



**2003 NFL SEASON
SIXTH SENSE SPORTS
WEEKS 11-15**

WEEK 11

Finally broke out last week, going 5-1 and winning my strongest play of the year on the Minnesota/San Diego over, which was almost over by halftime. Last year, starting with week 12, I finished the season with nine winning weeks out of ten weeks, winning 66% of my bets, going 41-21 during that time. Hopefully last week was the beginning of another great run.

All side opinions went 6-6-2 last week and are now 75-62-5 55% over the first ten weeks of the season.

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 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 -7 Houston 37.5

Bills continued their season long drought on offense last week, gaining just 185 yards at 3.0 yppl. They did rush for 100 yards at 4.0 ypr so maybe their running game is starting to get going, although they are still only gaining 4.0 ypr against teams allowing 4.5 ypr over their last five games. As bad as the offense has been, their defense continues to thrive, allowing just 4.4 yppl against 5.0 yppl and is above average against both, the run and the pass. Their offense may get a little healthier this week against a porous Houston defense, which is allowing 4.4 ypr against 3.8 ypr and 8.8 yps against 7.3 yps for, a total of 6.5 yppl against 5.6 yppl over the last five games. The Houston offense has been good this year, gaining 5.6 yppl against 5.3 yppl over their last five games and above average with both, the run and the pass. Buffalo qualifies in my turnover table system, which is 765-596-31. My numbers favor Buffalo anywhere from 3.5 points to 10 points. I'll side with the better defense and a offense, which should get going against a below average defense. **BUFFALO 26 HOUSTON 16**

PHILADELPHIA -3.5 NY Giants 38

Tough game to call here as I have situations going both ways. Giants reverted back to their old ways again last week, out gaining Atlanta, 320 yards to 274 and 4.8 yppl to 4.5 yppl. But, once again, the culprit was the turnover bug, as they lost the turnover battle 0-4. So once again, they moved the ball and played well but lost because of turnovers. They qualify in my turnover system this week, which is 765-596-31 and they also qualify in a contrary situation, which is 291-210-11. Unfortunately, for the Giants, they play Philadelphia this week and their strengths go against Philly's strengths. The Giants have not run the ball well as of late, gaining just 3.8 ypr against 4.3 ypr over their last five games and will go against a Philly defense, which is allowing 4.4 ypr against 4.2 ypr over their last five games. The Giants success on offense has come via the passing game, at 6.0 yps against 6.0 yps over their last five games, but they will face a tough Philly secondary that is allowing just 5.2 yps against 5.8 yps over their last five games. The Philly offense has been best with the running game, averaging 4.4 ypr against 4.4 ypr over their last five games and they will face a Giants defense, which is allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.2 ypr over their last five games. The strength of the Giants defense has been their pass defense, allowing just 4.6 yps against 6.3 yps, but it's doubtful that Philly will throw much with their 4.9 yps against 5.7 yps offense. Philly qualifies in two different fundamental rushing situations, which are 518-400-31 (29-20-2 TY) and a subset, which is 136-58-6 (7-4-1 TY) and another situation, which is 134-54-7 (6-4 TY). So, it appears the fundamentals and the technicals go against each other in this game. Final numbers slightly favor the Giants and I will too, even without Shockey in the lineup. **NY GIANTS 21 PHILADELPHIA 20**

CLEVELAND -6.5 Arizona 37.5

Always a little difficult to take an Arizona team on the road that has lost all four road games by 18, 24, 17 and 13

points but that's what I'm going to do this week. I went against Cleveland back in week seven when a good running team like SD came to town and I will do it again this week with a decent running team like Arizona. Arizona is averaging 4.1 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games and that should sit just fine against a Cleveland defense, which is allowing 4.2 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games. Cleveland does nothing well on offense, gaining just 4.1 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 4.6 yps against 6.1 yps over their last five games. Meanwhile, what was a weakness to the Arizona defense, pass defense, hasn't been a weakness over their last five games, allowing just 6.0 yps against 6.1 yps and the rush defense has been solid all year long, allowing just 3.7 ypr against 3.9 yps the last five games. Arizona qualifies in a general situation, which is 42-15-1. Cleveland allowed KC 41 points last week and that doesn't bode well for them laying points this week and they qualify in a negative momentum situation based on that, which is 68-27-4 and plays against Cleveland in this game. Arizona also qualifies in a contrary situation, which is 291-210-10 and is the same situation SD qualified in here a few weeks back. Arizona is also a turnover table play, which is 765-596-31 since 1983. They also qualify in two fundamental rushing situations, which are 518-400-31 (29-20-2 TY) and 234-163-14. Combine that with the fact Cleveland has won only one game this year by more than seven points, and the underdog has a nice ring to it. This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 76-42-1 (3-1 TY) and my final points predicts just 30 and 31 points. I never like going under in Cleveland games because I never seem to know when they will come out passing lights out and take the game over the total. But the under looks pretty solid here. **CLEVELAND 17 ARIZONA 14**

Kansas City -6 CINCINNATI 47

I can't sit here and try to convince you Cincinnati is the better team here, but like I have said earlier in the year, the better team doesn't always win and cover, or we would have plenty more teams go undefeated and winless each year (only one team has gone undefeated and only one team has failed to win a game since the merger). So, that must mean teams go through peaks and valleys during an NFL season. Well, I'm hoping this is one of those valleys for KC. The match up here isn't great for Cincinnati. They don't defend the pass very well, allowing 6.4 yps against 5.4 yps over their last five games and they will take on a KC team who is averaging 7.2 yps against 5.8 yps over their last five games. Cincinnati has been about average defending the run, allowing 4.2 ypr against 4.3 ypr, but KC has just been average running the ball the last five games, averaging just 4.1 ypr against 4.1 ypr. The KC defense is allowing just 17 points per game against teams averaging 19 points per game over their last five games, but they are allowing 5.2 ypr against 4.9 ypr over that same time span. That means they are getting the turnovers and allowing the yards, but not the points because of the turnovers. Cincinnati does fit my turnover table system this week but they don't qualify in the better part of that system. The KC defense is allowing 5.0 ypr against 4.6 ypr and 5.3 yps against 5.2 yps over their last five games. Cincinnati hasn't rushed the ball well, gaining just 3.4 ypr against 3.8 ypr over their last five games but they ran the ball well last week against Houston, using Rudi Johnson to gain 240 yards at 4.2 ypr. That was against a similar poor Houston rushing defense. So, I suspect they will be able to run the ball some. KC will probably look for that as well. And, while they are looking for that, Cincinnati will do what they do best, and that is throw the ball. They are averaging 6.2 yps against 5.7 yps over their last five games and should find some weaknesses in the KC secondary or be able to do some possible back door damage if they have to, late in the game. It's been a while since we've seen KC on the road but they haven't been dominating on the road this year. They beat Houston in their first road game, winning 42-14, but have won their last three road games by seven over Baltimore (in a game they were dominated in but got a key kick off return for a touchdown), six over Green Bay (in a game they were down by 17 in the fourth quarter but got a key interception return for a touchdown) and beat Oakland by seven points in a game they stopped Oakland on the one inch line as time ran out. Throw out Cincinnati's first game (a 20 point loss to Denver), which can be explained as Marvin Lewis's first game and a getting to know his team atmosphere, and they haven't lost by more than seven points this year, including two home wins over Baltimore and Seattle. Cincinnati qualifies in a momentum situation, which is 154-105-10 (2-0 TY). Kansas City has been on fire but that doesn't necessarily bode well for them on the road and they qualify in a letdown situation, which is 49-21-2 and plays against them here. My final numbers suggest a 5.5 point win (all games) to a one point win (last five games) for Kansas City suggesting a little value with Cincinnati as well. Those numbers also suggest a higher scoring game but this game qualifies in a terrific under situation, which is 297-221-11 (11-5 TY) and I can't go against that situation, which is hot again this year. **KANSAS CITY 24 CINCINNATI 22**

St. Louis -6 CHICAGO 41.5

Time to get back on the 'going against the Rams' train. St. Louis is really two different teams when playing at home or on the road. They are 6-3 this year but just 1-3 on the road and laying points against a good Bears defense, when their own defense just isn't that good, doesn't usually lead to profits. The Rams, over their last five games, are averaging just 3.3 ypr against teams allowing 4.1 ypr and on the road this year, they are averaging just 2.6 ypr overall. They haven't gained 100 yards rushing on the road yet. And, while most people don't want to believe it, the Bears are actually playing good defense, allowing just 3.8 ypr against 4.4 ypr over their last five games and just 5.3 yps against 5.5 yps over that same time period. Chicago isn't doing much on offense, gaining just 4.4 yppl against 4.9 yppl over their last five games but they may find some success against a Rams defense, which is allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games. But the Rams, on the road this year, are allowing an average of 126 yards per game rushing at 4.9 ypr and have allowed each of their four opponents to average at least 4.4 ypr or better. Meanwhile, the Bears have averaged 144 yards rushing per game in their four home games at 4.6 ypr. It appears they will be able to have some success on the ground against the Rams defense and it's doubtful the Rams offense will operate at full efficiency in the cold climate, which also could produce some problems in the passing game with the wind. The Rams qualify in a negative scheduling situation, which plays against them here and is 156-87-8 since 1983. The Rams also qualify in a letdown situation, which is a play against situation with a record of 71-38-3 and played against Seattle last week and Oakland earlier in the season here in Chicago. The Bears also qualify as a turnover table play, which is 765-596-31, including a subset of that, which is 137-78-4. And the Bears qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 73-32-3 and played on San Diego last week. I mentioned last week that playing on teams who have had success covering the spread against teams who haven't had success covering the spread can be fatal to your bankroll. A situation, based on that premise, won with Jacksonville and San Diego last week and applies to the Bears here. That situation is now 271-177-19 (6-2 TY). Final numbers only favor the Rams by five (all games) to just 2.5 points (last five games). Since their home loss to GB on a Monday night game, Chicago has failed to lose any game by more than seven points. Solid value with Chicago and the weather to help us out as well. **CHICAGO 23 ST LOUIS 20**

CAROLINA –6 Washington 36.5

I don't have any situations that favor either team here but the lean has to be to Carolina in this game. Carolina has a great match up here and the value seems to lie with them as well. The Carolina defense is starting to play better and they are now allowing just 5.3 yppl against 5.7 yppl over their last five games, including being above average against both, the run and the pass. Their offense still isn't great but their passing game has really come alive, and is now averaging 6.6 yps against 6.4 yps and is now above average. The running game, which we know is strong, is averaging just 4.5 ypr against 4.5 ypr over their last five games but they still produce yards out of it and with a stronger passing game, that's just fine. The match up is very favorable for them this week against a Washington defense, which is allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games and 6.8 yps against 5.7 yps over that same time period. Washington isn't doing anything well on offense either, gaining just 3.5 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 4.7 yps against 5.1 yps. My numbers indicate about a 8.5 point win (all games) to a 10 point win (last five games), giving us some value with Carolina in this favorable match up. This game could be a little higher scoring than we might think with the improved Carolina passing game. **CAROLINA 27 WASHINGTON 16**

TENNESSEE –10 Jacksonville 44.5

I've been talking for weeks now about Jacksonville continuing to out gain their opponents in yards and yards per play but losing the games because of turnovers. Interestingly enough, they finally won last week, keeping the turnover battle even, but actually losing the yardage battle and the yards per play battle. I still like what they are doing and this team could be a good cover team over the last half of this season. Leftwich will only get better. Their passing game is coming alive, averaging 6.5 yps against 6.3 yps over their last five games. While only averaging 3.7 ypr against 3.8 ypr, they are still getting yards out of the running game, averaging 108 yards per game this season. And lost in all of this is a good defense, which is allowing just 3.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 6.4 yps against 6.6 yps. No question, they'll face a red hot Tennessee team who is hitting on all cylinders right now. Tennessee is averaging 9.1 yps against 6.6 yps over their last five games. They still aren't running the ball well, averaging 3.2 ypr against 3.7 ypr but their passing game is making up for that. On defense, they are still well below average, allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 6.4 yps against 6.4 yps. Jacksonville should be able to move the ball on them some. Jacksonville qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 518-400-31 (29-20-2 TY), including the best subset of that, which is 136-58-6 (7-4-1 TY). Jacksonville has played against Houston/Tennessee eight years now

on the road and has lost only two of those games by more than 10 points. Final numbers show Tennessee winning this game by 14 (all games) and 12.5 points (last five games) but they don't account for the positive situation Jacksonville is in and I will never lay that many points with a defense like Tennessee's. This game also figures to be higher scoring but I have two solid under situations that apply here, which are 223-121-6 (7-3 TY) and 297-221-11 (11-5 TY). Both of those situations are having great years. Unfortunately I can't go under when my final score predictions are around 51 and 52 points but I can't play the over either with the strong situation suggesting a lower scoring game. **TENNESSEE 24 JACKSONVILLE 17**

MIAMI -6 Baltimore 33

How Baltimore could possibly lose last week's game is beyond me. Well, actually we know how, because they turned the ball over seven times to only four times for the Rams. But, Baltimore out gained the Rams 267-121 and 3.4 yppl to 2.4 yppl. They out rushed the Rams 145 to 47 and 3.8 ypr to 2.2 ypr and actually out passed the high flying Rams machine, 122 yards to just 74 yards and 3.1 yps to 2.5 yps. And, not only did they lose, but they lost by 11 points, even with that domination. It wasn't very pretty for Miami either, losing at Tennessee, 7-31, getting out rushed 101-59 and out passed 223-165, getting sacked four times and turning the ball over five times to none for Tennessee. Miami is really in a funk and I don't see them getting out of it this week against a good Baltimore defense. Miami is averaging just 4.7 yppl against 5.2 yppl over their last five games and below average with both, the run and the pass. They are still playing great defense, allowing just 4.6 yppl against 5.5 yppl and above average against both, the run and the pass. But Baltimore is also playing great defense, allowing just 4.4 yppl against 5.1 yppl and equally above average against both, the run and the pass. The difference is Baltimore has an identity on offense and that is their running game. They are averaging 4.4 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games. It will be tough for the Ravens to run against a Miami rush defense, allowing just 2.9 ypr against 3.9 ypr over their last five games, but at least Baltimore has an identity, while Miami is still searching for one. Yes, I realize Boller is out of this game but Baltimore is only going to look to run the ball anyway, and with Anthony Wright, at least they can scramble under pressure. I don't see Miami moving the ball much either. With Miami giving up 30+ points last week, they qualify in a negative momentum situation, which plays against them here, that is 169-99-10, including the best subset, which is a 56-18-2 play against here. The Ravens also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 234-163-14. Final numbers only suggest a three point win (all games) and a 4.5 point win (last five games) for Miami. They don't take into account the loss of Kyle Boller but they also don't account for the positive situations Baltimore is in. The Ravens haven't performed well on the road this year, but Miami has now played three teams above .500 and lost to all three of those teams, including two of those games at home. **MIAMI 17 BALTIMORE 16**

NEW ORLEANS -8.5 Atlanta 44

If you're into team trends, you will note NO has only covered but one of the last 14 games played between these two here in NO the last 14 years. I don't have any situations that favor either team here so we're left with just the match ups to try and figure out who will cover this game. When you have a defense like Atlanta's, it's hard to ever get a favorable match up. Atlanta is now allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 8.6 yps against 6.6 yps over their last five games. NO is rushing the ball well, gaining 4.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games but they aren't throwing the ball well, gaining just 6.2 yps against 6.7 yps. They did manage to throw for over 10 yards per pass against Atlanta earlier this year so perhaps their passing game will right itself again this week. The one thing Atlanta has done well, as of late, is rush the ball, averaging 5.2 ypr against 4.7 ypr. They've been well below average passing the ball, gaining just 5.1 yps against 5.8 yps. They could find some success against a NO defense that is allowing 4.9 ypr against 4.4 ypr over their last five games. The Saints have played good pass defense, allowing just 5.2 yps against 5.9 yps. Atlanta ran for 130 yards on only 22 carries in their first meeting, averaging 5.9 ypr but that didn't help them in their 17-45 loss to the Saints. My numbers favor NO by seven points (all games) and by 14 points (last five games). Atlanta won their game last week in easy fashion but I think it was more because of a +4 in the turnover department than what they did from a yardage standpoint. They were out gained 320-274 and 4.8 yppl to 4.5 yppl. The Giants rushed for 6.5 ypr and 124 yards. So, it doesn't appear they have corrected their problems, they just won the turnover battle and that allowed them to succeed even though they were getting out played on each play. On the road this year, Atlanta has allowed an average of 146 yards rushing per game at 5.2 ypr. NO has gained at least 103 yards rushing in every game this year except their game at Tennessee, where they were taken out of the game early. They gained 166 yards on 36 carries in their earlier meeting with Atlanta. I originally

thought this game might be high scoring because my numbers suggest about 45 to 48 points being scored but I do have a 223-120-6 under situation that applies to this game and that situation is 7-3 to the under this year. I'll take the better team and lean towards the under. **NEW ORLEANS 27 ATLANTA 14**

INDIANAPOLIS -6 NY Jets 43

This game should be a shootout whether Marvin Harrison plays or not. I still think the Colts offense is good enough and has enough weapons despite the loss of Harrison. And I don't believe the Colts defense is good enough to shut down the Jets offense, especially in a controlled environment, where they can run everything in their offense. Indy continues to throw the ball very well, averaging 8.0 yps against 6.6 yps over their last five games. They aren't running the ball well, averaging just 3.4 ypr against 3.8 ypr but that could get a little healthier against the Jets. The Jets are allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.1 ypr and have allowed at least 115 yards rushing in every game but one this year and an average of 155 yards per game, which soars to 168 yards per game on the road. If they continue to do that, they will continue to allow a bunch of points as well. They have faced only one good offense on the road this year and that was New England, where they allowed 23 points. The Jets should be able to move the ball in this game against the Colts defense, which is allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.2 ypr and 6.4 yps against 6.3 yps over their last five games. The Jets strength on offense has been their passing game, which is averaging 6.3 yps against 5.6 yps over their last five games. They have also started to rush the ball well, averaging 4.1 ypr against 4.2 ypr in their last five games, but have gained at least 118 yards rushing in each of those games and averaged at least 5.0 ypr in three of their last four games. Indy has allowed at least 21 points in five of their last six games and their offense has scored at least 20 points in every game since their first game and at least 23 in every game but two games. This means we can probably pencil in the Colts to get at least 23 points in this game. Will they give up 20 points? Well, knowing they have allowed at least 21 points in five of their last six games and at least 131 yards rushing in seven of their last eight games, I think we can assume the Jets offense, will get their share of points as well. The Jets have averaged 22 points in their last five games. The Jets also qualify in a contrary situation, which is 107-38-5 (3-1 TY) and my final numbers only show Indy winning this game by 4.5 points (all games) and by two points (last five games). Herm Edwards is now 6-3 as an away dog of more than three points and the Jets have historically been a good road dog team, going 16-4-1 since 1997 as a road dog of more than four points. On the other side, Tony Dungy teams have never performed well as a big favorite, going 13-27-0 as a favorite of four or more points, including 4-7-0 with Indy (1-3-0 TY). And, historically, Indy hasn't been a good favorite team, going 14-30-1 as a home favorite of four or more points, including just 3-6 with Tony Dungy (1-2 TY). The Jets haven't lost here at Indy by more than eight points in the last ten years. I realize a seven or eight point loss would not get the cover but the point is they have been competitive and they are in a great situation this week. We have line value, a 73%+ situation on 145 samples, past team history success in this role, a coaches past history of success in this role against a team with a poor history in their current role and their head coach with a poor history in this role. Only one side in this game and the over looks even better than the side. Yes, I realize the Colts are playing with revenge. You can throw that out in the NFL. Jets are the more desperate team here. **INDIANAPOLIS 31 NY JETS 30**

DENVER -8.5 San Diego 44

This is a pretty tough game for me to get a read on. Denver's numbers, as of late, aren't that good, but they have been playing without Plummer, which has greatly hurt their passing numbers and their rushing numbers to some extent. The defense has also suffered injuries and that has hurt them as well. For SD, they go with Doug Flutie for a second straight game. It's too bad they don't have a better match up this week because I would like to see Flutie succeed against some worse teams and set up a great play against SD down the road. Unfortunately, that probably won't happen. SD does qualify in the same situation the Jets qualify in, which is a remarkable 107-38-5 and 3-1 this year. And SD has rushed the ball well as of late, gaining 5.3 ypr against 3.9 ypr but they haven't thrown the ball well, gaining just 5.2 yps against 6.0 yps but maybe that will change some with Flutie. The one constant in all of this is the Chargers pass defense, which hasn't been good, allowing 6.6 yps against 5.6 yps over their last five games. Denver hasn't thrown the ball well as of late, gaining just 5.0 yps against 5.9 yps but that was without Plummer. The Broncos continue to run the ball well, gaining 4.6 ypr against 4.2 ypr and SD has played much better rush defense, as of late, allowing just 3.8 ypr against 3.9 ypr. I'll lean with SD because of the great situation they are in. This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 48-21-4. My final points show about 44 to 45 points being scored, which is too close to the number to play the under. **DENVER 23 SAN DIEGO 20**

TAMPA BAY –4 Green Bay 40.5

Last week many people saw their bankroll take a hit because they played TB, knowing the Bucs are now 20-2 ats when coming off a loss as a favorite. I'm sure people will point to that trend again this week and also point out TB needs this win badly, along with the fact GB has lost five straight games in TB. But, look a little deeper and realize three of those five losses were by five points or less, so it's not like they haven't been competitive in those games. Last year was another example of playing TB tough but losing the game in the end because of turnovers. In that game, they gained 264 yards at 4.2 yppl to TB's 246 yards at 4.2 yppl. The difference was four costly interceptions by Favre. He's certainly capable of doing that again this week but the Packers offense is much different this time around. They are running the ball with authority and that is taking the pressure off of Favre and putting him in position to succeed. GB is now averaging 5.8 ypr against 4.7 ypr in their last five games and throwing the ball for 6.5 yps against 5.8 yps. The defense isn't playing great, allowing teams to rush for 4.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr but only throw for 6.2 yps against 6.8 yps. There really isn't anything special about the TB defense right now. They are allowing 5.0 yppl against 5.0 yppl and the most telling sign was last week when they needed to stop Carolina on their last drive but instead allowed Carolina to drive 78 yards on only six plays in only 1:35. That's not a good sign for a defense that is supposed to be extra special. TB still can't run the ball, averaging just 4.0 ypr against 4.4 ypr but they continue to throw the ball well, gaining 6.3 yps against 5.6 yps. TB has allowed teams to rush the ball very effectively on them. They allowed Carolina, in their first game, to rush for 171 yards, NO to rush for 124 yards and SF to rush for 212 yards. They held Carolina to just 78 yards last week but that was without Stephen Davis. And two of those three games mentioned were at home. TB has now lost three of four home games this year so I don't think GB will be intimidated in this game. The Pack qualify in a contrary situation, which is 291-210-10 and they are a turnover table play, which is 765-596-31 and indicates they shouldn't have as many turnover problems this year as they had last year. GB also qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 518-400-31 (29-20-2 TY) and a subset of that, which is 419-295-23 (21-12-1 TY). Final numbers only show TB winning by 2.5 points (all games) and 1.5 points (last five games). We have line value along with some solid situations in their favor. And, possibly the Warren Sapp problems from last year, that might just light a fire under the GB offensive line. They took offense to some Chris Hovan talk earlier this year, and came out and played with vengeance and they just might do it again this week. **GREEN BAY 27 TAMPA BAY 24**

SEATTLE –10.5 Detroit 40.5

I don't have much interest in this game but I will side with the better team, which is Seattle. Detroit does nothing on offense, gaining just 4.2 yppl against 4.8 yppl, but they have played better defense as of late, allowing just 4.5 yppl against 4.7 yppl in their last five games. They'll face a Seahawk defense that really isn't anything special, allowing 4.9 yppl against 4.8 yppl over their last five games. Seattle continues to run the ball well, averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 6.5 yps against 6.2 yps. Mike Holmgren said they will open up the offense more this week and start looking for bigger plays out of the passing game. Seattle has gone under in every home game this year and Detroit has gone under in all but one road game this year, totaling just 40 points in the one game they did go over in. The season long numbers favor Seattle by nine points and the last five games numbers favor them by only 5.5 points. Seattle does qualify in a contrary situation, which is 324-245-20 but they don't qualify in the better subsets of that. Still, I side with them here in a light lean. **SEATTLE 27 DETROIT 14**

Minnesota –4.5 OAKLAND 45.5

Well, I guess they can't make the Vikings an underdog in this game so their only choice is to make them a favorite. I will admit I think the Vikings have a better chance this week because Oakland doesn't really have an identity on offense. The Vikings last four opponents all did something well on offense but Oakland doesn't fit that mode. Still, the situations go against Minnesota again this week. How one can lay points on the road with a team allowing 5.8 ypr against 4.8 ypr and 6.8 yps against 5.7 yps is beyond me. And, while the Oakland offense isn't anything special, gaining just 4.0 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 5.2 yps against 5.6 yps, this type of defense can get them healthy real quick. The Vikings don't bring any type of pass rush, which should allow Rick Mirer to find time for open receivers. And, if you think the Vikings secondary is going to stop Jerry Rice, Tim Brown and Jerry Porter, you haven't watched many Vikings games this year. Charlie Garner and Justin Fargas are salivating, waiting to get their shot against this run defense. If teams have been attacking the outside of the Vikings defense because of their slow (and

now we find out injured linebackers), I don't see them stopping the speed of Garner and Fargas. Now, Oakland has their own problems on defense. They are allowing 4.8 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 5.8 yps against 5.4 yps over their last five games and that should sit just fine with the Vikings offense. Their offense is still throwing the ball well, averaging 7.6 yps against 6.4 yps but the running game has become just average, averaging 4.3 ypr against 4.3 ypr. Go back to last week's analysis where I pointed out how many points this Vikings defense has allowed since late of 2000 on the road. It's unbelievable and now they are laying points. Until that changes, I have to continue to take my shots against them. Minnesota qualifies in a negative scheduling situation, which is a 156-87-8 play against them here and Oakland is a turnover table play for me this week, which is 765-596-31. I said it last week in the SD game and I'll say it this week. Teams who are covering the spread, when playing teams who aren't covering the spread, are poor propositions and will lead you to a depleted bankroll faster than you can pay the pizza delivery man. That situation pops again this week against the Vikings and is now 271-177-19 (6-2 TY). Oakland also qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is now 73-32-8. Of course, I had my biggest play of the year last week on the over. This week, the game qualifies in a 33-11-1 over situation, BUT, it also qualifies in a 48-21-4 under situation. Final predicted points are about 48 to 50 points but I can't play the over when the one situation plays to the under. Last week, Tice said he tried to run the ball more in the second half to keep his defense off the field and he might try that again this week. If they fall way behind again, he won't have a choice but if they can keep it close, he might resort to the run game, especially with Randy Moss a little banged up. It won't matter with that defense. **OAKLAND 24 MINNESOTA 20**

NEW ENGLAND -4 Dallas 35

Only one situation in this game and it leans towards the Cowboys. This should be a very interesting game with the NE offense, which is averaging 7.2 yps against 5.8 yps over their last five games going against the Cowboys pass defense, which is allowing just 3.3 yps against 5.1 yps over their last five games. NE is allowing 4.9 ypr against 4.4 ypr and, while the Cowboys don't rush the ball particularly well (3.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr), I have to believe Parcells will try and run the ball at them to try and open up his speedy receivers. If NE can't throw the ball, I'm not sure how they'll move the ball because they don't run the ball well enough. Dallas qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 234-163-14 and the final numbers suggest a four point win (all games) and a six point win (last five games) for NE. Parcells is now 31-13-1 as a road dog of four or more points. **NEW ENGLAND 17 DALLAS 16**

SAN FRANCISCO -4 Pittsburgh 41

SF has played some great football as of late, especially at home. They are now averaging 4.3 ypr against 3.8 ypr and 6.3 yps against 5.8 yps over their last five games. Pittsburgh has defended the run well, allowing just 3.1 ypr against 4.0 ypr but they are giving up big plays in the passing game, allowing 6.9 yps against 6.1 yps. On offense, Pittsburgh isn't doing anything well, averaging just 3.5 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 5.0 yps against 5.9 yps. Pittsburgh finally got the win last week but they didn't do anything well, getting out gained 379 yards to just 246 yards and 5.0 yppl to 4.7 yppl. The turnovers were even but they did register five sacks, which helped greatly and returned a punt for a touchdown. The only weakness in the 49ers defense, as of late, as been their rush defense, which is allowing 4.4 ypr against 3.9 ypr but the Steelers offensive line just isn't good enough to exploit that. SF qualifies in a home momentum situation, which is 25-7-0 and a Monday night situation, which is 59-26-2. Final numbers favor SF by a lot here and the situations do as well. I'll side with SF. **SAN FRANCISCO 30 PITTSBURGH 13**

BEST BETS

YTD 29-23-2 +12.20%

3% NYJ/INDY OVER 43

2% ARIZONA +6

2% CINCINNATI +6

2% CHICAGO +6.5

2% BALTIMORE +6

2% NY JETS +6

2% GREEN BAY +4
2% OAKLAND +5
2% SAN FRANCISCO -4

WEEK 12

Certainly on a great roll right now, going 7-2 last week and 12-3 over the last two weeks. All plays are now hitting at 59% and that comes on the heels of last years 57% success rate (65-49), including winning 66% over the last 10 weeks of the season last year (regular season and playoffs). Totals continue to do well, going 10-6 this year after going 11-4 last year and are now 21-10 over the last 1+ years. Top plays (3%+) are now 7-2 this year. Having said that, be aware I am not going to continue to win 80% of my games (12-3 last two weeks) and may not win 59% of my games the rest of the year. My goal each year is 55%. A good year is 57% -60% and a great year would be 62% or so. The chances of meeting my goal (55%) each year is quite likely, using the methodology I use. The chances of having a good year (57%-59%) are a little less and the chances of having a great year are much less. Keep things in perspective and respect your bankroll. Hopefully I'll remain red hot but that might be asking a little too much.

All side opinions went 8-8 last week and are now 83-70-5 54% over the first eleven weeks of the season.

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

Indianapolis -3 BUFFALO 37.5

The Buffalo offense has hit rock bottom, or at least I hope it has, meaning I hope it can only get better from here. Buffalo has now gone three straight games without scoring a touchdown. Listening to a Buffalo radio station this week and their advertisement for a restaurant in Buffalo that gives special drink and food items whenever Buffalo scores a touchdown, was kind of funny. The people at the radio station could barely get the advertisement out without laughing. Lost in all of this are two things. Buffalo is actually running the ball very well right now and their defense continues to play great ball. It's the Bills passing game, which has been non-existent the past three weeks. But it's that running game and the defense, that might lead them to a win this weekend. The Bills, who had only one 100 yard rushing game in their first six games, have now had four straight 100+ yard rushing games, including three out of four with at least 133 yards rushing. Their pass defense, which allowed 211 yards last week to Houston, of which 46 came on a touchdown because of a broken tackle, has only allowed one other team this year to throw for more than 199 yards and only one other team to throw for more than 170 yards. Since their third game of the season, Indianapolis has now allowed at least 131 yards rushing in seven of their last eight games. Over their last five games, Buffalo is allowing 4.4 yppl against teams averaging 5.1 yppl, being above average against both, the run and the pass. Indy continues to not be able to run the ball, averaging 3.4 ypr against 3.9 ypr over their last five games, but they are throwing the ball for 8.1 yps against 6.4 yps. Last weeks game against the Jets was a bit misleading, in terms of Indy gaining 538 yards, but at only 7.0 yppl (which was very good) but they allowed 9.5 yppl to the Jets! Buffalo ran for 6.5 ypr last week and out averaged the Texans 5.8 yppl to 4.7 yppl. The Indy defense is allowing 4.7 ypr against 4.2 ypr and 6.5 yps against 6.2 yps over their last five games. While Buffalo is only averaging 4.3 ypr against 4.5 ypr over their last five games, they are running the ball much better and will be able to succeed here against a very porous Indy rush defense. With their loss last week, Buffalo qualifies in a bounce back situation, which is 71-41-1. Buffalo also qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32 and they qualify in another contrary situation, which is 273-177-19 and 8-2 this year. That situation, basically, says teams under .500 ats for the season cover against teams above .500 ats for the season. There's more to it than that but that is the basics. Aside from the technical situations, Buffalo also qualifies in two different fundamental rushing situations, which are 112-54-6 (5-2 TY) and 521-401-31 (32-21-2 TY), including a subset, which is 240-138-12 (12-7-1 TY). Indy also qualifies in two different situations, which play against them, which are 72-38-3 (3-1 TY) and 97-52-3. Final numbers indicate Indy should be a 4.5 point favorite (all games) and 5 point favorite (last five games), before accounting for the great situations Buffalo is in this week. I have situations favoring both the over and the under here so I will lean with my numbers, which suggest an over. **BUFFALO 24 INDIANAPOLIS**

NY JETS –4 Jacksonville 42

Jets lost last week in a competitive game at Indy, but a closer look reveals they may have outplayed Indy. Jets lost the yardage battle, 324-538, but won the yards per play battle, 9.5-7.0! They ran for 7.8 ypr by gaining 132 yards on just 17 carries and passed for another 11.3 yps. Meanwhile, Jacksonville was doing what they do best, and that is out yard their opponent's by both, yards and yards per play, but still lose the game. They outgained Tennessee 271-246 and 4.4-4.1 yards per play. The Jacksonville defense remains very underrated, allowing just 3.4 ypr against 3.8 ypr and 6.4 yps against 6.8 yps. Their offense has come back to just an average offense, now gaining just 3.8 ypr against 3.8 ypr and 6.2 yps against 6.1 yps. Still, I like Bryon Leftwich an awful lot if he can just avoid the turnovers. For the Jets, their defense has been pretty average over the last five games, allowing 4.2 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 5.9 yps against 5.8 yps. The running game, which was so non-existent last year and early this year, is at least now average, gaining 4.4 ypr against 4.4 ypr. The passing game continues to shine, gaining 6.6 yps against 5.7 yps. A couple of things stand out here. With the exception of their game against Buffalo, the Jets have now allowed at least 115 yards rushing in every game this year, and with the exception of that 115 yard game, at least 145 yards in every game. On offense, as mentioned, they are starting to run the ball with authority and have gained at least 118 yards in each of their last six games after failing to gain more than 66 yards in each of their first four games. The Jets poor defensive effort last week doesn't bode well for them here, and they qualify in a negative situation, which is a 68-28-4 play against them here. And it also qualifies them in another negative situation, which is a 170-99-10, including the best subset, which is 70-25-2 and plays against the Jets here. Meanwhile, Jacksonville qualifies in a contrary situation, which is 293-212-11 and another, which is 107-40-5. They also qualify as a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32. And, last but not least, they qualify in two different fundamental rushing situations, which are 521-401-31 (32-21-2 TY), including a subset, which is 240-138-12 (12-7-1 TY) and a situation, which is 230-160-14. Other than the Jets 30-3 win over an injury depleted Bills team, they haven't won a game by more than five points this year. Meanwhile, take a look at Jacksonville's schedule this year. They have played at Carolina (lost by one), lost to Buffalo by 21 when Buffalo was playing so well, played Indianapolis twice, Tennessee twice, Baltimore and Miami. The only bad teams they have played (Buffalo wasn't bad when they played them), have been Houston (who they lost to by four on a last play touchdown by Houston) and San Diego, who they beat by six. Jacksonville has played an incredibly tough schedule and the Jets, while I respect them, are not in the class of that tough schedule. Jacksonville has the better defense, and a capable quarterback in the battle of Marshall quarterbacks. I like Jacksonville here. **JACKSONVILLE 24 NY JETS 21**

BALTIMORE –3 Seattle 36.5

A little home/road dichotomy in this game and the only thing that might balance it out is Anthony Wright starting at quarterback for Baltimore. Baltimore came up short last week but had their chances against Miami and probably deserved to win that game, but a solid effort by the Dolphins on defense, and a few costly turnovers did them in. Seattle dominated their game against Detroit from start to finish and let their 35-14 lead at halftime stand and coasted to a win in a scoreless second half. Baltimore's offense has gotten a little worse over the last five games (from a rushing standpoint) and they are no longer running the ball quite as well as before, gaining just 4.2 ypr against 3.9 ypr over the last five games, which is obviously down from their season long average of 4.9 ypr against 4.0 ypr. But, while they are still below average throwing the ball, gaining just 5.4 yps against 6.1 yps over their last five games, that is an improvement over their season long average of just 4.4 yps against 6.0 yps. So, they are getting more balanced, which is probably a good thing. And their defense is starting to play closer and closer to some of their better defenses of the past, allowing just 3.4 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 4.8 yps against 6.0 yps. For Seattle, the offense is really starting to play well now, averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 6.6 yps against 6.3 yps. The defense is starting to fall back to levels closer to last year, now allowing 4.1 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 5.6 yps against 5.5 yps. Seattle's numbers may look a little better than they are because they have played six of their ten games at home. When they have taken to the road, it's been another story for them. Throw out their game at Arizona, where Arizona turned the ball over six times and lost their starting quarterback early in the game, and it hasn't been a pretty picture on the road for Seattle. Seattle has allowed a 100 yard rusher in six of their ten games but three of their four games on the road, including their three worse performances. They allowed GB to rush for 159 yards, Cincinnati to rush for 180 yards and lowly Washington to rush for 137 yards. They also allowed each of those three teams to throw for at least 6.8 yps. And, Seattle has lost the three games on the road they have played after

the Arizona game, by 32, 3 and 7 points. In those last three road games, they have also turned the ball over ten times to only two for their opponents, which means against good competition on the road, their defense has not played well. And, they are turning the ball over against average to good defenses. That doesn't bode well for them in Baltimore. Seattle has moved the ball through the air this year, whether at home or on the road, but that assignment will be more difficult against a Baltimore pass defense, which has not allowed more than 186 yards passing at home this year. They have allowed just 83 yards (Cleveland), 113 yards (Kansas City), 90 yards (Denver) and 186 yards (Jacksonville). Baltimore qualifies as a turnover table play this week and that situation is now 769-597-32 and they qualify in a subset, which is 139-78-4. They also qualify in two different fundamental rushing situations, which are 75-32-3 (5-3 TY) and 135-54-7 (7-4 TY). Final numbers suggest a pick 'em game (all games) and favor Baltimore by 1.5 (last five games) but they don't account for the home/road dichotomy and they don't account for the great situations Baltimore qualifies in. This game, while it doesn't qualify in any over/under situations, could end up being higher scoring than 'they' think. **BALTIMORE 31 SEATTLE 13**

PHILADELPHIA -5.5 New Orleans 39.5

Philly dominated the Giants last week, in route to their 28-10 win. They averaged 7.4 yppl against only 5.1 yppl for the Giants. Much like Baltimore, Philly's rushing offense has taken a step back as of late, but their passing game, while still below average, has gotten much better over their last five games. They are now averaging 4.4 ypr against 4.4 ypr and 5.4 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games. They should be able to run on a New Orleans defense that is allowing 5.0 ypr against 4.4 ypr over their last five games. The Saints have played good pass defense, allowing just 5.0 yps against 5.8 yps over their last five games. For New Orleans, their rushing offense has been very steady this year and they are gaining 4.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr over their last five games. The passing offense has been a bit below average, gaining just 6.1 yps against 6.5 yps. NO has rushed for at least 103 yards in every game but one this year. Philly, after not allowing a team to rush for more than 90 yards in their first four games (no more than 62 in three of those four), has now allowed at least 109 yards in each of their last six games and 4.7 ypr against 4.5 ypr over their last five games. Saints haven't been much better, allowing at least 100 yards rushing in all but two of their games. I have no situations that favor either team here and the numbers suggest Philly by four (all games) and by 1.5 (last five games) and I'll lean towards NO based on that. **PHILADELPHIA 21 NEW ORLEANS 20**

CLEVELAND -3 Pittsburgh 40.5

This is the first of two games that qualified as best bets this week, but in trying to not take too many games, one, which I left off the card. The biggest reason I left the game off the card is because Pittsburgh, despite the situations favoring them, is just not playing very well. I look at four different stats – rushing and passing offense and rushing and passing defense. Not only is Pittsburgh failing in three of those four, but they are failing badly. The Steelers are averaging just 3.4 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 5.1 yps against 5.9 yps. On defense, the rush defense has been good, allowing just 3.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr but they are allowing a whopping 6.9 yps against 6.0 yps. At least last year, when they still couldn't run the ball, they were throwing the ball well, but that's not the case this year. Now, Cleveland doesn't have much to offer either, but at least they have some identity. The Browns have been average rushing the ball in their last five games, gaining 4.1 ypr against 4.1 ypr and well below average throwing the ball, gaining just 4.8 yps against 6.0 yps and that includes their performance against Arizona last week, which saw them throw for 11.2 yps. On defense, the Browns are allowing 4.2 ypr against 4.0 ypr but playing better pass defense, allowing just 5.8 yps against 6.0 yps over their last five games. Pittsburgh has never lost by more than three points in Cleveland since this franchise came back in 1999. Cleveland does qualify in a home momentum situation, which is 108-65-11 but they don't qualify in the better subset, which is 68-22-6, making the situation just 40-43-5 without the subset. Pittsburgh qualifies in two different contrary situations, which are 293-212-11 and the turnover table system, which is 769-597-32. Final numbers (before the situations are accounted for) do support Cleveland by 8.5 (all games) and 9 (last five games), which is one of the reasons I left Pittsburgh off the card despite qualifying as a play this week. **PITTSBURGH 20 CLEVELAND 17**

GREEN BAY -4.5 San Francisco 42.5

If there is one team Green Bay has had the number on for eight years now, it is the 49ers. Maybe that will change because the 49ers offense is a little different from the previous years, with Dennis Erickson now in charge, but I

doubt it will change much. It all started back in 1995 when Green Bay went to SF as a 10 point dog in the playoffs and played the most physical game I have ever seen them play. They left as 10 point winners in a game they were never threatened in. Since then, they have played SF nine times, winning eight of those games. They have played each year, sometimes twice. The only SF win was the Owens catch in the 1998 playoffs on the last play of the game, to win by three points. It doesn't matter if it's in Green Bay or San Francisco, playoffs, or the NFC Championship game in SF, the Packers have dominated this series. Since 1991, SF is just 18-31-2 on the road when playing a team at or above .500, which includes just 11-28 if SF is off a win. They are just 5-21-1 if SF played at home in their previous game and their opponent was on the road. And that includes some of SF better years, with a SB in 1994. They just haven't been a good team on the road when playing good competition. They have made a living on the road beating inferior teams. Not much has changed this year, with SF, although competitive, going 0-4 SU on the road. The SF offense has come on as of late, averaging 4.4 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 6.5 yps against 5.9 yps. But their defense, over the last five games, has given some of that back, allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 6.0 yps against 5.9 yps. In their last three road games, they have allowed 102, 147 and 221 rushing yards. That doesn't bode well against a Green Bay team who is running the ball better than any other team in the league right now, averaging 5.8 ypr against 4.7 ypr over their last five games. The Packers have gone to more of the run to protect Favre, and they are now averaging just 6.2 yps against 6.7 yps over their last five games. They have rushed for at least 190 yards in each of their last three games, and at least 184 yards in six of their ten games this year. The Green Bay defense, like SF, has given some of that back, allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games but the pass defense has played better, allowing just 6.3 yps against 6.8 yps. They allowed TB to rush for 154 yards at 8.6 ypr last week but that was somewhat misleading as two rushes accounted for about 110 yards and they only allowed about 2.0 ypr in TB other 16 rushes. The Pack qualify in a general momentum situation, which is 103-60-4 and if this line would drop to -4 or less, they would qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 135-54-7 (7-4 TY). Final numbers actually favor SF but the home/road dichotomy and the situations make up for that. If Green Bay becomes a favorite of four or less, I would make them a best bet. **GREEN BAY 30 SAN FRANCISCO 20**

MINNESOTA -10.5 Detroit 47.5

Maybe after Minnesota allows at least 28 points in about nine straight games, the line maker will begin to make their lines fair. Minnesota had a chance last week against an Oakland team who had no identity on offense to really take advantage of the porous Minnesota defense. That didn't work as Oakland rushed for their most yards this year, 191 and gained their second most total yards, 375, and second most points, 28, in a game this year. They better get the job done this week because with games at St. Louis, at home versus Seattle and Kansas City and at Chicago and Arizona, this might be their last chance to win a game. Those other teams all do something well, that could spell trouble for the Vikings. Yes, Chicago actually plays pretty solid defense and Arizona can rush the ball (who can't against this defense) and plays well at home. The other three teams speak for themselves. Minnesota has now allowed at least 20 points in six straight games and at least 26 points in five of six games. That doesn't bode well when you are laying 10.5 points. Can Minnesota score 30+ points? Sure, but they have only scored more than 30 points twice this year. And only two of their six wins have come by more than 11 points this year. Once again, they'll face a team that doesn't do anything special on offense. The Lions have been terrible on offense this year, averaging just 3.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 4.6 yps against 5.2 yps. But, where they fail, so does Minnesota. The Vikings are allowing 5.7 ypr against 4.8 ypr and 7.0 yps against 5.5 yps over their last five games. We've heard all the stories about Minnesota had to play some great backs in Tiki Barber, Ahman Green and Clinton Portis and Tomlinson. They didn't face one last week and still allowed Wheatley and company to rush for 191 yards. They played good teams and that was why they were losing. They haven't played a good team in each of the last two weeks and still lost the games badly. They were undervalued last year because they were turning the ball over so much and were getting a lot of points in games. This year, their defense wasn't playing that well, even in the beginning, but they were getting the turnovers. All of a sudden that has stopped for the last four games and they have lost all of them badly. Will they get the turnovers this week? They could against Detroit, but teams have figured out they can run the ball on this team, and that limits their chances of turning the ball over. Even as hapless as Detroit's offense has been, when comparing their numbers to Minnesota's numbers, they still figure to average about 4.5 ypr and 6.8 yps. Would you want to lay 10.5 points, knowing your opponent is probably going to average those numbers? And, what Oakland didn't have going for them last week, Detroit does this week, and that's a decent defense. Their defense is allowing just 3.3 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 5.6 yps against 5.5 yps. For Minnesota, the one area that has continued to perform well is the passing game, which is averaging 7.4 yps against 5.3 yps, while the

running game has been just above average, gaining 4.4 ypr against 4.2 ypr. Mike Tice has said this week they need to establish the run, which will allow them to pass and keep their defense off the field, where it belongs. But, Detroit is playing good rush defense, and may be able to limit the gains Minnesota can get. Over the last 10 years playing Detroit at home, Minnesota has only won one game by more than 10 points, and that was the 15-1 team in 1998. This isn't a version of that 15-1 team and I don't see them winning this game by more than 10 points with this defense. Detroit qualifies in a contrary situation, which is 293-212-11 and they are a turnover table play as well, which is 769-597-32. Final numbers, before accounting for the situations Detroit qualifies in, suggest Minnesota by 10.5 (all games) and by 8.5 (last five games). I'll always gladly take my chances getting 10+ points, when facing a defense like Minnesota. **MINNESOTA 28 DETROIT 27**

DALLAS -3 Carolina 32.5

I have no situations on either team in this game and I don't have a strong opinion either. It's very tough to see Dallas, with an offense that has really become somewhat anemic, laying points against a good team like Carolina, who is in just about every game. Having said that, the Dallas offense might play better this week on the carpet, where they can take advantage of their speed. The Cowboys have really only played three good defenses this year and they haven't performed well against them, scoring 0 points at Tampa Bay, 10 points against Buffalo, and 0 points again last week against New England. Carolina is obviously known as a running team but they are averaging just 4.3 ypr against 4.2 ypr for the whole season, and just 4.4 ypr against 4.6 ypr over their last five games. But, they are starting to throw the ball extremely well right now, averaging 6.9 yps against 6.3 yps over their last five games. Dallas has been just average defending the run, allowing 3.9 ypr against 3.9 ypr but excellent defending the pass, allowing just 3.4 yps against 5.1 yps. Until allowing NE to throw for 203 yards last week, Dallas hadn't allowed a team to throw for more than 133 yards in any of their previous six games. And since their first game, they haven't allowed a team to throw for more than 124 yards at home this year. Numbers favor Dallas by four points (all games) and by 5.5 points (last five games), but I am going to lean the other way in this game and take the points in what should be a low scoring game. **DALLAS 17 CAROLINA 16**

New England -6 HOUSTON 37

No question NE is playing great football right now. They are playing great defense, allowing just 4.6 ypr against 4.9 ypr and just 14 points per game against teams averaging 20 points per game over their last five games. The offense hasn't been terrific but their passing game has been, averaging 7.2 yps against 5.7 yps over their last five games. That could spell trouble against a Houston defense, which is allowing 4.6 ypr against 3.9 ypr and a whopping 8.2 yps against 7.0 yps over their last five games. The Houston offense has been solid, gaining 4.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 6.5 yps against 6.3 yps over their last five games. While they have played some teams that are better than this Houston team, NE hasn't been blowing teams away on the road. They lost their opener at Buffalo, in a game we can probably just throw out because of the Lawyer Milloy stuff, and then bounced back against Philly, winning 31-10. Since then, they have lost by three at Washington, won in OT at Miami by six, and won in the last seconds at Denver by four, against a Bronco team without Jake Plummer. For Houston, they lost badly early in the year at home to Kansas City by 28, but since then have defeated Jacksonville by four, lost by five against the Jets and defeated Carolina by four. So, they have been competitive at home. Houston qualifies in two similar momentum situations, which are 76-42-2 and 155-105-11 (3-0 TY). NE qualifies in a scheduling situation, which plays against them here. That situation is 97-52-3. Final numbers favor NE by 5.5 (all games) and 3.5 (last five games). I like the home dog to have a chance of staying within a generous amount of points. Houston has rushed for at least 107 yards in each of their four home games this year. NE has allowed at least 97 yards rushing in each road game this year and three of their four 100 yard rushing games allowed have come on the road. **NEW ENGLAND 21 HOUSTON 20**

DENVER -10.5 Chicago 40.5

Second game of the week that I scratched from the card, although it qualified as a play this week. It's hard to completely trust the numbers with Denver because so many of those games came without Jake Plummer at quarterback. Having said that, the numbers for all games favor Denver by about 14 and for just the last five games, favor them by about five points. The general perception is Chicago is a really bad team and they aren't necessarily a good team, but their defense has played well lately. They are allowing just 3.8 ypr against 4.3 ypr and 5.2 yps against 5.5

yps. They are also allowing just 17 points per game against teams averaging 20 points per game over their last five games. They'll go against a Denver offense, which is gaining 4.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr but just 4.9 yps against 5.9 yps. But, like I said, it's tough to get a read on those numbers because Plummer has been hurt. Last week with Plummer, they averaged 6.9 yps against a San Diego pass defense that has allowed 6.4 yps over their last five games and 6.6 yps for the season. So, I would say the Denver passing game is back to above average. Throw out the first game, which was a debacle against SF, and the Bears haven't lost a game by more than 15 points this year. And since Chandler became quarterback, they haven't lost by more than seven points and that includes traveling to Seattle as 11 point dogs (lost by seven) and to New Orleans as 6.5 point dogs (lost by seven). The Bears qualify in a contrary situation, which is 293-212-11 and they qualify in another situation, which is 106-52-2 (4-0 TY). I won't play Chicago here because I think it will be tough for them to move the ball on offense against a good Denver defense (Bears average just 3.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 5.0 yps against 5.8 yps) but they do qualify as a best bet and are the right side. **DENVER 21 CHICAGO 17**

St. Louis -8 ARIZONA 43

After going against the Rams for four straight games earlier this year and failing to win any of them, I have now gone against them in two of their last three games and won both of them. I'll continue to attack what I think is a slightly overrated team. It's beginning to get harder and harder to justify Arizona as they continue to slide back into the Arizona team we all know and love, but my last defense for them this week is they play better at home. Rams continue to not be able to rush the ball, averaging just 3.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr but they are throwing the ball extremely well, averaging 7.1 yps against 6.3 yps over their last five games. The defense has played respectable during that time, allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.5 ypr and 5.6 yps against 5.6 yps. For Arizona, their saving grace is their rushing game, which is averaging 4.1 ypr against 3.9 ypr. The passing game has gone south, averaging just 5.0 yps against 5.6 yps. On defense, they are allowing just 3.7 ypr against 3.9 ypr but are now allowing 6.2 yps against 5.9 yps. Since Marcel Shipp took over at running back, the team has gained 221 and 161 yards rushing in their last two home games. They lost their first game at home to Seattle, but lost Blake early in that game and turned the ball over six times. But, since then, they have defeated GB (who was banged up) by seven points, lost to Baltimore by eight (although trailed by much more) beat SF by three and Cincinnati by three. In that Baltimore game, they actually gained 320 yards to just a little over 300 for Baltimore but allowed an interception return for a touchdown and a punt return for a touchdown. Only once have the Rams averaged more than 3.1 ypr on the road this year and that was last week with Marshall Faulk, when they averaged 4.5 ypr. The defense is allowing 4.7 ypr on the road this year. The Rams have also had protection problems the last two weeks. That can be excused against a Baltimore defense, where they allowed five sacks, but not against the Bears defense, where they allowed four sacks. The Bears only had 8 sacks coming into that game. Arizona also only has eight sacks on the year so we'll see if playing on the road affects their ability to protect Mark Bulger. Arizona is averaging 4.1 ypr at home this year but has averaged 4.5, 5.0 and 4.4 ypr in their last three home games. They've also allowed only one team (Baltimore) to rush for more than 4.3 ypr and only Seattle and Baltimore to rush for more than 3.9 ypr at home. The Rams have won just one game by more than two points on the road this year. Going back to the 2000 season, the Rams are now just 3-12-1 when facing an opponent on the road who has a win percentage of .500 or below and just 1-10-1 when they have a winning percentage of less than .857. It's very hard to trust them laying points on the road. Arizona qualifies in a bounce back situation, which is 39-16-0, which plays on teams who allowed 40 or more points in their last game. They also qualify as a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32 and they qualify in a contrary situation, which is 273-177-19. That situation is 8-2 this year and the premise of the situation is to play on teams who are not covering the spread against teams who are covering the spread. Teams don't just keep on covering and not covering. Vegas wouldn't be quite as bright as it is if that was the case. Arizona also qualifies in two fundamental rushing situations, which are 112-54-6 (5-2 TY) and a situation, which is 521-401-31 (32-21-2 TY) and a subset, which is 240-138-12 (12-7-1 TY). Final numbers suggest Rams by 6.5 (all games) and by five points (last five games) before accounting for the situations Arizona qualifies in. This game also qualifies in two terrific under situations, which are 145-71-2 (6-1 TY) and 299-221-11 (13-5 TY). Arizona has played it close to the vest this year at home and their games have accounted for just 38, 33, 44, 29 and 31 points. Last year, these two combined for 58 points at St. Louis (50 this year at St. Louis) but just 41 points here. And Arizona only had one game last year at home that combined to total more than 43 points. The situations favoring the under are too strong and too hot this year to ignore. **ST LOUIS 21 ARIZONA 17**

Tennessee -7.5 ATLANTA 44

Here is another team (Tennessee) I have gone against five straight times and only covered one once. I finally got off that ship last week and they didn't cover. I'm getting back on that ship this week and we'll see what happens. It's hard to make a great case for Atlanta, from a fundamental standpoint. After all, Atlanta is allowing 4.7 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 8.1 yps against 6.4 yps over their last five games. And now they'll face a Tennessee offense that is averaging just 3.2 ypr against 3.7 ypr but an unbelievable 9.0 yps against 6.5 yps over their last five games. Dan Reeves replaced his entire secondary two weeks ago and it may be paying some dividends. That, or Atlanta has decided to let teams run on them but not throw the ball. Atlanta has allowed the Giants to throw for just 4.2 yps (they average 5.8 yps for the whole season) and NO to throw for just 4.3 yps (they average 5.7 yps for the whole season). Atlanta has allowed those teams to average 6.1 ypr in those two games but I like that philosophy better, especially against a pass happy Tennessee team. While Atlanta has stopped the opposing team's passing game, they haven't thrown the ball any better themselves and will go back to Doug Johnson this week. But, Atlanta is rushing the ball well, averaging 5.9 ypr over their last two games and 5.3 ypr against 4.7 ypr over their last five games. That might fit very well against a Tennessee rush defense, which is allowing 4.4 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games. I know nobody wants a bad team at home against a good team but home teams with a winning percentage of .200 or worse are 56-21-1 when getting more than five points and facing a team with a winning record. There's a little more to that but that is the basic premise. Atlanta is a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32. I've also talked about taking teams who are not covering the spread against teams who are covering the spread and that situation is 273-177-19 and 8-2 already this year. Final numbers suggest Tennessee by 4.5 (all games) and by 9.5 (last five games) before accounting for the situations Atlanta qualifies in. I don't think Atlanta can cover this game by just running the ball and they will have to score some to stay in this game. I also like the game to go over the total. Tennessee only scored 10 points last week but had scored at least 30 points in six straight games and at least 27 points in seven straight games prior to last week's game. They've also allowed at least 13 points in every road game this year and at least 17 points in all but one road game. If they get to 27 or 30 and allow their customary 17 points, this game stands a good chance of going over the total. Other than their game at home against TB, Atlanta has scored at least 16 points in every home game and since relying more on the rush the last two weeks, they have scored at least 20 points, both coming on the road. Other than two games this year, their defense has also allowed at least 23 points in every game. This game also qualifies in an over situation, which is 35-11-1. Final predicted points suggest somewhere around 49 points (all games) and 54 points (last five games). I like Atlanta and the over. **TENNESSEE 32 ATLANTA 29**

KANSAS CITY -11.5 Oakland 45.5

I have no situations that apply to either team here and I don't have much of an opinion on this game either. The Kansas City offense has been good, averaging 6.0 yppf against 5.1 yppf over their last five games (7.4 yps against 5.9 yps), while the Oakland defense hasn't been good, allowing 5.4 yppf against 5.0 yppf (6.2 yps against 5.7 yps) over their last five games. The Oakland offense has been below average, gaining just 4.7 yppf against 5.0 yppf, while the Kansas City defense has also been below average, allowing 5.1 yppf against 4.9 yppf. I still think it will be tough for Rick Mirer to operate in the tough Kansas City environment. A few years ago, teams playing after they had played TB didn't do too well because of the physical match-up they had the previous week with TB, etc. Maybe we are starting to see something new here. Teams who beat Minnesota are now 0-2-1 this year in their next game. Perhaps teams start feeling good about themselves after having such an explosive offensive outing that they lose track of the fact they may not be quite as good as they looked the previous week. Doug Flutie and San Diego looked great two weeks ago and terrible last week. And, perhaps, their opponents don't take them lightly either, after their impressive showing. Whatever the case, I think Oakland will have all they can handle this week against a Kansas City team that can play a little loser now that they have finally lost. This game qualifies in an under situation, which is 299-221-11 (13-5 TY). **KANSAS CITY 27 OAKLAND 14**

Cincinnati -3 SAN DIEGO 43

Here is a case of a team looking so good that we all forget they are still an average team. A much improved team and a team finally starting to put it all together, but I'm not ready to make Cincinnati the next contender in the AFC. I took SD two weeks ago against a bad Minnesota team and many people didn't want any part of it. Well, I can't suggest Cincinnati is worse than Minnesota but I like the spot here for SD. SD has still only played three home games this year, losing to Baltimore and Denver and beating the only average team they have played, Minne-

sota. Cincinnati, meanwhile, over the past six weeks, has played four home games, had a bye and played one road game at Arizona, in which they lost by three points. In their previous three road games, they won at Cleveland by seven points, lost at Oakland by three (we know how good Oakland is or isn't) and lost at Buffalo by six points. Throw out the Kansas City game (in KC), the two Denver games and the Miami game, and SD doesn't look so bad against average competition. They beat Cleveland on the road by six, lost to Oakland by three, lost to Jacksonville by six, lost to Chicago by 13 (on the road) and beat Minnesota by 14. They can certainly be competitive in this game. Doug Flutie isn't going to beat the great defensive teams but he can compete with the Cincinnati's of the world. Cincinnati is allowing 4.4 ypr against 4.3 ypr and 6.5 yps against 5.6 yps over their last five games. While SD isn't throwing the ball well, averaging just 5.0 yps against 6.0 yps, they are running the ball well, averaging 5.3 ypr against 3.9 ypr. Two weeks ago, they averaged 8.0 yps against an equally poor Minnesota pass defense. On offense, Cincinnati still isn't rushing the ball well, for average, gaining just 3.7 ypr against 3.9 ypr over their last five games, but they are averaging 6.4 yps against 5.8 yps during that same time period. They'll face a SD defense that is allowing 6.4 yps against 5.6 yps over their last five games. Cincinnati qualifies in a negative scheduling situation, which is 158-87-8 and plays against them here. SD is also a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32 and they qualify in our non-covering against covering contrary situation, which is 273-177-19 (8-2 TY). SD also qualifies in two different fundamental rushing situations, which are 422-295-23 (24-12-1 TY) and 112-54-6 (5-2 TY). Final numbers suggest a two point line (all games) and 2.5 point line (last five games), in favor of Cincinnati. While I don't have a situation on the over in this game, I also like the game to go over the total. SD has allowed at least 20 points in every game this year. Against the two teams SD has faced this year that are allowing more yards per play than their opponents are averaging and more points per game than their opponents are averaging (for the whole season), they have scored 31 points (Oakland) and 42 points (Minnesota). This week they get Cincinnati, who is allowing 22 points per game against teams averaging 20 points per game and 5.4 yppl against 5.0 yppl. Cincinnati, against the same criteria, has averaged 23 points in three games this year. SD's defense, against the same criteria, has allowed an average of 28 points in two games. And, Cincinnati's defense against the same criteria has allowed an average of 22 points in two games. Both teams have below average pass defenses, and while SD doesn't throw the ball that well, their running game is good enough to pose a threat to Cincinnati to have to defend it, which will open up the passing lanes for SD too. Final numbers suggest about 48 points (all games) to 55 points (last five games), giving us good value to the over. **SAN DIEGO 31 CINCINNATI 24**

MIAMI -6.5 Washington 35

Washington qualifies in a contrary situation, which is 293-212-11 but I have a hard time recommending them here, not knowing if P. Ramsey will be the quarterback. If he isn't, it's going to be awful tough for Washington to move the ball. If he is, it's still going to be tough to move the ball. The Miami offense is below average, gaining just 4.6 yppl against 5.1 yppl, but they'll face a struggling Washington defense that is allowing 5.9 yppl against 5.0 yppl. And Washington has been well below average against both, the run and the pass. The Miami defense, of course, is playing well, allowing just 4.6 yppl against 5.5 yppl and they'll face a Washington offense that is averaging just 4.2 yppl against 4.6 yppl over their last five games. Final numbers suggest Miami by 9.5 points (all games) and by 9.0 points (last five games). It isn't often I will go against the situations, but I have a hard time recommending Washington here. **MIAMI 24 WASHINGTON 14**

TAMPA BAY -5.5 NY Giants 37

I don't have enough ammunition to make the Giants a best bet here but I will lean their way, despite the loss of Shockey. The Giants offense is just average, gaining just 5.2 yppl against 5.4 yppl over their last five games. That could get worse because of the loss of Shockey. But, they'll face a TB defense, which is allowing 5.0 yppl against 5.2 yppl and has been pretty average for a while now. On the other side of the ball, TB throws the ball well, averaging 6.0 yps against 5.5 yps (we'll see how the Keyshawn deactivation affects their passing game) but they'll face the strength of the Giants defense, which is the passing game. Their pass defense is allowing just 4.9 yps against 6.2 yps. Giants qualify as a turnover table play, while TB qualifies in a Monday night situation. Value lies with the Giants as final numbers suggest a 3.5 point line (all games) and a 4.5 point line (last five games). This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 48-23-4. Those final numbers suggest about 37 points (all games) and 33 points (last five games). I'll lean towards the Giants and the under. **TAMPA BAY 17 NY GIANTS 14**

BEST BETS

YTD 36-25-2 +22.80%

2% BUFFALO +3

2% JACKSONVILLE +4 (Must get at least 4)

2% BALTIMORE -3

2% DETROIT +10.5

2% HOUSTON +6

2% ARIZONA +8

2% ATLANTA +7

2% SAN DIEGO +3

2% STL/ARZ UNDER 43

2% TENN/ATL OVER 44

2% CIN/SD OVER 43

Possible Play:

2% GREEN BAY -4 or less

WEEK 13

The great run continued last week, going 7-2-3. The Green Bay line went down to -4 or even -3.5 and became a best bet. I said it last week and I'll say it again. Even though I am 19-5-3 over the past three weeks, this run will not continue. I hope I am wrong again, like I was last week, but at some point I will be right. Continue to respect your bankroll and keep this in mind.

All side opinions went 7-6-3 last week and are now 90-76-8 54% over the first twelve weeks of the season.

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 otherwise noted.

A little Thanksgiving research for those of you looking for something to play this year. The research goes back to 1983. Home teams (Detroit and Dallas) are 23-16-1 during that time. They are 11-5 in division games (Detroit this year) and just 12-11-1 in non-division games. If the home team played on the road the previous week (Detroit) and the road team played at home the previous week (Green Bay), the home team is 16-8-1, including 12-4-0 if the home team is favored by three or less (or a dog). Taking both home teams each year would have resulted in the following the last 20 years:

7 years of going 2-0
1 year of going 1-0-1
8 years of going 1-1
4 years of going 0-2

Or, in other words, you would have won money in 8 of 12 years and came out even (minus the juice) in the other 8 years.

For totals, they have gone 22-18 to the over. If the home team's win percentage is less than or equal to .667 and the away teams win percentage is less than or equal to .600, the over is 16-3 and 14-1 if the total is 45 or less. That applies to the Green Bay/Detroit game this year. Taking both overs each year would have resulted in the following:

7 years of going 2-0
8 years of going 1-1
5 years of going 0-2

Detroit is 13-7 to the over, while Green Bay is 4-0 to the over. Dallas is 9-11 over and Miami is 0-2 over. For sides, Green Bay is just 1-3 ats and 0-2 as a favorite. Detroit is 12-8, 7-4 as a home dog but just 3-3 with a win percentage of less than or equal to .273, which is their current win percentage. Dallas is 11-8-1, 7-4-1 as a favorite and 6-2-1 with a win percentage of greater than .500. Miami is 1-1, both as a dog.

Hopefully that will help you if you need it to make a decision on Thanksgiving and enjoy the games.

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

Green Bay -6.5 DETROIT 44

Brett Favre has become the most expensive guy in the league to just hand the ball off. The Packers offense is rolling along right now and it's not because of Favre. They are averaging 5.8 ypr against teams allowing 4.7 ypr over their last five games. The Packers are now averaging 173 yards per game rushing. They have rushed for at least 241 yards per game in three of their last four games. Those games were against Minnesota (poor rush defense),

Philadelphia (poor rush defense), Tampa Bay (good rush defense) and San Francisco (average rush defense). This week they will take on the Lions rush defense, which is above average, allowing 4.0 ypr against 4.4 ypr. But the Packers last four opponents all said they knew exactly what was coming and simply couldn't stop it. The Packers have gone to using an offensive lineman (Kevin Barry) as a third blocking tight end, which has helped them become the Nebraska Cornhuskers of the NFL. You're going to hear a lot about Green Bay not being able to win in domes and on artificial turf, etc. The basic premise of those statements is Favre can't play in domes, etc. Forget about that. He already won at Minnesota and won at Tampa Bay, where he didn't have a victory either. This isn't Favre's team right now. It's a team that relies on the run. For Detroit, this just isn't a very good team. They are terrible on offense, averaging just 4.3 yppf against teams allowing 4.9 yppf and equally bad trying to run and pass the ball. On defense, they have stopped the run well, as mentioned earlier, but their pass defense has not been good, allowing 5.6 yps against 5.6 yps over their last five games and 6.2 yps against 5.8 yps for the whole season. GB will run on this team and playing in a controlled environment, where the weather isn't a factor, Favre will look to throw the ball as well. Detroit will look to put extra men in the box and I doubt they'll stop the run, just like the last four opponents haven't been able to do. When they go man to man on the outside, Favre will burn them with the deep pass. Green Bay qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 523-402-32 (34-22-3 TY). Having said all of that, I will still lean with Detroit in this game, with a weak lean. Green Bay is now one game over .500 for the season but that puts them in a negative letdown situation, which is a 53-24-1 play against them here. Green Bay also qualifies in a negative scheduling situation, which is a 158-88-8 play against situation. The Packers have won each of the last two years here by two points and six points. But, they led both of those games by double digits and weren't able to hold the leads. With the running game going the way it is, they might be able to hold a larger lead this year. Detroit has faced five above average offenses this year. Those offenses are Green Bay (31), Minnesota twice (23 and 24), San Francisco (24) and Seattle (35). They allowed those teams an average of 27 points per game. While most don't want to admit it, the Packers defense is above average, having allowed just 17, 13 and 10 points in their last three games and just 21 points per game this year against teams averaging 23 points per game and 5.1 yppf against teams averaging 5.2 yppf. Detroit has faced four defenses that have allowed less points per game and yards per play than their opponents are averaging. They have averaged just 11.5 points per game in those games, making the score based on that alone, 27-12 in favor of Green Bay. Give Detroit a little for home field advantage but the line still favors Green Bay. I think the best play, although somewhat risky is on the over in this game. Four of the last five games played here have totaled at least 47 points. My numbers (power ratings) favor Detroit but my final score estimates, which total 42 and 49 points, favor Green Bay by 11 and 10 points. Series history and situations lean towards Detroit and taking points in a game in doubt is probably the better solution, but it's a weak opinion, with a stronger opinion to the over. I don't know if Detroit can score enough to get the over and GB may just run the ball but GB may be without Sharper and Barnett on defense, which could aid Detroit's scoring chances. **GREEN BAY 28 DETROIT 24**

DALLAS -3 Miami 34.5

Hard to gauge Miami's numbers because they consist of a lot of Brian Griese's play, which has been horrible. Jay Fiedler came in to spark the offense last week and it remains to be seen whether he will continue to spark this offense or it was just a one game wonder. The Miami offense has been below average over the last five games, averaging just 4.6 yppf against 5.1 yppf. The defense, however, has been outstanding, allowing just 4.5 yppf against teams averaging 5.3 yppf over their last five games. Similar situation in Dallas, where their offense is below average with both, the run and the pass, averaging just 4.5 yppf against 4.9 yppf. And the defense has also been outstanding, allowing just 3.7 yppf against 4.8 yppf. With two below averages and two above defenses, I prefer to take the points. Miami qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 236-165-14. Final numbers suggest this line should be Dallas by 2.5 (all games) and 5.5 (last five games). Those numbers also suggest the final total will be closer to around 24-29 points, and because of that, I'll lean towards the under as well. **MIAMI 14 DALLAS 13**

NY GIANTS -3 Buffalo 35

Two teams who have underachieved greatly this year. In a battle of such, I like to lean towards the dog with the better defense. I really wanted to play Buffalo here but I just don't have enough on them to make them an official play. This Buffalo defense has really played well this year, allowing more than 17 points only three times. They allowed Kansas City 38 points but they can be excused for that. They allowed the Jets 30 points but that was more the result of a -4 turnover ratio and they were playing without Eric Moulds. The offense completely collapsed in

that game. And they allowed Philadelphia 23 points. Everything else has been 17 points or less. Unfortunately, for them, their high flying offense has been just the opposite. Early in the season, they weren't able to rush the ball but that is not the case as of late, as they are now averaging 4.5 ypr against teams allowing 4.5 ypr over their last five games. After having only one game of 100+ yards in their first six games, they have now rushed for at least 100 yards in each of their last five games. But the passing offense has been horrible, averaging just 4.3 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games, allowing 13 sacks during that time. The Buffalo defense is allowing just 4.4 yppl against 5.2 yppl over their last five games. For the Giants, it is the same thing each week. They typically out play their opponent but end up losing on the scoreboard because of turnovers. That wasn't the case last week as they were out played by Tampa Bay. Over their last five games, the Giants are only gaining 5.2 yppl against 5.4 yppl but their defense has played well, allowing just 4.8 yppl against 5.4 yppl. Buffalo qualifies in a couple of great situations this week. They qualify in a contrary situation, which is 298-213-11 (11-6-1 TY), including going 5-1 last week. They also qualify in another contrary situation, which plays on bad teams going on the road after playing at home, which is 109-56-5 (3-1 TY). The Giants do qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 136-54-8 (8-4-1 TY) as long as they are a favorite of four or less points. Final numbers do favor the Giants by seven points (all games) and by eight points (last five games). They also only predict about 34 points (all games) and 26 points (last five games). This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 76-43-1. The number is a little too low for me to play the under but I lean that way. **BUFFALO 17 NY GIANTS 14**

BALTIMORE -3 San Francisco 37

I was very fortunate last week to get a push out of the Baltimore game. I actually won that game because I bought the three down to 2.5 but I called it a push on the record. That game last week was very evenly played. Baltimore averaged 4.3 ypr to 4.2 for Seattle. They averaged 6.4 yps to 6.1 yps for Seattle and both teams had six sacks and totaled 426 yards of offense. It's obviously very hard to take San Francisco, knowing they have played so poorly on the road, this year and in previous years (see last week's post). And with last week's loss at Green Bay, San Francisco is now 0-5 this year on the road. No question the Baltimore defense is playing well, and despite a bit of a debacle last week, they are still allowing just 4.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games, including being well above average against both, the run and the pass. They'll face a SF offense, which has been playing well as of late, averaging 5.5 yppl against 5.0 yppl over their last five games, including being well above average with both, the run and the pass. On defense, SF has slipped below average over their last five games, allowing 5.4 yppl against 5.1 yppl and being below average against both, the run and the pass. The Baltimore offense has also been below average over their last five games, gaining just 4.6 yppl against 5.0 yppl. They have been well below average throwing the ball, although getting better than their season long stats, but the rushing game has come back to earth. They are still above average rushing the ball, gaining 4.1 ypr against 3.8 ypr but that's a far cry from where they were not too long ago. It remains to be seen if the Anthony Wright to Marcus Robinson connection will continue to roll or not. Baltimore's poor defensive effort last week qualifies them in a 69-28-4 situation that plays against them here. SF also qualifies in a contrary situation, which is 298-213-11. Baltimore almost qualifies in a 75-32-3 fundamental rushing situation, which is close enough to keep me off of SF in this game. Final ratings suggest a pick 'em (all games) and SF by three (last five games). I will lean that way because of the situations and the value despite the poor performance of SF on the road this year and in the past. **SAN FRANCISCO 20 BALTIMORE 17**

PITTSBURGH -3 Cincinnati 41.5

I went against Cincinnati last week and lost that play but I would make that play again and still feel it was the right play. I'm still not sure how Cincinnati won that game, allowing 5.9 ypr to San Diego, 5.9 yps and 5.9 yppl, while only averaging 5.3 yppl themselves and losing the turnover battle 0-1. I guess the fact they ran 85 plays and were able to protect their defense by keeping them off the field greatly helped their team. But, I don't think they will move the ball as well this week against the much better run defense of the Steelers. The Cincinnati offense racked up 225 rushing yards at 5.0 ypr last week but they are still only averaging 4.0 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games. They are throwing the ball well, averaging 6.4 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games and will take on a Steelers defense, which is allowing 6.9 yps against 6.0 yps. The Steelers rush defense continues to play well, allowing just 3.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr over their last five games. The Steelers offense continues to play poorly, averaging just 4.5 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games. And despite winning last week's game at Cleveland, they only gained 168 yards at 2.9 yppl. But, they have a chance to play much better this week against a poor Cin-

cinnati defense, which is allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.3 ypr, 6.5 yps against 5.7 yps and 5.7 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games. Pittsburgh has defeated Cincinnati in seven of the past ten years here in Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh qualifies in a contrary situation, which plays on teams who are not covering the spread against teams who are covering the spread. That situation is now 274-178-21 (9-3-2 TY). Remember, teams who are not covering the spread, when playing teams who are covering the spread, are very profitable investments. There's more to it than just that, but if you simply remember this, you will be a much smarter player in the future. As you would expect, final numbers support Cincinnati by three points (all games) and by five points (last five games) but I've said it before and I will say it again. The situations are much more important than the value. Think about this for a second. If teams who do not cover the spread are good investments against teams who do cover the spread, it's pretty unlikely you are ever going to get great value with these teams, when compared to your own line, because they are under performing. This game also sets up in two different under situations, which are terrific situations. Those situations are 145-72-2 (6-2 TY) and 300-223-11 (14-7 TY). My final numbers suggest about 42 points (all games) and 46 points (last five games). I can't get myself to play the under here because both teams play such poor pass defense, but that should be enough to keep you off the over in this game. **PITTSBURGH 24 CINCINNATI 17**

INDIANAPOLIS -4 New England 43.5

I have no situations on the side on this game but it should be a terrific game. I find it very hard to take a Colts team, laying points, knowing they are allowing 4.7 ypr against 4.1 ypr over their last five games, and allowing 125 yards per game for the whole season. NE might not be able to take full advantage of that, seeing they are gaining just 3.2 ypr against 3.8 ypr over their last five games, but Indy has allowed eight of their last nine opponents to gain at least 110 yards rushing. On the flip side, NE gained at least 105 yards rushing in four of their first five games this year but have only done it once in their last six games. That one game was last week against Houston. It took an OT to win their game last week but NE actually dominated that game, averaging 5.1 yppl to just 2.9 yppl for Houston and gaining 472 total yards to just 169 for Houston. The key match-ups for this game are the Indy passing offense, which is averaging 7.9 yps against 6.3 yps going against a NE pass defense, which is allowing just 5.1 yps against 5.6 yps over each of their last five games. On the other side, it is the NE passing offense, which has played terrific this year, averaging 7.3 yps against 5.7 yps going against a Indy pass defense, which is allowing 6.4 yps against 6.1 yps. That match-up greatly favors NE here. My ratings favor Indy by 4.5 (all games) and by only a .5 point (last five games). This game also qualifies in two outstanding under situations, which are 145-72-2 (6-2 TY) and 225-121-6 (9-4 TY). Knowing how much these two teams like to throw the ball, I have a hard time taking the under. My final numbers also show about 49 points (all games) and 50 points (last five games) thus making it even harder to take the under. But, these again, should be enough to keep you off the over. **NEW ENGLAND 23 INDIANAPOLIS 20**

CHICAGO -4.5 Arizona 36.5

I'm getting back on the Arizona train this week. I rode this to a cover last week but also had them two weeks ago in Cleveland, where they were blown out 6-44. As a matter of fact, they have been blown out in all five of their road games, losing by an average of 22 points per game and not coming any closer than 13 points in any road game. So, why would I take them in this game? I still feel they are a decent team and I'm just not sure Chicago is quite good enough to pull away from them here. And, of course, there are numerous situations applying to Arizona this week. Arizona continues to rush the ball well, averaging 4.2 ypr against 4.0 ypr and they played terrific last week, rushing for 166 yards at 5.5 ypr. The rush defense continues to play well too, allowing just 3.7 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games. They've only allowed four teams to rush for more than 100 yards this year (St. Louis twice, Seattle and Baltimore). Chicago has allowed eight of eleven teams this year to rush for more than 100 yards and Arizona stands a chance to do it in this game if they stick to the run and avoid the turnovers. The weakness to the Arizona defense has been their pass defense, which is allowing 6.4 yps against 5.9 yps but it's doubtful a Chicago pass offense can take advantage of that. The Bears are averaging just 5.0 yps against 5.8 yps and their rushing offense hasn't been much better, gaining just 3.5 ypr against 4.0 ypr. With Chris Chandler in there, the Bears pass offense has improved some but their rushing offense has slipped some. If Chandler doesn't play this week, that will play into Arizona's hands even more, because they defend the run much better. Arizona qualifies in a great contrary situation, which is 298-213-11 (11-6-1 TY) and they qualify in my turnover table system, which is 769-597-32. That situation indicates they might be able to avoid playing turnover ball today. Arizona also qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 523-402-32 (34-22-3 TY), including a subset, which is 242-138-13

(14-7-2 TY). They also qualify in another rushing situation, which is 237-160-14, including a win by Miami on Thursday. My numbers favor the Bears by four (all games) and by 8.5 points (last five games) but the situations are simply too strong to not play Arizona here. This game also qualifies in a 76-43-1 under situation. Final numbers suggest about 38 points (all games) and 31 points (last five games). I don't like going under with such a low total but that is the way to lean here. **ARIZONA 20 CHICAGO 13**

CAROLINA –1.5 Philadelphia 36

Philly has played great as of late, winning and covering in six straight. But, that actually sets them up in a letdown situation, which is a 62-26-4 play against situation. The Carolina defense is finally getting healthy and starting to play much better, allowing just 3.7 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 6.0 yps against 6.4 yps for a total of just 5.0 yppl against 5.3 yppl. Meanwhile, the Philly offense is also playing very well over their last five games, averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.4 ypr and 6.0 yps against 6.0 yps, which totals out to 5.2 yppl against 5.3 yppl. That makes them just an average offense but that is pretty good considering where this offense was earlier in the year. Much will be made about the Philly rush defense, which is allowing 4.9 ypr against 4.6 ypr and taking on the Carolina rush offense, which is averaging actually just 4.3 ypr against 4.5 ypr over their last five games. It's been the Carolina passing offense, which has really excelled lately, averaging 7.1 yps against 6.1 yps. During that time, Philly is allowing just 5.1 yps against 5.7 yps. Carolina will be able to rush the ball because they commit to it and Philly hasn't done much to stop it as of late, but Carolina should also be able to throw the ball some if they wish to. Philly has allowed at least 109 yards rushing in each of their last seven games. Meanwhile, Carolina has rushed for at least 110 yards in all but three of their games. Philly also qualifies in another letdown situation, which is a 170-123-5 play against situation. Carolina is also a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32 and they qualify in a subset of that, which is 140-78-5. Carolina also qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 136-54-8 (8-4-1 TY). Final ratings suggest a 3.5 point Carolina win (all games) to a two point Philly win (last five games). Situations are simply too strong to not play Carolina here and they get the big win at home. **CAROLINA 23 PHILADELPHIA 13**

ST LOUIS –6 Minnesota 51

I had been waiting for this game for a few weeks now. I was anticipating a big play on both, the Rams and the over. But, now that the game is here, I have solid situations on both teams and actually a solid situation on the under, which eliminates all plays for me. You can go back to the Vikings game against San Diego, where I mentioned the horrible defensive performances the Vikings have had on the road, going back to late in the 2000 season. Nothing has changed this year with their defense, which has allowed at least 26 points in every road game but one (13 points allowed at Detroit). I've also made it a habit of going against each of these teams lately, going against the Rams each of the last two weeks and winning both, and going against the Vikings each of the past three weeks and winning all three times. The Rams have been very solid throwing the ball, averaging 6.8 yps against 6.1 yps over their last five games, but they haven't been able to run the ball very well, averaging just 3.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games. It should be noted they have averaged 4.5 ypr and 229 yards rushing on 51 carries in their last two games. So, maybe Marshall Faulk is getting it going. And they should have plenty of success against a Vikings defense, which is allowing 5.7 ypr against 4.8 ypr and 7.1 yps against 5.5 yps over their last five games. It's been well documented how slow the Vikings are on defense and that should only be more emphasized this week against a very fast Rams offense. For Minnesota, their offense has been a little more average over the last five games, but it is still averaging 7.2 yps against 6.2 yps and 4.5 ypr against 4.2 ypr. They'll go against a Rams defense, which is allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.4 ypr and 5.5 yps against 5.5 yps. The Rams offense is a little better than average but that's head and shoulders above how bad the Vikings defense is. The Rams defense is just average, although better at home and should be able to contain the Vikings offense many more times than the Vikings defense can contain the Rams offense. Everybody saw how badly the Rams were out played in their Sunday night game against the Ravens, in which they only gained 121 total yards. But they still managed to score 33 points because of special teams and defensive scores, etc. The Rams have scored at least 27 points in every home game this year and at least 33 points in all but one home game. As said earlier, the Vikings have allowed at least 26 points in all but one road game. Minnesota has only played two above average offenses on the road this year, Green Bay (allowed 25 points) and San Diego (allowed 42 points). In the GB game, they forced five Packer turnovers, which hurt their chances of scoring. It's almost a given, barring a majority of turnovers, that the Rams will put up at least 35 points in this game. Against somewhat similar defenses on the road this year (Green Bay and Detroit – aver-

age), the Vikings have scored 30 and 23 points. If you can write the Rams down for about 35 points in this game and you know the Vikings probably aren't going to score more than about 27 points, it will be awful tough for the Vikings to cover this game. I've been going against Minnesota because I believe they are over rated and their defense isn't very good, but that was when they were laying points. This game is more like last year, when I frequently went with the Vikings, because they were getting points with their good offense. Minnesota does qualify in a terrific contrary situation, which is 108-40-5. The Vikings also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 88-28-5. But, the Rams qualify in a scheduling situation, which plays on good teams returning home after a road trip, which is 42-16-1 and they also qualify in a turnover table subset, which is 140-78-5. Final numbers do favor Minnesota but I like the situations the Rams qualify in, along with the poor performance of the Vikings on the road. As for the total, this game qualifies in a 300-223-11 under situation, which is already 14-7 this year. Final numbers suggest about 53-60 points being scored but I respect the situations much more than the numbers. Mike Tice said this week his team needs to run the ball and control the game with short passes. That means they could run some clock with their offense to keep their defense off the field. He also said he expected the Rams to try and run the ball as well and the Vikings would look to take away the run to force Mike Martz (whom he said will abandon the run very quickly) to throw the ball and take advantage of mistakes by Mark Bulger. A lot of running could result in a lower scoring game. The bottom line to this game is this. Both teams qualify in good situations and there is also a solid situation on the under. That's just opposite of what most think will happen and with the NFL being a contrarian league, this game might be best if avoided. **ST LOUIS 30 MINNESOTA 17**

HOUSTON -3 Atlanta 41

Interesting game here between two very poor defenses and two offenses that stand a chance to move the ball. The Atlanta defense is now allowing 4.8 ypr against 4.2 ypr and 7.7 yps against 6.4 yps over their last five games. It's not much different with the Houston defense, which is allowing 4.5 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 7.9 yps against 6.9 yps. On offense, Atlanta is running the ball very well, averaging 5.2 ypr against 4.8 ypr. They aren't throwing the ball very well, averaging just 4.6 yps against 5.5 yps but they did throw for 7.6 yps last week against Tennessee. If you take away the 86 yard screen pass to Warrick Dunn, they averaged closer to about 5.1 yps. But, that should continue to get better with Doug Johnson, who replaced Kurt Kittner last week. For Houston, they are also running the ball well, averaging 4.3 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 6.3 yps against 6.1 yps over their last five games. We have two well below average defenses and an above average offense with Houston along with a potentially above average offense with Atlanta. Yet, the total is just 41, which is one point below the average points scored in the NFL this year. There aren't many defenses as bad as these two in the league. Atlanta has played just one defense that is close to this bad and they scored 26 points against the Vikings defense. Houston has only played one defense, which is even close to this bad, and that was Cincinnati, where they scored 27 points. And the Cincinnati defense is better than this Atlanta defense. My final numbers predict about 49 points (all games) and 42 points (last five games) but some of those games were with Kurt Kittner, who absolutely couldn't throw the ball. I have no situations on either team for the side in this game but I prefer to take the points when two poor defenses play. Final ratings suggest Houston by 1.5 (all games) and three points (last five games). **ATLANTA 30 HOUSTON 27**

WASHINGTON -1 New Orleans 41

Total number two for the week. I was also looking for a reason to play NO in this game but I don't have quite enough ammunition to make them a play. I do like the total here. The Redskins offense isn't playing that great, averaging just 4.2 yppl against 4.6 yppl and below average with both, the run and the pass, but I think they can get something done against the Saints defense. NO is allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games, and that includes 5.1 ypr against 4.4 ypr. The Saints have allowed at least 100 yards rushing in all but two games this year. Washington isn't running the ball well but they have gained at least 116 yards rushing in four of their five home games this year, so they do seem to be able to move the ball at home a little more. On the other side, Washington is playing horrible defense, allowing 5.9 yppl against 5.0 yppl over their last five games, including allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 7.3 yps against 5.8 yps. The NO offense is averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.2 ypr over their last five games. The Saints have rushed for at least 100 yards in all but one game this year and the Redskins have now allowed at least 106 yards rushing in every game since their second game this year. The Redskins have also allowed at least 20 points in every game but two this year – the first game against the Jets (whose offense was horrible early on) and 17 points to NE, who turned the ball over three times. I went over in the Redskins/Seahawks game here three weeks ago with a similar total and the final ended up at 47 (27-20) and I think we stand a good

chance of getting the over again. My numbers suggest 49 points (all games) and 49 points (last five games). That combined with two below average defenses, when asked to score the average points scored in the NFL this year (42 points) to get the over, looks promising. Saints also qualify as a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32. Final ratings suggest NO by one (all games) and by 7.5 points (last five games). I don't quite have enough to suggest taking NO but I will lean their way. **NEW ORLEANS 30 WASHINGTON 20**

SEATTLE -5.5 Cleveland 41.5

Cleveland lost last week but not because they couldn't move the ball or stop the Steelers. Cleveland amassed 303 yards of offense, at only 4.0 ypl, which is not good, but they only allowed Pittsburgh to gain 168 yards at 2.9 ypl. The biggest problem for Cleveland was five turnovers and not being able to get the ball into the endzone with four chances inside the five yard line, which is really another turnover. This week they get Seattle who comes off a tough loss at Baltimore after leading by 17 in the fourth quarter before finally losing in OT. That was a game where the refs made an error that would have won the game for Seattle, if not for their error. The Cleveland offense is still below average but they are running the ball better, averaging 4.0 ypr against 4.1 ypr over their last five games. They are still well below average throwing the ball, gaining just 4.9 yps against 6.0 yps during that same time span. But, they face a Seattle defense, which is below average, allowing 4.2 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 5.8 yps against 5.4 yps over their last five games. The Seattle offense has been good, gaining 5.7 ypl against 5.2 ypl and above average with both, the run and the pass. They'll face a Cleveland defense, which has been above average against the pass, allowing 5.7 yps against 6.0 yps, but below average against the run, allowing 4.2 ypr against 4.0 ypr. Seattle, with their poor defensive effort last week, qualifies in a negative situation, which is an 82-40-5 play against them here. Cleveland also qualifies in a bounce back situation, which is a 109-56-6 (3-1 TY) and they are a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32. Cleveland has been a competitive team this year, losing only two games by more than seven points, while Seattle doesn't win many games by blowing away their competition, with only three wins by more than seven points. I like Cleveland's competitiveness and their ability, even though the stats don't show it, to throw the ball for the back door cover, if needed. Final ratings only favor Seattle by five points (all games) and 3.5 points (last five games). The situations favor Cleveland as does the value. **CLEVELAND 24 SEATTLE 21**

Denver -3 OAKLAND 42

This is a game where the situations go both ways, which ultimately is a pass for me. It's hard to gauge Denver on just their last five games because three of them are without Jake Plummer, but Denver's offense wasn't that spectacular last week, at least not in the passing game, where Plummer is supposed to make the difference. They only threw for 4.2 yps last week. They did break off a couple of big runs and finished the game averaging a whopping 9.5 ypr on 200 yards rushing. But, it still resulted in only 10 points for the Broncos. Denver is running the ball well, averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr but only throwing for 4.9 yps against 5.8 yps. Their defense continues to play well, allowing only 3.5 ypr against 4.0 ypr and 6.1 yps against 6.3 yps. That doesn't bode well for Oakland this week. Oakland's offense is banged up and not playing particularly well, averaging just 4.0 ypr against 4.3 ypr and 5.5 yps against 5.7 yps. Their defense has also been disappointing, allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 6.6 yps against 6.0 yps. Denver qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32 and they also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 523-402-32 (34-22-3 TY), including a subset, which is 242-138-13 (14-7-2 TY). Denver also qualifies in a negative scheduling situation, which is a 159-88-8 play against them here. This total seems a little high here as my numbers only show about 37 points (all games) and 36 points (last five games). Oakland has only played one solid defense this year, and that was Denver on the road and they could only score 10 points in that game. I don't see them scoring much more than that here. **DENVER 20 OAKLAND 13**

Kansas City -7 SAN DIEGO 48.5

I was on SD last week and lost that game but they didn't play that badly, averaging 5.9 ypl in that game, while allowing Cincinnati to average just 5.3 ypl. Meanwhile, KC was winning barely against Oakland but they controlled the majority of that game, and gained 384 yards at 6.5 ypl. But, they also allowed a below average Oakland offense to gain 379 yards at 5.5 ypl. And such is life for the KC defense, which is now allowing 5.1 ypl against 4.9 ypl, including a whopping 5.0 ypr against 4.5 ypr over their last five games. That should sit just fine with a SD offense, which can run the ball, averaging 5.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games. These two

have historically played close games here and SD has only lost two of the past 10 games here by more than five points. I'm still not convinced KC is the best team in the league and since beating Houston badly on the road, they have now gone four straight road games where they have failed to win by more than seven points. Bad teams, at home getting more than five points, are actually a good proposition, and SD qualifies in a situation based on that, which is 56-21-1. KC also qualifies in a letdown situation, which is a 72-38-4 (3-1-1 TY) play against situation here. Chargers are also a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32 and they qualify in a subset of that, which is 122-70-4 (5-1 TY). I've also been saying it for weeks now and that is teams who are not covering the spread, when playing against teams who are covering the spread, are fantastic situations. SD qualifies in a situation based on that, which is 274-178-21 (9-3-2 TY). The Chargers also appear to be able to run the ball in this game and that sets them up in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 113-55-7 (6-3-1 TY) and 523-402-32 (34-22-3 TY), including a subset, which is 424-296-24 (26-13-1 TY). Final numbers show KC by 10 (all games) and by 8.5 (last five games) but that's before accounting for the great situations that SD qualifies in. They qualify in some great technical and fundamental situations and KC qualifies in a negative situation as well. So, we have things working in all directions for us in this game. This game also qualifies in a couple of under situations, which are 49-23 and 300-223-11. My final numbers show about 54 points and 55 points being scored so it's a little tough for me to take the under, especially with two poor defenses, but these situations should at least keep you off the over. **KANSAS CITY 24 SAN DIEGO 23**

Tampa Bay -3.5 JACKSONVILLE 37

TB kept their playoff hopes alive last week by defeating the Giants. Brett Favre said this week he thinks TB is still the team to beat in the NFC. They'll need some help in getting to the playoffs but TB can throw the ball and they are averaging 5.9 yps against 5.5 yps over their last five games. The defense is still playing above average, allowing just 4.8 yppl against 5.2 yppl. They'll face a Jacksonville team, which did it again last week. That is gaining more yards than their opponent and gaining more yards per play than their opponent. Last week they gained 330 yards at 4.6 yppl to just 282 for the Jets at 4.5 yppl. Turnovers, especially in the red zone did them in again. I've been saying it for weeks now that the Jacksonville defense is very under rated. They are allowing just 5.0 yppl against 5.3 yppl over their last five games 4.9 yppl against 5.2 yppl for the whole season. And remember, they have played some very good offenses, passing offenses (like Tampa Bay), including Indianapolis and Tennessee four times (twice each) and the Jets. TB has struggled on the road lately, losing their last two to Carolina and San Francisco. Jacksonville qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 769-597-32 and they qualify in three different fundamental rushing situations, which are 113-55-7 (6-3-1 TY), 523-402-32 (34-22-3 TY) and 237-165-14 (7-5 TY). Final numbers only suggest TB by 1.5 (all games) and Jacksonville by three points (last five games). This game also qualifies in two very good over situations, which are 36-12-1 (3-1 TY) and 52-21-1. My final numbers suggest about 35 and 32 points so it's a little hard to take the over, especially with two above average defenses. But, these situations should keep you off the under, as that does not appear to be the right move in this game. **JACKSONVILLE 21 TAMPA BAY 17**

Tennessee -1.5 NY JETS 42

I thought I finally had a win by going against Tennessee last week, but it was not to be as the Titans came charging back and I actually needed a backdoor score by Atlanta to get the push. But, I'm back on my horse again this week to go against the Titans again. The Tennessee defense is starting to play better, allowing just 4.1 ypr against 4.0 ypr but they are still allowing 5.6 yppl against 5.2 yppl because teams are having to pass on them playing catch-up ball. They'll face a Jets offense that is really starting to play great ball now. The Jets are now averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.4 ypr over their last five games and 6.7 yps against 5.9 yps during that same time span. The Jets defense is much like the Titans defense, about average, allowing 4.2 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 6.2 yps against 6.0 yps. Tennessee's offense doesn't rush the ball as well as the Jets are but they throw the ball better, averaging 3.3 ypr against 3.7 ypr and 8.6 yps against 6.4 yps. The Jets were held below 100 yards rushing last week for the first time in seven games. They allowed 100+ yards rushing for the 10th time in 11 games this year. Tennessee, who doesn't rush the ball for a very good average, is getting rushing yards out of their offense, and they ran for over 100 yards last week for the fifth time in their last six games. They have also allowed only three teams to gain 100+ yards rushing this season. Tennessee qualifies in a negative scheduling situation, which is a 159-88-8 play against them here. The Jets also qualify in a Monday night situation, which is a 61-26-2 situation. And, like I have been saying, teams that don't cover the spread, when playing teams who do cover the spread, are terrific propositions and the

Jets qualify in a situation based on that, which is 274-178-19 (9-3-2 TY). Final numbers suggest a .5 point line for Tennessee (all games) and a two point line for Tennessee (last five games), before accounting for the great situations the Jets qualify in. This game also qualifies in some great under situations, which are 145-72-2 (6-2 TY) and 300-223-11 (14-7 TY). In a game with two very good passing teams and a game where my numbers suggest closer to 47 points (all games) and 57 points (last five games), I can't play the under. But, the situations are there to indicate the right play is the under. That should at least keep you off the over in this game. **NY JETS 23 TENNESSEE 17**

BEST BETS

YTD 43-27-5 +32.40%

3% ATLANTA/HOUSTON OVER 41

3% NEW ORLEANS/WASHINGTON OVER 41

2% ARIZONA +4.5

2% CAROLINA -1.5

2% CLEVELAND +5.5

2% SAN DIEGO +7

2% JACKSONVILLE +3.5

2% NY JETS +1.5

WEEK 14

I came back to earth last week, going just 4-4, and am now 23-9-3 over the last four weeks. If that as bad as it gets from here on out, I'll be one happy camper.

All side opinions went 10-6 last week and are now 100-82-8 55% over the first thirteen weeks of the season.

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 -2.5 Washington 37.5

A battle of two teams headed nowhere and, quite frankly, have probably quit for the season. The problem with trying to take either of these teams is they have no identity. Neither team runs or throws the ball well. The Giants offense has been a turnover machine all year long. And, over their last five games, the Giants are averaging 4.3 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr and 5.1 yps against teams allowing 5.9 yps. They will face a Washington defense that is giving up yards in big chunks. The Redskins defense is now allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.2 ypr and 6.8 yps against 6.1 yps over their last five games. For Washington, their offense has been below average, gaining 4.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr but just 4.7 yps against 5.5 yps. They'll go against a Giants defense that is defending the run, allowing just 3.8 ypr against 4.4 ypr but allowing 6.6 yps against 5.8 yps. We have two anemic offenses and only one average defense, which is the Giants. The Giants qualify as a turnover table play, which is 798-620-35, including a subset of that, which is 126-67-3. Washington does qualify in a contrary situation, which is 299-215-11. Final numbers suggest a two point win for the Giants (all games) and a 3.5 point win for the Redskins (last five games). I'll reluctantly side with the better defense. This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 78-43-1 (5-2 TY). My final points predict about 45 points (all games) and 42 points (last five games), making it tough to play the under, but that is the way I will lean. **NY GIANTS 20 WASHINGTON 16**

BALTIMORE -3.5 Cincinnati 40

Five of the eight divisions showcase their number one team against the number two team this week. This is one of them and it should be a great game. Cincinnati has really played well over their last seven weeks, having won six of those games, including in come from behind fashion last week against Pittsburgh. For Baltimore, they have been playing well for some time now, although it has been just the last two weeks that they have had any type of passing game. Two weeks ago, they averaged 6.4 yps and last week averaged 6.3 yps. That's a major step up from where they were early this season. I really don't think this game will be that close. Cincinnati has done a nice job this year, especially on offense, where they are averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.3 ypr and 6.5 yps against 6.2 yps over their last five games. But this week, they will run into a defense that is allowing just 3.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 4.5 yps against 6.0 yps over their last five games. Matt Hasselbeck and Seattle passed for 293 yards but they only averaged out at 6.1 yps and Seattle averages 6.6 yps over their last five games, so Baltimore actually held them to 0.5 yps below their average. The Baltimore defense is better than the Cincinnati offense. On the other side of the ball, Baltimore should be able to move the ball against a below average defense. Baltimore is averaging 3.9 ypr against 4.0 ypr and only 5.1 yps against 5.7 yps. They did average 6.4 yps against Seattle, who allows only 5.9 yps and they averaged 6.3 yps last week against San Francisco, who allows 6.4 yps. So, since Anthony Wright came aboard, they have actually averaged better or close to what their opponents are allowing. And they'll face a Cincinnati defense, which is allowing 4.8 ypr against 4.2 ypr and 5.8 yps against 5.8 yps over their last five games. Cincinnati has now won and covered four straight games but that doesn't bode well for them here and they qualify in a negative letdown situation, which is a 62-27-4 play against situation. Baltimore, off their dominating win last week, qualifies in a home momentum situation, which is 25-7-0. They also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation,

which is 527-404-32 (38-24-3 TY), including a subset, which is 138-58-6 (9-4-1 TY). It's been a nice run for Cincinnati but Oakland, Cleveland, Buffalo, Arizona, San Diego and Pittsburgh are not good teams and those are the teams Cincinnati has defeated on the road this year. Final numbers only favor Baltimore by two points (all games) and .5 points (last five games) but that's before accounting for the terrific situations they qualify in this week. This game also qualifies in two under situations, which are 301-226-11 (15-10 TY) and 146-74-2 (7-4 TY). But my final numbers show closer to 47 points (all games) and 53 points (last five games), making the under a tough call. But, I will lean that way because of the situations. **BALTIMORE 26 CINCINNATI 13**

PHILADELPHIA -5.5 Dallas 36.5

Another 1-2 match-up this week. I have no situations on either team in this game, so we'll just have to look at the numbers and decide where to side. The Dallas offense is averaging 4.0 ypr against 3.7 ypr and 5.3 yps against 5.5 yps over their last five games. They'll face a Philly team that is below average defensively, allowing 5.7 ypr against 4.7 ypr and 5.3 yps against 5.5 yps for a total of 5.5 yppl against 5.1 yppl. The Philly offense is playing much better, averaging 4.4 ypr against 4.5 ypr and 7.9 yps against 5.6 yps for a total of 6.2 yppl against 5.1 yppl. For Dallas, their defense continues to play well, allowing just 3.3 ypr against 3.8 ypr and 5.2 yps against 5.9 yps. Their game against Miami was a little deceiving because they were blown out of that game on big plays. They did allow Miami to throw for 11.0 yps but in the end, Dallas ended up averaging 5.8 yppl and Miami just 5.6 yppl. Granted Miami was in control the whole game but the final numbers do suggest it was a game of a few big plays that set the tone for the rest of the game. Bill Parcells has always been a great coach when getting points. Parcells is now 57-41-2 when getting points, including 46-29-1 when on the road, 31-14-1 when getting four or more points, and 17-4 if coming off a loss, getting four or more points on the road. Final numbers suggest a two point game (all games) and a 10 point game (last five games). I will side with Dallas, who has had since last Thursday to plan for this game, combined with Parcells history of getting his teams to bounce back after losses. **PHILADELPHIA 17 DALLAS 16**

PITTSBURGH -5 Oakland 41

This game is very similar to the Giants game. It features two teams headed nowhere and Oakland, like Washington, qualifies in a contrary situation, which is 299-215-11 and Pittsburgh, like the Giants, qualify in the turnover table situation, which is 798-620-35. Pittsburgh doesn't qualify in the subset like the Giants did. The Pittsburgh defense, overall, is a little better than the Oakland defense, but they both have their weaknesses. Pittsburgh is allowing 6.3 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games, while Oakland is allowing 7.0 yps against 6.0 yps and 4.5 ypr against 4.4 ypr over their last five games. Pittsburgh defends the run better, allowing 4.1 ypr against 4.2 ypr. But on offense, Oakland is a little better, between two below average offenses. The Raiders are averaging 5.0 yppl against 5.3 yppl and Pittsburgh is averaging just 4.6 yppl against 5.3 yppl. I find it awful tough to lay points in this game with a Pittsburgh team that has won only two games this year by more than seven points. And Oakland is playing hard and has lost only three games by more than seven points, with two of them being to Denver. Last week's final was a little misleading for both teams. Oakland actually out averaged Denver, 4.8 yppl to 4.2 yppl, but turned the ball over three times to only once for Denver. Pittsburgh hung tough in their game, but they were out averaged 6.5 yppl to 5.1 yppl. The week before, Pittsburgh was beaten badly by Cleveland but won the game because of five Cleveland turnovers. Final numbers suggest Pittsburgh by only 3.5 points (all games) and 5 points (last five games). This game also qualifies in two under situations, which are 49-24-4 and 78-43-1 (5-2 TY). Final numbers suggest only 38 points (all games) and 32 points (last five games), which also gives us value to the under. I decided to pass on the under because both defenses are below average, but this game stands a good chance to go under the total. **PITTSBURGH 20 OAKLAND 17**

DETROIT -2.5 San Diego 43.5

This is a very tough game for me to call on the side because there are great situations favoring both teams. In addition, the San Diego defense has been horrible this year (but better lately), allowing at least 20 points in every game but the Detroit offense has been equally horrible, scoring more than 20 only three times. So, something has to give in this game. The Lions offense has been horrible and they are averaging just 3.1 ypr against 4.7 ypr and 5.1 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games. Fortunately for them, they face a SD defense, which is allowing 4.5 ypr against 4.5 ypr and 6.4 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games. On the other side, SD has continued to rush

the ball very well, averaging 5.7 ypr against 4.9 ypr and 5.5 yps against 5.6 yps over their last five games. They will face an above average Lions defense, which is allowing just 3.9 ypr against 4.6 ypr and 5.5 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games. What we have here is a Lions offense that can't throw the ball, even though SD doesn't defend the pass well. And we have a Lions defense that is weaker defending the pass, but a SD offense that doesn't throw the ball well. Don't be misled by last week's game against the Packers. Detroit was out-gained in that game, 320-266 and out-averaged, 5.6 ypr to 3.9 ypr. The Lions passed for just 4.7 yps but survived on five Packer turnovers. For SD, they lost to KC last week but they played a great game, out-gaining KC, 370-335 and out-averaging them, 5.9 ypr to 4.8 ypr. If you take out the last drive for SD, which was a garbage drive to most (not me because I had SD), they would have ended up with only 286 yards but still averaged 5.2 ypr. I'll side with SD in this game, because I would rather have the dog in a toss-up game and I don't want to lay points with an anemic offense. But, I really like the total in this game. This game qualifies in an under situation, which is 225-122-6 (9-5 TY). My final points suggest about 44 points (all games) and about 41 points (last five games) but even without the value, I think this game stands a good chance to be lower scoring. Brett Favre and Mike Tice have both said over the last week, that the Detroit front four on defense, is the best they have faced this year. And, that stands to reason, since Detroit has been so good against the rush this year and allowed GB just 52 yards at 3.3 ypr last week. That was a GB team that was able to run against anybody lately, no matter how many people they put in the box to stop the run. At home this year, Detroit allowed Arizona 24 points but some of those points were in garbage time, allowed a good Vikings offense 23 points, Dallas 38 points and only 13 to Oakland, 10 to Chicago and 14 to Green Bay. That averages out to 20 points per game but only 12 points over their last three home games. SD, on the road, hasn't been able to put it together this year. Against above average defenses, they have scored 21 at Jacksonville (that was a garbage touchdown late in the game), 10 versus Miami, 7 at Chicago and 8 at Denver. Against above average defenses, they have only averaged about 12 points per game. It stands to reason, they will probably end up somewhere around 14-17 points in this game. That means Detroit would have to score at least 27-30 points in this game to go over the total. I just don't see that happening, seeing Detroit has only scored more than 23 points once this year. That was the first game of the season against Arizona, when they scored 42 but 14 of those points came on a punt return and an interception return. Turnovers could certainly do me in here, but I'll take my chances. **DETROIT 17 SAN DIEGO 16**

GREEN BAY -7 Chicago 38.5

GB continues to give away chances to catch the Vikings. While I'm not sure Minnesota will win another game this year, GB better start winning these games or they will be watching the playoffs from home this year. The Packers do get back Sharper and Barnett on defense and those two are their best two athletes on defense. Chicago has been playing great ball as of late, especially on defense. Chicago is now allowing 4.4 ypr against 4.3 ypr and 4.7 yps against 5.3 yps over their last five games. The offense is still horrible, averaging just 3.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 5.1 yps against 5.9 yps. They did throw for 6.7 yps last week against Arizona but I'll chalk that up to being Arizona and I have to see that for a couple of weeks before I can say their passing offense is back on track. For the Packers, as mentioned in the Detroit write-up, they played well enough to win last week, if it weren't for the five turnovers (four in the fourth quarter), which ultimately did them in. They've had extra time to prepare for this game and should be healthier and better prepared and focused for Chicago. GB is still averaging 5.7 ypr against 4.8 ypr and 5.4 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games. On defense, they are allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.2 ypr but only 4.8 yps against 6.0 yps. I don't see Chicago being able to throw the ball on them. The Bears have gone over 100 yards rushing on the road only twice this year. GB qualifies as a turnover table play this week, which is 798-620-35. They also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 527-404-32 (38-24-3 TY), including a subset, which is 426-298-24 (28-15-1 TY). Final numbers suggest a nine-point win (all games) and a 1-point win (last five games). I like GB here, with the extra rest, focused coming off a loss and in a couple of good situations.

GREEN BAY 27 CHICAGO 14

MINNESOTA -1.5 Seattle 51

The wheels are coming off the cart in Minnesota. From Mike Tice not being a nice guy to his players anymore to a Chris Hovan meltdown on the radio this week, this team is falling farther and farther into a hole. I get a kick out of the Minnesota players continuing to say they need to look at the film and correct their mistakes. The simple problem is they don't have enough talent on defense to win games, much less even stop anybody. When Mike Tice says he likes the match-up, like he did last week for the Rams game, he clearly isn't seeing the right things on film or he

is just trying to gain some confidence with his team. It's one thing to allow 48 points to the Rams last week (a few of those scores were by the defense directly or indirectly) but to allow 396 yards at 8.4 yppl is embarrassing. That's 8.4 yppl! Now the Rams offense is clearly better at home than on the road, but we're still talking about an offense, which is just above average, gaining just 5.3 yppl against 5.2 yppl over their last five games. The Vikings are now allowing 6.0 ypr against 4.6 ypr and 7.5 yps against 5.6 yps over their last five games. That totals to 6.7 yppl against 5.1 yppl over the last five games. That, my friends, is the worse defense in the league over the last five games, and it isn't even close. And how they are going to stop a Seattle offense, which has begun to open it up lately, is beyond me. Seattle is now averaging 4.4 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 6.6 yps against 5.9 yps over their last five games. That works out to 5.6 yppl against 5.0 yppl. If these averages continue, Seattle can be expected to gain about 7.3 yppl this week and about 451 yards of offense. That would amount to about 29-44 points in this game. The Vikings offense has been pretty good this year, averaging 5.2 ypr against 4.4 ypr and 6.2 yps against 5.7 yps over the last five games. And they should find some success against a Seattle defense, which is allowing 4.0 ypr against 3.6 ypr and 5.9 yps against 5.2 yps over the last five games. Based on their horrible defense last week, the Vikings qualify in a negative situation, which is 82-42-5 and plays against them here. They also qualify in another situation, which is similar, and is 171-99-10 and plays against them, including a subset, which is 126-60-7. Seattle just misses out on a fundamental rushing situation, which is 527-404-32 (38-24-2 TY). Much will be made about Seattle losing four of five games on the road this year, but let's look at who has beat them. They have lost at Green Bay (who is better than Minnesota), at Cincinnati (who is better than Minnesota), at Washington (who is probably as good as Minnesota), and at Baltimore (who is better than Minnesota). And, except for the GB game, they were in all of those games, including blowing a huge lead at Baltimore. They probably should have won that game but Tom White's crew screwed them out of a win. Now, whom has Minnesota defeated this year? They defeated GB, by catching them at the right time, even though GB revenged that loss in Minnesota later in the year, have defeated Detroit twice (although barely in their last meeting two weeks ago at home), defeated Chicago, who they will lose to next week, Atlanta, and banged up Denver and San Francisco teams. The NFL is all about playing teams at the right time and this isn't the right time to be playing Seattle. And I'll take Mike Holmgren over Mike Tice any day of the week. Minnesota has allowed less than 20 points to only four teams. Those teams are Detroit (twice), Chicago once and San Francisco. Detroit and Chicago may be the two worse offenses in the NFL. Seattle has scored at least 20 in every game but one this year. Against the only other balanced offense they have faced this year, Minnesota has allowed GB 25 and 30 points. I like Seattle big here and if they lose, this game will have to go over the total, because you can mark Seattle down for at least 24 points in this game and I think it will be much more. **SEATTLE 36 MINNESOTA 26**

JACKSONVILLE –6 Houston 38.5

I've been saying how much I like Jacksonville just about all year now and last week they finally put it all together, beating TB 17-10 and dominating that game. They gained 359 yards to just 221 for TB and out averaged TB, 5.2 yppl to 3.7 yppl. The Jacksonville offense is pretty average, but getting better each week, averaging 4.9 yppl against 4.9 yppl. But, their defense has been great, allowing just 4.7 yppl against 5.2 yppl and above average against both, the run and the pass. And, remember, they have faced the likes of Indianapolis and Tennessee twice each and the Jets. All five of those games are against offenses that can throw the ball all over the field. This is a great match-up for them this week against Houston. The Houston offense is averaging 4.5 yppl against 4.8 yppl, and their defense is allowing 5.2 yppl against 5.1 yppl and below average against both, the run and the pass. Jacksonville qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 527-404-32 (38-24-3 TY), including a subset, which is 138-58-6 (9-4-1 TY). Final numbers suggest Jacksonville by 5.5 points (all games) and by three points (last five games) but the situations are in their favor as is the fundamental match-up for this game. I'm not quite ready to start laying this many points with a young Jacksonville team that might still be celebrating their win over TB last week, but I will definitely lean their way. **JACKSONVILLE 24 HOUSTON 14**

TENNESSEE –3.5 Indianapolis 46

Both these teams blew golden opportunities to take the lead in their division last week. This is a huge game for Tennessee because a loss here would mean two losses on the year to Indy and put them two games behind Indy for the division, because they would have to win the division outright. This match-up is very similar for both teams, as neither team has run the ball effectively this year, with Indy gaining just 3.3 ypr against 3.4 ypr and Tennessee gaining just 3.4 ypr against 3.7 ypr over their last five games. But, both teams can throw the ball, with Indy averag-

ing 6.8 yps against 5.8 yps and Tennessee averaging 7.0 yps against 6.0 yps. The Indy defense is a little worse, allowing 4.4 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 6.4 yps against 6.1 yps. Tennessee is allowing 3.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 6.1 yps against 5.8 yps over their last five games. Indy qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 798-620-35. My final numbers suggest a 3.5 point win for Tennessee (all games) and 7.5 point win (last five games). But, I lean towards the situation (turnover table) and take the points in this game. The play I really like is the over. Both teams throw the ball incredibly well and neither team defends the pass particularly well. Indy has scored at least 20 points in all but two games this year and Tennessee has scored at least 25 points in all but three games this year. Both teams should get into the twenties, and if that happens, this game as an excellent change of going over the total. Final numbers suggest about 58 points (all games) and 59 points (last five games). I like the over **INDIANAPOLIS 31 TENNESSEE 30**

NEW ORLEANS -1.5 Tampa Bay 40

I already reviewed how badly TB was beaten last week at Jacksonville (see Jacksonville write-up) and although NO won their game last week, they weren't very impressive in doing so. The Saints only gained 310 yards at 4.6 ypl, while allowing Washington to gain 392 yards at 5.8 ypl. They allowed Washington to rush for 161 yards at 6.2 ypr. TB hasn't been rushing the ball very well, gaining just 4.2 ypr against 4.1 ypr over their last five games, but they should find some success against a Saints rush defense, which is allowing 5.7 ypr against 4.2 ypr over their last five games. The Saints pass defense has been good lately, allowing just 5.6 yps against 6.0 yps and they'll face a TB pass offense gaining 5.4 yps against 5.6 yps. The Saints are rushing the ball themselves extremely well, thanks to McAllister. They are now averaging 5.4 ypr against 4.6 ypr over their last five games. That's slightly better than the TB defense, which is allowing 4.1 ypr against 4.7 ypr. NO does qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 136-56-8 and my final numbers suggest the Saints by 3.5 points (all games) and by 10 points (last five games). I don't expect Gruden to let his team quit, but it's pretty hard for a veteran, high paying team, who is now out of the race, to get fired up after winning the SB last year. Repeatedly this team has failed to answer the bell and NO has defeated TB three times over the last 1+ years. I don't see that changing this week. NO has allowed at least 100 yards rushing in every game but two this year. One of those games was their game at TB. So, there is no indication TB will be able to take advantage of the porous NO rush defense. This game qualifies in an under situation, which is 301-226-11 (15-10 TY). Final points suggest about 38 points (all games) and 42 points (last five games). I was actually thinking about the over in this game but the situation lies to the under, which is where I will now lean. TB has scored more than 19 points only once in their last seven games. **NEW ORLEANS 20 TAMPA BAY 13**

SAN FRANCISCO -10 Arizona 41.5

I must be pretty stubborn because I'll be on these damn Cardinals again this week. You can certainly make a good argument for not taking Arizona on the road. After all, they have now lost every road game this year by at least 13 points. At least the line is getting closer to that 13 point mark. Last week they made Kordell Stewart look like Dan Marino, allowing the Bears to throw for 268 yards at 6.7 yps. That was only the second time the Bears had topped the 200 yard passing mark this year (SD the other time). I really can't make a great case for the fundamentals or even value in this game. But the situations clearly lie with Arizona and I am a slave to the situations, which have me at over 60% this year and at 57% winners last year, so I am not going to fight with them. I passed on two games a few weeks ago and they both covered so I will just do what the situations dictate and leave it in their hands. Arizona qualifies in a general situation, which is 42-16-1. San Francisco, after their terrible defensive performance last week, qualifies in a negative momentum situation, which is 69-29-4 and plays against them here. SF also qualifies in another negative momentum situation, which is 171-100-10, including the best subset, which is 71-25-2 and plays against SF here. Arizona also qualifies in two different contrary situations, which are similar, and they are 299-215-11 (12-8-1 TY) and 160-104-4 (4-2 TY). Arizona is also a turnover table play, which is 798-620-35, including a subset, which is 123-70-4 (6-1 TY). Again, I can't make a great case for Arizona, especially after their debacles on the road this year, but the situations greatly favor them and some of them are very strong situations, performing well this year. **SAN FRANCISCO 20 ARIZONA 17**

BUFFALO -3 NY Jets 36

The situations favor Buffalo here and it's pretty hard to recommend laying points with an anemic offense but I will

do just that, and I think I can make a decent case for doing so. There is no question the Buffalo offense has been poor this year, but they finally exploded, if you will, for 24 points last week. They gained 403 yards at 5.4 ypl. And they did it with the run, gaining 151 yards at 4.2 ypr and the pass, gaining 252 yards at 6.6 yps. Over their last five games, Buffalo is now averaging 4.8 ypr against 4.2 ypr and 4.2 yps against 5.9 yps. The offense is still below average but the rushing game is really performing well now. The Bills have now rushed for over 100 yards in six straight games. The last time they didn't rush for 100 yards was against these Jets. But, their offense was beat up badly that day. The last time the Jets didn't allow a 100 yard rusher, with the exception of last week, was against these Bills. The Jets had gone six straight games allowing at least 100 yards rushing. Over their last five games, they are allowing 3.6 ypr against 3.8 ypr but 7.5 yps against 6.1 yps. Buffalo should be able to exploit that some. On offense, the Jets continue to get better and better with Pennington back, averaging 4.2 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 7.4 yps against 6.4 yps. But they are going to face a very stiff test this week against the Bills defense, which is allowing just 2.9 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 5.7 yps against 5.9 yps. The numbers favor the Jets by two (all games) and by 1 point (last five games) but I like the way Buffalo is playing lately and will side with the better defense and the team who figures to rush the ball better. **BUFFALO 20 NY JETS 16**

NEW ENGLAND -3 Miami 36

Another 1-2 match-up. And another game where the situations favor both teams and they are strong situations going both ways. You really have to like what Bill Belichick is doing with this team. And, unlike their SB year two years ago, where the numbers weren't that great, but they were winning with heart and determination, their numbers are getting better and better each week. NE still doesn't run the ball well, averaging just 2.8 ypr against 3.9 ypr but they are passing for 7.1 yps against 5.8 yps over the last five weeks. On defense, they have been above average against both, the run and the pass, allowing just 3.5 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 4.4 yps against 5.6 yps. The Miami defense has been equally good, allowing just 3.6 ypr against 3.8 ypr and 5.6 yps against 5.8 yps. But, on offense, Miami has struggled, gaining just 3.5 ypr against 3.9 ypr and passing for 6.0 yps against 5.7 yps. Those numbers might continue to get better with Fiedler back but time will only tell with that. Miami is 1-4 when failing to rush for 100 yards this year, and NE has only allowed four teams to rush for over 100 yards and Miami wasn't one of them earlier in the year. I just don't see how Miami will rush for 100 yards in this game and that will be their Achilles Heel in this game. Final numbers favor NE by 3.5 points (all games) and by 4.5 points (last five games). **NEW ENGLAND 18 MIAMI 13**

DENVER -2.5 Kansas City 45

I will be on Denver in this game and I would rather have a more favorable line, because my numbers do favor KC by 1.5 points (all games) and by 1 point (last five games) but the situation is very favorable for Denver and one I really like. Denver lost to KC earlier this year, 23-24, but they out gained KC in that game, 469-261 and out averaged them, 6.7 ypl to 4.9 ypl. Denver averaged 5.7 ypr and 7.5 yps, while KC averaged 5.5 ypr but only 4.4 yps. There are still a lot of questions Denver needs to answer. A lot of their problems on offense were excused because Plummer wasn't playing but since his return, Denver has beat a bad SD team at home, lost to Chicago at home, and defeated the Raiders last week but not in convincing fashion as turnovers helped the Broncos, despite Oakland winning the yard per play battle. But, KC has their own questions to answer. Their defense seems to be getting worse and worse every game now. Last week they allowed SD to average 5.8 ypl (5.2 ypl minus the last drive), while only gaining 4.8 ypl themselves. They are now allowing 5.2 ypr against 4.5 ypr over their last five games and 5.2 yps against 5.5 yps. That doesn't bode well against a Denver offense that is averaging 4.7 ypr against 4.1 ypr but just 4.6 yps against 5.3 yps. The Broncos defense, despite the injuries, continues to play well, allowing just 3.7 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 5.0 yps against 5.8 yps. KC is averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.1 ypr over their last five games and they are throwing the ball well, averaging 6.9 yps against 6.2 yps over that same time period. KC has really struggled on the road against good teams, beating Baltimore by seven but needing a kick return to do so, despite being out played in that game. A +3 in the turnover ratio helped them dramatically. They lost at Cincinnati in a game they were behind just about the whole way. And they were getting blown out in GB before a fourth quarter 70-80 interception return got them back in that game. Denver qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 527-404-32 (38-24-3 TY), including the best subset, which is 138-58-6 (9-4-1 TY). The numbers don't favor Denver but the situation does and that makes the line fair. The fundamentals also do with a team who can rush the ball against a team who can't stop the rush. My numbers also show a fairly high scoring game, with 44 points (all games) to 47 points (last five games), but I have three different situations applying to the under in this game, which

are 301-226-11 (15-10 TY), 146-74-2 (7-4 TY), and 225-122-6 (9-5 TY). That should be enough to keep you off the over and at least think about the under. **DENVER 27 KANSAS CITY 17**

Carolina -1 ATLANTA 41

I don't have any situations, which favor either team here, but I do lean towards the better defense, which is Carolina and a possible over. Carolina lost last week to Philadelphia but they moved the ball in that game and accumulated 336 yards at 5.6 ypl, while limiting Philadelphia to just 283 yards at 5.0 ypl. Turnovers, missed field goals and a missed extra point did them in. Philadelphia took advantage of the opportunities they had and Carolina did not. I don't think they'll have quite as many problems this week against an Atlanta team who won't pose as big a threat. Yes, Atlanta gets Vick back and he should recharge an offense that has struggled to throw the ball. Atlanta is averaging 4.4 ypr against 4.6 ypr over their last five games and that number will probably only get better with Vick back. They are only averaging 4.5 yps against 6.0 yps but that will also probably get better with Vick. The defense, however, is still allowing 5.0 ypr against 4.2 ypr but only 5.6 yps against 6.0 yps over the last five games. Carolina is only running for 3.6 ypr against 4.4 ypr over the last five games but is throwing for 7.9 yps against 5.7 yps. Those rushing numbers are a little weaker because they faced TB and Dallas but in the other three games against poor rush defenses, they ran the ball very well and I expect them to do the same this week, as well as throw the ball well. Carolina's defense is allowing 3.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr and 5.3 yps against 5.7 yps but Atlanta should be able to move the ball some in this game, with Vick back. Final numbers favor Carolina by 1.5 points (all games) and Atlanta by 7.5 points (last five games), while predicting about 42 points (all games) and 48 points (last five games). I like Carolina and the over, because of the fundamentals. **CAROLINA 26 ATLANTA 20**

St. Louis -4 CLEVELAND 43

I'll continue to go against what I consider to be an over rated Rams team. The Rams are a very good team at home, because they can take advantage of their speed on the carpet. But they are a different team on the road, especially playing on grass, where their speed is negated somewhat. The Rams are now just 4-14 ats when playing on the road on a grass field, since 2000, including just 1-3 this year. On the road this year, they have allowed an average of 128 yards rushing per game at an average of 4.8 ypr. They have allowed five of their six opponents to average at least 4.4 ypr. Cleveland is not a great rushing team, averaging just 3.3 ypr against 4.1 ypr over their last five games, but they have averaged 103 yards rushing per game at home this year at 3.8 ypr. When the Rams have allowed more than 100 yards rushing per game on the road, they are now 0-9 ats in their last nine games, including going just 1-8 SU (0-3 ats, 1-2 SU this year). It would appear Cleveland has a shot of rushing for 100 yards in this game and if they do that, they stand a good chance of not only covering but winning straight up. The Rams continue to struggle running the ball, averaging just 4.1 ypr against 4.3 ypr (four games with Marshall Faulk). They are also below average throwing the ball, averaging 5.9 yps against 6.0 yps over their last five games. The Rams rush defense over their last five games has failed them, allowing 4.9 ypr against 4.1 ypr, while the pass defense is allowing 5.1 yps against 5.5 yps. The Rams have won only one road game this year by more than three points, while Cleveland hasn't lost a home game by more than seven points this year, meaning they have been very competitive in their home games. Cleveland qualifies in a bounce back situation, which is 59-32-2. I've also talked each week about teams who are not covering the spread against teams who are covering the spread. The teams not covering the spread are the teams that make you money, in the right situation. Cleveland qualifies in a situation based on that, which is 276-180-21 (11-5-2 TY). Cleveland is also a turnover table play, which is 798-620-35, including qualifying in subsets, which are 126-67-3 and 140-79-5. They also qualify in a Monday night situation, which is 62-26-2. The Rams, meanwhile, qualify in a negative scheduling situation, which is 160-89-8 and plays against them here. Poor rush defenses laying points on the road are not profitable situations and Cleveland stands a good chance to take advantage of that against a Rams team that is playing in it's worse element Monday night. Final numbers favor the Rams by a .5 point (all games) and by 3.5 points (last five games), giving immediate value to Cleveland before I account for any of the terrific situations they qualify in. **CLEVELAND 27 ST LOUIS 24**

BEST BETS

YTD 47-31-5 +31.50%

3% BALTIMORE -3.5

3% SEATTLE +1.5
3% CLEVELAND +4

2% ARIZONA +10
2% DENVER -2.5 (No higher than -3)
2% SD/DET UNDER 43.5
2% SEA/MINN OVER 51
2% INDY/TENN OVER 46

WEEK 15

A second straight week of 4-4 last week, making the last five weeks now 27-13-3 68%. I actually was fortunate enough to push the Cleveland play on Monday night but I will count it as a loss seeing most people weren't able to get the +6. I mentioned a few weeks back, while I was hitting 80% of my plays, that the streak would not continue like that. Two weeks, with a combined record of 8-8 would confirm that. But, if .500 is the worse I do, I can live with that.

We are now down to the final three weeks of the season. The trick here is trying to determine who has quit and who is still playing. Hopefully I will guess right and leave off the towel tossers and keep the teams to fighting hard.

All side opinions went 8-8 last week and are now 108-90-8 55% over the first thirteen weeks of the season.

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 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 -7 Jacksonville 35.5

Absolutely got to love the way Jacksonville is playing. I have been saying all year this team was winning the yards per play and yardage battles, but was coming up short on the scoreboard because of turnovers and simply not being able to put the ball in the endzone. It didn't help having to face the likes of Indianapolis and Tennessee four times in an eight week stretch, with Baltimore and Miami also thrown in that mix. They have now allowed only 33 points over their last four games. Yes, Houston was beat up last week, but they also allowed Tennessee just 10 points four weeks back. For New England, they're playing better than Jacksonville, having now won nine straight games and they have shutout their last two opponents at home and allowed the last four opponents they have faced in NE just nine points. Does this game have under written all over it, especially when you consider it's another Florida team heading north? I'm not playing the under and I'm still trying to figure out why. I guess it's because the total is pretty low and a couple of mistakes could easily lead to an over, but the under is the way to go here. The Jacksonville offense is average over the last five games, gaining 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl, but their defense has been outstanding. They are allowing just 4.3 yppl against teams averaging 5.1 yppl over their last five games and that includes only 5.1 yps against 6.2 yps. That's a relevant number because NE is averaging 6.6 yps against 5.8 yps over their last five games. NE still can't run the ball, averaging just 2.7 ypr against 3.9 ypr over their last five games. But their defense has been even better than Jacksonville's, allowing just 3.8 yppl against 4.8 yppl. Jacksonville has run the ball well, averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games but NE has allowed just 3.2 ypr against 4.0 ypr during that same time span. Jacksonville qualifies in two different fundamental rushing situations, which are 532-404-32 (43-24-3 TY), including the best subset of that situation, which is 141-58-6 (12-4-1 TY). The other situation is 238-167-14. Something has to give here. NE has won every home game this year by at least six points, while Jacksonville has lost every road game this year by 10 or less. Jacksonville has played at some tough venues, including a one point loss at Carolina, a 10 point loss at Indianapolis (game was much closer than final score), a seven point loss at Tennessee, and a seven point loss at Baltimore. So, they are definitely battle tested and shouldn't face anything in NE that they can't handle. Final numbers suggest NE by 6.5 (all games) and Jacksonville by one (last five games). **NEW ENGLAND 13 JACKSONVILLE 12**

NY JETS -3 Pittsburgh 39.5

Pittsburgh finally got up off the mat and won a game last week, albeit against a defeated Oakland team, but a win is a win. I don't have any situations for either team in this game. It's pretty hard to lay points with a Jets team, who has defeated only three teams by more than three points this year. They defeated Tennessee a few weeks back in a

Monday night game, winning 24-17. They beat an extremely beat up Buffalo team earlier in the year, 30-3 and defeated a Houston team on the last play of the game, 19-14. Everything else has been a defeat or a three point win. That makes it tough to lay points with this team. The Jets offense has been fantastic over their last five games, short of last week's poor performance against a very good Buffalo defense. They have averaged 5.8 yppl against teams allowing 5.0 yppl, being above average with both, the run and the pass. The Steelers defense has played better as of late, allowing just 5.1 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games. The Steelers offense has been well below average, averaging just 4.8 yppl against 5.6 yppl, but they'll face a Jets defense, which is allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.0 yppl over their last five games. That includes allowing teams to throw for 7.0 yps against 6.0 yps. Final numbers show Jets by 7.5 points (all games) and this game to be a pick 'em (last five games). Knowing how difficult it's been for the Jets to win any game by more than three points and with no situations favoring either team, I'll side with the dog, who will play until the end under Cowher. **PITTSBURGH 19 NY JETS 16**

Dallas -1 WASHINGTON 35.5

Dallas has finally come back to earth and now appears to be nothing better than an average team. And that has played out over their last five games, as they are averaging just 4.4 yppl against teams allowing 4.4 yppl and allowing on defense 4.9 yppl against 5.0 yppl. They have lost three of their last four games but that is bound to happen when those four games were against the likes of Philadelphia, Miami, Carolina and New England. This week's game is against Washington, who doesn't resemble those other four teams. Washington has played hard this year, which is a credit to Spurrier, but the facts remain, they are a below average team. They are averaging just 4.6 yppl against 5.0 yppl and allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.0 yppl over their last five games. Washington has also lost three of their last four games as well. Dallas qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 801-623-35. Consider this. Dallas has an 8-5 record, while Washington is 5-8. Dallas has a -6 turnover margin (they've turned the ball over six more times than they have created turnovers) and Washington has a +7 turnover margin (they've created seven more turnovers than they have lost). These types of things tend to even out. Record wise, Washington is still a much worse team, despite having some success with turnovers, while Dallas is much better despite not having any success with the turnovers. Again, these things tend to even out, and when they do, Dallas will perform much better. That has a good chance of happening this weekend. It's also very likely Washington will be down to their third, fourth and fifth options at running back. Of course, one could say Dallas has been playing that way all year. Final numbers suggest Washington by .5 point (all games) and Washington by four points (last five games) but the situation favors Dallas and I will lean that way. **DALLAS 21 WASHINGTON 17**

CINCINNATI -3 San Francisco 42

SF comes in off their 50-14 laughter over Arizona last week, but now they hit the road, where they have failed time and time again. Since 1991, SF is just 18-33-2 on the road when playing a team at or above .500, which includes just 11-29 if SF is off a win. They are just 5-22-1 if SF played at home in their previous game and their opponent was on the road. And that includes some of the better SF years, with a SB in 1994. They just haven't been a good team on the road when playing good competition. They have made a living on the road beating inferior teams. Not much has changed this year, with SF, although competitive, going 0-6 SU on the road. Over their last five games, SF is now averaging 5.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl. And that includes being productive with the run, averaging 4.8 ypr against 4.3 ypr and with the pass, averaging 6.5 yps against 5.5 yps. That should fit just fine against a Cincinnati defense, which is allowing 5.6 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games (5.0 ypr against 4.1 ypr, 6.1 yps against 5.9 yps). The Cincinnati offense is also playing very well, averaging 5.5 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games (4.9 ypr against 4.5 ypr, 6.3 yps against 5.6 yps). And that offense should excel against a 49er defense, which is allowing 5.1 yppl against 4.8 yppl, including struggling terribly against the pass, allowing 6.1 yps against 5.4 yps. There are situations applying to both teams here, making the side a little harder to predict, but I like the over in this game. Both team's offenses are playing above average and both team's defenses are playing below average. Against average (SF) to below average defenses, at home this year, Cincinnati has scored 27 (Seattle), 34 (Houston) and 24 (Kansas City). Against better than average offenses (SF), they have allowed 30 (Denver), 24 (Seattle) and 19 (Kansas City). They have averaged 28 points and allowed 24 points to those teams. SF, on the road, against below average defenses, has scored 24 (St. Louis), 7 (Minnesota), 19 (Seattle), and 13 (Arizona), for an average of 16 points. They have allowed, against better than average offenses, 27 (St. Louis), 35 (Minnesota), 20 (Seattle), and 20 (Green Bay). That averages out to 26 points per game. Put those numbers together with Cincinnati's numbers, and we get something in the neighborhood of 27-20, which gets us the over.

Weather could be a factor here but as long as it's not windy, which hopefully it won't be, rain or snow and a temperature in the mid thirties is fine. Final numbers predict about 43 points (all games) and about 48 points (last five games). The numbers don't give us great value but, knowing both offenses are above average and both defenses are below average, hopefully both teams should be able to move the ball and go over a total, which is just an average total for the NFL. **CINCINNATI 30 SAN FRANCISCO 24**

INDIANAPOLIS -7.5 Atlanta 48

Atlanta has played much better as of late, and hasn't lost a game by more than seven in eight weeks. Meanwhile, Indianapolis continues to play well and win the big games, but they haven't won a game by more than nine in eleven weeks. There's a lot of talk about how bad Atlanta's defense is, and I'm not about to tell you their defense is great, but over the last five weeks, it has played very well, allowing just 4.8 yppl against 4.9 yppl. The rush defense hasn't been that solid, allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr, but the pass defense has been solid, allowing just 5.0 yps against 5.5 yps. On offense, they have been below average, gaining just 4.6 yppl against 5.1 yppl. They have run the ball well, averaging 4.8 ypr against 4.2 ypr but not thrown the ball as well, averaging just 4.4 yps against 5.9 yps. All of those numbers could change. Vick definitely helped the running game last week but, as time goes by, he should begin to feel a little more comfortable throwing the ball, and those numbers should improve. At the same time, he'll continue to run, but maybe less than last week. Their running game, which was good before Vick did all of his scrambling last week, should find success against the Colts rush defense. Indy is allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.0 ypr over their last five games. The pass defense hasn't been very good either, allowing 6.5 yps against 6.2 yps and overall the defense is allowing 5.6 yppl against 5.1 yppl. On offense, Indy is playing very well, averaging 3.4 ypr against 3.3 ypr and 6.9 yps against 5.4 yps, for a total of 5.4 yppl against 4.5 yppl. So, even though Indy is only averaging 3.4 ypr, they have done it against teams allowing just 3.3 ypr, which makes their running game above average. This game would figure to be a high scoring game, but I have a situation, which is 302-228-11 (16-12 TY) and plays to the under. Final numbers suggest Indy by nine points (all games) and Atlanta by two points (last five games). With no situations either way, I will lean with the dog and the under, based on that total situation. **INDIANAPOLIS 27 ATLANTA 20**

Minnesota -3 CHICAGO 40.5

Rex Grossman will get the start for the Bears this week. Nobody knows how well he will play but the Bears offense is based on short passes and timing. It's doubtful that the Bears will ask him to sit in the pocket and try and find open receivers. It should consist of three step drops and quick passes. Considering he is replacing Stewart and Chandler, can he be any worse? Statistically, the Bears played the Packers straight up last week, averaging 4.4 yppl and allowing 4.3 yppl. A -4 turnover ratio did the Bears in, while a +3 turnover ratio aided the Vikings last week. The Chicago defense has been outstanding the last five weeks, allowing just 4.5 yppl against 4.9 yppl. Their defense has been just a little worse than the Vikings offense has been good. Minnesota has averaged 5.9 yppl against 5.4 yppl over their last five games. Their rushing offense has averaged 5.0 ypr against 4.5 ypr, while the Bears have allowed 3.9 ypr against 4.4 ypr, which probably means the Vikings will average about 4.1 ypr, which is the league average. Minnesota is averaging 6.5 yps against 6.1 yps, while the Bears are allowing 5.0 yps against 5.3 yps, which means the Vikings will probably average just better than the league average, which sets them up for about 5.9 yps. Having said all of that, Minnesota will probably have an average game on offense, which gives them about 21 points. Chicago, on offense, has been horrible, averaging just 4.2 yppl against 5.2 yppl over their last five games. But they should get a bit healthier against a Vikings defense, which is allowing 6.3 yppl against 5.1 yppl over the last five games. This suggests Chicago will also have an average game on offense, to just slightly better than average on offense. Factor in the Bears are at home and the numbers probably get a little better for Chicago and a little worse for Minnesota. Let's remember we're talking about a horrible Vikings defense, especially on the road. They have now allowed 48, 28, 42, 26, 13 and 25 points on the road this year. Now, the 13 points allowed were to Detroit, who has an equally poor offense to that of the Bears. But, Detroit was stopped on four straight plays at the one yard line to end that game, so the numbers could have been 20 points in that game as well. Bottom line is it will be tough for Minnesota to win this game, laying three points, knowing their defense is almost assured of allowing 20 or more points. Add in the fact Chicago has scored the following at home this year, 23, 24, 24, 20, 21, and 28 points. We know Minnesota is almost guaranteed to allow at least 20 points and the Bears have scored at least 20 points in every home game this year. Mark Chicago down for at least 20 points in this game. Minnesota has played only two average to above average defenses on the road this year, Green Bay and Detroit. They scored

30 points at Green Bay and 23 points at Detroit. In both of those games, they were +2 in turnover ratio, which helped their offense and defense, for that matter. I'm going to guess they won't win the turnover battle this week. Chicago qualifies as a turnover play this week, which is 801-623-35, including two subsets, which are 126-69-3 and 140-80-4. Minnesota also qualifies in a negative letdown situation, which is a 73-38-3 play against and goes against Minnesota here. That situation is 4-1 this year. Both, Michael Bennett and Mo Williams are banged up. Bennett did not practice on Friday and may not play in this game. Final numbers, before accounting for the situations, favor Minnesota by four points (all games) and Chicago by eight points (last five games). Better defense, at home, getting points, against a poor defense laying points, that has showed little to no heart when adversity strikes. Chicago gets the straight up win here. This is, by far, the worse defense Chicago has faced at home this year, and we already know they have scored at least 20 points in every home game, including 28 points against the previous worse defense they have faced, Arizona. **CHICAGO 27 MINNESOTA 20**

TAMPA BAY NL Houston

No line on this game, making it hard to form an opinion here. I will lean TB's way, because they are still in the playoff hunt, after last week's win and Houston is very banged up at the running back and quarterback position. The TB defense is still playing well, allowing just 4.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl, while the offense has been about average, gaining 4.9 yppl against 4.8 yppl over their last five games. That should be enough against a Houston team, who is below average on defense, allowing 5.1 yppl against 5.0 yppl. On offense, they are well below average, gaining just 4.0 yppl against 4.5 yppl. Houston qualifies in a negative scheduling situation, which plays against teams in their last road game. That situation, playing against Houston is 38-15-1. Final numbers suggest TB by 11 (all games) and by 6.5 (last five games). **TAMPA BAY 24 HOUSTON 10**

TENNESSEE -6.5 Buffalo 40

Another game, where it is hard to get a read, because of injuries to both teams. Buffalo is playing through their injuries, but Tennessee may be without McNair in this game. If he plays, I have to believe the offense will be a little more vanilla, trying to keep McNair healthy. Buffalo is really starting to do things well, especially on defense. They are now allowing just 4.0 yppl against 4.8 yppl over their last five games. On offense, they are still below average, gaining just 4.6 yppl against 5.2 yppl, but they are rushing the ball extremely well, gaining 4.8 ypr against 4.1 ypr over their last five games. Tennessee has played well defending the rush over the last five games, allowing just 3.3 ypr against 4.1 ypr, but they are allowing 6.1 yps against 5.9 yps during that same time span. They haven't been able to rush the ball, gaining just 3.5 ypr against 3.9 ypr but they continue to throw the ball well, averaging 6.8 yps against 5.7 yps. That passing offense will be severely tested this week against the Bills pass defense, which is allowing just 5.0 yps against 5.5 yps over the last five games. Buffalo qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 238-167-14. Final numbers suggest Tennessee by 8.5 points (all games) and by six points (last five games). I would also like the under in this game but I do have a situation that plays on the over, which is 76-42-2 (3-1 TY), so I will lean towards the over, respecting the situations. **TENNESSEE 23 BUFFALO 20**

ST LOUIS -7 Seattle 51.5

Well, here I go again. Going to go against the Rams and take Seattle. Yes, I know Seattle is 1-5 ats on the road and St. Louis is 5-0-1 ats at home this year. Seattle has lost five games on the road and they didn't look good last week. They have been blown out by two teams this year, Green Bay and Minnesota, while playing competitively in their other four road games, including losing by three at Cincinnati and Baltimore and by seven to Washington. No question, turnovers have done them in this year on the road, and no question turnovers have greatly helped the Rams at home this year. If Seattle continues to turn the ball over, they will get smoked in this game as well. But, I'm of the belief that after last week's debacle, they will attempt to make some adjustments to avoid the costly mistakes they made last week. I've been saying it for weeks now and will continue to say it. The Rams, for the whole season, are just an average team (offense 5.3 yppl against 5.1 yppl, defense 5.2 yppl against 5.0 yppl). And, over their last five games, they are only averaging 5.0 yppl against 5.2 yppl, while the defense is allowing 4.9 yppl against 4.9 yppl. The rush defense has been well below average, allowing 5.3 yppl against 4.1 yppl. They do a lot of blitzing, which got Seattle in trouble last week, but Cleveland adjusted to the blitzes last week, and ran the ball well when the Rams chose to blitz. Seattle continues to perform above average on offense, averaging 5.6 yppl against 5.2 yppl over their last five games, but the defense is well below average, allowing 5.4 yppl against 4.9

yppl. The Rams offense, over the last five games, is well below average throwing the ball, gaining just 5.5 yppl against 6.0 yppl. The rushing offense is now just above average, after being well below average for most of the season, averaging 4.2 yppl against 4.1 yppl over the last five games. That's a product of Marshall Faulk now playing. Seattle qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 88-31-5 and they qualify in a contrary situation, which is 123-56-5. Final numbers actually only suggest the Rams by three points (all games) and by two points (last five games). Those numbers reflect the Rams on the road and Seattle at home as well. If I run just home/road numbers, I get the Rams by 13 points with one of my predictors. You can certainly make a solid argument for playing the Rams. The situations, however, don't favor them in this game. I'll take my shot with, what I consider to be, two equal teams. This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 302-228-11. Final numbers suggest about 51 points (all games) and 57 points (last five games) but, again, those numbers include home and road games for both teams. When I only use the respective home and road numbers for each team, I get a final prediction of about 53 points. I can't play the under in this game, knowing what has happened in Rams home games this year, but the situation suggests it will be lower scoring than some think. **ST LOUIS 27 SEATTLE 24**

KANSAS CITY -14 Detroit 44.5

The Detroit defense has played very well lately, but that's not a good enough reason for me to make a play on them this week. The defense is allowing 5.3 yppl against 5.3 yppl over their last five games, which translates to just 3.9 ypr against 4.5 ypr, but allowing 6.6 yps against 6.0 yps. That may not sit too well against a KC team, who is averaging 7.0 yps against 6.2 yps over their last five games. The KC defense is bad, allowing 6.0 yppl against 5.4 yppl over their last five games. But, as bad as they are, the Detroit offense is even worse, averaging just 4.4 yppl against 5.2 yppl over their last five games. Detroit played a similar team in Minnesota, a few weeks ago, and lost by 10 points, but that was because of two interception returns for touchdowns in the last four minutes of that game for the Vikings. Detroit qualifies in the turnover table situation this week, which is 801-623-35, including a subset, which is 123-71-4 and 6-2 this year. Kansas City does qualify in a late season scheduling situation, which is 44-16-1 (3-0 TY), if they are laying less than 14 points. Detroit also qualifies in a couple of other contrary situations. Final numbers suggest KC by 15 points (all games) and by 10 points (last five games). You should know that all teams, over the last 20 seasons, laying 14 or more points, when at home, are just 51-71-3 41.8%, including just 9-23-0 if they are off a loss. So, if you think KC will smoke Detroit this week because of their loss last week, history does not suggest that. If this line goes higher than -14, know these home teams are 33-51-2 39.3%. And, know if our home team laying -14 or more points, and is not undefeated, they are just 37-61-1 37.8%. I'd be very careful laying this many points this weekend, especially knowing KC is now 0-4 ats since their game against Cincinnati, which they lost. **KANSAS CITY 28 DETROIT 17**

DENVER -11 Cleveland 43

Game number one of two this weekend that qualifies as a best bet, but I am deciding not to play for various reasons. Cleveland qualifies in several situations this week, including what might be my best situation, which is 91-24-2 (2-1 TY). The last time I passed on two best bets, those games both won, so we'll see what happens here. The Broncos, especially Portis, looked terrific last week, gaining 8.3 yppl against the porous KC defense. Denver is now averaging 5.6 yppl against 5.1 yppl over their last five games and the defense has been above average, allowing just 4.9 yppl against 5.2 yppl over that same time span. Denver has done it with the run, averaging 5.5 ypr against 4.4 ypr, including 8.4 ypr last week against KC, aided by the Portis runs. The Cleveland offense has been poor and is banged up, averaging just 5.0 yppl against 5.5 yppl over their last five games. But, the defense continues to play well, allowing just 5.0 yppl against 5.2 yppl over their last five games. They held the Rams to just 3.8 ypr, 5.4 yps and 4.7 yppl last week. Cleveland also qualifies in a contrary situation, which is 301-217-11 (14-10-1 TY). They are also a turnover table play, which is 801-623-35. Denver has already failed twice this year at home, laying these kinds of points, after winning their previous game at home. They defeated Detroit, 20-16, laying 11.5 points, and lost to Chicago, 10-19, laying 10.5 points. Final numbers suggest Denver by 10.5 points (all games) and by 13 points (last five games). Situations, including a couple of very good situations, suggest Cleveland is the play here. They are awful banged up, which keeps me from playing this game, but I would not lay the points in this game. **DENVER 21 CLEVELAND 13**

Baltimore -6.5 OAKLAND 39.5

Game number two that I am not playing this week. The situations lie clearly with Oakland in this game. I am passing on the game for two reasons. First, Oakland may have quit for the year and if the players truly want Callahan fired, there is no better way than to not play as hard as he would like. When, as a coach, you lose your team, you are doomed. Also, Baltimore does qualify in a very solid fundamental rushing situation, which is 532-404-32 (43-24-3 TY), including the best subset, which is 141-58-6 (12-4-1 TY). Baltimore also qualifies in a negative letdown situation, which is an 81-43-5 play against Baltimore here. And Baltimore qualifies in a scheduling situation, which plays against them here and is 160-90-8. I say it each week that teams that are not covering the spread, when playing teams who are covering the spread, are the teams to play on. Oakland qualifies in a situation based on that premise, which is 276-181-21 (11-6-2 TY). The Raiders have played well at home this year, losing by no more than seven in five of six games. And the one game they lost by 14, to Denver, they actually out played Denver, but a multitude of lost fumbles did them in. Baltimore, on the other hand, is coming off of three straight home games. They've won but one game by more than eight points this year on the road, at San Diego, so going West doesn't seem to be a problem for them. Teams playing on the road, after playing three consecutive home games, are just 19-35-0 if they are getting one or less points (also favored). It doesn't appear to be a very good situation for Baltimore in this game. Final numbers suggest Baltimore by 5.5 points (all games) and by 2.5 points (last five games). It's hard for me to make a play on Oakland, because of the solid rushing situation on Baltimore, which is having a great season this year, but Oakland appears to be the play. If this line were to go higher than seven points, I would make Oakland a best bet. **BALTIMORE 24 OAKLAND 20**

Carolina -6.5 ARIZONA 39.5

Thankfully, I don't have enough criteria to play Arizona this week, although they have played much better at home than on the road. Arizona does qualify as a turnover table play, which is 801-623-35, including a subset, which is 126-69-3. The offense, which will start McNown at quarterback this week, is suffering, averaging just 4.5 yppl against 4.9 yppl over their last five games. At least McNown will now be able to play before Arizona gets down by 30+ points. The defense hasn't been any better, allowing 6.1 yppl against 4.9 yppl, including 4.3 ypr against 3.9 ypr and 7.8 yps against 5.7 yps. Carolina is not running the ball well at all, as of late, averaging just 3.1 ypr against 4.5 ypr, but they continue to throw the ball well, averaging 7.4 yps against 5.5 yps and should find some holes in the Arizona pass defense this Sunday. The defense has been just better than average over their last five games, allowing 4.6 yppl against 4.9 yppl. Final numbers favor Carolina by six points (all games) and by six points (last five games). Carolina has won only one game this year by more than six points and that game was at home, while Arizona has lost only one game by more than eight points, at home this year. **CAROLINA 24 ARIZONA 20**

Green Bay -5 SAN DIEGO 45.5

Oh, it pains me to go against my Packers this week, but that is what I must do. The situations greatly favor SD this week. Drew Brees gets the start here, which isn't to my liking but the results shouldn't be too much different. The perception with SD is their offense isn't that good and the defense isn't good either. But, over their last five games, the offense is well above average, averaging 5.9 yppl against 5.6 yppl and the defense has also played well, allowing just 5.3 yppl against 5.5 yppl. The defense is allowing 4.6 ypr over that time, but against teams averaging 4.7 ypr, so they are actually defending the run better than average. On offense, they continue to run the ball well, gaining 5.4 ypr against 4.8 ypr and they are now an average team throwing the ball, averaging 6.3 yps against 6.3 yps. For GB, the offense has not played as well over the last five games, averaging just 5.0 yppl against 5.0 yppl. They continue to run the ball well, 4.6 ypr against 4.3 ypr, but not quite as well as they have earlier in the season. The defense has played extremely well lately, allowing just 4.4 yppl against 5.1 yppl over the last five games. Good weather, which SD has, along with a healthier Favre, should allow this offense to be a little more productive this week. The Packers defense has played well lately but that has included two games against Detroit and Chicago, which can often give you misleading numbers. SD qualifies in some great situations this week, including a home momentum situation, which is 77-42-2, including a subset, which is 34-5-1, 13-0 if our team is getting more than three points and an amazing 32-3-1 if our opponent was even to positive in turnover margin in their last game, making them feel good about themselves. They qualify in another home momentum situation, which is 156-105-10 (4-0 TY). Green Bay is now one game over .500 but teams favored by five or more, after winning their last game to go over .500, are now just 23-53-1 when playing a team below or at .500. That same situation won with Detroit over GB earlier this year. And that situation is 16-6 in December, so if you think GB will be focused this week because of the playoff run, it hasn't helped other teams playing in December. GB also qualifies in a letdown situa-

tion, which is a 73-38-3 play against situation here, which is 4-1 this year. Once again, SD also qualifies in our play on teams not covering the spread against teams covering the spread, which is 276-181-21 (11-6-2 TY). And the Chargers qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 136-57-8. The situations definitely favor SD. Final numbers indicate GB by five (all games) and by .5 point (last five games). SD struggled earlier this year, at home, against better than average defenses, losing by 24 and 14 to Denver and Baltimore. But, in their last three home games, against below average defenses, they have scored 42 points (Minnesota), 27 points (Cincinnati) and 24 points (Kansas City). The GB defense is somewhere in between the good defenses and the below average defenses. GB has played only two good offenses on the road this year, allowing 27 points to Minnesota and 34 points to St. Louis. That's an average of about 31 points. We can probably mark SD down for about 24-27 points in this game. GB has played three defenses somewhat similar to the SD defense, on the road this year. They have scored 13 points (Arizona – were really banged up at receiver), 30 points (Minnesota) and 24 points (St. Louis). SD has faced four good offenses at home this year and allowed 37 points (Denver), 28 points (Minnesota), 34 points (Cincinnati) and 28 points (Kansas City). So GB is averaging about 22-23 points on the road against poor defenses and SD is allowing an average of 32 points against good offenses at home. We can probably pencil in GB for about 27 points in this game. That gives us around a 27-24 or 27-27 game, which clearly gives us enough points for the over and allows the dog to stay in this game. Situations clearly favor SD and the over looks to have a good shot as well. **GREEN BAY 27 SAN DIEGO 26**

NEW ORLEANS –7.5 NY Giants 39

I am on the Giants here and it is real hard to try and tell you the Giants are the better team. They certainly are not the better team right now, but I still think they have a shot at the cover here. The Giants qualify as a contrary play, which is 301-217-11 (14-10-1 TY) as well as another contrary situation, which is 111-57-6 (5-2-1 TY). NO has won only one game by more than seven points this year and I expect the Giants, third and fourth string and all, to give a good effort on national television Sunday night. It's hard to find anything positive with the Giants lately but they are still running the ball well, gaining 4.8 ypr against 4.3 ypr and that should sit just fine against a Saints defense, which is allowing 5.2 ypr against 4.4 ypr over their last five games. The one area of strength for the Saints has been their running game, which is averaging 5.4 ypr against 4.5 ypr but the Giants have defended the run well, allowing just 3.7 ypr against 4.5 ypr. It's a lot different laying seven points than taking seven points and the Giants, with any kind of effort at all, and the ability to run the ball some, can stay within this number. I'm well aware of the injuries in the secondary, offensive line, quarterback, wide receivers and tight end. But, if it were that easy, then this line would be closer to 14 points. It isn't and it isn't. **NEW ORLEANS 21 NY GIANTS 20**

MIAMI –2 Philadelphia 37

No question Philly is playing well over their last eight games (eight wins). But, I just find it hard to believe a team that is allowing 5.6 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr (last five games) and has allowed nine straight teams to gain over 100 yards rushing, can keep on winning. Miami has not run the ball well, gaining just 3.4 ypr against 3.7 ypr over their last five games, but Philly is much worse than Miami is, and therefore, Miami will get some yards on the ground in this game. And, while Miami is above average on defense, allowing just 4.4 ypr against 4.7 ypr, the Philly offense has been even better, gaining 6.2 ypr against 4.9 ypr. Philly qualifies in a letdown situation, which is a 32-10-3 play against situation and another letdown situation, which is a 63-27-4 play against situation. Dolphins also qualify in a Monday night situation, which is a 62-27-2 play. And, once again, we have our play on teams not covering the spread, against teams covering the spread situation, which is 276-181-21 (11-6-2 TY). Final numbers favor Miami by 4.5 points (all games) and Philly by eight points (last five games). But, those numbers are skewed a little because Griese was playing in a couple of those games. It's hard to go against Philly in this game but this is where situations are the way to go and they support Miami big time in this game. This game may be higher scoring than 'they' think. **MIAMI 27 PHILADELPHIA 17**

BEST BETS

YTD 51-35-5 +29.50%

3% CHICAGO +3

3% SAN DIEGO +5

2% SEATTLE +7

2% NY GIANTS +7.5

2% MIAMI -2

2% SF/CINCINNATI OVER 41.5

2% GB/SAN DIEGO OVER 45.5

