2003 NFL SEASON
SIXTH SENSE SPORTS
WEEKS 6-10

WEEK 6

I suffered my first losing week last week in the NFL, going just 2-4 and that dropped the record to 15-10 60.0% on the year. I'm not sure what to think about last week. The Monday night game was a debacle as TB gave up a 21 point lead with just four minutes left in the game. But, I got extremely lucky on my total bet on the Jacksonville game on Sunday. Dallas decided to kneel down on the five yard line, and costing me my over bet in that game and a 58 yard field goal by Seattle to end the first half cost me my under bet in that game. New England gave up the lead with about five minutes left but came right back to score (and I steal this next line from someone else) faster than I could pay the pizza man to grab the lead back for good. Bottom line is the day could have been much better or much worse and I got some breaks on Saturday so I'll take what I got and move on.

All side opinions went 6-7-1 (7-7 if you consider the Detroit line moved to +7.5) last week and they are now 41-29-3 59% over the first five weeks this year.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.0
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 5.9
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.1

NEW ENGLAND –2.5 NY Giants 41

NE played a pretty good game last week and moved the ball quite well but also gave up some big yards. They have had multiple injuries to overcome and I had them last week and got away with the cover but this might be the time to go against them this week. They allowed Tennessee to gain 442 yards last week at 6.0 yppl. They gained 354 yards themselves at 5.8 yppl so nothing wrong with the offense, despite some injuries at running back. NE ran for 161 yards last week at 6.0 ypr. For the Giants, they played a good game from a yardage perspective, but lost the game because of turnovers and a failure to force Miami into turnovers by dropping two potential interceptions that resulted in six points for Miami. The Giants gained 350 yards at 5.2 yppl and only allowed Miami to gain 285 yards at 4.9 yppl. Take out Miami's end around 68 yard run on a reverse and they gained just 3.8 yppl. And, although they allowed Miami to run for 134 yards at 4.5 ypr, take out the 68 yard run on a reverse and they only gained 66 yards at 2.3 ypr. Point is the Giants played pretty well except for four costly turnovers. For the season, NE is very average, by gaining exactly what their opponent's are allowing and averaging (4.8 vs 4.8 yppl on offense and 5.0 vs 5.0 yppl on defense). The Giants defense is still not playing real well, allowing 5.3 yppl against teams averaging 5.2 yppl but their offense is playing well, gaining 5.3 yppl against 5.0 yppl. I have conflicting trends on this game, which make that part of the handicapping neutral. The Giants do run the ball very well, averaging 4.2 ypr against 3.6 ypr and NE is allowing 3.7 ypr but against teams averaging only 3.5 ypr. My final numbers favor the Giants slightly and they favor the over but I have a 286-216-11 situation that plays on the under, which makes the total a no play. I group teams into ratings with their offense, defense and overall and the Giants rate better across the board. Combine that with the NE injuries and I side with the Giants. **NY GIANTS 24 NEW ENGLAND 21**

Tampa Bay –3.5 WASHINGTON 38

Nice debacle by TB last week. Thanks. Washington dropped a decision at Philly but played a decent game. They couldn't get their running game going, averaging just 2.3 ypr on 49 yards. They defended Philly well, allowing just 4.0 ypr and 4.1 yppl, although the Philly offense hasn't been that great this year but the rushing offense has been much better than they did last Sunday. Yes, Washington scored late to make the game much closer but they also allowed a short interception return for a touchdown. For TB, they had the big lead, and I had them last week, but they didn't exactly do as much as it might appear they did to get that lead. They scored their first touchdown on a broken coverage play and their second touchdown on a fumble return, after they had turned the ball over. They also returned an interception for a touchdown for a third score. That's all part of the game but their offense wasn't quite as dominating as it might have seemed. For the game, they gained 6.3 yppl on 457 yards, which is very good,

but their defense also allowed 455 yards at 6.5 yppl. They gave up 7.2 yps, much after they lost Brian Kelly in the secondary. They won't have him again this week and after losing Dexter Jackson during the off season and playing without their best linebacker (who may return), the defense is suffering a little because of a lack of depth. The TB rush defense is better than average, allowing 4.1 ypr against teams averaging 4.3 ypr but they will face a stiff test against Washington, who is averaging 4.2 ypr against teams allowing 4.0 ypr. The TB offense has moved the ball well this year through the air, averaging 6.6 yps against 6.1 yps, but their rushing offense is terrible, averaging just 3.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr. Washington has been very average stopping the pass this year, allowing 5.5 yps against 5.4 yps but their rushing defense has been very solid, allowing just 3.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr. That doesn't bode well for TB, who can't run the ball, has lost Mike Alstott for the year and Michael Pittman is banged up along with Keyshawn Johnson (who may not play). TB qualifies in a negative scheduling situation this week, which is a 97-51-3 situation playing against TB. Washington is also a turnover table play, which is now 747-579-30 over the last 20 seasons. Most importantly, Washington qualifies in a number of solid fundamental rushing situations, which are 107-52-6, 489-380-29 and 128-50-7. These are all solid situations and indicate Washington will control the ball on the ground and plays good defense themselves. My power rating numbers suggest this line is fair and my final score predictor favor TB, but as I have said week after week, I consider the situations to be much stronger than the value aspect to handicapping. My final numbers also suggest this game to go over the total and I do have a 73-41-2 situation that plays on the over but I am a little hesitant to play the over, despite the low total because of the potential for TB to play solid defense, especially against a young quarterback. Having said that, the situations are simply way too strong to not play Washington. **WASHINGTON 24 TAMPA BAY 17**

CLEVELAND – 3 Oakland 44

Oakland continues to sink lower and lower each week, losing to Chicago last week and allowing 200 yards rushing at 5.7 ypr. For the season, Oakland is now allowing 163 yards rushing and 4.5 ypr against teams averaging 4.1 ypr. The pass defense hasn't been any better, allowing 6.4 yps against teams averaging just 5.7 yps. They may get a bit of a break this week against a Cleveland offense that is below average, especially running the ball, where they are averaging just 3.2 ypr against 3.9 ypr. While the Cleveland pass defense has been good, their rush defense has been horrible, allowing 4.9 ypr against teams averaging 4.0 ypr and Oakland figures to take advantage of that this week, as they are averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.4 ypr. Oakland also qualifies in a terrific rushing situation, which is 489-380-29 over the last 20 seasons. Cleveland, with their solid win last week over Pittsburgh (they gained 332 yards to 221 yards and 5.0 yppl to 4.3 yppl), sets up in a home momentum situation, which is 63-20-6. Oakland also qualifies in a contrarian situation, which is 287-207-10. My numbers favor Cleveland in this game and actually favor the under as well. But, the situations lean towards Oakland and I have a hard time laying points with an anemic offense. The dog is the play here and that is Oakland. **OAKLAND 20 CLEVELAND 17**

INDIANAPOLIS –5 Carolina 38.5

The final numbers last week for Indy were quite impressive. Just another reason to remember a game is a full 60 minutes. For Carolina, they are still undefeated. They are an interesting team to watch because they are below average on both offense and defense, believe it or not. They are averaging just 4.6 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl, although they are running the ball very well (4.6 ypr against 3.9 ypr) but their passing game has been terrible (4.6 yps against 6.4 yps). Facing teams allowing 6.4 yps means they have faced terrible pass defenses and they still haven't been able to do anything about it. On defense, they are below average as well, allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.2 yppl, including allowing 4.3 ypr against 3.9 ypr. So, it will be interesting as we continue to watch them play out the season. Last week NO out gained them 344 to 309 and 5.7 yppl to 4.9 yppl, including allowing NO to rush for 155 yards and 5.3 ypr. They get a good match up this week because their strong rushing offense will face a weak Indy rush defense, allowing 4.7 ypr against 3.5 ypr. And the weakness of the Carolina defense, their rush defense, will face a below average Indy rushing offense, gaining just 3.4 ypr against 3.9 ypr. It would appear the match up favors Carolina and they qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 489-380-29 but none of the better subsets and Indy qualifies in a negative situation, which is a 164-95-10 play against them based on their terrible defense last week but, again, they don't qualify in the better subsets. Final numbers actually favor Indy but the technicals and fundamentals favor Carolina and I will side with them. **INDIANAPOLIS 20 CAROLINA 17**

GREEN BAY –1.5 Kansas City 47.5

KC got away with a gift last week, based on their stats from their game. KC was out gained 469 yards to only 261 and 6.7 yppl to just 4.9 yppl. But, again, special teams helped them out. They ran the ball for 5.5 ypr and 133 yards but they allowed Denver to run for 176 yards and 5.7 ypr. Denver also passed the ball for another 293 yards and 7.5 yps. KC only passed for 128 yards and 4.4 yps. That could spell trouble against a Packer team who looked pretty good again last week. The Packers won the game 35-13 but the yards and yppl were about even, 336-343 and 5.5 to 5.4 yppl for the Packers. GB rushed the ball for 159 yards at 4.5 ypr but did allow Seattle to rush for 128 yards and 5.6 ypr. They defended the pass well, allowing just 5.2 yps but Seattle has been below average throwing the ball. GB seems to not only have found the secret to their success but are now experiencing the success, which is run the ball, control the clock and let Favre work his magic under control. They'll do the same thing against KC, because GB can run the ball, averaging 4.9 ypr against 4.2 ypr and should find success against a KC defense, which is allowing 4.8 ypr against 4.6 ypr. On the other side, KC is running the ball well, averaging 4.7 ypr against 4.1 ypr and should find success against a GB run defense allowing 4.4 ypr against 4.3 ypr. But GB's success last week sets them up in a terrific home momentum situation, which is 63-20-6 and in a great fundamental rushing situation, which is 70-29-3. My numbers favor KC slightly, but again, the situations are more important than the numbers. GB is playing very well right now, has their offensive skill people all back and have put in new sets on offense, which have made their offense much better. They get a big win at home. This game also sets up in an under situation and my final numbers support that but with two explosive offenses and two below average defenses, I will stay away from the under. **GREEN BAY 27 KANSAS CITY 20**

TENNESSEE –10 Houston 40

Houston comes off a bye after their last second win over Jacksonville two weeks ago. Tennessee comes off a tough loss at NE, where they played the Patriots even, but fell short in the end. This is a good match up for Tennessee, who throws the ball well, averaging 7.1 yps against 6.0 yps and will face a Houston defense that has struggled defending the pass, allowing 7.1 yps against 6.2 yps. The Tennessee defense hasn't been great, allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.2 yppl but the Houston offense is below average again this year, gaining just 4.8 yppl against 5.2 yppl. Tennessee's poor defensive effort last week sets them up in a negative play against situation, which is 164-95-10 and they qualify in the better subset of that situation, which is 120-57-10. Tennessee is not a good team to be laying points, with their profile. They run for only 2.6 ypr and allow 3.7 ypr. That doesn't bode well, in this situation, when laying points against a Houston offense that is gaining 105 yards on the ground and 3.5 ypr. Because of that, Tennessee also qualifies in a negative rushing situation, which is a 88-28-5 play against them. It will be very hard, with those type of numbers to win a game laying these kinds of points. My numbers also support a higher scoring game and with a fairly low total, this game could go over. **TENNESSEE 24 HOUSTON 19**

Miami –3 JACKSONVILLE 38

Bryon Leftwich looked very good last week in leading Jacksonville to their 27-21 win over SD, averaging 10.1 yps and throwing for 313 yards. Granted it was against SD but he looked like the kid we got use to seeing at Marshall. The Jacksonville defense allowed SD to gain 346 yards and 6.0 yppl, which wasn't too good but the offense didn't have too many problems moving the ball. I chronicled the Miami game in the Giants write up this week in saying they didn't look quite as good as the final score might have indicated. The Miami offense is just average so far this season, averaging 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl and their running game has been below average, with just 4.1 ypr against 4.2 ypr. It's their passing game, which has been so good, gaining 6.3 yps against 5.9 yps. They'll face a weak Jacksonville pass defense, which is allowing 6.6 yps against 6.0 yps. Miami qualifies in a tough negative scheduling situation, which is 155-85-8 and plays against them. The value in this game lies with Miami but I will lean towards a Jacksonville team that looked good on offense against a Miami team that had sort of a false win last week. This game also qualifies in an under situation if the total is 38 or higher. My final numbers suggest about 34 to 39 points being scored so no opinion there. **JACKSONVILLE 20 MIAMI 17**

NEW ORLEANS –6 Chicago 41.5

Saints played a good game last week, in losing to Carolina, 13-19. They gave up a kick return for a touchdown, which really hurt them. But, they out gained Carolina 344-309 and 5.7 yppl to 4.9 yppl. They also rushed for 155 yards at 5.3 ypr. The offense, as a whole, is still below average, gaining just 5.2 yppl against 5.3 yppl but they have rushed the ball well, gaining 4.5 ypr against 4.2 ypr. This week they face a Bears defense that is giving up rushing

yards by the boatload, allowing 5.1 ypr against 4.6 ypr. But the Bears might also have some success running the ball. They have run the ball very well over the last two weeks and are now averaging 5.2 ypr against 4.2 ypr. That bodes well against a NO defense that is allowing 3.9 ypr but against only 3.7 ypr. While the NO pass defense has been below average, allowing 6.6 yps against 6.3 yps, it remains to be seen if the Bears can take advantage of that or not, gaining just 3.5 yps against 5.6 yps. Last week, a very bad Carolina passing team managed to throw for 5.4 yps. My numbers are pretty close to the line and teams favored, with a winning percentage of .200 or worse are just 48-77-1 since 1983. But NO doesn't fit the best part of that situation, making it just 33-31-0 without the subset. My numbers make this game pretty close to the line. I do have two under situations on this game but my final points predictions are around 45-48 points, making the total too tough to take under. I lean with Chicago in a game between two teams just not playing that well. **NEW ORLEANS 24 CHICAGO 21**

DALLAS –1 Philadelphia 37.5

Very interesting game between a 'new' Cowboy team and the Eagles, who may be starting to come around. I can't give any credence to previous series history, which has seen Philly win six straight in dominating fashion. This is a new Cowboy's team, with Parcells at the helm. Much has been made about the Cowboys playing much better on offense this year, averaging 383 yards per game. And, that is good, but they have done it against teams allowing 357 yards per game and they are averaging 5.6 yppl against 5.5 yppl. So, they are above average but just barely. They are throwing the ball well, averaging 7.2 yps against 6.8 yps and their speed at the receiver position is very good. It will be interesting to see how that plays out against a blitzing Philly secondary, who, was getting lit up just a few weeks ago, but are now above average defending the pass, allowing just 5.8 yps against 6.1 yps. The other key area in this game is the Philly rush offense (which includes McNabb as well) averaging 5.3 ypr against 3.8 ypr against a Cowboy rush defense, which is allowing only 2.7 ypr against 3.6 ypr. As a one point favorite, Dallas does not qualify in any situations, but if they become a dog of +1 or more again, they would then qualify in a home momentum situation, which is 152-105-10 and a fundamental rushing situation, which is 46-12-3. Philly would also qualify in a negative road scheduling situation, which is 97-51-3. I will make a play on Dallas if they become a dog again, other wise it's just a lean. **DALLAS 20 PHILADELPHIA 13**

Buffalo –2.5 NY JETS 37.5

I talked about the Carolina team, which seems to be winning despite not winning the yardage battle. The Jets actually sport one of the league's best offenses, from a yards perspective, thanks to their passing game, but they have had trouble converting those yards into points. They are averaging 5.3 yppl against 4.9 yppl (6.6 yps against 5.9 yps but only 2.8 ypr against 3.4 ypr) but they are only averaging 11 points per game against teams allowing 19 points per game. The defense hasn't been as good, allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.2 yppl and they are having trouble stopping the run, allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr. The rush defense might get a break on Sunday because Buffalo has been horrible rushing the ball, averaging just 2.4 ypr against 3.4 ypr. The Buffalo defense has been better than average, allowing just 4.4 yppl against 4.8 yppl and their pass defense has been stellar, allowing just 4.6 yps against 5.5 yps. So, both teams strengths and/or weaknesses go against the other teams strengths and/or weaknesses. Winless teams from week six on, who are a dog or pick 'em are 74-42-5 and the Jets qualify in a subset of that, which is 58-22-4. And winless teams coming off their bye week, as a dog or pick 'em are 17-2 from game number four on. The numbers here favor Buffalo or the Jets, depending on which numbers I use. The situations favor the Jets and it's just a matter of time before they finally convert those yards into points. I also like the under in this game. **NY JETS 17 BUFFALO 16**

DENVER –7 Pittsburgh 45

Here is another team, where the stats and the record are not in agreement. Pittsburgh is moving the ball, averaging 5.1 yppl against 5.0 yppl and 338 yards against teams allowing only 306 yards per game. Their defense is allowing just 4.5 yppl against 4.9 yppl and only 245 yards per game against 303 yards per game. But they are allowing 26 points per game against teams averaging only 21 points per game. So, what is happening? Turnovers are killing this team. The fact Pittsburgh is only allowing 245 yards might not be that impressive. When you turn the ball over and it is returned for a touchdown, your offense gets the ball back and the other teams offense doesn't have a chance to gain any yards. But, the fact their defense is allowing just 4.5 yppl against 4.9 yppl shows their defense is playing well when they actually have a chance to defend the other team. Understand this. Pittsburgh has allowed

27 points directly related to turnovers and kick returns (7 points on kr). They allowed an additional 35 points on turnovers where the other team has only had to go less than 25 yards to score. That breakdown includes six drives (3 less than 10 yards) amassing a grand total of 71 yards (an average of 12 yards per drive) resulting in 35 points. Take away the short drives and the points scored on kick returns (7) and interception returns (20) and this team is allowing 12 points less per game, or only 14 points per game. That's huge. Will it continue? Who knows but I doubt it. Teams make corrections. Those figures alone make this line outrageous. Denver is playing very well and their offense is averaging 5.8 yppl against 5.5 yppl and has been efficient with both, the run and the pass. The Denver defense is playing well too, but mostly in their pass defense, allowing just 4.6 yps against 5.5 yps. Their rush defense has been bad, allowing 4.7 ypr against 4.2 ypr. I'm not sure if Pittsburgh can take advantage of that, seeing they are only averaging 3.3 ypr against 4.3 ypr. The Pittsburgh pass offense has been terrific, gaining 6.3 yps against 5.5 yps but they'll go right into the teeth of the Denver defense with that. Pittsburgh's loss last week as a favorite sets them up in a very solid 69-38-1 bounce back situation. They also qualify as a turnover table play, which is 747-579-30 since 1983. Pittsburgh also qualifies in a contrarian situation, which is 120-67-6 since 1986. The numbers favor Denver here but that is because of all the turnovers. Let's face it. If Pittsburgh continues to turn the ball over, they won't win again. The turnover table system tells us that teams don't continue to do this game after game. Pittsburgh will make the necessary adjustments here and may win this game outright. **PITTSBURGH 24 DENVER 23**

Baltimore –6 ARIZONA 37

Hard to support Arizona here but that's what I'm about to do. The Arizona rush defense has been good this year. They are allowing just 3.2 ypr against 4.2 ypr. Maybe that's because teams are passing at will on them, averaging 7.3 yps against 5.9 yps. The strength of Baltimore is their rushing game, averaging 5.9 ypr against 4.4 ypr and they'll get their share of rushing yards in this game. But Baltimore has had trouble passing the ball, averaging just 3.5 yps against 5.8 yps. Maybe the bye week and a few games under his belt will help Kyle Boller. Only time will tell. For Arizona on offense, they aren't doing much, averaging just 4.8 yppl against 5.1 yppl and their rush offense has been terrible, gaining just 3.1 ypr against 4.2 ypr. Baltimore defends both, the run and pass well, especially against the pass, where they are allowing only 5.0 yps against 5.9 yps. Baltimore also qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 489-380-29 but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. Arizona is a turnover table play and Baltimore also qualifies in a negative scheduling situation, which is a 97-51-3 play against situation. Final numbers support Baltimore in this game but I'll lean with the situations, which side with Arizona. Weak lean. **BALTIMORE 20 ARIZONA 17**

SEATTLE –3.5 San Francisco 45.5

This should be an entertaining game but I have a hard time siding strongly with either team. Both teams are playing good defense, with SF allowing just 4.5 yppl against 4.9 yppl and Seattle allowing just 4.8 yppl against 5.1 yppl. On offense, SF has been below average, averaging just 5.1 yppl against 5.4 yppl and Seattle has been average, gaining 5.2 yppl against 5.2 yppl. The strength of the Seattle offense is their rushing game, which is averaging 4.7 ypr against 4.0 ypr but SF has defended the rush well this year, allowing just 3.4 ypr against 4.0 ypr. Seattle has struggled throwing the ball, averaging just 5.7 yps against 6.2 yps but they get Chris Terry back this week. Holmgren said they had scaled down the passing game without Terry for fear Hasslebeck would get hit from his blind side. But, he said with Terry back, the long passes will resurface immediately. It will be interesting to see how that effects their passing numbers but look for long passes again. Numbers favor Seattle slightly here. With their poor performance last week on defense, Seattle qualifies in a negative situation that is a 164-95-10 play against them but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. If this line were to move to –3 or less, Seattle would qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 128-50-7. I'm going to side with the better defense, as a lean only. **SEATTLE 21 SAN FRANCIS CO 20**

ST LOUIS –11 Atlanta 45.5

Atlanta is really banged up and after playing a very solid first half last week, Minnesota took it to them in the second half. Part of that was them turning the ball over three times to only once for Minnesota. Atlanta gained 104 yards rushing at 6.1 ypr last week and passed for another 336 yards at 7.8 yps. Overall, they gained 440 yards at a whopping 7.3 yppl as Peerless Price finally got involved in the offense. Atlanta also gave up 399 yards at 6.2 yppl,

including 233 yards passing at 9.0 yps. The Atlanta defense is not healthy and not playing well, allowing 5.9 yppl against 5.4 yppl, including 7.5 yps against 6.6 yps. The offense has held their own, gaining 4.9 yppl against 4.9 yppl, making them average and they have been average with both, the run and the pass. I don't know if the Rams can take advantage of the poor Atlanta defense or not. The Rams have averaged just 4.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl, including just 5.6 yps against 6.0 yps. And on defense, the Rams have been awful, allowing 4.8 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 5.9 yps against 5.8 yps for a total of 5.4 yppl against 5.1 yppl. Atlanta qualifies in a general contrarian situation, which is 287-207-10. The fact the Rams only average a paltry 3.2 ypr and are allowing 4.8 ypr doesn't bode well for them here. In fact teams laying points in this situation (there's more to it) are just 28-88-5. That's not good, especially when laying as many points as they are. My numbers support the over in this game and I like the match up as well. Atlanta has scored at least 26 points against their opponents who have allowed 17 or more points per game (Rams are allowing 21). The Rams have allowed each of their opponents to score at least their season averages. Arizona is only averaging 13 points per game and scored 13 points. Atlanta averages 19 points per game, which means they will get at least 19 points, based on that assumption. The Rams have also scored at least 23 points in each of their last three games. Two bad defenses, playing in a controlled environment (dome) should lead to plenty of points here. **ST LOUIS 31 ATLANTA 30**

BEST BETS

YTD 15-10-1 +8.90%

3% PITTSBURGH +6.5

2% WASHINGTON +3.5
2% GREEN BAY –1.5
2% HOUSTON +10
2% ATLANTA +11

2% ATLANTA/ST LOUIS OVER 45.5 (No higher than 47)

POSSIBLE BEST BET

2% DALLAS +1 or more

WEEK 7

I had one of my worse weeks in the NFL in a long time last week, going 1-5. During the last two weeks I have now lost two 17+ point fourth quarter leads but I've also thrown in some very bad picks as well. The good news is even with the bad week, and actually two poor weeks in a row (3-9), the beginning of the year was so good that I am still above .500 (16-15-1) and profitable for the year (+1.20%). The only other bright spot last week was another winner on my 3% game with Pittsburgh. Unfortunately, that was the only winner. Hopefully I'll turn it back around this week.

All side opinions went 5-9 last week and they are now 46-38-3 55% over the first six weeks this year.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.0
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 5.9
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.1

BUFFALO –3 Washington 39

Although they kept it competitive for almost three quarters last week, the cream rose to the top in the end, and it wasn't Washington. TB spanked Washington pretty bad in their 35-13 win. Washington gained but 275 yards at only 4.2 yppl to TB's 379 yards at 6.9 yppl. Also in the mix were six more sacks on Washington quarterbacks. The Washington defense, which played very well last year, has now become a below average defense, allowing 5.0 yppl against teams averaging 4.9 yppl. More importantly, they are allowing 24 points per game to teams averaging just 19 points per game. Combined with poor defensive play, turnovers are giving their opponent's good field position to take advantage of that. The Redskins offense is still just above average, gaining 5.2 yppl against 5.0 yppl but they'll find the going tough this week against a Bills defense that continues to play well. Buffalo was spanked bad themselves last week but their recent slide isn't because of their defense. Their defense allowed the Jets just 233 yards at 4.5 yppl. The Jets are averaging 278 yards at 5.1 yppl for the season so Buffalo's defense did their part. And they have all year, allowing just 4.4 yppl against 4.8 yppl. The problem last week for Buffalo and all year is their offense. Last week they were without Eric Moulds and that certainly hurt them. They gained but 193 yards at a paltry 2.9 yppl. They turned the ball over four more times than the Jets (0-4). They had no chance. The Buffalo offense has been as bad as their defense has been good, gaining just 4.4 yppl against 4.8 yppl. Washington does qualify in a 506-387-30 fundamental rushing situation but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. My numbers favor Buffalo by five to 14 points depending on which of the three sets I use. I'll lean Buffalo's way as I think Buffalo has a better chance to turn things around than Washington does. The numbers also support this game to be higher scoring than 'they' think. **BUFFALO 31 WASHINGTON 21**

NY GIANTS –3 Philadelphia 38

Turnovers continued to haunt the Giants last week, as for the second week in a row, they out gained their opponent but lost on the scoreboard because of costly turnovers, mostly from Kerry Collins. Last week it was a 0-5 ratio and you aren't going to win too many games with those types of numbers. The Giants held NE to just 220 yards at 4.1 yppl and gained 381 yards at 4.5 yppl. The offense and defense for NY are about average this year, gaining 5.1 yppl against 4.9 yppl on offense and allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl on defense. They have run the ball a little better, gaining 4.0 ypr against 3.6 ypr but they'll find that task very tough this week against a Philly defense that is allowing just 4.6 yppl against 5.0 yppl, including just 2.6 ypr against 3.7 ypr. I don't see the Giants running up and down the field on Philly. For the Giants, their rush defense has been below average, allowing 4.0 ypr against 3.9 ypr and they might find some trouble this week against a Philly offense that is averaging 5.0 ypr against 3.7 ypr. Some of that is McNabb but he has to be accounted for. Philly's big weakness this year has been their passing game, which is averaging just 3.7 yps against 5.3 yps. That makes it pretty tough to move the ball with those types of numbers. Phlly qualifies in a general contrarian situation, which is 287-207-10 and they also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 506-387-30, including a subset that is 233-133-12. Their ability to rush the ball and stop the rush is the key in this game. With two quarterbacks struggling, I'll take the better defense and the

more mobile quarterback who can makes things happen on his own. Loser of this game might be out of the race all together. **PHILADELPHIA 21 NY GIANTS 17**

Dallas –3 DETROIT 39

This is a very interesting game because there does appear to be some holes in this Dallas team but their fundamental approach has kept them on the winning side so far. Dallas played another sound game last week, gaining 292 yards at 4.6 yppl against Philly's 232 yards at just 3.9 yppl. For the year, Dallas is averaging 5.4 yppl against 5.2 yppl and allowing just 4.4 yppl against 4.8 yppl. Those numbers are, obviously, above average. But, in the scoring department, which one could argue is most important, they are only scoring 22 points per game against teams allowing 24 points per game and they are allowing 19 points per game against teams averaging just 16 points per game. Those numbers make them below average on both sides of the ball. The point here is, from a yards perspective, they are above average, but in terms of turning those yards into points and stopping the opposing offenses from scoring points, they are below average. My only point here is this might all catch up to them very soon. Only time will tell. I think, ideally, I would like to see them win big here and go to TB next week and it would be a nice spot to go against them. I have situations favoring both teams in this game. Dallas qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 506-387-30, including the best subset of that, which is 134-55-6 (5-1-1 TY). Detroit qualifies in my turnover table situation, which is 751-585-30. The numbers in this game, actually favor Detroit, but I don't like the fundamental matchup in this game. On offense, Dallas throws the ball very well, averaging 7.0 yps against 6.4 yps and their speed at the receiver position has helped them greatly, along with Carter's ability to avoid the costly turnovers. For Detroit, their biggest weakness, is their pass defense, which is allowing 6.8 yps against 6.3 yps. That's a matchup that will be hard for them to overcome and for that reason, I will lean with the Cowboy's, although this might be a 'square' pick this week. The over looks to have a good shot as well. **DALLAS 24 DETROIT 20**

CLEVELAND –5 San Diego 41

SD comes off a bye week and hopes that a week off will bring better luck to them. Hopefully they worked on their defense, because over their first five games this year, they have allowed 5.9 yppl against 5.3 yppl, including a whopping 7.2 yps against 5.8 yps. While it would appear their rush defense isn't very good, allowing 4.6 ypr, it is actually above average, because they have faced very solid rushing offenses that are averaging 4.7 ypr. I also don't think Cleveland can take advantage of their poor pass defense, because Cleveland is only averaging 5.4 yps against 5.6 yps. While they will get some yards through the air, they won't get as many as other opponents have got against SD. And they might not get many at all because they might not have the ball. SD should be able to run the ball in this game, as the Chargers are averaging 5.2 ypr against 4.2 ypr and they'll face a Cleveland defense that is allowing 4.8 ypr against 4.0 ypr. That doesn't bode well for Cleveland. SD qualifies in a 506-387-30 fundamental rushing situation, including a subset that is 410-288-23 (12-5-1 TY). Winless teams from week six on who are a pick 'em or a dog, are now 74-42-5 and SD qualifies in a subset of that, which is 58-22-4. Cleveland has won a couple of games but they are due for a letdown and they qualify in a negative letdown situation that is 47-105-4. And, most importantly, they qualify in a subset of that, which is 23-89-2. That's nearly 80% winners on over 100 plays. That is my best system, at least from a technical standpoint. Combine a tremendous technical situation with a solid fundamental rushing situation and you have the makings of a very, very solid play. I also have a under situation on this game, which is 6-2 this year and now 222-119-6, if the total would go to 42 or higher. My final numbers also support the under, predicting around 34-35 points. I have a tough time taking the under with the SD defense, although I do think they will play much better in this game. It's under or nothing for me. **SAN DIEGO 21 CLEVELAND 14**

Baltimore –2 CINCINNATI 36.5

This game sets up much like the Dallas game. Baltimore qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 506-387-30, including the best subset of that, which is 134-55-6 (5-1-1 TY). But, Cincinnati qualifies in my turnover table system, which is 751-585-30. Cincinnati comes in fresh off their bye and one would think Marvin Lewis might have had enough time to scheme his way into a game plan that can attack his old defense. Baltimore won last week against Arizona, in comfortable fashion, but it was their defense and special teams that did all the work. The rushing game did wonders again, rushing for 213 yards at 5.6 ypr but their passing game continues to be non-

existent. Last week, they passed for just 72 yards at 3.8 yps. Some of the players are now rumbling about how the offense needs to be better balanced. Meanwhile, Billick continues to say that is not the kind of team we are. The rushing game continues to thrive, now averaging 5.9 ypr against 4.3 ypr and the passing game continues to stumble, averaging just 3.5 yps against 6.0 yps. They'll face a Cincinnati defense that is below average stopping the rush, allowing 4.1 ypr against 3.8 ypr but above average stopping the pass, allowing just 5.4 yps against 5.7 yps. For Cincinnati on offense, what they do well is pass the ball, but that could be tough against this Baltimore defense. Cincy is averaging 5.8 yps against 5.1 yps but Baltimore is allowing just 5.2 yps against 5.9 yps. Cincinnati doesn't run the ball well, averaging just 2.9 ypr against 4.3 ypr and Dillon might not play this week, while Baltimore's only weakness on defense is stopping the rush, allowing 3.9 ypr against 3.9 ypr. And they are actually average at that, which doesn't really make it a weakness. The line is pretty close to my numbers, as is the total, but I would lean towards the under. I chose fundamentals in the Dallas game and I will here too. **BALTIMORE 20 CINCINNATI 14**

MINNESOTA –3.5 Denver 44

Toughest matchup to date for Minnesota. They will face an above average offense, like they have themselves, but a top rated defense, which they haven't faced yet. Denver dominated the game two weeks ago against KC but lost the game because of another Dante Hall kick return. Last week, they dominated the numbers again but ran up against a very solid Pittsburgh defense, which made it hard to convert yards into points. This week they face a below average defense, which has thrived on the turnovers, to keep opponents out of the endzone. They may get a break this week because Jake Plummer won't play. While Steve Beuerlein is a capable backup, they'll miss Plummer's ability to roll out and scramble away from pressure. That could be the difference in this game. Minnesota is running the ball well but not as well as they would like. They are averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.3 ypr. Mike Tice has repeatedly said his team will run the ball with they can block all the defenders in the box and pass the ball when the defense puts too many people in the box. But he also said they have had trouble at the end of the game, when they want to run the ball and eat the clock away with the lead, when the defense has more men in the box than they can block. And the Vikings are throwing the ball very well this year, thanks to Randy Moss's ability to leap up and catch balls. They are averaging 8.0 yps against 6.3 yps. The Denver defense is allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr but their pass defense has been outstanding, allowing just 4.4 yps against 5.7 yps. Something has to give here. The linebackers on Denver are the best Minnesota has faced this year, although Denver has some injuries there. For Denver, their advantage in this game comes with their offense, which matches up against a poor Vikings defense. I talked about the not so obvious holes in the Dallas team. The same thing is happening here and it's just a matter of time to see, which way it goes. Minnesota is allowing just 17 points per game against teams averaging 21 points per game, thanks in part to their defense creating timely turnovers. But they are allowing 5.3 yppl against 4.9 yppl, including 4.5 ypr against 4.4 ypr and 5.8 yps against 5.3 yps. That doesn't bode well for the future. Can Denver take advantage of that on Sunday? Time will tell because I don't think they are as good with Beuerlein, on the road, in a noisy dome. But Denver is doing very well on offense this year, averaging 4.9 ypr against 4.4 ypr and 6.5 yps against 6.1 yps for a total of 5.7 yppl against 5.3 yppl. There are no situations to play on here. Minnesota would qualify in a very solid situation if they were favored by three or less and Denver qualifies in my turnover table situation, but that situation doesn't work as well for teams coming off a win. Bottom line in this game is two good offenses (Minnesota's is better) against a below average defense and a top rated defense, which is Denver. You know the old saying. Defense wins games and it wins this game. I also lean pretty strongly to the under in this game. **DENVER 20 MINNESOTA 17**

CAROLINA –2 Tennessee 37.5

This is team number three that we have to keep an eye on this year. Carolina, as I have said for a few weeks now, is also very interesting, in that they are not giving up any points (14 per game against teams averaging 21) but they are allowing yards per play (5.4 yppl against 5.3 yppl), which makes them a bit below average. Again, something will give there. I'm more inclined to think they will continue to not allow teams to score because they have done it in the past. On offense, much like Baltimore, they are running the ball very well but not passing the ball well at all. They are averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr but only averaging 5.0 yps against 6.3 yps. The defense has been average, at best, allowing 4.0 ypr against 3.8 ypr and 6.4 yps against 6.4 yps. Again, they are not allowing points, so we'll see which way that goes. Carolina averaged 6.6 yps last week against Indianapolis and that could be key here because they will face a terrible Tennessee pass defense, which is allowing a whopping 6.7 yps against 6.0 yps,

which includes allowing David Carr to throw for 367 yards at 8.5 yps last week. The Tennessee rush defense has been below average as well, allowing 4.0 ypr against 3.8 ypr and overall on defense, Tennessee is allowing 5.7 yppl against 5.1 yppl. Tennessee simply can't rush the ball, as they are averaging only 2.8 ypr against 4.1 ypr but they have thrown the ball terrific this year, averaging 8.1 yps against 6.2 yps. That includes last week's game, where Tennessee threw for 421 yards at 15.0 yps! Tennessee is in a letdown situation, which is a 167-115-9 play against situation and Carolina qualifies in three different fundamental rushing situations, which are 506-387-30 (they don't qualify in any better subsets of that situation, which is 17-7-1 TY), in a 71-30-3 fundamental situation and a 128-53-7 fundamental rushing situation. Final numbers support Carolina by two to eight points. Value, sound situations and the better defense at home win this game. **CAROLINA 23 TENNESSEE 14**

New Orleans –1 ATLANTA 41

Here's a matchup of two worthless teams that aren't going anywhere this year. Atlanta will start Kurt Kittner at quarterback and I'm not sure he'll do much of anything here. The Atlanta offense is below average, gaining just 4.8 yppl against 5.0 yppl, while their defense has been torched this year, allowing 6.1 yppl against 5.4 yppl. The rush defense has allowed 4.4 ypr against 4.0 ypr and the pass defense has been atrocious, allowing 7.9 yps against 6.5 yps. I don't know if NO can take advantage of that or not. Normally I would say yes, but their offense hasn't been very good this year. They are averaging 4.4 ypr against 4.3 ypr and will run the ball well in this game. Their passing offense has been disappointing this year, gaining just 5.7 yps against 6.4 yps, which means they have faced some below average pass defenses and not been able to exploit them. On defense, they are about average, allowing 5.2 yppl against 5.2 yppl. NO qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 506-387-30, including a subset, which is 314-209-16 (11-4-1 TY). NO has the better defense, rushing game, quarterback, the fundamentals to support them and if they don't turn the ball over, they should win this game. **NEW ORLEANS 26 ATLANTA 21**

MIAMI –5.5 New England 37.5

For such a big game, I don't have much on this game. Both teams look pretty average, from a yards per play perspective, but I would venture to say Miami seems to be playing a little better as of late. Although, their win last week was a little misleading, seeing they only averaged 4.5 yppl to 4.4 yppl for Jacksonville, but benefited from a +3 turnover margin. NE, on the other hand, as I pointed out in the Giants writeup, won their game but were outplayed and they, too, benefited from the +5 turnover margin. For the season, Miami is averaging 5.0 yppl against 5.1 yppl and allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.0 yppl. NE is averaging 4.7 yppl against 4.9 yppl while allowing 4.9 yppl against 5.0 yppl. Miami qualifies as a turnover table play but teams that won their last game don't do as well in that situation. NE also qualifies in a negative letdown situation that is a 167-115-9 play against situation. Final numbers support Miami and I will lean that way. **MIAMI 21 NEW ENGLAND 12**

ST LOUIS –4 Green Bay 49

The Packers blew a golden opportunity last week. They could have gone into this game with a three game winning streak and possibly a four game winning streak coming out of the bye and heading to Minnesota. But a few things happened along the way and their 17 point fourth quarter lead vanished. Mike McKenzie was hurt early in that game and his departure helped KC throw their way back into the game. A Brett Favre interception returned for a touchdown also helped and then an Ahman Green fumble in overtime, when GB had great field position, put the final nail in the coffin for GB. The Packers were burned through the air in that game, allowing KC to gain 400 yards throwing at 8.9 yps. Even if you take away the last pass (a 51 yards touchdown throw), they still allowed 7.9 yps. And, with McKenzie probably out for this game as well, their pass defense could be in trouble again against a Rams offense that is throwing for 6.4 yps against 6.2 yps. GB will get back Antuawn Edwards this week and that should help. GB stuffed the Chiefs running game last week, allowing just 82 yards at 3.2 ypr, but some of that could have been because KC was throwing to try and catch up. GB also lost Joe Johnson last week for the season, and that could hurt their rush defense as well. But, as bad as their defense might appear to be or is, they aren't any worse than the Rams defense, which has been able to camouflage their defense the last two weeks against anemic offenses of Arizona and Atlanta. The Rams are still allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 5.2 yppl against 5.0 yppl. This week, they will finally meet a team who can take advantage of their poor rush defense. GB is averaging 5.0 ypr against 4.4 ypr and throwing the ball for another 6.3 yps against 6.1 yps. With Wesley Walls now into the mix on offense, Favre has plenty of weapons to throw the ball to and Green is running better than ever this year. I know

all about GB's problems in the dome, but that is vastly overrated. Most of those games, the line hasn't been favorable to Green Bay bettors. As a matter of fact, since 1992 (when Favre started playing with GB), the Packers are just 6-16-0 in domes when they are getting three or less points (also favored), but when GB is getting more than three points, they are 6-1. These numbers are for regular season only. Give a good team points on the road, when they aren't expected to do anything, and they will oblige. GB has won four of those seven games straight up, while two of the three losses were by four and three points. Coming in as a favorite, teams have been fired up to beat them. But, as dogs, all of a sudden, they don't appear to be quite as good anymore, and teams relax a little against them. GB qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 506-387-30, including a subset of that, which is 410-288-23 (12-5-1 TY). Meanwhile, the Rams are in for a letdown and they qualify in a negative situation that is a 105-47-4 play against them, including the subset of that, which is an amazing 89-23-2 play against them. Those two solid situations, along with what appears to be value on GB make GB the side in this one. My numbers show about 46-49 points in this game but I have a very good under situation in this game, which is 6-2 this year and 222-119-6 overall. The fundamentals line up to the over, but the value isn't there and the technicals show the under to be the right side of the total. Probably a good total to avoid. **GREEN BAY 24 ST LOUIS 23**

NY Jets –3 HOUSTON 37.5

I had Houston last week and they disappointed me big time. While I realized their pass defense wasn't that good and facing a good Tennessee passing offense, I didn't expect them to allow over 420 yards through the air and 15.0 yps. Maybe Aaron Glenn makes that big of a difference in the secondary as he missed last week and will probably miss this week. While the technicals line up to Houston again this week, they unfortunately, get the same type of poor matchup with the Jets this week. I talked last week about how good the Jets offense actually is performing. They ran the ball a lot last week, which kept their yards per play average down, because they still can't run the ball real well. But, when they did pass, they continued to throw the ball well, averaging 6.1 yps last week against a Buffalo defense that is allowing just 4.7 yps this year. For the year now, the Jets are averaging 6.5 yps against 5.6 yps, which helps their offense average 5.1 yppl against 4.8 yppl (3.0 ypr against 3.6 ypr). While their defense has allowed rushing yards to the tune of 4.3 ypr against 3.7 ypr, their pass defense has been pretty good, allowing just 5.3 yps against 5.9 yps. Last week Houston, at least, had a favorable matchup in their passing game, because they were facing a below average Tennessee secondary. But this week, the Houston passing offense (6.5 yps against 6.3 yps) will face a stiffer test. And Houston hasn't been able to rush the ball (3.7 ypr against 3.9 ypr) to take advantage of the Jets porous rush defense. The problem for Houston again this week is that outstanding Jets passing offense against a Houston secondary that is allowing an amazing 8.5 yps against 6.6 yps. That doesn't bode well for Houston. Houston does qualify as a turnover table play, which is 751-585-30 and they qualify in three different subsets of that, which are 33-13-0, 123-65-3 and 136-77-4. Bad teams laying points is never a good option and the Jets qualify in a negative situation based on that, which is 44-17-1 and plays against them here. Technicals line up for Houston, fundamentals line up with the Jets as does the value in this game. I will have to lean the way of the Jets because of that. **NY JETS 21 HOUSTON 17**

SEATTLE –11 Chicago 41.5

I'll start this by saying Chicago qualifies as a turnover table play and that system is 751-585-30, including a subset, which is 117-69-4 but that's about all the good things I can say about the Bears. If I knew Anthony Thomas was playing (he's doubtful) and Kordell Stewart was playing, I would give the Bears a shot to get this cover. While I realize how bad Stewart is and can be, he, at least, gives them an option to avoid the rush. I don't know how Chris Chandler is going to be able to do that on the road. It could get ugly very quickly. The Bears defense has been pretty average this year, allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.4 yppl, and a little worse than average against the run (4.8 ypr against 4.5 ypr) and average against the pass (6.0 yps against 6.0 yps). On offense, they have run the ball well, especially as of late, with the combination of Stewart scrambling and Thomas finding holes. But their 5.0 ypr against 4.2 ypr doesn't do much for me when it looks like both of those guys will be out of action. Now, you have to rely on their passing game, which is averaging just 3.8 yps against 5.9 yps. That should get a little better with Chandler but he'll probably get knocked out of this game with a concussion and he isn't going to make that much of a difference anyway. For Seattle, their defense is playing very well right now, allowing just 4.7 yppl against 5.2 yppl and above average against the run and pass. On offense, they are averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr and should be able to do some damage against the Bears rush defense. The passing game is still behind, averaging just 5.7 yps against 6.0 yps, but Holmgren was holding back the pass offense until he got Chris Terry back last week. Last week the

wind dictated a lot of what they could and couldn't do. If there isn't any wind, I look for them to air it out this week. This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 6-2 this year and 222-119-6 overall, if the total would go to 42 or higher. My final predicted score shows about 38 to 41 points being scored, which would favor the under if the total goes to 42 or more. Those numbers also favor Seattle by close to 20 points and I see no reason not to agree with them, even if the turnover table situation favors Chicago. **SEATTLE 28 CHICAGO 10**

Tampa Bay –3.5 SAN FRANCISCO 40

The TB offense is clicking along just fine right now, averaging 5.5 yppl against 5.3 yppl, including 7.0 yps against 6.4 yps. Their rushing game still isn't doing anything, gaining just 3.6 ypr against 3.9 ypr. On defense, they are still playing solid, allowing just 4.5 yppl against 5.0 yppl, and above average against the run and the pass. For SF, their offense is having problems getting going, gaining just 5.0 yppl against 5.2 yppl but their defense has been extremely solid, allowing just 4.6 yppl against 5.0 yppl and above average against the run and the pass. SF qualifies in two different fundamental rushing situations in this game, which are 107-53-6 and 128-53-7. They also qualify as a turnover table play, which is 751-585-30 and they qualify in a subset, which is 136-77-4. SF's ability to play defense and their potential big play makers on offense (Garcia and Owens) give them a chance in this game. Yes, the TB defense can make people look bad, including Garcia, which they did last year in the playoffs, but getting points with a solid defense that can run the ball, always gives you a chance at the cover. Final numbers suggest about a four point game here, which is fair value, especially when you consider the solid situations in SF's favor. **SAN FRANCISCO 21 TAMPA BAY 17**

Kansas City –3.5 OAKLAND 47

I can make a decent case to go against KC here but I'm not sure I can make a good enough case to take Oakland in this game. KC is either a team of destiny this year or they are living on borrowed time. Their offense has played very well this year, gaining 5.7 yppl against 5.2 yppl and well above average with both the run and pass. But, their defense, is much like Minnesota's defense, in that they are giving up yards but turnovers, etc. are keeping the points off the board. KC is only allowing 19 points per game against teams averaging 22 points per game, but they are allowing 5.5 yppl against 5.3 yppl and below average against the run and the pass. If you think back over their last three games, they have been extremely lucky to win those games. But, sometimes hard work, opportunity and luck are camouflaged as just that, luck, when in fact it's the makings of a good team. Against Baltimore, they were out gained 265-326 and 4.5 yppl to 6.0 yppl. In that game, it took a Dante Hall kick off return late in the game to seal the win. Against Denver a week later, they were out gained 261-469 and 4.9 yppl to 6.7 yppl. Again, it took a Dante Hall punt return to get the victory. Against, GB last week, they had more yards and a better yards per play, but they were being beaten soundly until key injuries to GB helped KC get back in the game, along with an interception return for a touchdown. Maybe their good enough to overcome all of that each week, but I have to believe it catches up to them at some point. I'm just not sure if it happens with this Oakland team this week, who has showed no heart at all this year. Oakland is below average on offense, gaining just 5.0 yppl against 5.2 yppl and below average on defense, allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.1 yppl, including 4.7 ypr against 4.0 ypr. Priest Holmes should have a field day against this rush defense. Oakland qualifies in a couple of contrary situations, which are 116-64-3 but they don't qualify in the better subset of that, which is 43-13-0. They also qualify as a turnover table play, which is 751-585-30. I'll side with Oakland in this game because of the situations and the fact I believe KC will come back down to earth sooner rather than later. The numbers greatly favor KC here but I will rely on the situations, which are usually stronger. This game also qualifies in a under situation, which is 4-1 this year and now 290-217-11 overall. Final numbers in this game suggest about 49 to 54 points so I don't see enough value in the under for me. **KANSAS CITY 24 OAKLAND 23**

BEST BETS

YTD 16-15-1 +1.20%

3% SAN DIEGO +5

2% PHILADELPHIA +3
2% CAROLINA –1.5

2% GREEN BAY +4
2% SAN FRANCISCO +3.5

WEEK 8

A nice bounce back last week, going 3-2 and winning the 3% play again. The top play (3%) is now 4-1 this year and hopefully we'll continue to grind out a profit this week.

All side opinions went 7-7 last week and they are now 53-45-3 54% over the first seven weeks this year.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.0
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 5.9
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.1

NEW ENGLAND –5 Cleveland 37.5

Everyone keeps waiting for NE to collapse because of all of their injuries but it doesn't look like it's going to happen. During the preseason, NE looked very good. They are starting to look like that team once again. The numbers for NE are really just average, gaining 4.8 yppl against teams allowing 4.9 yppl and allowing 4.9 yppl against teams averaging 4.9 yppl. But, somehow, someway, they are getting the job done. As for Cleveland, they bring an anemic offense (4.5 yppl against 5.1 yppl) along with a better than average defense. Unfortunately for them, there is a weak link to their defense, which is the rush defense. I used SD as my top play last week because of Cleveland's inability to stop the run, allowing 5.1 ypr against teams averaging just 4.2 ypr. And, because of that, NE qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 510-391-30 (21-11-1 TY), including it's best subset, which is 135-56-6 (6-2-1 TY). But Cleveland falls into a very solid contrarian situation, which is 108-55-5 (2-0 TY) and they also qualify in another contrarian turnover situation, which is 754-588-30. Line appears to be about right, but the situations lean towards Cleveland and I will to, in a bounce back roll, after losing as a favorite last week. **NEW ENGLAND 17 CLEVELAND 14**

BALTIMORE –2 Denver 38

This is a tough game for me to call because the situations lean one way, the value leans another way, yet there are key injuries for Denver that must be accounted for. Misleading final #1 comes from Cincinnati last week, where the Ravens dominated the game from the stats department, but failed on the scoreboard because of turnovers. That's happened a lot this year to them and they'll need to change that if they hope to get any better. Baltimore gained 390 yards last week to only 303 for Cincinnati and averaged 6.6 yppl to only 5.1 yppl for Cincinnati. But a –3 in the turnover department killed any hopes they had of winning that game. Denver also suffered a –3 in the turnover department and was out averaged by Minnesota, 4.7 yppl to 6.8 yppl. In their defense, two long pass plays really did them in, along with an interception returned for a touchdown. But, that's life in the NFL with a back up quarterback. They are now down to their third string qb, in Danny Kanell, who looked pretty good last week. But, often, back up qb's look good until a team sees them on game film and can game plan against them. Baltimore has been just average on offense this year, gaining 5.1 yppl against teams allowing 5.1 yppl. Obviously, they have been very strong rushing the ball (5.6 ypr against 4.3 ypr) and very unproductive throwing the ball, averaging just 4.5 yps against 5.8 yps. They did average 8.9 yps last week so maybe things are changing a little. But they were also playing from behind and some of those yards were mop up yards. Baltimore gets a break this week by going against just an average rush defense, in Denver, who allows 4.1 ypr against 4.1 ypr. The strength of the Denver defense has been their pass defense, which is allowing 5.0 yps against 5.9 yps. But, for a team like Baltimo re, who likes to run the ball, they should have some success on the ground. Baltimore actually qualifies in two different fundamental rushing situations, which are 71-31-3 and 129-53-7 and set them up nicely here. The strength of the Denver offense has been their running game, averaging 4.9 ypr against 4.4 ypr but they'll face a Baltimore defense that is above average against both, the run and the pass, allowing just 3.6 ypr against 3.8 ypr. But Baltimore's poor defensive effort last week, allowing 34 points to Cincinnati, sets them up in a negative 60-125-10 situation, including the best subset of that, which is 22-65-2 and plays against Baltimore here. Value also appears to lie with Denver but the situations lean towards Baltimore and so will I. **BALTIMORE 21 DENVER 17**

PITTSBURGH –1 St. Louis 46

I've gone against the Rams three straight weeks now and lost all three times. And, I'm going against them again this week. The Rams have only played two games on the road this year and haven't been on the road in over a month (three straight home games surrounding a bye week). The Steelers come off a bye week, after playing a good game at Denver but coming up short (they did cover for me as a 3% play). If you go back to my write up for that Denver game, you'll notice how I commented on Pittsburgh's defense has played fantastic this year but they've been given extremely short fields to play with because of turnovers. I talked about how they had allowed 62 points either directly to turnovers or kick returns or their opponent having to go less than 25 yards for a touchdown. I talked about if you removed those numbers from their defense, they were allowing only 14 points per game, instead of the 26 points per game they were allowing going into that game. They only turned it over once in that game and allowed Denver only 17 points. Their defense has been solid, allowing just 4.6 yppl against 5.2 yppl, which includes just 3.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 5.5 yps against 6.2 yps. And that will match up very well against the Rams offense, which isn't running the ball well at all, averaging just 3.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr. Until last week's outburst of 4.9 ypr against GB, the Rams hadn't topped the 3.8 ypr mark. The reason I've chosen to go against the Rams as of late is because of their defense. The defense is just not that good. They are allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.2 yppl, which includes 4.5 ypr against 4.3 ypr and 5.9 yps against 5.8 yps. Take out their two games against anemic teams Arizona and Atlanta, and they have allowed at least 4.4 ypr to every other team. Can Pittsburgh take advantage of that? I'm not sure because their rushing offense has been terrible this year too, averaging just 3.2 ypr against 4.3 ypr. But, at home, they haven't allowed a team to rush for better than 3.8 ypr, which includes their game against Baltimore. So, I don't think either team will rush the ball very well, but I think Pittsburgh has the better chance to succeed. Pittsburgh has been successful again this year throwing the ball, averaging 5.8 yps against 5.6 yps so they should have some success in the air again this week. With the turnover problem, I think Cowher would like to establish the run a little more and by inserting Bettis into the starting lineup, he may be looking to run the ball a little more as well. The Rams have succeeded partly because they have won the turnover battle the last three weeks but they actually qualify in a negative situation based on that premise, which is a 77-30-1 play against them here. Teams don't continue to turn the ball over or get turnovers, in general, with the exception of a few teams. And, a lot of their success has come because of fumbles, which are even more random, meaning their luck is even more likely to come to an end very soon. The Rams have also scored an awful lot of points here the last few weeks, which has kept this line down. Because of that, they qualify in another negative situation, which is a 79-41-5 play against situation. The Rams, after allowing 11 sacks the first two weeks, are now keeping more people on the offensive line to block for Bulger (only three sacks the last four weeks). That generally means they are only sending two and sometimes three receivers downfield, and keeping the tight ends in to block. Although they have been able to score some points because of turnovers and anemic teams they have been facing, they aren't the same explosive offense they used to be because of this. Ball control has actually become more important to Mike Martz. That'll suit just fine against a very good Steeler defense. Meanwhile, like I said earlier, I believe Pittsburgh would like to run the ball a little more and take some of the pressure off of Tommy Maddox. This game sets up into two terrific under situations, which are 293-218-11 (7-2 TY) and 222-118-6 (6-1 TY). My final numbers indicate about 43 points being scored but, remember, Pittsburgh is actually allowing about 10 points less because of the turnovers they have put themselves in, which means their defense is really only allowing about 14 points per game instead of the 24 points per game their numbers show. And, the Rams have succeeded as of late because of turnovers, which are due to turn on them. Pittsburgh and the under look to be the winning ticket here. **PITTSBURGH 24 ST LOUIS 14**

Seattle –1.5 CINCINNATI 42

Read my write up on the Baltimore/Denver game to find out how misleading Cincinnati's final last week was. And, quite honestly, so was Seattle's. Seattle dominated that game, from a stats standpoint, gaining 335 yards to only 221 for Chicago and averaging 5.9 yppl to just 3.2 for the Bears. Turnovers were even but for some reason, they just couldn't put the Bears away. Chicago did control the clock, with 34+ minutes of ball control, which had something to do with it. Cincinnati does qualify in a 152-102-10 home underdog momentum situation this week but Seattle qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 210-391-30 (21-11-1 TY) but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. Let's face it. Seattle has the better offense (5.3 yppl against 5.2 yppl to just 4.7 yppl for Cincy against 4.8 yppl) and the much better defense. Their defense is allowing just 4.5 yppl against teams averaging 5.2 yppl, while Cincy is allowing 5.1 yppl against 4.9 yppl. The strength of Cincinnati's offense has been their

passing game, averaging 6.1 yps against 5.2 yps but they'll face a very tough test against Seattle's pass defense, which is allowing just 5.0 yps against 5.8 yps. Very short number for the team with the better offense and defense, who should be focused after seeing what Cincinnati did to Baltimore last week and getting their own scare against Chicago last week. **SEATTLE 23 CINCINNATI 15**

CHICAGO –3 Detroit

Does anyone really care about this game? Detroit is below average on offense, gaining just 4.4 yppl against 4.9 yppl but their rushing offense has been getting better, averaging 3.8 ypr against 3.9 ypr. They'll go against a Chicago defense that is allowing 5.5 yppl against 5.5 yppl but has been poor against the rush, allowing 4.8 ypr against 4.5 ypr. For Chicago on offense, they are below average, gaining just 4.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl, including being good with the rush (4.6 ypr against 4.2 ypr) but poor with the passing game (3.7 yps against 5.7 yps). They'll face a Detroit defense, which is about average, allowing 5.6 yppl against 5.5 yppl but better against the rush than the pass. But, the Bears can't throw the ball anyway, and with Chris Chandler at qb, he's a sitting duck with any type of pass rush. Both teams qualify in contrarian situations, but the value seems to lie with Detroit and I will lean that way as well, because of the value and the match up seems to favor Detroit slightly. **DETROIT 23 CHICAGO 19**

MINNESOTA –5.5 NY Giants 44

If you believe turnovers never change and teams getting them continue to get them and teams committing them continue to commit them, then the Vikings are your play this week. But, I'm telling you that just doesn't happen. Trying to predict when it changes is another battle, in and of itself, but this week looks like a good shot at it happening. The Giants qualify in my turnover table situation, which is 754-588-30 since 1983. The fact the Giants have lost three games in a row is just about directly related to turnovers. And, they must change that if they are to win this week. But looking back at their last three games, they have dominated the competition, only to lose the game because of turnovers. Their game last week was actually even in the turnover battle and they ended up losing the game because of the punt return. But their games against Miami and New England, they won the yardage and yards per play battle but lost because of massive turnovers. For the Vikings, their defense is allowing 5.2 yppl against teams averaging 5.0 yppl but only 17 points per game against teams averaging 21 points per game. That means they are allowing the yards but getting the turnovers to keep other teams from scoring. No question the Minnesota passing offense has been nothing short of spectacular this year, gaining 8.3 yps against teams allowing just 6.2 yps. They'll face a Giants defense, which has been above average defending the pass, allowing just 5.4 yps against 5.7 yps. Still, the Vikings will get their yards through the air this week. But the Vikings rushing game hasn't been as good this year, gaining just 4.4 ypr against 4.3 ypr. Even more telling is if you take out their games against Chicago, Detroit and Atlanta (three sorry ass teams), they have failed to average more than 4.3 ypr against Denver, San Francisco and Green Bay. Against those three teams, they are averaging just 3.7 ypr. They are still throwing the ball successfully against those teams but the running game hasn't been as good. And except for the Green Bay game (where the Packers got down early and gave up on the run) and against Detroit, they have allowed at least 4.7 ypr against each of their other opponents, including Atlanta and Chicago (who actually is above average rushing the ball). The Giants average 4.1 ypr against teams allowing 3.5 ypr so they should get some yards rushing the ball and control the clock some. They also have the offensive weapons at the receiver position to do some damage through the air. They just need to stop turning the ball over. The Giants also qualify in another contrarian situation, which is 121-55-6, including a subset of that, which is 105-38-5. The final numbers support Minnesota but they should because of the turnover situation for both teams. That's why I say situations are better indicators than the value because teams don't continue to turn the ball over. Unless your numbers take into account this information, the situations are the better indicator. This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 293-218-11 (7-2 TY). **MINNESOTA 22 NY GIANTS 21**

Tennessee –4 JACKSONVILLE 44

Teams that continue to overcome situations going against them, week after week, are usually teams that go far into the playoffs. I have gone against Tennessee each of the past three weeks and gone 1-2 in those games. The lone win was the New England game and Tennessee could have won and covered that game too. But, the situations go against them this week and they are simply too strong to ignore them. I'll either go down in flames again or they will finally catch up to Tennessee. Misleading boxscore #1 comes from the Titans game last week. Yes, they domi-

nated the game on the scoreboard, winning 37-17. But, if you simply looked at the final numbers, you would have seen Carolina out gain Tennessee 383-348 and out average them 5.5 yppl to 5.4 yppl. And then you would look and see Carolina turned the ball over four times and you might conclude that Carolina was the right side. But, you must look further into the numbers to really realize what happened. Tennessee averaged 3.7 ypr to Carolina's 2.6 ypr and averaged 7.6 yps to Carolina's 6.4 yps. If they won both of those battles, why were they out gained and out averaged? Simply because Tennessee got the lead and ran the ball 36 times to only 17 times for Carolina, while Carolina was playing catch up mode, by throwing the ball 49 times to only 25 times for Tennessee. Just make sure you understand the numbers when you look at them. For this game, the match up is a good one for Jacksonville. This game, as do most games, will come down to turnovers. If Bryon Leftwich, who I like an awful lot, can avoid throwing the turnovers, which might be asking a lot, they can win this game. The weakness to the Tennessee defense, which is allowing 5.7 yppl against 5.1 yppl, is their pass defense, which is allowing 6.6 yps against 6.0 yps. Jacksonville can take advantage of that, as they are averaging 6.3 yps against 6.2 yps and I think they will find some holes in the Tennessee pass defense. The weakness to the Jacksonville defense, is their pass defense as well, allowing 6.4 yps against 6.1 yps. And, they'll face a very stiff challenge from the Tennessee passing game, which is averaging 8.1 yps against 6.2 yps. Tennessee still can't run the ball and Jacksonville stops the run very well, allowing just 3.1 ypr against 4.0 ypr. Hard to tell if that will come into play here with the passing games both likely to succeed but the Jacksonville defense is playing better, from a yards perspective, but allowing points because of the turnovers. I'm betting that changes this week. Jacksonville qualifies in my turnover table situation, which is 754-588-30 since 1983. They also qualify in a two different fundamental rushing situations, which are 108-53-6 and 510-391-30, including a subset, which is 235-134-12. Value lies with Tennessee, of course, but if the turnovers turn a little, Jacksonville stands a good chance. Tennessee, who has been getting the turnovers, also qualifies in a negative 62-101-2 situation that implies their luck will run out this week. The over also looks good in this game, with both teams having the ability to throw the ball in this game. My final number suggest about 51 points being scored. **JACKSONVILLE 27 TENNESSEE 24**

TAMPA BAY –6.5 Dallas 36.5

Solid match up between two teams heading in opposite directions. I was wrong when I picked Washington over Tampa Bay two weeks ago but was right on, for the same reasons, when I picked San Francisco last week. Actually, in hindsight, SF has a much better defense than Washington and has the big playmakers that were needed to beat Tampa Bay last week. But I took both of those teams because they fit solid fundamental rushing situations. The facts continue that TB can't run the ball (3.7 ypr against 4.0 ypr) and aren't doing much to stop the rush either, allowing 4.2 ypr against 4.2 ypr. Last year their pass defense was out standing, and while it is still above average, it isn't nearly as good, allowing 5.3 yps against 5.5 yps. And, it might continue to get worse with the injuries they are suffering on defense. Life sure is harder when you have injuries and they stayed relatively healthy last year but are finding the going much tougher with their current rash of injuries, which is depleting their depth. This week, Dallas qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 510-390-30 (21-11-1 TY), including the best subset, which is 135-56-6 (6-2-1 TY). The Dallas rushing offense is actually below average as well, gaining just 3.7 ypr against 4.0 ypr but their rush defense is outstanding, allowing just 3.2 ypr against 4.0 ypr. And their pass defense is allowing just 4.9 yps against 5.2 yps, which is key against a solid TB pass offense, which is averaging 6.8 yps against 6.3 yps. The Dallas passing offense has been great this year, gaining 7.0 yps against 6.4 yps. They have plenty of speed at the receiver position to take advantage of TB if they come out of the cover-2 scheme and are forced to play man to man defense. TB does qualify in a very solid bounce back situation that is 120-67-4, based on their bad loss last week. And TB is 19-1 off a loss as a favorite in their last 20 tries (2-0 TY) but Bill Parcells is now 34-15-1 as an away dog of more than three points. Situations lean both ways, numbers suggest about a five point game. Looks like a great game to watch but not bet on. I'll lean with the dog. **TAMPA BAY 21 DALLAS 17**

NEW ORLEANS –2 Carolina 39

Even though I was on Carolina last week because of the situations they were in, I've talked for weeks now about how their record might be a little deceiving. Carolina is allowing just 18 points per game against teams averaging 23 points per game but their defense is allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.4 yppl, which makes their defense average, from a stats standpoint. They are allowing 3.9 ypr against 3.7 ypr, while NO is averaging 4.4 ypr against 4.2 ypr and should be able to move the ball some on this defense. The NO defense is just average, as well, allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl but the Carolina offense has been below average, averaging just 4.9 yppl against 5.4 yppl and

they've been horrific trying to throw the ball, averaging just 5.4 yps against 6.4 yps. NO does qualify in a 102-60-11 (6-3 TY) home momentum situation based on their convincing win last week but they don't qualify in the better subset (just 34-32 without the subset). My final numbers make this line two so the line appears to be about right. I will side with, what I consider to be the better team, and that is New Orleans. **NEW ORLEANS 20 CAROLINA 15**

San Francisco –6.5 ARIZONA 41

Arizona comes off a bye this week, while San Francisco comes off their dominating win over Tampa Bay last week. I used San Francisco last week because they fit some very strong fundamental rushing situations, and rush they did. SF gained 212 yards rushing last week at 5.2 yards per rush. They also passed the ball for another 246 yards at 8.2 yps, gaining 458 total yards at 6.5 yppl. TB gained 326 themselves at 5.7 yppl. Even with that success, SF is still only gaining 4.4 ypr against 4.5 ypr but their passing game has been succeeding, gaining 6.0 yps against 5.6 yps. As I mentioned last week, it's been their defense that is playing so well for them, allowing just 4.8 yppl against 5.1 yppl and succeeding against both, the run and the pass. For Arizona, well, their defense hasn't been that good, although they have defended the run pretty well, allowing just 3.7 ypr against 4.4 ypr but they're allowing a whopping 6.9 yps against 5.9 yps. They can't run the ball themselves, gaining just 3.4 ypr against 3.9 yps but they have thrown the ball well, gaining 5.9 yps against 5.7 yps. Arizona qualifies as a turnover table system play, which is 754-688-30 since 1983 and they also qualify in another contrarian situation. Final numbers support SF but the situations are always considered stronger for me and I will lean their way. Arizona simply isn't good enough for me to play but the situations dictate SF comes back down to earth and Arizona rises to the occasion. **SAN FRANCISCO 21 ARIZONA 20**

PHILADELPHIA –3 NY Jets 36.5

Chad Pennington will play in this game, although he won't start. I've been saying for weeks now that the Jets offense has actually played well, in terms of gaining yards, but they haven't been able to turn those yards into points. They are averaging 5.1 yppl against 5.0 yppl so they are above average but only scoring 16 points per game against teams allowing 19 points per game. They have thrown the ball well, averaging 6.3 yps against 5.9 yps but they will face a stiff test from the Philadelphia secondary this week, which is allowing 5.6 yps against 6.0 yps. The Jets haven't been able to run the ball, gaining just 3.4 ypr against 3.7 ypr and I don't see that changing much against a Philly defense, which is allowing just 3.0 ypr against 3.7 ypr. The Jets did rush the ball well last week, gaining 136 yards at 5.0 ypr and they have gained at least 118 yards in each of their last two games, but two games ago, they still only averaged 3.6 ypr so I can't really say their rushing game is back yet. Meanwhile, I don't see them stopping Philly from running the ball. Yes, Philly has been terrible trying to pass the ball this year, gaining just 3.5 yps against 5.4 yps and the Jets have stopped the pass very well, allowing just 5.4 yps against 6.1 yps. But when it comes to the run, Philly is averaging 4.8 ypr against 3.8 ypr and the Jets are allowing 4.4 ypr against 3.7 ypr. Two games ago the Jets held Buffalo to just 53 yards at 2.8 ypr but Buffalo has been terrible trying to run the ball and played most of the game from behind. In every other game, the Jets have allowed teams to rush for at least 147 yards and 4.1 ypr, at a minimum, including allowing Houston to run for 169 yards at 4.7 ypr last week. Philly qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 510-391-30 (21-11-1 TY) but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets. They also qualify in another rushing situation, which is 128-50-7. Final numbers actually support the Jets to win this game by three points but, as I have said all year, the situations are stronger than the final numbers and I will lean with them and Philadelphia to be able to get the job done on the ground on Sunday. **PHILADELPHIA 20 NY JETS 14**

INDIANAPOLIS –13 Houston 42.5

The situations lean heavily towards Houston this week. They have leaned towards Houston in each of the past two weeks as well but Houston has failed to cover those games. Why? Simply because they have had bad match ups the last two weeks, and guess what? They get another bad match up again this week. The problem with Houston is their pass defense, which is allowing an unheard of 8.0 yps against teams averaging just 6.7 yps. The rush defense hasn't been good either, allowing 4.2 ypr against 3.8 ypr but it sure looks respectable when you compare it to their pass defense. Indy must be chomping at the bit to play Houston as they average 7.5 yps against 6.0 yps. Indy hasn't run the ball well this year, gaining just 3.3 ypr against 4.1 ypr but if they can throw at will, they will eventually be

able to run the ball as well against a poor Houston rush defense. Meanwhile, the Indy defense hasn't been too stellar themselves, playing their cover-2 schemes, which has allowed teams to rush for 4.7 ypr against 3.8 ypr. They have played solid pass defense, allowing just 5.8 yps against 6.4 yps but they'll face a pretty good Houston passing attack, that is averaging 6.5 yps against 6.1 yps. When Houston has played the other elite passing teams in the league, they have been lit up, allowing 42 points to Kansas City (7.0 yps against 6.1 yps) and 38 points to Tennessee (8.1 yps against 6.2 yps) and I don't see it being much different this week. Indy allows 5.3 yppl and against the two other teams they have faced this year that allow at least 5.3 yppl or more, Houston has scored 14 points against Kansas City (5.4 yppl) and 17 points against Tennessee (5.7 yppl). If they can get their 17 points in this game, which I think they can (Indy has allowed 21+ points in each of their last three games), then this game should fly over the total of 43. Indianapolis should be good for 28 points, at least, and Houston should be able to get their 20 points. This game actually qualifies in a 75-41-2 over situation, which is 2-0 this year. My final numbers show about 52 points being scored in this game and I think there is tremendous value towards the over, along with a solid situation to support it. Houston does qualify in a very solid contrarian situation, which is 104-37-5. Because of the situations, despite the poor match up, I will lean towards Houston, but the play here is the over**. INDIANAPOLIS 31 HOUSTON 20**

KANSAS CITY –6.5 Buffalo 43.5

The mood in Buffalo isn't very good, knowing this team has underachieved their expectations so far this year but maybe last week provided a glimpse of hope for the Bills. Buffalo destroyed what is appearing to be a weak Washington team. Buffalo gained 432 yards at 6.5 yppl and allowed Washington to only gain 169 yards at 3.2 yppl. But, most surprising for Buffalo, was their rushing game, which gained 196 yards at 5.0 ypr. That was obviously solid improvement but still leaves the team averaging only 3.1 ypr against 3.6 ypr. The passing game has been about average and may be without Eric Moulds again this week. But their defense has played fantastic so far, allowing just 4.2 yppl against 4.8 yppl and they have defended the pass extremely well, allowing just 4.6 yps against 5.6 yps. Their rushing defense has been about average, allowing 3.9 ypr against 3.8 ypr. Naturally they will get a solid test from the undefeated Chiefs this week. Kansas City had won three straight games that they may not have deserved to win before finally playing a solid game last week. Although it came down to the last play, they played well enough to deserve that win. The Chiefs offense has played well this year, although not quite as well as some people expect. Still, they are averaging 5.7 yppl against 5.2 yppl and throwing the ball for 7.0 yps against 6.1 yps. Again, they will face a very good test from Buffalo this week because the Bills defend the pass extremely well. On defense, KC has been much better than last year, but still average, allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.3 yppl. Kansas City qualifies in a 168-118-9 situation that actually plays against Buffalo in a letdown spot. That situation is a winner but not the strongest situations that I use. The value also appears to lie with Kansas City here. I will lean with them because of the situation and the value but I think Buffalo could be a pretty good dog in this game. **KANSAS CITY 26 BUFFALO 17**

Miami –3 SAN DIEGO 37.5

San Diego won their first game last week, in easy fashion over Cleveland. This week the test gets a little tougher, against a Miami team, who lost last week at home to New England. SD's strength this year has been rushing the ball, which is exactly why I took them last week, and they didn't disappoint, gaining 228 yards at 6.3 ypr. For the season, they are averaging 5.4 ypr against 4.3 ypr but they'll face a very stiff test this week against a Miami defense, which is allowing just 2.9 ypr against 3.7 ypr. SD doesn't throw the ball well enough (5.2 yps against 5.6 yps) to take advantage of the weakness of the Miami defense, which is their pass defense, allowing 6.4 yps against 6.0 yps. But Miami does throw the ball well themselves, averaging 6.1 yps against 5.8 yps and they'll face a SD secondary that is allowing 6.4 yps against 5.7 yps. SD does qualify in a 152-105-10 home dog momentum situation and my numbers make this line about 1.5. Despite the poor match up for SD, I will lean with the home running dog to get the job done against an average Miami team. **MIAMI 21 SAN DIEGO 20**

BEST BETS

YTD 19-17-1 +4.10%

3% HOUSTON/INDIANAPOLIS OVER 42.5

2% PITTSBURGH –1
2% STL/PITTSBURGH UNDER 46
2% NY GIANTS +5.5
2% JACKSONVILLE +4

WEEK 9

Only managed to go 2-3 last week but did win the 3% again and those top plays are now 5-1 this year.

All side opinions went 6-8 last week and they are now 59-53-3 53% over the first eight weeks this year.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.0
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 5.9
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.1

NY GIANTS –2.5 NY JETS 38.5

No situations for either team here that I know of. I'll just ride with the better team. I talked last week about the Giants winning most of their games on the stat sheet, but losing because of the turnovers. That finally changed last week and they may be ready to make a large move in the next few weeks. Simply looking at both teams, from a yards gained perspective, shows the difference between these two. The Giants average 366 yards per game against teams allowing only 308 while the Jets are averaging just 295 yards per game against teams allowing 309, making the Giants offense above average and the Jets offense below average. On defense, the Giants are allowing just 316 yards per game against teams averaging 323 yards per game, while the Jets are allowing 312 yards per game against teams averaging 305 yards per game. The other favorable match ups for the Giants come out of their running game, which has been decent, averaging 3.9 ypr against teams allowing 3.7 ypr. That goes against a Jets defense, which is allowing a whopping 4.6 ypr against teams averaging 3.9 ypr. Favorable match up number two is in the passing game, where the Jets average 6.4 yps against teams allowing 4.8 yps but the Giants defend the pass very well, allowing just 5.5 yps against 6.0 yps. Last week the Giants held the potent Minnesota passing game (averaging 7.9 yps) to just 6.3 yps and they should limit the Jets attack this week. Better teams wins this game. **NY GIANTS 20 NY JETS 16**

BALTIMORE –7 Jacksonville 37

This is a contrarian play on Jacksonville in this game. Certainly Baltimore is the better team but hopefully they'll be thinking a little about their dominating win last week over Denver and their next two games on the road at St. Louis and Miami. I don't want to make too much about Jacksonville winning the stats last week against Tennessee because much of that came in catch up mode, after Tennessee had put the game away. Still, Jacksonville averaged 5.7 yppl to just 4.9 yppl for Tennessee and they still sport a solid defense, which is allowing just 4.9 yppl against 5.2 yppl this year. Last week, they only allowed Tennessee to gain 4.9 yppl and Tennessee is averaging 5.6 yppl this year. The downfall for Jacksonville was turnovers, losing that battle, 1-3. The strength of the Jacksonville defense is their rush defense, which is allowing just 3.2 ypr against 3.9 ypr this year. And they should match up well with Baltimore, who is running the ball for 5.4 ypr against teams allowing just 4.2 ypr. The weakness of the Jacksonville defense is their pass defense, as they allow 6.5 yps against 6.3 yps, but I don't see a poor Baltimore passing game taking advantage of that. Baltimore is averaging just 4.5 yps against 5.8 yps this year. The Jacksonville offense is just average, gaining 5.3 yppl against 5.3 yppl and they'll face a stiff test from Baltimore, who is allowing just 4.5 yppl against 5.0 yppl. Jacksonville qualifies in a couple of solid contrary situations, which are 289-210-10 and 108-56-5. That, along with a pretty favorable match up, gives them a chance in this game. Also, note Jacksonville came into the league in 1995, and since then, these teams have played 15 times. Baltimore has NEVER won any of these games by more than seven points. They won last year's game by seven points and have only five of those games. They have won the last five but only once by more than five points and that was last year when they won by only seven points. This includes when Jacksonville was an expansion teams and includes when Baltimore was on their Super Bowl run. Series history doesn't suggest a large win here. Successful contrary situations suggest a Jacksonville cover and the match up favors Jacksonville. **BALTIMORE 24 JACKSONVILLE 21**

Oakland –2.5 DETROIT 39

Two extremely disappointing teams match up here. At least in Detroit, you could say it was kind of expected. For Oakland, injuries and now dissension amongst the players are quickly going to lead this team to a "toss the towel" team in a few more weeks. The veterans on this team may just pack it in very quickly if things don't change. And why will they change. Oakland isn't doing anything well this year. They have rushed the ball ok this year, averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.4 ypr but their vaunted passing game has been terrible, averaging just 5.2 yps against 5.8 yps. On defense, they have been even worse, allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.0 yppl, including allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 6.2 yps against 5.8 yps. I don't see those numbers changing anytime soon, especially without Gannon. For Detroit, well, nothing better to report. They are terrible running and throwing the ball (3.9 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 4.6 yps against 5.6 yps) and on defense, they have been below average as well. It's been their pass defense, which has been so bad, allowing a whopping 6.7 yps against 6.0 yps. Their rush defense has actually been their lone bright spot, allowing just 4.1 ypr against 4.3 ypr. Detroit does qualify in my turnover table system, which is now 758-590-30. Turnovers are due to start going their way and they also qualify in a couple of subsets of that, which are 64-28-2 and 123-67-3. Final numbers support Detroit here as do the situations and I will lean their way. This game also qualifies in a 73-41-1 under situation, although my final numbers show about 40 points being scored. **DETROIT 21 OAKLAND 17**

CHICAGO –2.5 San Diego 40

A couple more teams headed nowhere. Hard to believe SD can really be ready for this game. Their season is a loss, they just had to move their last game to Arizona because of the California fires. They may have to move their game next week as well. They certainly have other things are their mind and left for Chicago early in the week because of the fires. So all their game planning has been on the road, not in their friendly confines, where they are used to getting everything done. SD does still rush the ball very well, gaining 5.1 ypr against 4.1 ypr and they will face a Bears defense, which is allowing 4.7 ypr against 4.4 ypr. Because of that SD qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 512-395-30(23-15-1 TY) but they don't qualify in any of the better subsets of that. For Chicago, the one thing they have done well is rush the ball, averaging 4.4 ypr against 4.3 ypr but those numbers have declined the past couple of weeks without Anthony Thomas. He should be back this week. The weakness of the SD defense is their pass defense, allowing 6.4 yps against 5.7 yps but Chicago won't be able to take advantage of that, gaining just 4.0 yps against 5.9 yps this year. But, I do think the Bears can run the ball enough to do some damage. Chicago's win last week gives them some momentum and they qualify in a terrific home momentum situation, which is 108-64-11 (6-4 TY), including a subset of that, which is an outstanding 68-22-6 (5-2 TY). That situation is 13-3 when it plays on teams below .500 and 13-6 when playing against teams under .500 and 5-2-1 when both teams are under .500, so it works even with bad teams. My final numbers actually predict about 47 points being scored in this game but the game qualifies in a solid under situation, which is 73-41-1. **CHICAGO 20 SAN DIEGO 17**

MIAMI –3 Indianapolis 39

Peyton Manning is playing very well right now and has his team's passing game going strong. The Colts are now averaging 7.7 yps against 6.2 yps and they'll take on a Miami defense, which is allowing 6.1 yps against 5.9 yps. But, I still have great respect for the Dolphins secondary, which was torched badly the first two weeks but has played much better since then. Miami also does not allow teams to run on them, allowing just 3.0 ypr against 3.9 ypr and Indy hasn't been rushing the ball very well anyway, gaining just 3.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr. Indy will have some success in the air, because they are that good, but I see them having more problems trying to stop Miami than Miami trying to stop Indy. Indy is allowing a whopping 4.7 ypr against 3.9 ypr and although Miami isn't running the ball real well this year, averaging just 3.8 ypr against 4.0 ypr, Ricky Williams will get his carries in this game and have some success. Along with that, I believe that will open up the passing lanes a little more too. Miami qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 512-395-30 (23-15-1 TY) and they also qualify in the best subset of that, which is 136-57-6 (7-3-1 TY). They also qualify in another fundamental rushing situation, which is 70-29-3. Final numbers indicate about a three point game, but the situations favor Miami, giving them a little more value. Miami has also won four straight against Indy and should get the win on Sunday. Dolphins have gone under every week since week one and although my numbers show about 42 points being scored, this game also qualifies in a 294-220-11 (8-4 TY) under situation. **MIAMI 21 INDIANAPOLIS 13**

TAMPA BAY –8.5 New Orleans 39.5

I still have great respect for the TB defense, even though they have slipped a little this year, due somewhat to injuries. But I like this match up for New Orleans. Teams that can run the ball at TB have a shot and NO can run the ball. NO gained 118 and 102 yards against TB last year and although their yards per rush weren't that good, the point was they were able to control the ball with a ground game. TB won last week to put them one game over .500 but since 1983, teams that do that and are then favored by five or more facing a team at .500 or below, tend to relax a bit. There's a little more to that situation but the situation is now 52-23-1 going against those favorites. NO also qualifies as a turnover table play, which means the turnovers should start going in their favor and against TB. That situation is now 758-590-30. NO also qualifies in a contrary situation, which is 289-210-10. The numbers appears to be about right in this game but the situations indicate TB may let up a little bit (yes, I know they have double revenge against these guys) and that NO should have some success as a contrary play here. Contrary wins in the NFL and it wins again in this game. This game also qualifies in an over situation, which is 76-41-2 and 3-0 this year, including last weeks win with HOU/INDY. My final numbers show about 36 points being scored but that's close enough, given the strong situation to the over. **TAMPA BAY 24 NEW ORLEANS 21**

DALLAS –4 Washington 38

A lot of problems in Washington right now. Washington is starting to revert back to the Washington of last year, all pass and no run, but this year injuries are also hurting their defense. The Redskins are allowing 6.4 yps against teams averaging just 5.6 yps, while Dallas is averaging 6.7 yps against teams allowing 6.1 yps. So, basically, Washington can't stop the pass and Dallas has been very good passing the ball. Final numbers also favor Dallas by 7 to 10 points. So why is Dallas only a four point favorite? The linemaker can see the same things we all see. Washington does qualify in my turnover table system, which is 758-590-30. Based on that alone, I will side with Washington, in a game I think is better left alone. The over might be a good call in this game. **DALLAS 26 WASHINGTON 23**

Carolina –6.5 HOUSTON 37

I have no situations that favor either team here but finally, for the first time in about four weeks, Houston gets a match up that gives them a better chance to win. For the past three weeks, Houston has faced terrific passing teams and they don't defend the pass well, allowing 8.1 yps against 6.8 yps. But this week they face Carolina, who only averages 5.4 yps against 6.3 yps. Carolina does run the ball well, averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.2 ypr and Houston hasn't defended the run well either, allowing 4.2 ypr against 3.8 ypr, but I think they stand a better chance facing a running team than a passing team. The Houston offense has done a nice job as of late, especially running the ball. Last week they ran for 131 yards at 4.7 ypr and Dominick Davis looks like the real thing. My numbers support Houston and I will lean that way. **CAROLINA 21 HOUSTON 17**

Cincinnati –3 ARIZONA 39.5

Arizona racked up 221 yards at 5.0 ypr last week in their win over SF. And I'm quite sure they will look to run the ball again this week. For the year, however, they are only averaging 3.8 ypr against 4.0 ypr and Cincinnati is allowing 4.2 ypr against 4.3 ypr, so it doesn't look like they'll have any great advantages there. The weakness to the Cincinnati defense is their pass defense, allowing 6.3 yps against 5.4 yps, but it remains to be seen if Arizona can take advantage of that or not. Arizona is only averaging 5.6 yps against 5.6 yps. For Cincinnati, I doubt they will run the ball well in this game, averaging only 3.2 ypr against 4.1 ypr and Arizona is only allowing 3.7 ypr against 4.3 ypr. But, Cincinnati should be able to throw the ball, as they average a solid 6.2 yps against 5.3 yps and Arizona is allowing 6.7 yps against 5.9 yps. Arizona does qualify in a momentum situation based on their win last week, which is 153-105-10. Final numbers lean towards Cincinnati but I'll lean with the situation and Arizona at home. They figure to be able to run the ball better. Although my final numbers support a high scoring game, this game qualifies in a 294-220-11 (8-4 TY) under situation. CINCINNATI 17 ARIZONA 16

SEATTLE –4.5 Pittsburgh 44.5

Steelers really let me down last week and they were never in the game, allowing the Rams to gain a whopping 448 yards at 5.9 yppl, while only gaining 245 yards at 5.1 yppl themselves. The Seattle final was a little misleading last

week as they out gained Cincinnati 462-412 and 6.7 yppl to 6.2 yppl. Five turnovers did them in and cost them the game. The Pittsburgh offense has been terrible this year, especially trying to run the ball, averaging just 3.4 ypr against 4.3 ypr. Their passing game is above average but not by much, averaging just 5.7 yps against 5.6 yps and they'll get a tough test this week against a good Seahawk pass defense, which is allowing just 5.2 yps against 5.9 yps. The Seattle offense is finally starting to gel and they are now above average with both, the run and the pass, averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.3 ypr and 6.3 yps against 5.9 yps. Their strong rushing game sets them up in a 128-50-7 fundamental rushing situation. Pittsburgh does qualify in my turnover table system, but I will lean with the rushing situation and what I feel is the better team. Final numbers greatly favor Seattle by 9 to 15 points. **SEATTLE 27 PITTSBURGH 17**

Philadelphia –4.5 ATLANTA 40

Probably a good game to pass on seeing I have quite a few technical situations on Atlanta and the fundamental situations are with Philadelphia. Atlanta has benched their entire secondary so we'll see if that helps or further hinders their ability to stop teams. Their defense has been abysmal so far, allowing 6.3 yppl against 5.3 yppl, including 4.4 ypr against 4.0 ypr and a whopping 8.2 yps against 6.4 yps. Meanwhile, the offense hasn't done anything, averaging just 4.8 yppl against 5.0 yppl. I don't see Atlanta moving the ball much on offense, knowing Philly is allowing just 4.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl and is now above average against both, the run and the pass. On offense, however, I expect Philly to be able to move the ball on the ground. They average 5.0 ypr against 4.0 ypr and that should fit just fine against the porous Atlanta rush defense. Philly qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 512-395-30(23-15-1 TY) and a subset of that, which is 318-213-16 (15-8-1). Atlanta does qualify in some contrary situations, which are 54-20-1 and 39-15-0, which are enough to keep me off of Philly. I'll still lean with the better fundamental team. The over could be a good play in this game. **PHILADELPHIA 27 ATLANTA 17**

St. Louis –4 SAN FRANCISCO 45

Well, here I go again. Week number five in a row that I have gone against St. Louis. And, yes, I know I haven't won any of those yet. But, I'll try it again. Once again the Rams qualify in negative situations and SF qualifies in some solid situations of their own. Garcia won't play in this game but the 49ers will look to run the ball and I don't think that will be a problem. I still don't think the Rams are that good of a team. Their offense is playing well, but their defense continues to be below average, allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.1 yppl, including a horrendous rush defense, which is allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.2 ypr. That rush defense didn't get much of a test last week against a poor running team like Pittsburgh (although it did allow 5.2 ypr), but it will have it's hands full against a solid rushing team like SF this week. SF gained 148 yards at 5.7 ypr in their first meeting this year and I expect more of the same this week. The Rams offense hasn't been able to rush the ball this year, averaging just 3.4 ypr against 4.0 ypr but their passing game is really taking off, averaging 6.8 yps against 6.1 yps. They'll get a good test against a SF secondary that is allowing just 5.3 yps against 5.8 yps. The lowest average the Rams have had this year was against the 49ers in their first meeting, where they averaged just 4.6 yps. The 49ers were burned against Minnesota for 11.0 yps but that was more of the street ball-throw it up to Randy Moss and see if he can catch it- type play. And, doesn't Minnesota seem to burn everybody through the air? Take out that game and their pass defense has been solid. They will give up some yards to the Rams because StL can throw the ball but the ability of SF to control this game on the ground gives them a great chance. SF has lost only one game this year by more than three points and that was to the Vikings. The 49ers qualify in three different fundamental rushing situations, which are 107-52-6, 512-395-30 (23-15-1 TY), including a subset, which is 415-293-23 (17-10-1 TY) and a 128-50-7 situation. All of those situations are a bit different but they indicate SF should have some success on the ground and when that happens, it leads to covers. SF is also due to bounce back after last week's embarrassing loss to Arizona, and they qualify in a 70-39-1 bounce back situation based on that. They also qualify in another bounce back situation that played on TB last week, which is 121-67-4. Meanwhile, the Rams qualify in a negative situation, after scoring so many points again last week, which is a 79-43-5 play against situation. Final numbers support the 49ers in this game, and their ability to rush the ball and defend the Rams, gives them an excellent chance to win this game SU. SF has also played six straight to the under. **SAN FRANCISCO 24 ST LOUIS 17**

MINNESOTA –4.5 Green Bay 48.5

Much will be made about GB's inability to win in domes, on carpet and at Minnesota. They will also talk about

Minnesota having already won in GB earlier. But let's look at a few facts first that might not make this game quite so easy for Minnesota. In many of those games, GB came in favored, just like last year when they were favored by 6.5 points. Quite obviously, when you get down by ten points as a –6.5 point favorite, it's going to make it tough to cover a spread. But, when you're getting 4.5 points and are down by ten, you're only one score away from covering the game. And, that's the biggest difference in this game and many other games played here. Since 1992 (when Favre started playing with GB), the Packers are just 6-17-0 in domes when they are getting three or less points (also favored), but when GB is getting more than three points, they are 6-2 (3-0 at Minnesota). These numbers are for regular season only. Give a good team points on the road, when they aren't expected to do anything, and they will oblige. GB has won four of those eight games straight up (1 of 3 at Minnesota), while two of the three losses were by four and three points (Both at Minnesota). Coming in as a favorite, teams have been fired up to beat them. But, as dogs, all of a sudden, they don't appear to be quite as good anymore, and teams relax a little against them. So just remember things are a little different when they are dogs as opposed to being a favorite. I also have been talking about Minnesota winning because they have been creating turnovers and how that will probably reverse itself in the very near future. That was just one of the reasons I had a best bet against Minnesota last week and the Vikings lost the turnover battle, 1-2, and the game. GB lost at home to Minnesota to open the season but they also turned the ball over five times in that game. If they do that again, they won't win or cover but if they win the turnover battle, they will cover this game and probably win it straight up. And they stand a good chance of doing just that because they qualify in my turnover system, which is now 758-590-30.

But the best play in this game, IMO, is the total. I love the over in this game for the following reasons. There have been plenty of points scored here in each of the last three meetings, with the lowest point total being 48 points and the other two games seeing 52 and 61 points being scored. Both team's offenses are playing extremely well and both team's defenses are below average. GB is simply banged up on defense and that makes it hard to consistently stop anyone, especially a great Minnesota offense. The Vikings are allowing less points per game than their opponents are averaging because of the turnovers, but the real story is their yards per play allowed, which is 5.4 yppl against teams averaging just 5.0 yppl, which means they are giving up the yards. If teams don't turn the ball over, they will score on this young defense. GB is allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.2 yppl. The Vikings offense has been nothing short of spectacular, especially the passing game, which is averaging 7.9 yps against 6.0 yps. They'll face a Packer's secondary that should be a little healthier after their bye, but one that is still allowing 6.0 yps against 6.0 yps. But, lost in all of this is the GB offense, which is averaging 29 points per game against teams allowing just 22 points (Minnesota is 28 versus 23), averaging 354 yards per game against teams allowing 327 (Minnesota is 372 versus 332), averaging 5.8 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl (Minnesota is 6.2 yppl versus 5.2). And the Packers are doing it with balance, averaging 4.9 ypr against 4.3 ypr and 6.5 yps against 5.9 yps. That bodes very, very well against a Viking defense that is allowing 6.1 yps against teams averaging just 5.4 yps. The Vikings defense is not that good, unless they force turnovers, and I don't think they will do that. My final numbers in this game show about 54 points being scored. GB has now lost two games in a row and since Favre came to GB, when they have lost two games in a row, get a look at these numbers. GB has gone over, after losing two in a row, in 14 of 18 games. When GB is favored by four or less in those games (dog as well – competitive games with a low line), they have gone over the total in 11 of 12 games. When GB comes in under .500, they have gone over in 12 of 14 games. When GB's opponent is greater than or equal to .500, they have gone over in 9 of 10 games. If it's a divisional game, they have gone over in 8 of 9 games. When the total is 40 or less, they have gone over the total 13 of 14 games. So, you say, but wait, this total is 48.5 points. Well, know this. If GB's win percentage is .250 or better and the line is –4 or lower (or a dog), they have gone over 10 out of 10 times and if the total is 39 or higher, they have gone over the total 4 out of 4 times, including one total, which was set at 51. The other three were 39.5 twice and 40 once. But, in those four games, they went over the total by 17.5, 23.5, 25 and 8 points. The 8 point cover was on the 51 total. They covered the total by an average of 18 points and averaged 61 points in those four games. What does all this mean? They have lost two games in a row, which means they will be focused and come with their best effort (averaging over 25 points in these games). GB has changed their offense since their week one game against Minnesota. They are going to a lot more rollouts by Favre, which helps him buy time. That combined with his great anticipation of defenders breathing down his neck, allow him to escape sacks and make completions. This is a very good GB offense, facing a below average Viking defense. The same is true on the other side of the ball. Plenty of points in this Sunday night showdown. **MINNESOTA 30 GREEN BAY 27**

DENVER –2 New England 35.5

Denver comes into this game needing a win badly, having lost two consecutive games. But both those losses came on the road, and for winning teams, that's not all bad. Winning teams coming off after consecutive road losses are now 30-9-1 since 1983. There's a little more to that but basically these teams are focused to get a win, the line is usually in their favor because the public only remembers how bad they have looked the past two weeks. NE also qualifies in a letdown situation, which is a 32-9-3 play against them. NE has also won and covered four straight and that doesn't bode well for them here. Because of that, in this situation, they qualify in a very solid letdown spot that is a 62-25-4 play against them, once again providing a low line for Denver bettors. The Broncos are due to begin getting some turnovers to go their way and they qualify as a turnover table play for me as well, which is now 758-590-30 since 1983. The Denver defense, despite losing two key linebackers, is still solid. They are allowing just 4.6 yppl against 5.1 yppl, and have been solid against both, the run and pass. The one area NE has done decent in this year is throwing the ball, as they average 5.8 yps against teams allowing 5.7 yps but Denver has been outstanding defending the pass, allowing just 4.9 yps against 5.8 yps. The NE defense is playing very good ball right now, allowing just 4.7 yppl against 4.9 yppl but they'll get a great test against a great Bronco rushing attack, which is averaging 4.8 ypr against 4.2 ypr. I realize Denver has problems at the quarterback spot right now but they'll move the ball enough on the ground. Playing at home will help this offense quite a bit. Denver qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 128-50-7 and my numbers favor them by about 3-5 points, giving us a little value along with some solid situations. They also have a great history of being able to beat NE, having won six of the last eight meetings between these two teams over the last ten years, winning those games by an average of 12 points per game, including a win at NE last year by eight points and two years ago in Denver by 11 points. Value, fundamental, letdown, bounce back situations and past series history dominance all lead to a Denver cover on Monday night in a basic "just win" type of setting. **DENVER 20 NEW ENGLAND 10**

BEST BETS

YTD 21-20-1 +1.90%

3% DENVER –2

2% JACKSONVILLE +7
2% MIAMI –3
2% NEW ORLEANS +8.5
2% SAN FRANCISCO +4
2% GB/MINN OVER 48.5

WEEK 10

Pulled off a 3-2-1 week last week, and +0.5% for a small gain.

I do have a 4% play this weekend.

All side opinions went 10-3-1 last week and they are now 69-56-3 55% over the first nine weeks this year. Unfortunately, two of those three losses and the push were best bets, so I didn't really take full advantage of my handicapping.

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

I also feel it's more important to look at each team's last five games as opposed to the whole season. Stats listed are for the last five games unless other wise noted.

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.0
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 5.9
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.1

NY Giants –10.5 Atlanta 40.5

Pretty hard to make a case for Atlanta here and I'm not going to try other than to tell you the situations greatly, and I mean greatly, favor them this week. I can't pull the trigger on them knowing they are starting Kurt Kittner at quarterback and replaced all of their secondary last week. And the numbers all suggest this game should be closer to a 11.5 to 15 point spread. But, Atlanta qualifies in a 290-210-11 contrary situation and another 157-102-4 contrary situation. The Giants also qualify in a letdown situation, which might be my best situation, which is a 106-47-4 play against situation, including the subset, which is a remarkable 90-24-2 play against situation. Atlanta is also a turnover table play, which is a 761-593-30 situation. They also qualify in another contrary situation, which is 106-52-2, including 4-0 this year. These are very strong situations and I would not advise playing the Giants this week. Over the last five games, Atlanta's offense has played better, averaging 5.2 yppl against 5.3 yppl, including running for 5.2 ypr against 4.5 ypr. Their defense has been horrible, against both the run and the pass, allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.3 ypr and a whopping 9.1 yps against 6.7 yps over the last five games. The Giants haven't run the ball well over the last five games, averaging just 3.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr but they continue to throw the ball well, gaining 6.2 yps against 5.7 yps. They've also played great pass defense over the last five games, allowing just 4.8 yps against 6.3 yps but teams have run the ball for 4.1 ypr against 4.0 ypr over the last five games. So, it's possible Atlanta might be able to run on the Giants somewhat. Using numbers for the whole season, indicate about 49 points being scored in this game but using just the last five games, indicate about 40 points being scored. I also have an under situation, which applies to this game, which is 295-221-11, including being 9-5 to the under this year. It appears this game belongs to Atlanta and the under. **NY GIANTS 21 ATLANTA 17**

Seattle –3 WASHINGTON 40

Seattle is a strange team, in that they keep winning, but certainly not in dominating fashion. But, their offense is above average, gaining 5.6 yppl against 5.3 yppl and their defense is also above average, allowing 4.8 yppl against 5.1 yppl. Meanwhile, they'll take on a Redskins team that appears to have thrown in the towel already. Washington is gaining just 4.1 yppl against 4.7 yppl the last five games and allowing 5.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl the last five games. But when you put together all the numbers over the last five games, they only favor Seattle by three points. Washington can't run the ball, averaging just 3.4 ypr against 3.8 ypr and can't throw the ball, averaging just 4.5 yps against 5.2 yps. And they've been terrible defending the rush, allowing 4.5 ypr against 3.9 ypr and terrible defending the pass, allowing 6.9 yps against 5.9 yps. That doesn't bode well against a Seattle team that hasn't been great but is above average rushing and throwing the ball, including averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr and is above average defending both, the run and the pass. But, we all know it just isn't this easy or the bright lights wouldn't be quite as bright as they are on the strip. Seattle qualifies in a play against 70-38-3 letdown situation and with the numbers being fair before applying the situation, Washington actually has some value in this game. But, I like the

total more than anything in this game. Seattle will move the ball against a below average Washington defense and I have to believe Washington will perform better at home, while Seattle's defense hasn't been that good on the road this year. Seattle has allowed, not counting their game against Arizona (who was playing without Jeff Blake), 35 points at Green Bay and 27 points at Cincinnati. They also scored 38 at Arizona, 13 at Green Bay and 24 at Cincinnati. The offense can definitely score when asked to. Washington should be good for 20 points at home and I believe Seattle can get at least that many on the road. I like the over in this game and lean towards Washington because of the good situation they qualify in. **SEATTLE 26 WASHINGTON 24**

PITTSBURGH –7.5 Arizona 40.5

Arizona has looked much better the last couple of weeks since they turned over the rushing game to Marcel Shipp. Over the last five games, Arizona is now averaging 4.1 ypr against 4.0 ypr and their rush defense is allowing just 3.7 ypr against 3.8 ypr. Now they face a Steelers team who has lost five straight games and can't run the ball, averaging just 3.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr, can't throw the ball, averaging just 5.1 yps against 6.0 yps and all of a sudden, can't stop the pass, allowing 7.3 yps against 6.6 yps. They have continued to stop the rush, allowing just 3.0 ypr against 3.9 ypr over the last five games. But, the fact that Arizona can rush the ball, stop the rush and Pittsburgh can't rush the ball, sets up Arizona in a terrific 234-161-14 fundamental rushing situation, which is 4-1 this year. That's enough to get me leaning Arizona's way. **PITTSBURGH 23 ARIZONA 17**

DETROIT –2 Chicago 37

These two met two weeks ago with Chicago jumping out to a 24-0 lead and holding on to win 24-16. Both team's offenses are below average, with Chicago gaining 4.5 yppl against 5.0 yppl and Detroit gaining 4.3 yppl against 4.8 yppl. Both team's defenses are above average, believe it or not, with Chicago allowing just 4.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl and Detroit allowing just 4.6 yppl against 4.9 yppl. And both teams have stopped the run extremely well over the last five weeks, but Detroit is still allowing teams to pass on them, allowing 5.9 yps against 5.5 yps over the last five weeks. All the numbers I run are pretty close to the line but I like Chicago in this game a little more than Detroit. Chicago is getting a little healthier with Marty Booker returning and Anthony Thomas returning last week. He has really run the ball well the last couple of games he has played. Detroit does qualify in a home momentum situation, which is 108-64-11 but they don't qualify in the best part of that situation, which makes it about .500 without the subset. Detroit had dominated Chicago here up until about four years ago. Since then, Detroit has won by four and three, lost by three and lost by 24, so Chicago has been very competitive as of late. This game also qualifies in a 75-41-1 under situation, which is 2-0 this year. I like the Bears and the under. **CHICAGO 17 DETROIT 16**

CINCINNATI –5.5 Houston 39

This is a great match up of both teams taking their strengths against the other teams weaknesses. Both teams are throwing the ball well, with Houston averaging 6.7 yps against 6.2 yps over their last five games and Cincinnati allowing 6.6 yps against 5.3 yps over their last five games. Meanwhile, Cincinnati is averaging 6.3 yps against 5.5 yps over their last five games and they will go against Houston, who is allowing 8.8 yps against 7.3 yps. Cincinnati continues to not be able to run the ball, averaging just 3.2 ypr against 3.9 ypr and they are allowing 3.9 ypr against 4.3 ypr. While their defense has been above average stopping the rush over the last five games, the fact that they are only averaging 3.2 ypr and allowing 3.9 ypr doesn't bode well for them laying points in this game. Cincinnati qualifies in a negative fundamental rushing situation, which is a 88-28-5 play against situation. Final numbers also support Houston in this game. With both teams being able to pass the ball, I like the team that is more likely to run the ball and that is Houston. This game would also qualify in a 75-41-1 under situation if the total is below 40 but my final numbers indicate closer to about 44 points being scored. **CINCINNATI 20 HOUSTON 17**

Tampa Bay –3 CAROLINA 34

Very much aware that Tampa Bay is now 20-1 ats when playing after losing their previous game as a favorite, including 3-0 ats this year and 6-0 ats with Gruden. Also, very aware of Jon Gruden's 18-5 ats record when his teams have lost their last game as a favorite. So, I understand that he has his team ready. But the kind of teams that can beat TB are teams like Carolina. SF did it two weeks ago by running the ball left and right, all over TB. NO gained