indy. They are allowing 4.7 ypr against only 4.1 ypr and now have to face a Philly team who averages 5.2 ypr against 4.1 ypr. And if Indy does one thing well, it is throw the ball, as they average 6.2 yps against 6.0 yps. But unfortunately they will have to take on a Philly defense that is allowing just 5.0 yps against 5.7 yps. Aside from all that, my numbers do favor Philly by 10. Indy does qualify as a turnover table play. That situation is now 29-14-1 on the year but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. I'll lean with the value and the better fundamental match up team. This could be a higher scoring game than the numbers indicate. Indy doesn't figure to stop Philly and should be playing catch up most of the day, which means passing for either scores or turnovers that could lead to scores. **PHILADELPHIA 27 INDIANAPOLIS 17**

BALTIMORE -5.5 Cincinnati 37.5

How 'bout them Bungles. Or I guess this week, them Bengals. Cincinnati actually looked like a pretty good team last week in beating Houston 38-3. They gained 390 yards of offense at 6.3 yppl and only allowed 268 yards of offense at 4.5 yppl. This week they take on Baltimore and even though Baltimore lost last week, they did get the cover for us against Atlanta. And, they too, controlled that game gaining 340 yards of offense at 5.9 yppl against only 240 yards of offense for Atlanta at 4.0 yppl. I have no situations which apply to either team here and my numbers favor Baltimore by about 7-10 points. In addition, the last three trips to Baltimore, Cincinnati has lost 0-75 (0-16, 0-37, 0-22). And the trip has just never been a kind trip for Cincinnati whether it has been to Baltimore or Cleveland (prior to moving to Baltimore). These are the scores for their last 10 games on the road against the Ravens/Browns. They have lost 0-16, 0-37, 0-22, 24-31, 10-23, **24-21**, 10-26, 13-37, 14-27, 21-37. The bold game indicates the only game they have won and it is also the only game they have stayed within seven points and only twice have they stayed within 13 points. It has been a complete mismatch. Cincinnati is playing better since John Kitna took over again and they have scored over 20 points in each of their past two games but this game will be very tough for them. Baltimore isn't doing anything exceptionally well, gaining only 4.8 yppl against 4.8 yppl and allowing 5.0 yppl against 5.2 yppl but they should be able to take care of business against a Cincinnati team that isn't playing very good defense. The Bengals are allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 6.8 yps against 5.8 yps for a total of 5.5 yppl against 5.0 yppl. That should allow Baltimore to move the ball pretty easily and the Ravens defense can still shut down teams like we saw last week and that task should be pretty easy against Cincinnati. **BALTIMORE 23 CINCINNATI 13**

GREEN BAY -10 Detroit 41

Talk about another mismatch and you have to talk about this series in GB. Take a look at the last 10 games played at Lambeau for the Lions. They have lost 6-28, 13-26, 17-26, 19-38, 10-20, 18-28, 21-30, 30-38, 17-26 and 10-38. So the Lions have failed to win here over the past 10 seasons and the closet they have come is nine points. This line has crept back up in this series where the past dominance isn't as over whelming as in the past. Green Bay was favored by only 6, 3.5 and 5 points the last three times they have played here. The Packers offense continues to just grind out good numbers, averaging 5.5 yppl against 5.1 yppl but their running game is starting to take over for a couple of reasons. First, with Favre getting hurt, GB will look to put away teams late in the game by simply running the ball. Second, it's starting to get cold in GB and the running game tends to take over. The Packers defense is starting to get healthy and they are starting to play pretty good ball. Their defense has now allowed just 4.3 yppl to NE, 3.7 yppl to Washington and last week 4.0 yppl to Miami. You might say these teams are not great offensive

juggernauts and you are right. But neither is Detroit, who comes in averaging just 4.4 yppl against 5.2 yppl. Both defenses are average, allowing the same amount of yards per play that their opponents are averaging but the Green Bay defense, as stated, is starting to play like we thought they would at the beginning of the season. Detroit's defense is pretty decent this year but GB was able to move the ball on them in the first meeting, gaining 442 yards at 5.6 yppl to Detroit's only 271 yards at 4.8 yppl. There is certainly motivation for GB to keep winning here as they own the best record in the league and if they get home field advantage, they have a very good shot at going back to the SB. One other note of motivation here is there are ex-Lions coaches on this Packers staff and they would love to take it to this Lions team every chance they get. Trust me on this one, I know this for a fact. My numbers favor GB by 12 points. Detroit does qualify as a turnover table play but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. I'll lean with GB because of the prior history and coaches motivation to beat Detroit as bad as they can. **GREEN BAY 34 DETROIT 16**

NY Giants –1 MINNESOTA 44.5

Coaches are sometimes smarter than we think. Last week Dick LeBeau supposedly made a guarantee that his team would beat the Houston Texans. Now what did LeBeau have to lose in saying that. If they didn't beat Houston, he was probably going to be fired either right away or at the end of the season. But by putting some extra pressure on his team to perform, he got a top notch effort out of this club and looks a little smarter for doing so. Two years ago, Jim Fassel guaranteed his team was going to make the playoffs. Well, that was all fine and well too but after his guarantee, his team played teams that finished with the following records: 3-13, 8-8, 9-7, 5-11 and 7-9. It wasn't like they were taking on all SB contenders that year. Last week, Fassel took over the play calling for the offense. Well, that was pretty smart considering they took on Jacksonville, now get Minnesota this week, get Houston next week, then Tennessee, Washington, Dallas, and Indianapolis before finishing with Philadelphia. I wouldn't be surprised if he has great success against these stout defenses and then just before the final game against Philly says the offense is back to where it belongs and gives the job back to Sean Payton. As for this game, Minnesota is in some great situations. Yes, the Vikings defense is still terrible, allowing TB to gain 446 yards at 7.3 yppl last week, including 313 passing yards at 10.1 yps. But, what might have gone unnoticed was the Vikings offense. As bad as it was for an anemic TB offense to move the ball on Minnesota's defense, it was equally surprisingly to see the Vikings offense gain 393 yards at 7.0 yppl. That was against a TB defense that came in allowing just 4.0 yppl against 5.2 yppl. Minnesota qualifies in a couple of great fundamental rushing situations which are 101-48-6 (4-1 TY) and another one which is 478-362-32 (18-13-2 TY) and all of the subsets down to a 244-141-12 (9-5-1 TY) subset. They are also a turnover table play this week which is now 29-14-1 this year and they qualify in a subset which is 118-57-4 (4-2 TY). The Giants qualify in a negative scheduling situation which is 79-150-8 and also one that is 34-66-4. The Giants do match up very well in one area. They are averaging 6.7 yps against 5.8 yps and Minnesota is allowing 7.8 yps against 5.9 yps. My numbers suggest either a one point Giant line or a four point Viking line. Minnesota plays much better at home and I look for them to bounce back and play well, much like they did against the Bears two weeks ago here. **MINNESOTA 27 NY GIANTS 20**

PITTSBURGH –4.5 Atlanta 42.5

Steelers only got us the push last week but they deserved to cover. Two of the Browns scores came on a punt return for a touchdown and a long pass late in the game with the Steelers ahead by nine points. Meanwhile, Pittsburgh self destructed deep in Cleveland territory time and time again, missing field goals and turning the ball over. While the yppl were even at 4.6 yppl, Pittsburgh gained 391 yards to Cleveland's 193 yards. They now take on Atlanta, who as noted in the Baltimore write up, were handled quite easily last week, even though they won the game. Atlanta was out gained 241-340 and 4.0 yppl to 5.9 yppl. They recovered a fumble for a touchdown, which greatly aided their cause. If the Baltimore defense can contain Michael Vick, the Pittsburgh 3-4 defense (this will be the first time Vick has seen the 3-4 this year) should be able to contain him too. Pittsburgh does qualify in a very solid 70-26-3 fundamental rushing situation and should be able to grind out a victory here. While Pittsburgh's numbers are about average on offense, they should excel against an Atlanta rush defense that is allowing 4.7 ypr against 3.9 ypr. That should be the difference and Pittsburgh is starting to put together the same type of run they had last year. Maddox is not committing the turnovers that Kordell did and that is allowing Pittsburgh to win games in comfortable fashion. **PITTSBURGH 27 ATLANTA 17**

ST. LOUIS –5.5 San Diego 44

The Rams are starting to put it together again and their numbers, especially on offense, are very solid. They are gaining 5.7 ypl against 5.0 ypl and their rush defense is holding their own, allowing just 4.0 ypl against 4.1 ypl. The weakness for the Rams has been their pass defense, which is allowing 6.5 yps against 6.1 yps but SD may not be able to take advantage of that, gaining just 5.8 yps against 6.3 yps. While the Rams looked out of it at 0-5, they have now won three straight and have an excellent shot at making the playoffs. Meanwhile, for SD, their loss at home to the Jets last week has to be very disturbing. They were out gained 413 yards to 243 and 6.0 ypl to 4.8 ypl. They did rush for 5.2 ypr but they allowed the Jets (who only average 4.1 against 4.3) to rush for 165 yards at 5.5 ypr. That doesn't bode well going against Marshall Faulk and company who are averaging 4.7 ypr against 4.1 ypr. And if they don't already know it, that game against the Jets might have been their last chance at a win until their final game of the season. They now must play the Rams, SF, at Miami, Denver, Oakland, at Buffalo, at KC and Seattle. That is not an easy road for a team whose numbers are average, at best right now. St. Louis is a turnover table play but they don't qualify under any of the other subsets. Also, my numbers favor SD, predicting only about a 2-3 point line for this game. Having said all of that, I see these two teams headed in opposite directions and I like the Rams here. **ST LOUIS 27 SAN DIEGO 20**

TENNESSEE -9.5 Houston 40

I had Cincinnati last week and mentioned it was the first time and probably the last time Cincinnati would play a team this year that has a worse offense than they have. But I also expected the Houston defense, which has been very solid this year, to have played much better than they did last week. They were torched by Cincinnati (who has played much better recently since John Kitna became the starting qb) by allowing the Bengals to gain 390 yards at 6.3 yps. But I do expect Houston to bounce back this week. They qualify in a contrary situation which is 277-196-11 after going 4-1 last week with Cincinnati, Baltimore, New England, Dallas and losing with Jacksonville. They also qualify in another contrary situation which is very similar, that is 159-102-5. In addition, my numbers show only a nine point line or less for Tennessee in this game. Jevon Kearse may return for this game and Tennessee is getting much healthier at this point. But despite their win at Indy last week (a very big win against the only other competition the Titans have for first place in the AFC South), they were badly out gained, 198-378 and 3.9 ypl to 5.3 ypl. Houston played at Cleveland three weeks ago, losing by 17 but they out gained Cleveland 354-230 and should have covered that game. The following week they went to Jacksonville and won that game as a 10.5 point dog. Tennessee hasn't won any game by more than nine points this year and their inept offense should make it hard to cover this game. They are averaging just 5.0 ypl against 5.1 ypl and their defense is allowing 6.6 ypl against 5.7 ypl. It's their pass defense, which is the sieve of the defense, allowing 6.6 yps against 5.7 yps that should aid Houston here. Meanwhile, on offense, it's their rushing offense, that is holding the offense back, gaining just 3.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr. Last week they took on an Indy defense that is allowing 4.7 ypr against 4.1 ypr and only gained 3.9 ypr. While the Houston offense is bad, real bad, their defense is holding their own despite last week's debacle. They are allowing just 5.0 ypl against 5.2 ypl. The offense is gaining just 4.1 ypl against 5.1 ypl but they should find some success against a less than average Tennessee defense. I like Houston to bounce back here and Tennessee might just be looking ahead a little to their match up against Pittsburgh next week, after their big win over Indy last week. Never a look ahead for a new franchise like Houston. **TENNESSEE 26 HOUSTON 23**

New Orleans -4.5 Carolina 41

Carolina has now lost five in a row after winning their first three games. But other than their blowout loss at Atlanta, they have stayed close in all of their games, thanks to a defense that is allowing just 4.5 ypl against 5.0 ypl. They will be challenged by a very good NO offense this week that is gaining 5.6 ypl against 5.0 ypl. But the Saints defense should also allow a less than average Carolina offense to get back on track. The Saints are now allowing 5.4 ypl against 5.1 ypl while Carolina is gaining just 4.7 ypl against 5.0 ypl. Carolina should get Rodney Peete back this week and that should help their offense greatly. Other than two years ago here where Carolina lost by 10 points in a game they had numerous chances to win outright, they have either won or lost by three or fewer points in every match up with NO since they came into the league seven years ago. Last year it took a Ricky Williams run on the last play of the game to score and give NO the victory. NO does qualify in a negative scheduling situation which is 80-149-8 and my numbers show this game to be about a pick 'em. I like Carolina here to maybe get the outright victory. **CAROLINA 24 NEW ORLEANS 23**

JACKSONVILLE –2.5 Washington 40.5

Hard to say which way Jacksonville will go this week after losing four games in a row. It should be noted that three of those four losses were on the road but the home loss was to Houston, which is pretty disturbing as well. For Washington, they are beating the teams they should beat but losing to the better teams. They have been smoked by Philly, SF, NO and GB while they have beaten Arizona, Tennessee, Indy and Seattle. That should mean they should stay competitive with Jacksonville here as well. The Washington defense is playing pretty well right now, allowing 5.0 yppl against 5.3 yppl but their offense is still lacking, gaining just 4.9 yppl against 5.2 yppl. Jacksonville has been pretty average this year on both offense and defense and I thought they would make a better run last week against the Giants but they didn't look good. They do qualify in a 101-36-8 fundamental rushing situation and my numbers predict them by three or four points. I like Jacksonville to bounce back in this game. Washington does qualify as a turnover table play but not in any of the better subsets. **JACKSONVILLE 27 WASHINGTON 16**

ARIZONA –3.5 Seattle 37

Originally Arizona looked like a pretty good play this week but there are plenty of reasons to be concerned now. Arizona is averaging 4.3 ypr against 4.3 ypr but they take on a Seattle rush defense that is allowing 5.1 ypr against 4.4 ypr. Meanwhile, the Arizona rush defense is allowing just 3.8 ypr against 4.2 ypr and the Seattle rush offense is gaining just 3.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr. That all sets up Arizona in a 478-362-32 (18-13-2 TY) rushing fundamental situation including a subset which is 244-141-12 (9-5-1 TY). But David Boston was announced out for the year today and they have already lost Martay Jenkins for the year as well. That leaves Arizona with basically no passing game at all, which was already struggling, gaining 5.3 yps against 5.7 yps. Seattle also qualifies in a 277-196-11 contrary situation and my numbers contradict each other, one favoring Arizona by seven and one by only two points. Arizona has lost two in a row and are now 4-4, with tough games against Philly, Oakland, KC, the Rams, SF and Denver ahead. The loss of Boston has to be very depressing to them and I doubt they feel there is much left to play for this year with the recent losses and tough schedule ahead. I will lean with Seattle to get revenge for an earlier loss and suggest the under may be the better option here. **SEATTLE 17 ARIZONA 16**

New England –3.5 CHICAGO 40.5

Bears got the cover last week against Philly but I'm not sure they deserved the cover. As I said last week, much of the season, NE had been overrated by the linemaker and last week I thought they were being underrated and they showed by giving us an easy spread cover, winning 38-7 at Buffalo. This week, I think they may be overrated once again. I'm not thrilled with suggesting Chicago here but the Bears should play competitive enough against an average NE offense that is gaining 5.4 yppl against 5.4 yppl. The Bears offense is not very good, averaging just 4.7 yppl against 5.4 yppl and their defense is average, allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.4 yppl. Also, the Bears poor offense will struggle against a very good NE defense that is allowing just 5.0 yppl against 5.5 yppl. Chicago does qualify as a turnover table play (29-14-1 TY) and they qualify in a subset that is 129-73-4. My numbers also suggest this line should only be about two points at best. The better play here might be the under. **NEW ENGLAND 17 CHICAGO 16**

SAN FRANCISCO –6.5 Kansas City 50

Have to be impressed by the way the 49ers got their deserving cover last week. I went 3-3-1 last week and probably should have covered one of the losses and the push (Philadelphia and Pittsburgh) but I probably didn't deserve the Raiders cover should they have lucked out and gotten the cover. SF gained 434 yards at 5.2 yppl to only 239 at 4.8 yppl for Oakland. Their defense is just average, allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.4 yppl and their rush defense is allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.3 ypr. They should get a very good test from a rested KC offense that is gaining 6.1 yppl against 5.2 yppl and 5.2 ypr against 4.2 ypr and the best in the league. On the other hand, the league's second worst defense that is allowing 6.4 yppl against 5.4 yppl (equally bad against both the run and pass) will get a very tough test from a 49er offense that is gaining 5.7 yppl against 5.2 yppl (equally good against both the run and pass). KC does qualify as a turnover table play but none of the better subsets and my numbers suggest the value lies with KC. I also think the better play, even though the number is high, is probably the over in this game. **SAN FRANCISCO 30 KANSAS CITY 26**

NY JETS -3 Miami 38.5

A very tough game for me to predict here. Miami qualifies in a 478-362-32 (18-13-2 TY) fundamental rushing situation but that is based on their full arsenal of players, including their quarterback, Jay Fiedler. Now it's Ray Lucas and the Dolphins offense is having problems moving the ball. They take on a Jets offense that is now playing very well ever since Chad Pennington became the starting quarterback. The Jets have now scored 25, 20, 21 and 44 points in the four games since Pennington became the starter. Their offense is now about an average offense for the season, gaining 5.4 yppl against 5.5 yppl. Their defense is still below average, allowing 5.9 yppl against 5.5 yppl but they have allowed just 29, 7, 24 and 13 points in their last four games, suggesting maybe they are starting to play a little better. The competition in those games hasn't been great but I'm not sure the competition is that great in this game against a struggling Miami offense and a defense that plays worse on the road. Miami's offense is below average to average, at best, gaining 5.2 yppl against 5.3 yppl. Their defense is playing pretty good, allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.4 yppl. But this is a case of two teams headed in opposite directions and the Jets have won four straight here against Miami. My numbers suggest this game should be a pick 'em but they don't account for the quarterback change, other than accounting for those two games stats. It's very tough to lay points with a team that doesn't have the better defense but it's also tough to take a team that is not playing the better ball right now. I'll still lean with Miami but I think there are better games this week. **MIAMI 22 NY JETS 21**

DENVER -4.5 Oakland 46.5

Mike Shanahan has now coached Denver against Oakland in 14 games (seven years since Al Davis let him go) and he is now 12-2 SU against Oakland. Do you think Mike takes these games seriously? At home Denver, during Shanahan's tenure, has beaten Oakland 27-0, 24-19, 31-3, 40-14, 27-21, 27-24 and 23-17 last year on a Monday night. So, in six of the seven seasons he has covered tonight's number. Oakland is really struggling right now, having lost four games in a row and they still have a lot of tough games ahead of them. They bring a very good offense to town that is averaging 6.1 yppl against 5.5 yppl and their defense is average, allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.5 yppl and has played better in recent weeks. They will face the second toughest defense in the league (according to my ratings) that is allowing 4.7 yppl against 5.5 yppl. Their offense is about average, gaining 5.4 yppl against 5.5 yppl. So, we have a very good defense against a very good offense and an average defense against an average offense. I think defense wins out and Denver also qualifies as a turnover table play but none of the better subsets. Denver also qualifies in a negative scheduling situation based on their bye week that is 10-42-2. My numbers favor Denver by three and five points. I will side with the better defense, the team that is playing better right now and the team that has the coach that has demonstrated a willingness to beat this team. **DENVER 27 OAKLAND 20**

BEST BETS

YTD 18-20 -13.40%

3% MINNESOTA +1

3% PITTSBURGH -4.5

3% HOUSTON +9.5

3% CAROLINA +4.5

3% JACKSONVILLE -2.5