



2004 NFL SEASON
SIXTH SENSE SPORTS
WEEKS 16-21

WEEK 16

Another solid week last week, going 3-1-1 and bringing the yearly record to 58-45 56.3% +24.30%. If you received the email about KC, you did even better. As stated last week, that game will not count on the record as everybody probably didn't get the chance to play the game.

I will have bowl plays as they come up on my website. To date, I have not had any yet.

A quick reminder to check out my college page each week - <http://www.sixthsensesports.com/247210.html> - for my college best bets, which have been red hot, at 57-41 58% for the season. I will have any bowl plays up there during the bowl season.

I've also attached as an Excel spreadsheet and Adobe Acrobat showing the stats I use versus the opponents they have faced. Any questions, please let me know.

This will be on Friday evenings, going forward. If you haven't received your report by 7:00 p.m. central time on Friday, please send me an email.

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

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

Average Points Scored 22.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.2
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.3

I am adding one other item this year. Under each game listed you will see an average score for the teams that are playing listed. This average represents the average score between these two teams playing at this site over the past ten seasons. I also will be listing the spread record and over/under record for these two teams at this site for the past ten seasons. One hint is when we have a sample of at least **five games** and the average score is at least **seven points** from today's line, playing on that team that it favors has been extremely profitable.

For example:

NEW ENGLAND -3.5 Indianapolis 44

3-6-0/3-6-0 16-26.3

Away teams record is always listed first. Indy is 3-6-0 ATS (first set of numbers) and also 3-6-0 OU (second set of numbers) playing at NE during the past ten seasons. Their average score is 16-26.3, losing by an average of 10.3 points per game when playing at NE. That's a difference of 6.8 points in favor of NE. They win by an average of 10.3 points per game and the line is currently 3.5. Remember, anything at **seven** or higher creates historical value for that team when the sample is at least **five games**. You might say teams change and you can't rely on this but I'll tell you these teams win at a 56% clip so you better have good reason to play against this, even though it represents team trends and not league wide trends.

MINNESOTA - 3 Green Bay 56

5-5-0/6-4-0 21.3-25.4

This game sure is being hyped here in Minnesota, which is very understandable but both of these teams are currently playing horrible right now. I'm not sure their play deserves the hype they are currently getting. The Packers lost last week to Jacksonville at home but they out played Jacksonville from the line of scrimmage, allowing Jacksonville just 5.5yppl while gaining 6.5yppl themselves. The difference was a -3 in the turnover margin, which is certainly part of the game. I don't expect the Packers to be that poor again this week. Since 1993 (Favre era), GB has been -3 or greater in turnovers and they are 15-6 SU in their next game. So, there is plenty of reason they will

be turnover conscious and try and cut down on the turnovers. Unfortunately, two of those losses did come here in Minnesota. While the Packers offense has been good this year, they are not as good on the road, averaging just 5.4yppl against 5.5yppl, including running the ball for just 3.6ypr against 4.2ypr. They did rush for 5.9ypr against Minnesota earlier this season and the Vikings defense, which is much better at home, allowing just 5.4yppl against 5.5yppl, is allowing 4.7ypr against 4.3ypr. The Vikings have recently played three teams at home who can or are rushing the ball well. They allowed 5.4ypr, 5.7ypr and 4.5ypr so there is a chance GB will be able to run some on this defense. Going the other way, the Minnesota offense is very solid at home, averaging 5.9yppl against 5.0yppl and they will face a Packers defense, which is allowing 5.5yppl against 5.2yppl on the road. The problem for GB is they have played some anemic offenses on the road but when they have played the two good offenses (similar to Minnesota), they have been lit up. They allowed Indy 7.1yppl and Philly 7.7yppl and 45 and 47 points. That doesn't bode well for GB in this game. With that said, I have to believe they will try and run the ball as much as possible because if they put this game in the hands of their defense, it will be over before it even gets started. Randy Moss looked like he was in full stride last week and may finally be almost 100% again. GB qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 1328-1115-69, including a subset, which is 824-649-37. Minnesota qualifies in a last home game situation, which is 66-34-4. That situation works better if their opponent is coming off a win (just 14-11-2 if opponent is off a loss). The final numbers in this game suggest Minnesota by two and three points (all stats) and Minnesota by 4.5 points and GB by three points (home/away stats). In other words, the value seems to lie slightly with GB despite all the poor play. I realize there will be plenty of talk about Favre and his play in domes but the fact is GB is actually 2-2 SU and 3-1 ATS here in Minnesota when they are an underdog, including a 30-27 win over the Vikings here last year. The problems for Favre have come when his team is greatly favored and can't match expectations. As for the total, as I mentioned last week in the Vikings write up, they keep setting these totals for Vikings games extremely high. With Moss now appearing to be healthy, these totals can make a little more sense but I don't see this game going that way. I went over in the first meeting between these two and the game went over easily but I don't see GB coming out throwing as much as they will have to to get this game over the total. They won't stay in this game having to throw the ball consistently. Minnesota home games haven't totaled more than 52 points yet this year and I have gone under in their games against both Seattle and Jacksonville. The real reason I like the under here is a situation, which plays to the under. That system is 335-248-12 and is 15-12 this year. I was on the over in this game here last year, which totaled 57 points but these two have only once totaled more than 57 playing here in the last 10 seasons and that game only totaled 61 points. Final numbers suggest 57 points (all stats) and 53 points (home/away stats). One of two things will happen in this game. GB stays in the game by running the ball, which will keep the score somewhat down. Or, they will get blown out, but that means they only get about 20 points, at best, which means Minnesota will have to score at least 37 points, which I don't see happening because GB should control the clock some early on while they are still in the game. There have been four games with totals set as high as 56 or higher this year. Those games have gone 2-2 with one over by a point (scoring 59 points with a 58 point total). The defenses are just bad enough to keep me off the under but I will lean that way. As for the side, I will call the final a three point game and let the line decide which way to lean. The situations and numbers slightly favor GB and I don't want to lay points with such a poor defense, but GB seems to be playing a team that they just don't match up with. **MINNESOTA 28 GREEN BAY 25**

KANSAS CITY -7.5 Oakland 59

3-6-1/4-6-0 15.3-23.9

Both teams came through for us last week in fine fashion. While the Raiders have been better as of late, their offense and defense are below average when on the road and they are hurting in the secondary this week. Oakland is averaging 5.5yppl against 5.8yppl on the road, including a porous 6.2ypr against 7.2ypr on the road. That is significant because the way to beat KC is via the passing game. The Chiefs are allowing a whopping 7.9ypr against 6.3ypr at home this year and 6.3yppl against 5.4yppl overall at home. Their rush defense has been good, allowing just 4.2ypr against 4.3ypr. Meanwhile, the Chiefs offense is in high gear, especially at home, where they are averaging 4.8ypr against 4.1ypr, 7.6ypr against 6.8ypr and 6.2yppl against 5.5yppl. They'll face a Raiders defense, which is allowing 3.9ypr against 3.8ypr, a whopping 7.5ypr against 6.0ypr and 5.5yppl against 5.1yppl on the road. Both teams qualify in good situations this week but the value greatly favors KC here. Final numbers favor KC by 14 and 11 (all stats) and by 10.5 and 18 points (home/away stats). This game also qualifies in a 335-248-12 under situation and final totals suggest about 61 points (all stats) and 60 points (home/away stats). I'll lean slightly under based on the situation but it's pretty tough to play under in this game. I'm a little scared to lay points with a

bad defense (Chiefs are 0-2 as favorites of six or more this year) but I will lean their way based on the numbers. If this line goes to -7 or less, I will make KC a best bet. **KANSAS CITY 37 OAKLAND 21**

Denver -4 TENNESSEE 50

0-1-0/1-0-0 33-42

Denver is really struggling and it's been five weeks since they have won a game by more than four points. With that said, it's been five weeks since Tennessee has lost by less than four points. Denver's offense has been below average on the road this year, gaining just 5.3yppl against 5.5yppl and they'll face a Tennessee defense, which overall, is allowing just 5.1yppl against 5.7yppl at home. Most of those numbers came a while ago (Tennessee has only played one home game in the last five weeks) and came against anemic offenses but the Denver offense is a far cry from the Indy, KC and even Oakland home offense they have faced the last three weeks. The Tennessee offense is average at home, gaining 5.4yppl against 5.4yppl while the Denver defense is not the problem, allowing just 4.9yppl against 5.5yppl on the road. Even last week against a good KC offense, they allowed only 6.6yppl but had a -3 turnover ratio and allowed a kickoff return for a touchdown. Denver qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 1328-1115-69, including a subset, which is 824-649-37. Tennessee qualifies in a power rating value play, which is 345-256-23 and in a bounce back situation, which is 41-17-1. Final numbers suggest Denver by three and 3.5 points (all stats) and by 4.5 points and nine points (home/away stats). I actually like this game to go under the total because of plenty of value in this game. Final totals suggest just 44 points (all stats) and only 33 points (home/away stats). Denver will be very happy to run the ball and their solid defense should hold a Tennessee offense to less than 20 points seeing Tennessee hasn't score more than 18 points this year against above average defenses. I don't see Tennessee winning this game but Denver has struggled as of late as well so I will call for a three point Denver victory with the solid play to the under here. **DENVER 23 TENNESSEE 20**

PITTSBURGH -5 Baltimore 34

4-8-0/6-6-0 13.2-23.3

Pittsburgh is having a great season but their play continues to allow teams to stay close and thus, laying points, is always dangerous. Pittsburgh is just 2-2 ATS when laying more than 4.5 points. The Ravens offense is horrible on the road (at home as well), averaging just 4.3yppl against 5.5yppl. They'll face a Pittsburgh defense, which is allowing just 4.5yppl against 5.2yppl at home this year. The Pittsburgh offense has been below average, partly because they run the ball so much, averaging just 5.1yppl against 5.2yppl and they'll face a very good Baltimore defense, which is allowing just 4.4yppl against 4.9yppl on the road this year. Pittsburgh qualifies in a last home game situation, which is 66-34-4 but Baltimore qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 246-179-14. Final numbers favor Pittsburgh by three and eight points (all stats) and by 12 and 10 points (home/away stats). I'll lean with the offense which has a better chance to put together consistent drives and whose defense is still very solid against an offense, which figures to break down quite a bit, as usual. The under gets a good look as final numbers suggest about 34 points (all stats) and 26 points (home/away stats). **PITTSBURGH 20 BALTIMORE 10**

DETROIT - 6 Chicago 36

4-6-0/4-6-0 15.6-24

Both teams are sliding with Chicago having lost four of five and Detroit seven of eight. But, Detroit is getting better, having now rushed the ball for at least 113 yards in five straight games. The Detroit defense is pretty solid at home and when they haven't had to face prolific offenses, they have held their own this year. That should again be the case this week against a terrible Bears offense, which has now scored a total of eight points in their last two games (actually six points because of a safety). Against better than average defenses on the road this year, Chicago has scored seven points at Tampa Bay and three points at Jacksonville. I don't see them scoring many points in this game. The Bears defense has been pretty solid as well this year although they are 0-5 without Brian Urlacher and will be without him the rest of the season. Chicago is allowing 5.1yppl against 5.2yppl on the road this year. If you take out their games against good offenses like Minnesota, Indy, GB and Philly, they have allowed but one team more than 5.0yppl in a game this year. I don't see them allowing Detroit many points here either. They'll face a

Detroit offense, which is averaging 5.2yppl against 5.5yppl at home this year. The Bears offense is averaging a horrible 4.0yppl against 5.5yppl on the road this year and will face a Detroit defense, which is allowing 5.5yppl against 5.4yppl at home. Detroit, however, has faced GB, Minny, Philly and Indy at home this year so their defensive numbers are skewed a bit because Chicago certainly is not any of those teams or even close to that. Chicago is more like Arizona, who scored but 12 points at 3.8yppl and Washington who scored 17 points (seven on defense or special teams) at 3.9yppl. Both teams qualify in favorable situations but I will lean to Detroit because I like they way they are moving the ball on the ground. Final numbers favor Detroit by five and six points (all stats) and Chicago by three and two points (home/away stats). Keep in mind those home/away stats include four games against really good offenses (Philly, Indy, GB and Minny) where Detroit has really struggled this year. Final numbers suggest about 32 and 36 points being scored and I don't see Chicago getting more than seven or ten at the most and Detroit getting more than 21 to 24 (if turnovers become a factor). This game also qualifies in an 81-48-1 under situation. **DETROIT 19 CHICAGO 10**

CINCINNATI -6 NY Giants 44

No Past History

Based on what Eli Manning has seen so far, this game should look easy. It's easily the worse defense Manning has had to face yet and he finally looked like a quarterback last week against Pittsburgh. The situations go both ways here as Cincinnati qualifies in a negative letdown situation based on their poor defense last week, which is 183-109-11 and plays against them here. But, Cincinnati qualifies in a late season situation, which is 45-16-2 and a similar late season situation, which is 84-38-2 based on the Giants poor defensive play the last couple of weeks, which is usually a sign of a team folding down the stretch. Final numbers favor Cincinnati by five and seven points (all stats) and by nine points and the Giants by one point (home/away stats). Final totals suggest about 48 points (all stats) and 45 points (home/away stats). I can see the Giants, with some skill players, finally doing some damage with Manning against a so-so defense and Cincinnati should do their fair share of damage as well. My lean here is with the Giants slightly and the over slightly but they are weak leans at that. **CINCINNATI 25 NY GIANTS 20**

INDIANAPOLIS -7 San Diego 57

2-1-0/2-1-0 21.7-20

Indianapolis's offense was slowed down last week at just 5.5yppl and 20 points. Their defense allowed Baltimore to average 5.0yppl, including 160 yards rushing at 5.5ypr. But, the Baltimore offense isn't good enough to score and Indy got the win and cover. I'm not sold on SD, especially when they are on the road, where they are averaging just 3.6ypr against 4.3ypr, 7.0ypr against 6.9ypr and 5.2yppl against 5.7yppl. They'll face an Indy defense, which isn't that good, but at home has been very serviceable. Indy is allowing just 5.3yppl against 5.6yppl, including 5.7ypr against 6.7ypr but 4.6ypr against 4.2ypr. The Indy offense has been sensational and I don't see the SD defense slowing them down. Indy is averaging 9.0ypr against 6.1ypr at home and 6.8yppl against 5.4yppl. SD is allowing 5.3yppl against 5.3yppl on defense on the road. I don't have any situations favoring either side here. I do like the total in this game as I think it is over valued a bit. SD has played one really good offense this year and they allowed KC 31 points (seven on a kickoff return) but just 5.6yppl. I don't see SD getting a lot of points in this game because Indy has been pretty solid at home this year and it's doubtful SD can get more than 27 points in this game. That might be enough to put this game over the total but I just don't think both teams can combine for a high total here. This game is either close in the 20's or Indy wins going away by not allowing a lot of points. The game qualifies in two under situations, which are 154-85-2 and 238-140-8. Final numbers favor Indy by nine and four points (all stats) and by 2.5 points and six points (home/away stats). Final totals suggest about 56 points (all stats) and 50 points (home/away stats). I will lean to the dog and make a best bet on the under. **INDIANAPOLIS 28 SAN DIEGO 23**

JACKSONVILLE -7 Houston 37.5

1-1-0/1-1-0 10.5-23

Jacksonville has allowed but one team to score more than 18 points against them at home this year and that was Indy scoring 24 points. I doubt Houston will be able to muster more than 17 points in this game, if that. Against good defenses on the road this year, Houston has averaged only about 15 points. We can pencil Houston in for about 14-17 points. The wildcard is the Jacksonville offense, which likes to run the ball and even in a good day can end up only scoring 17-20 because they eat the clock with their running game. Houston averages a pathetic 4.8yppl against 5.8yppl on the road, while Jacksonville is allowing just 5.1yppl against 5.5yppl at home. Jacksonville is averaging 5.1yppl against 5.3yppl at home while Houston is allowing 5.4yppl against 5.3yppl on the road. Houston does qualify in an outstanding situation, which is 95-27-2. That situation is almost an automatic play and is 3-3 this year. When there isn't a strong situation playing against it, I have been on it this year but when there is a situation going against it, I have laid off the game. That is the case this week as Jacksonville qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 552-421-34, including the best subset, which is 144-65-7. Final numbers favor Jacksonville by six points and seven points (all stats) and by 12.5 points and 11 points (home/away stats). Final total suggests about 31 points (all stats) and about 25 points (home/away stats). I will lean with Jacksonville (the better team) and a stronger lean to the under. **JACKSONVILLE 20 HOUSTON 10**

TAMPA BAY –3 Carolina 39.5

2-1-0/0-3-0 11.7-16

I will be on Tampa Bay here and the only question for me is if they will toss the towel after last week's loss at home to New Orleans. I don't think Gruden will let them do that against a team they don't care much for. Tampa Bay lost last week but out averaged NO 5.0yppl to 4.3yppl. It was a –2 in turnovers that did them in as they led 17-7 well into the fourth quarter before their collapse. Prior to that the only touchdown NO scored was on the opening kickoff as a touchdown return. This week they face a Carolina team who is playing extremely well but Carolina is not as good on the road as they are at home, averaging just 5.5yppl against 5.7yppl and they will face an extremely tough TB defense, which is allowing just 4.1yppl against 5.5yppl at home this year. Other than facing the high flying Chiefs offense, last weeks 4.3yppl was the most a TB defense has allowed at home this year. I don't see the Carolina offense scoring more than 17 points in this game. The TB offense has been pretty solid at home, gaining 5.3yppl against 5.1yppl, including averaging 4.5ypr against 4.3ypr and they will face a Carolina defense, which is allowing 5.4yppl against 5.4yppl on the road, including 4.8ypr against 4.1ypr. TB qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 1328-1115-69, including a subset, which is 824-649-37. Final numbers favor TB by three and 4.5 points (all stats) and by seven and five points (home/away stats). Final totals suggest about 36 points (all stats) and 35 points (home/away stats). I went with Carolina in their first meeting this year because of the home/road dichotomy and will do so here again. Since Tony Dungy turned this team around (1996), TB, when at home and laying less than four points (or a dog) is now 26-8-2 (2-1-1 TY) and 16-2-2 since 1999. Carolina has a long history of covering as a road dog, as they are now 36-23-2 61.0% as a road dog (4-1-1 TY). Best Bet for TB and a lean to the under, where they have combined for 33 and 21 points in each of the last two years playing here. **TAMPA BAY 23 CAROLINA 10**

NEW ORLEANS –4 Atlanta 44.5

9-1-0/7-3-0 24.4-21.7

Not much to say here. Huge question marks as to whom we will see for Atlanta. I don't think laying points with NO is a good idea but the uncertainty of who will play for Atlanta makes their side hard to play as well. If it were just Matt Schaub for Vick, I could live with that but Crumpler might not play and Dunn may only play a little bit. Atlanta's defense hasn't been that good on the road, allowing 5.8yppl against 5.2yppl and NO does qualify in some solid situations this week. Atlanta qualifies in three different fundamental rushing situations, but if Vick doesn't play, that really negates the strength of those situations. Final numbers favor Atlanta without adjusting for the players who might miss this game and this game does qualify in a couple of under situations. I just think it's simply too hard to make a call here other than lean slightly to the dog and respect the under situations. **NEW ORLEANS 24 ATLANTA 21**

New England –2 NY JETS 43

6-4-0/4-4-2 22.8-20

I'm kind of kicking myself for not playing Miami and the over last week. The NE defense has been below average this year on the road, allowing 5.2yppl against 4.9yppl, including 6.0yps against 5.7yps. That doesn't bode well against a Jets offense, at home, that is averaging a whopping 6.3yppl against 4.7yppl, including 5.5ypr against 3.8ypr and 7.3yps against 5.4yps. The NE offense has also been good on the road this year, averaging 5.6yppl against 5.2yppl, including 7.2yps against 6.3yps. They'll face a Jets defense, which is allowing 4.9yppl against 5.1yppl at home this year. The Jets are the better team from the line of scrimmage in this game. There are situations that favor both sides here but I like the fundamentals favoring the Jets because they should be able to rush the ball against NE and then throw the ball once that happens. NE has faced one good opponent on the road this year and was beaten badly by Pittsburgh. Final numbers favor NE by two points and the Jets by 3.5 points (all stats) and the Jets by 1.5 points and NE by three points (home/away stats). I simply like the home team, getting points, who I feel is the better team in this game and thus a best bet winner. Final total suggest about 41 points (all stats) and 55 points (home/away stats). Against three better than average offenses this year, on the road, NE has totaled 54, 62 and 46 points. I included Pittsburgh as an above average offense because they are capable of moving the ball through the air if they have to pass, as they showed last week against the Giants and against NE earlier this year. I like the over in this game as well. **NY JETS 29 NEW ENGLAND 23**

Buffalo –11.5 SAN FRANCISCO 44

1-1-0/0-2-0 8.5-31

Laying double digits on the road, as NE and Pittsburgh found out last week, can be quite dangerous. Buffalo has won five in a row, all by at least 10 points. And, all of their wins this year against below .500 teams have been by at least seven points or more. Meanwhile, SF has suffered numerous injuries this year and their only two wins have come against Arizona. Since week three, all of the SF losses have come by at least seven points or more. With all that said, SF qualifies in my turnover table play, which is 1328-1115-69, including a subset, which is 824-649-37. Buffalo's high octane offense sets them up in a letdown situation, which is 85-53-5. SF also qualifies in a home dog bounce back situation, which is 44-15-0 and contrary situations, which are 186-201-21 and 345-256-23. Final numbers favor Buffalo by 15 and seven points (all stats) and by three and 17 points (home/away stats). Final total suggest 50 points (all stats) and 49 points (home/away stats). Buffalo has been scoring a lot of points on defense and special teams over the last few weeks, which has helped create their predicted win margin as well as the total. They may do that again but I can't rely on that for the total or the side. The defense has been outstanding on the road this year, allowing just 4.7yppl against 5.1yppl and I'm not sure SF can move the ball on this defense. I will lean with the home dog because of the situations and the over but they are both weak leans. SF has scored at least 14 points in every home game this year. **BUFFALO 27 SAN FRANCISCO 20**

Washington –2 DALLAS 37

3-7-0/3-7-0 13.6-23.6

Dallas has simply dominated this series over the years, winning 13 of the last 14 played, including earlier this year at Washington. The Redskins offense is not good and on the road they are averaging just 4.2yppl against 5.0yppl. They'll face a Dallas defense, which hasn't been that good this year, but has been respectable at home, allowing just 5.1yppl against 5.2yppl. Against equally anemic offenses this year, Dallas allowed Chicago but seven points and 2.5yppl. The Washington offense, especially as of late, is better than that, but they don't stand much of a chance to score a lot in this game. Dallas is a turnover table play, which is 1328-1115-69, including a subset, which is 824-649-37. They also qualify as a power rating value play, which is 345-256-23. Final numbers favor Washington by two points and Dallas by 1.5 points (all stats) and a pick 'em with both home/away stats. The value and situations lie with Dallas. Final totals suggest about 37 points (all stats) and 34 points (home/away stats). This game also qualifies in an under situation, which is 81-48-1. Dallas is a tough team to play here but the value and situations do favor them and I will trust that in this game. The home/away numbers make Dallas the better team from the line of scrimmage. **DALLAS 20 WASHINGTON 13**

SEATTLE –7 Arizona 43.5

1-2-0/1-2-0 16-24.7

This is a tough game to call because Seattle is the better team but they're just not that good of a team and other than their two wins over SF and a first game win over the Saints, they haven't defeated anyone by more than seven points this year. Denny Green is a long time 60% cover as a dog but Arizona, on the road, against teams at 5-9 or better this year, has lost four of five games by seven or more and three of those five have been by 14 or more. The Arizona offense has been terrible all year, averaging just 4.3yppl against 5.1yppl on the road but they'll face a Seattle defense that has been hurt by injuries and is allowing 5.3yppl against 5.3yppl at home. They've also allowed 5.7yppl or better in four straight game but they have faced some good offenses in that stretch. Five games ago they faced Miami, which is more like this Arizona offense, and allowed just 3.9yppl. They also had less defensive injuries at that point. The Seattle offense is averaging 5.5yppl against 4.8yppl at home this year, including 4.3ypr against 3.5ypr. That should sit just fine against an Arizona defense, which is allowing 5.7yppl against 5.0yppl on the road, including 5.3ypr against 3.7ypr. With that said, Seattle qualifies in similar situations based on their poor defensive performance last week, which are 90-48-5 (8-3 TY) and 183-109-11 (11-3 TY) and play against Seattle in this game. Those two situations have been red hot all year long. Arizona also qualifies in a conference situation that plays on sizeable dogs in a game against a home team that doesn't figure to play much defense. That situation is 113-44-4 (4-2 TY). Final numbers favor Seattle by six and 5.5 points (all stats) and by five and eight points (home/away stats). Final total suggests about 43 points (all stats) and 48 points (home/away stats). I don't have enough balls to trust Arizona on the road to make them a best bet so I will just lean their way. I will also go over the total in this game. **SEATTLE 26 ARIZONA 20**

MIAMI -7 Cleveland 40.5

No Past History

Don't be too misled by Miami's victory last week. Miami is certainly playing more competitive and have covered four of their last five games. This is the third time they have been favored this year and are 0-2 so far against Pittsburgh (-1) and Arizona (-3), losing both straight up. Last week, Miami won the game 29-28 but were out averaged in that game, 4.7yppl to 3.9yppl but were +3 in the turnover margin and needed just about all of them to get the win and cover. They have won just one game by more than seven points this year and that was against the Rams and who can't defeat that team when they are on the road. After all, the Rams have played but two games within 13 points of their opponent on the road this year. This might have been Miami's super bowl last week, on Monday night, against the defending champions, etc. It's pretty hard to get all excited about a dying Cleveland team. With that said, Cleveland's best road effort this year was their first road effort, in which they lost by only seven. That's as close as they have come this year on the road. They have allowed at least 19 points in every road game and at least 27 points in each of their last five road games. Miami has now scored at least 23 points in each of their last four home games. It sounds like they should be able to get to at least 23 points, if not 27 points in this game. The Cleveland offense, on the road this year, is averaging just 4.5yppl against 4.9yppl, while the Miami defense is allowing just 5.0yppl against 5.3yppl. Miami's offense hasn't been that good at home this year, gaining just 4.6yppl against 5.1yppl but they should find big holes in a Cleveland defense, which is allowing a whopping 6.0yppl against 4.8yppl on the road, including 4.8ypr against 3.8ypr and 7.4yps against 5.6yps. With that said, Cleveland qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 1328-1115-69, including a subset, which is 824-649-37. Miami's poor rushing attack sets them up in a negative 94-38-6 fundamental rushing situation, which plays against them here. Final numbers favor Miami by just four and 3.5 points (all stats) and by 4.5 and eight points (home/away stats). Much like Arizona, I don't have the balls to take Cleveland, but they are in a good spot this week and the weather of Miami might be a little more enticing than two feet of snow in Cleveland or Buffalo, that causes them to play. They have faced a very tough schedule this year and this game has to look much easier than any so far. Final totals suggest about 45 points (all stats) and 52 points (home/away stats) but I have a 335-248-12 under situation on this game as well as an 81-48-1 under situation if the total is less than 40. I'll lean under because of the situations. **MIAMI 23 CLEVELAND 17**

ST LOUIS -3 Philadelphia 46.5

1-0-0/1-0-0 24-29

I realize TO is down and out and Philly might now take it a little easy because they have nothing to gain, going forward, for the playoffs. With that said and realizing the Rams are fighting for their life, I have a hard time justifying this line. The Rams are currently 0-4 SU against better than .500 teams this year, having come no closer than 17 points in any of those games. If I'm Andy Reid, I have to find out what I have for the playoffs and I don't find that out by sitting all of my starters. If the team gets way behind, he may pull them but I doubt the Rams can do that. If the team gets way ahead, he may pull them but that would also mean they get the cover. He may also pull them after a good half of play, in which they are slightly ahead and then Philly loses the game in the second half with their reserves. That's very possible but I wouldn't want the Rams, knowing that is the only scenario that gets me the cover. The Philly numbers are a little meaningless here because they involve TO and all that changes along with how long the starters will play. For the Rams, they are averaging 6.0yppl against 5.0yppl at home this season. Their much maligned defense is allowing just 5.2yppl against 5.5yppl at home this year so they should be able to somewhat contain a much worse Philly attack without TO. The Philly defense, which is always talked about allowing large rushing yards, is having quite a good season, having allowed teams to score 20+ points only three times all year. They've also allowed the fewest points in the league this year. The Rams qualify in quite a few situations this week but those situations assume a fair line. With TO in the game, my numbers favor Philly by 14 and 11 points (all stats) and by four and five points (home/away stats). I doubt his loss is accountable for eight or nine points. He certainly will be missed but against the Rams, Philly can still stay competitive with their defense alone. I'm certainly not going to lay three or more points with the Rams. Final total in this game suggests just 45 points for both all stats and home/away stats. Knowing it's very unlikely Philly will give up points in the 20's and the Rams have only scored more than 24 points only three times all year and haven't scored more than 17 points in five weeks, I find it hard to believe they can score more than 24 points here. I also don't see Philly putting up a lot of points in this game, whether it's because their offense becomes a little more anemic or if they pull their starters half way through the game. The guys who are typically pulled are the offensive players. I think this game has an excellent chance to go under. The total is set because of the reputation of the Rams offense, but that hasn't been the case this year. The Rams scored 25 against a bad Saints defense, 28 against a good TB defense but seven points came directly on a defensive score (95 yard return) and another seven came after the Rams recovered a fumble on the five yard line (five yard drive), so they really only scored about 14 points in that game. They also scored 22 and 23 points against New England and Seattle. That's probably more likely here, if that, and I don't see the Philly offense putting a lot of points on the board, again with a respectable Rams defense at home. **PHILADELPHIA 20 ST LOUIS 17**

BEST BETS

YTD 58-45 +24.30%

3% TAMPA BAY -3

3% NY JETS +2

3% DALLAS +2

3% DENVER/TENNESSEE UNDER 50

3% SAN DIEGO/INDIANAPOLIS UNDER 57

3% PHILADELPHIA/ST LOUIS UNDER 46.5

WEEK 17

A lot of questionable games this week with many teams probably resting players, which means some of the write ups are reduced because it's impossible to handicap those games.

I've also attached as an Excel spreadsheet and Adobe Acrobat showing the stats I use versus the opponents they have faced. Any questions, please let me know.

This will be on Friday evenings, going forward. If you haven't received your report by 7:00 p.m. central time on Friday, please send me an email.

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

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

Average Points Scored 22.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.2
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.3

I am adding one other item this year. Under each game listed you will see an average score for the teams that are playing listed. This average represents the average score between these two teams playing at this site over the past ten seasons. I also will be listing the spread record and over/under record for these two teams at this site for the past ten seasons. One hint is when we have a sample of at least **five games** and the average score is at least **seven points** from today's line, playing on that team that it favors has been extremely profitable.

For example:

NEW ENGLAND -3.5 Indianapolis 44

3-6-0/3-6-0 16-26.3

Away teams record is always listed first. Indy is 3-6-0 ATS (first set of numbers) and also 3-6-0 OU (second set of numbers) playing at NE during the past ten seasons. Their average score is 16-26.3, losing by an average of 10.3 points per game when playing at NE. That's a difference of 6.8 points in favor of NE. They win by an average of 10.3 points per game and the line is currently 3.5. Remember, anything at **seven** or higher creates historical value for that team when the sample is at least **five games**. You might say teams change and you can't rely on this but I'll tell you these teams win at a 56% clip so you better have good reason to play against this, even though it represents team trends and not league wide trends.

NEW ENGLAND -13 San Francisco 37

0-1-0/1-0-0 21-24

A lot of games this week where teams have everything wrapped up and playing time for starters is unknown. I'm not into guessing when and how long they are going to play and because of that, I'll have to pass on this game.

BUFFALO -9 Pittsburgh 34

2-0-0/1-1-0 20.5-13.5

We know how long Buffalo will play their starters because they need to win but how long Pittsburgh plays their starters is in question. Pittsburgh does qualify in a 246-180-14 situation but that is somewhat meaningless if their starters aren't going to play the whole game. I'll side slightly with the team who needs the game and will be playing all out. **BUFFALO 28 PITTSBURGH 13**

BALTIMORE -11 Miami 33.5

1-0-0/0-1-0 24-13

During the last week of the season teams that need to win usually face inflated lines and usually don't come through with the cover. Those teams usually don't come through with the cover if they are facing a team that can do something about it but I don't see the Miami offense, with Sage Rosenfels at the helm, being able to do anything to dent the Baltimore defense. If the line was -10 or lower, Baltimore would qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 160-98-7. With the line at -11, they don't quite qualify in that situation. My numbers favor Baltimore by 12 and 7.5 points. At home this year, Baltimore has struggled against the two above average offenses they have faced, Kansas City and Cincinnati. Against average to below average defenses this year, Baltimore, at home, has won every game by at least 14 points and hasn't allowed more than 14 points in any of those games. Baltimore has scored at least 24 points in all but one home game this year and Miami hasn't scored more than 17 in any road game, with an average of just 13 per game against above average defenses. Baltimore has only allowed an average of 10 points against the really poor offenses they have faced this year. I don't see Miami getting more than 10 points in this game and Baltimore should get at least 21 in this game and get the cover. **BALTIMORE 27 MIAMI 10**

Minnesota -4 WASHINGTON 41

No Past History

We can sum this game up one way. Minnesota needs to win a big game. That usually means they will not win and if they don't win the game they can't cover the spread. Minnesota has only won 8 of their past 40 regular season road games by more than three points. The best Minnesota has done this season is to win by seven points on the road. Yes, that would be enough to get the cover in this game but I don't see them being able to move the ball against a solid defense like Washington. Minnesota, against decent defenses on the road this year, has scored 14 at Chicago, 16 at Philly and 28 at Detroit based on two long scoring passes, which I believe Washington will take away this week. GB played more of a cover two in the second half last week and that took away the long pass play. In other words, Minnesota has averaged about 20 points per game on the road against better than average defenses, and this is the best defense they will face on the road this year. Meanwhile, Washington's offense is better than Chicago's, who the Vikings allowed to score 24 points and worse than Detroit, who the Vikings allowed to score 27 points. Washington averaged about 21 points at home against below average defenses this year and Minnesota may be the worse defense they have faced. Bottom line here is Washington should be able to score around 20-24 points in this game. Can Minnesota score 24-30 points, which may or may not allow them to cover this game? Washington has only allowed an average of 21 points per game against better than average offenses and I doubt Minnesota, who is averaging only 20 per game against good defenses, can get to the magic number of 24-27 to get the cover. Washington does qualify in a 77-37-5 fundamental rushing situation. I realize Portis isn't playing in this game but against a Minnesota rush defense, that isn't going to matter. Final numbers favor Washington by 1 and 1.5 points. This game also qualifies in an over situation, which is 83-50-2. Minnesota has allowed at least 24 points in every road game this year, while Washington hasn't allowed more than 28 points in any game and that was only in two games all year against Green Bay and Philadelphia. Knowing Minnesota has allowed at least 24 and also scored at least 14 in every game, this game stands a good chance to go over the total as well. I'll hold off on the total and make the side a best bet in a very good situation for Washington. **WASHINGTON 24 MINNESOTA 20**

Cincinnati -3 PHILADELPHIA 38.5

2-0-0/1-1-0 24.5-30

A lot of games this week where teams have everything wrapped up and playing time for starters is unknown. I'm not into guessing when and how long they are going to play and because of that, I'll have to pass on this game.

CHICAGO -3 Green Bay 34

8-2-0/7-3-0 29.2-15.3

A lot of games this week where teams have everything wrapped up and playing time for starters is unknown. I'm not into guessing when and how long they are going to play and because of that, I'll have to pass on this game.

CAROLINA -8 New Orleans 46

4-5-0/4-5-0 16.7-22.9

This is one of those games where one team needs to win (actually both need to win) and the line is inflated. Unfortunately for Carolina, NO can do something about it and is getting great value in this game. While NO hasn't had a good defense under Jim Haslett, they have thrived in the role of divisional underdog on the road and Haslett is now 9-0 ats as a road underdog of three or more, including 2-0 already this season. Meanwhile, John Fox plays it close to the vest and is just 6-11 ats as a home favorite in the regular season. NO qualifies in a terrific conference situation, which is 5-2 this year and now 114-44-4. Final numbers favor Carolina by nine points before accounting for the great situation, which is worth 4.5 points and makes this line closer to Carolina by only 4.5 points. That's too much value with a head coach who knows how to compete in critical road games. **CAROLINA 27 NEW ORLEANS 23**

Detroit -3 TENNESSEE 45.5

1-0-0/0-1-0 24-17

Tennessee is really hurting on both sides of the ball. With that said and their quarterback in question this week, I still find it hard to side with a Detroit team, who is playing much better down the stretch, laying points on the road. I'll side with the home team and an AFC team, which should simply be better than an NFC team. **TENNESSEE 27 DETROIT 24**

NY Jets -3.5 ST LOUIS 43

0-1-0/0-1-0 10-30

If I wasn't using systems, I would be all over the Jets in this game simply because the Rams are not a very good team and the value points towards the Jets by 10 and 6.5 points. The Rams have won seven games this year, defeating Arizona, San Francisco twice, Seattle twice (the Jets destroyed Seattle), Tampa Bay, and Philly who conceded the game before it started. They haven't beaten a good team and against teams who have won nine or more games, they haven't come closer than 17 points. Unfortunately, the situations favor the Rams in this game and I respect them enough to keep me off the Jets but I will still lean their way. What I do like in this game, however, is the total. The Jets have played three teams with good offenses and average to below average defenses this year and averaged a total of 56 points in those games. The Jets are similar to NE in that they possess good offenses and average to slightly better than average defenses. The game played here against NE resulted in 62 points being scored. I don't see it any different this time around. The Jets average 6.8yppl against 5.8yppl and will face a Rams defense allowing 5.4yppl against 5.1yppl. The Rams average 5.7yppl against 5.2yppl and will face a Jets defense, which is allowing 4.9yppl against 4.9yppl. **NY JETS 33 ST LOUIS 27**

HOUSTON -9.5 Cleveland 39

No Past History

I simply don't understand this line. I realize Cleveland is playing horrible football right now but Houston doesn't deserve to be favored over anybody by almost 10 points. From the line of scrimmage, both teams are equal, with an advantage to Houston for the home field, but not enough to justify this line. I loved what Cleveland did last week with their dedication to the running game and they are going to do that again this week. Holcomb stands a good chance to be back at quarterback and that will help stabilize that position as well. Cleveland qualifies in one of my best situations, which is 96-27-2 and won with Houston against Jacksonville last week. I passed on that game because Jacksonville also qualified in a great situation but this situation knows when to play against teams due for a letdown and that is this game. Final numbers only favor Houston by nine and four points before the great

situation. Cleveland also qualifies in my turnover table situation, which has been hot late in the year, and went 7-2-1 last week. Simply too many points and Cleveland has played a lot of good teams as of late. In fact they have only played six games (five teams) below .500 and lost all of them but one by 10 or less points. This game should be just as competitive. **HOUSTON 24 CLEVELAND 21**

ARIZONA –3.5 Tampa Bay 38

0-1-0/0-1-0 9-13

I have a hard time siding with Arizona laying points, a role they are 0-1 in this year, losing to lowly SF. But, it's hard to figure out what is going to happen with TB, which is much more of a veteran team with a veteran head coach. Veteran teams and head coaches can't be happy playing these meaningless games and their motivation level has to be questioned here. I like the rookie head coach with young players trying to play for a position next year but not to the extent I have to lay more than a field goal. I will call it a three point victory and let the line decide which way I lean. This game does qualify in an under situation, which is 84-48-1 and final numbers only suggest 35 points. **ARIZONA 19 TAMPA BAY 16**

SEATTLE –5 Atlanta 42

1-0-0/0-1-0 24-17

We know how long Seattle will play their starters because they need to win but how long Atlanta plays their starters is in question. Atlanta does qualify in a 114-44-4 situation but that is somewhat meaningless if their starters aren't going to play the whole game. I'll side slightly with the team who needs the game and will be playing all out. **SEATTLE 23 ATLANTA 16**

DENVER –9 Indianapolis 44.5

1-0-0/0-0-1 23-20

We know how long Denver will play their starters because they need to win but how long Indianapolis plays their starters is in question. Denver does qualify in 85-39-2 and 77-37-5 situations but it's tough to say the line is fair without knowing how long Indy will play their starters. I'll side slightly with the team who needs the game and will be playing all out. **DENVER 27 INDIANAPOLIS 17**

Kansas City –3 SAN DIEGO 54

4-6-0/5-5-0 23-21.1

A lot of games this week where teams have everything wrapped up and playing time for starters is unknown. I'm not into guessing when and how long they are going to play and because of that, I'll have to pass on this game.

OAKLAND NL Jacksonville NT

1-1-0/0-2-0 11.5-13

It's still questionable who will play for Jacksonville this week and if things don't go right in the early games, they could be eliminated before the game even starts. Either way, I lean with Oakland who has been playing better down the stretch. **OAKLAND 21 JACKSONVILLE 17**

NY GIANTS –3 Dallas 37.5

4-6-0/4-5-1 18.9-19

Have to feel the Giants stand an excellent chance to win this game. Both teams are playing for next season but the

difference is the Giants have been doing that for about half the season now with Eli Manning and the Cowboys should start that sometime during this game by subbing for the 80 year old Testaverde. Manning has had to face some very good defenses this year and these last two weeks he is finally getting a chance to face below average defenses. He has shown his best the last three games from a yards per pass standpoint and against a Dallas defense, which is allowing 5.6yppl against 5.1yppl and 6.7yps against 5.9yps, he stands an even better chance in this game. The Giants are still running the ball well, averaging 4.5ypr against 4.1ypr and should be able to move the on the ground and through the air with consistency in this game. Dallas should be able to have some success on the ground and through the air against a banged up Giants defense. I don't see them doing as consistently as the Giants but enough to put their share of points on the board. The Giants qualify in a 134-62-8 fundamental rushing situation. Final numbers favor the Giants by five and two points before accounting for the situation. Final totals also suggest about 46 points and with such a low total and two below average defenses and two offenses that can move the ball, this total stands an excellent chance of going over. **NY GIANTS 31 DALLAS 22**

BEST BETS

YTD 60-49 +17.10%

- 3% BALTIMORE -11 (No higher than -11)
- 3% WASHINGTON +4
- 3% NEW ORLEANS +8
- 3% CLEVELAND +9.5
- 3% NY GIANTS -3 or less
- 3% NY JETS/ST LOUIS OVER 43
- 3% DALLAS/NY GIANTS OVER 37.5

WEEK 18

An excellent finish to the season last week, going 6-1 +14.70% and now at 66-50 +31.80% for the season. Let's hope it continues the rest of the playoffs.

A few notes about the Wild Card round. When looking at the wildcard round, I think it's important to understand the changes that took place in 1990. Prior to 1990, the two wildcard teams from each conference played each other in the "wildcard round." But, when the NFL added one more wildcard team in 1990, that produced a first place team playing a wildcard team in the "divisional round." The years previous to this saw just wildcard teams playing each other. And last year, another segment was added because of the extra division created in each conference. This produced two playoff games in each conference with each divisional winner playing a wildcard team.

What's important to know is since 1990, when divisional winners started playing wildcard teams, the home teams have never failed to produce at least a .500 record SU, and other than two years of going 2-2 SU (1991 & 1992), they have gone 3-1 SU in 11 years and 4-0 SU one other year. So, in the 14 years, only two years have produced .500 years and 12 of 14 years have seen the home teams win at least three of the four games played.

I looked at only divisional winners playing wildcard teams in the first round. Those home teams went 18-13-1 against the spread and 23-9 SU. If the line was three or less or our home team was a dog, they went 6-3 against the spread and 7-2 SU.

The bottom line here is home teams dominate this round and trying to predict which road team will win SU is really asking for trouble. Over the previous 21 years, there have only been four years (19%) that the road teams have covered more games than the home team in this round, including covering three of four two year's ago. Again, the home teams are the safe bets here and looking at too many road teams could get you in trouble. Remember, history repeats itself more than you might think or like. On to the games.

This will be on Friday evenings, going forward. If you haven't received your report by 7:00 p.m. central time on Friday, please send me an email.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.1
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

SEATTLE -4 St Louis 50.5

I don't have any situations that apply to this game but, as stated above, I must look to the home team, despite what appears to be a sieve like defense in Seattle. I just don't trust the Rams defense on the road and all seems to be forgotten now that they have played two games at home, where they play much better. The Rams defense, on the road this year, is allowing 4.8ypr against 4.0ypr, 6.8ypr against 5.9ypr and 5.8yppl against 5.0yppl overall, on the road. The Seattle offense has been solid at home this season, averaging 4.3ypr against 3.8ypr, 6.6ypr against 5.6ypr and 5.5yppl against 4.8yppl overall at home. St. Louis has been serviceable on the road this year, gaining 5.4yppl against 5.2yppl and they'll face a Seattle defense, which has been average at home, allowing 5.3yppl against 5.4yppl. The Rams have faced three good offenses on the road this year, allowing 34 points at Atlanta (7.2yppl), 27 points at Seattle (5.9yppl) and 45 points at Green Bay (8.1yppl). In GB, 14 points were scored by the defense. That adds up to an average of 35 points per game allowed or 31 points allowed if you take away the 14 points scored by the GB defense. Meanwhile, Seattle has faced three below average defenses at home this year (with Hasselbeck) and scored 34 points against SF (5.3yppl), 27 points against the Rams (5.9yppl) and 39 points against Dallas (7.3yppl) for an average of about 33 points per game. You can probably mark down Seattle for about 33 points in this game. On the road this season, the Rams have faced three games against poor defenses and scored 24 at SF, 33 at Seattle and 17 points at Green Bay for an average of 25 points per game. Seattle has faced three above average offenses at home this year and allowed 33 points to the Rams, 43 points to Dallas and 26 points to Atlanta (who

played with some back ups as well) for an average of about 34 points per game. You can probably mark down the Rams for something close to about 28 points per game. Those numbers alone suggest about 61 points being scored. We can probably downgrade those numbers some because it is playoff football and the weather is supposed to be cold and snowy, although as long as it's not windy, the weather shouldn't cause too many problems. Final numbers favor Seattle by 7.5 and 10 points (all stats) and by 12 and 11.5 points (home/away stats). Final totals suggest about 48 points (all stats) and about 53 points (home/away stats). I'll lean towards Seattle but I believe the over is the better play here between two hurting defenses that just aren't that good. **SEATTLE 34 ST LOUIS 27**

SAN DIEGO -6.5 NY Jets 42.5

The Jets are really struggling and Pennington doesn't look like the normal Chad Pennington. Not only did an AFC Jets team lose at a poor NFC Rams team last week but they allowed the Rams to gain 479 yards at 7.7yppl and only managed to gain 324 at 4.0yppl themselves. On top of that, the Jets were +3 in turnover margin yet still lost the game. This week they get a SD offense, which is averaging 4.8ypr against 4.1ypr, 7.1yps against 6.2yps and 5.9yppl against 5.3yppl overall at home. Meanwhile, the Jets will bring their road defense, which is allowing 6.4yps against 5.4yps and 5.2yppl against 4.8yppl overall on the road. The Jets are allowing an average of about 24 points per game on the road against above average offenses this year. SD has faced these same Jets and Jacksonville, which are probably closest to what they will face on Saturday. The other teams they have faced at home this year either have much worse defenses or much better defenses. They averaged about 31 points per game in those two games. You can probably mark up SD for about 27 points in this game. NY is averaging about 4.8yppl against 5.0yppl on the road this year and SD is allowing about 5.4yppl against 5.5yppl at home this year. The Jets have averaged around 19 points per game against the three average defenses they have faced this year on the road. SD has allowed about 23 points per game at home to the three slightly above average offenses they have faced this year. You can probably mark the Jets down for about 21 points in this game. The Jets strength this year has come via the run, averaging about 4.5ypr against 4.1ypr overall but they will face a very stiff test from SD, who is allowing just 3.8ypr against 4.3ypr overall and 3.6ypr against 4.3ypr at home. That includes allowing only 3.5ypr against the Jets in their first game this year. SD lost the turnover battle 0-4 and I doubt that happens again. If it does, they will lose again. SD qualifies in a 40-13-0 playoff situation. Final numbers favor SD by 6.5 and nine points (all stats) and by 10 and 7.5 points (home/away stats). Final totals suggest about 39 points (all stats) and about 43 points (home/away stats). Based on what I have seen with the Jets the last two weeks, especially last week against a much worse team than SD, I don't see anyway they compete here. Herm Edwards is 0-2 on the road in the playoffs and it looks to be 0-3 this week. They are just 1-4 SU this year on the road against .500 or better teams while SD is 2-1 SU at home against .500 or better teams at home. Yes, the one loss was to the Jets but they were +4 in turnovers and I don't see that happening again. **SAN DIEGO 31 NY JETS 17**

INDIANAPOLIS -10 Denver 56

Denver has really disappointed this year and disappointed ever since John Elway retired. Since then, they are 0-2 in the playoffs and lost those games by 18 and 31 points, including to these same, but better Colts here last year. Indy's offense is naturally very good at home this year, averaging 9.0yps against 6.3yps and 6.8yppl against 5.3yppl. They'll face a good Denver defense, which is allowing just 4.9yppl against 5.5yppl, including 5.8yps against 6.6yps. Indy has averaged about 26 points at home this year against better than average defenses. Denver has really only faced one good offense on the road this year and they allowed KC to score 45 points and average 6.6yppl in that game. I think you have to count on Indy to get at least 30-35 points in this game. The Denver offense has been below average on the road this year, averaging just 5.3yppl against 5.5yppl and they'll face an Indy defense, which is allowing just 5.3yppl against 5.5yppl at home this year. Denver hasn't scored more than 17 points in a road game against better than average defenses this year. It's tough to say which Indy defense we will see (the better than average at home defense or the below average road defense) but I'm betting on the better than average defense. Denver qualifies in a 40-13-0 playoff situation and my final numbers favor them by 11.5 and 8 points (all stats) and by eight and 13.5 points (home/away stats). I also like the under in this game as the final totals suggest just 50 points (all stats) and 47 points (home/away stats). The situations favor Denver in this game and the value also certainly lies with the under. **INDIANAPOLIS 34 DENVER 16**

GREEN BAY -6 Minnesota 50

Well, we'll start this just like last week. Minnesota needs a big win, which is all we need to say. The chances of them getting a big win on the road, in the playoffs, just aren't very good. Much as been made of Minnesota's recent 2-20 SU run outdoors and for good reason. Truth be told, their defense just isn't very good and when you consider they allowed Chicago to score 24 points, which was the second highest point total for the leagues worse offense this year and allowed Washington to total 21 points, which was their third highest total this year, for the leagues bottomthree offense. This week, they get a GB offense that is playing very well and getting healthy again. Minnesota has allowed 6.1yppl against 5.6yppl on the road this year and will face a GB offense, which is averaging 6.4yppl against 5.2yppl at home this year. Minnesota has faced three top offenses this year on the road and allowed an average of 31 points per game, including at least 27 in each of those games. GB has faced three poor defenses at home this year and averaged 40 points per game against those three teams. You might as well just mark up GB for 35 points in this game because I don't see anyway a Minnesota secondary, which is without Corey Chavous this week and still has Antoine Winfield hurting, is going to stop the GB passing attack. The Vikings offense has been solid themselves, averaging 6.9yppl against 5.7yppl on the road this year and will face a GB defense, which is allowing 5.8yppl against 5.5yppl at home this year. Minnesota has faced three bad defenses on the road this year and averaged 32 points per game (38 against NO with Moss). GB has faced three above average offenses at home this year and allowed an average of 23 points per game. Minnesota should be able to get at least 26 points in this game, knowing they have scored at least 28 in all three of those road games. GB qualifies in a 59-32-2 playoff situation, including a 43-17-0 subset. Final numbers favor GB by 6.5 points and seven points (all stats) and by 6.5 and 2.5 points (home/away stats). Final totals suggest about 57 points (all stats) and 60 points (home/away stats). The weather looks to be fine for Sunday and neither one of these teams can stop each other consistently enough to keep this score down. If GB gets to 28, which is a no-brainer, they can't lose both the side and total. **GREEN BAY 40 MINNESOTA 27**

BEST BETS

YTD 66-50 +31.80%

4% MINNESOTA/GREEN BAY OVER 50

3% SAN DIEGO -6.5

3% INDIANAPOLIS -10 or lower

3% GREEN BAY -6

3% ST LOUIS/SEATTLE OVER 50.5

3% DENVER/INDINAPOLIS UNDER 56

WEEK 19

Two weeks ago, I went 6-1 and anytime you do that, you have to be both lucky and good. Last week, I went just 1-5 and anytime you do that, you have to be both unlucky and have some bad picks. The Packers total should have gone over last week but injuries to the Packers offense kept their offense from performing like normal. The Rams total stood an excellent chance to go over the total but bad breaks kept us from getting there as well. The GB side turned out to be a bad pick but the weekend should have been either 2-4 or 3-3 but like I said earlier, anytime you have really good or bad weekends, there is some luck involved as well.

Two years ago, I had a similar regular season, going 59-43 +32.60% (I was 66-50 +31.80% this year). That year, I went 0-4 in the first round of the playoffs but rebounded to go 6-2 the rest of the playoffs and end up 6-6 for the playoffs. Chances are we will rebound nicely the rest of the way, especially seeing last week was such an abnormal week with regard to past history.

This will be on Friday evenings, going forward. If you haven't received your report by 7:00 p.m. central time on Friday, please send me an email.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.1
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

PITTSBURGH –8.5 NY Jets 34.5

I tried to buck the Jets last week based on a 59-32-2 situation, including a 40-13-0 subset of that situation, which went 1-1 last week (Loss on SD and win on Indy). I have no problems trying to do that again this week as the Steelers qualify in the same 60-34-2 and now 41-14-0 subset of that situation. In addition to that, teams that win as an underdog in the playoffs and are now on the road are just 18-33-0 over the years. That record is an even worse 10-25-0 if they are not getting 10 or more points. And, the Jets qualify in a 2-18-0 subset of that situation. It's very tough to win on the road, in the playoffs, after an upset win. The opposing team has had a week of rest recently (2-10-0) and their attention is 100%, knowing their opponent has already upset one team. The best I can see the Jets doing this week is 17 points and I'm not sure they can get there without some breaks. Of course, if they get to 17, then Pittsburgh will have to score about 27 points to cover this game. Pittsburgh scored at least 24 points in every home game this season with Plaxico Burress in the lineup. He missed four games at the end of the season. Meanwhile, the Jets allowed an average of about 23 points on the road against good offenses this year. I would rather be betting on Pittsburgh getting to 24-27 points rather than the Jets getting to 17 points. Final numbers in this game favor Pittsburgh by 6.5 and 9 points (all stats) and by 11 and 8.5 points (home/away stats) before accounting for the situations. If Pittsburgh gets to the 27 point mark, this game also stands a chance of going over the total, which is the way I will lean based on my numbers, which predict about 35 points (all stats) and 32 points (home/away stats). **PITTSBURGH 27 NY JETS 10**

ATLANTA –7 St Louis 48

Much like the Jets, the Rams qualify in a couple of very negative spots this week. Teams coming off an upset win and now on the road in the playoffs are not good propositions (see above write up on Jets game) and the Rams qualify in the same negative subset, which is 2-18-0 as the Jets did. Also, Atlanta qualifies in a 60-34-2 and 41-14-0 subset situation. Not much changes this week in terms of my view on the Rams. They are still a very bad team that doesn't deserve to be playing in this game. The Rams are just average on the road this season, averaging 5.4yppl against 5.2yppl and their defense has been terrible, allowing 5.8yppl against 5.0yppl. They allowed Atlanta to average 7.2yppl in their first meeting this season. That doesn't bode well for the Rams, seeing Atlanta plays solid defense at home and allowed the Rams just 5.5yppl in the first meeting this season. That actually was pretty good compared to what Atlanta allowed to other teams they faced this season at home. I expect the Rams to be able to move the ball somewhat this week as well because their offense is a good offense. The problem will be their de-

fense, which should allow an Atlanta team to rush and throw the ball whenever they want, which will add up to long drives and points, putting a lot of pressure on the Rams offense to perform every time they have the ball. Atlanta averaged 6.4ypr and 8.7yps in their first meeting this season. The Rams have allowed an average of about 31 points per game on the road against the good offenses they have faced this season and Atlanta has scored an average of about 25 points per game at home against below average defenses. The Rams have only averaged about 17 points on the road this season against better than average defenses. Meanwhile, Atlanta has allowed an average of about 17 points at home against better than average offenses. You can probably mark Atlanta down for 31 points in this game and the Rams for somewhere around 17-20 points. That won't get it done in terms of covering the spread and I'm very willing to take the better defense, at home, with a weeks rest, against a below average defense, on the road, laying a touchdown or less. Final numbers favor Atlanta by 7.5 and 8.5 points (all stats) and by 14.5 and 18.5 points (home/away stats). Final totals suggest around 42 points but I think this game will be a higher scoring game than that and some of Atlanta's home numbers are a bit skewed because of some anemic offenses they have faced.

ATLANTA 31 ST LOUIS 17

PHILADELPHIA –8 Minnesota 47.5

Here we go again. Another playoff road team, coming off an upset win. Again, those teams are just 18-33-0 and just 10-25-0 when getting less than 10 points. And, yes, Minnesota qualifies in the same negative 2-18-0 spot that the Jets and Rams qualify in. Philly also qualifies in a 60-34-2 playoff situation and a 44-18-0 subset of that situation. I just don't see Minnesota having much success this week. They played a great game last week against Green Bay but they were also the beneficiary of four turnovers (+4 in turnovers) and I highly doubt that happens again this week. Minnesota was as fired up as I have even seen them last week and I just don't think that happens again this week. There is simply no way they can be that fired up again. Naturally, the big question mark is how will Philly fair without Owens but with or without Owens, their offense is still better than Washington and Chicago, who scored 21 and 24 points against this Vikings defense. Let's also remember, not only was Minnesota +4 in turnovers last week, GB lost their best receiver during the game (Javon Walker), their two running backs at times (Green and Davenport) and their key offensive lineman (Clifton). They weren't going to win the game either way but that contributed to Minnesota's defense appearing much better than they really are. Minnesota was also facing an anemic Packers defense, which isn't the case this week and they will most likely do it without the services of Randy Moss. Yes, Moss will play but he was extremely banged up after last weeks game and I don't think he will be a major contributor in this game. Philly ran for 5.4ypr and passed for 7.5yps in their first meeting, averaging 6.7yppl to Minnesota's 5.9yppl. The Vikings gained just 2.8ypr after taking out Culpepper's numbers while Westbrook averaged 5.4ypr. Minnesota is allowing an average of 27 points per game on the road to better than average offenses this year (and that includes an anemic Packers offense last week that was decimated by injuries). With or without Owens, Philly should get to at least 27 points in this game. Minnesota can move the ball but against better than average defenses on the road this year, they have only averaged around 19 points. Philly is only allowing about 17 points at home to good offenses this year (16 to Minnesota and 17 to Green Bay). I just don't see Philly allowing more than 17-20 points in this game and that probably won't be enough to cover this game for Minnesota. Philly laid low against Green Bay and then smoked them and I think they will do the same thing here against a bad Vikings defense. Final numbers favor Philly by 13.5 and 11 points (all stats) and by 15 and 14.5 points (home/away stats). Final totals suggest about 48 points (all stats) and 51 points (home/away stats). Philadelphia ends Minnesota's dream this week. **PHILADELPHIA 35 MINNESOTA 17**

NEW ENGLAND –1.5 Indianapolis 52

This is the best game this week and I will only lean to NE for the following reasons. NE qualifies in a 60-34-2 playoff situation but they don't qualify in the best part of that situation. My numbers in this game are extremely close to the line, favoring NE by four and 3.5 points (all stats) and by just three and four points (home/away stats). Indy can and will move the ball in this game and has averaged around 24 points per game on the road this year against better than average defenses. NE has allowed an average of 24 points at home to better than average offenses this year, including 24 to these same Colts in the first game of the season. The Colts defense is not as good on the road as they are at home, allowing 5.9yppl against 5.4yppl and they will face a NE offense that is better at home, averaging 5.5yppl against 4.9yppl, including 6.7yps against 5.7yps. NE has averaged about 31 points per game at home this year against below average defenses, while Indy has allowed an average of 36 points per game against above average offenses on the road this year. Indy should do better than the 24 that we saw with the num-

ber analysis and I would predict they get somewhere closer to 27-30 points simply because of how good their offense is. But, remember, a good Baltimore defense held them to just 20 points in a game Peyton was trying to set the touchdown mark and Jacksonville held them to 24 and 27 points and NE 24 points. NE had better players in their secondary for that game but Indy's offense has been held down somewhat against better defenses this year. With that said, NE should get to 30 points in this game and maybe more. I like over in this game more so than the side but not enough as of now to make it a best bet. Final numbers suggest 53 points (all stats) and 49 points (home/away stats). I may come back on Sunday morning with an updated best bet on the total but as of now, it's just a lean. If I do make it a best bet, you will know by 11:00 a.m. central. **NEW ENGLAND 34 INDIANAPOLIS 27**

BEST BETS

Reg. Season YTD 66-50 +31.80%

Playoffs YTD 1-5 -14.60%

Totals YTD 67-55 +17.20%

3% PITTSBURGH -8.5

3% ATLANTA -7

3% PHILADELPHIA -8

WEEK 20

A nice bounce back week last week, going 2-1 on the sides. On to the Conference Championship games and my database for these games goes back to 1970, which was the first year after the NFL and AFL merged, and there is plenty of data to look at for these games. Coming into this year, there have been 68 games played in the CC since 1970. When the line is less than 10 points, the team winning the game is a perfect 56-0-2 ats. Essentially, whoever wins the game straight up also wins the game against the spread. That's especially relevant this week with the lines being fairly low. However, trying to predict the SU winner isn't always as easy as it may seem. But, it seems a safe bet to ignore the lines and just pick the SU winner.

This will be on Friday evenings, going forward. If you haven't received your report by 7:00 p.m. central time on Friday, please send me an email.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.1
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

PHILADELPHIA –5 Atlanta 37

Lost in their route last week against the Rams were a couple of stats that could spell trouble for Atlanta this week. Depending on which stats you want to use, Atlanta should have allowed the Rams anywhere from 4.7yppl (home/road stats) to 5.7yppl (all stats). Atlanta allowed the Rams 5.9yppl and their defense is night and day when at home and on the road. At home this year, Atlanta is allowing just 4.7yppl against teams averaging 5.4yppl. But, on the road, they are allowing 5.7yppl against 5.3yppl. They didn't hold the Rams down like they should have last week and that spells trouble for the below average defense this week. The other question is if Philly can take advantage of that and I think they can but we'll look at that shortly. The other trouble spot for Atlanta was their passing offense last week. They averaged just 4.1yppl and Vick was harassed constantly by the Ram defenders. It won't be as easy to get away from them this week against Philly. And, for the season, Atlanta is averaging just 5.0yps against teams allowing 6.4yps on the road. That doesn't help Atlanta, knowing Philly can play man to man against the Atlanta receivers and look to stop the run. The Atlanta receivers don't scare Philly enough to warrant extra defenders on them. For Philly last week, numbers wise, they didn't appear to miss a beat on offense or defense. They weren't as efficient as they might have wanted to be but they were able to move the ball up and down the field. Granted they were facing the Vikings defense, but they still averaged 6.7yppl, 4.4ypr and a whopping 8.7yps. That 8.7yps is important because that is what Minnesota allowed to Indy (8.8yps), Green Bay (8.1yps and 8.0yps) and Seattle (8.6yps). In other words, Philly's offense was able to move the ball through the air much like other potent offenses like Indy, GB and Seattle did as well. On the road this year, Atlanta is only averaging 5.0yppl against teams allowing 5.4yppl and the Philly defense is allowing just 4.8yppl against teams averaging 5.3yppl at home. That doesn't bode well for Atlanta trying to move the ball. Meanwhile, the Philly offense is averaging 6.0yppl against teams allowing 5.3yppl at home and the Atlanta defense is allowing 5.7yppl against teams averaging 5.3yppl on the road. Final numbers favor Philly by 12 and 9 points (all stats) and by 14 and 16 points (home/road stats). There is a lot of value with Philly in this game.

Enough of the fundamentals. Let's take a look at the situations applying to this game. Philly qualifies in a playoff situation, which is 42-15-0. Philly sports the better defense in this game and thus, they qualify in a Conference Championship situation based on that, which is now 47-19-2 going back to 1970. But, it gets better. There is a subset when these two situations meet, which is 18-2-0 favoring Philly in this game. Let's keep digging. Atlanta comes into this game allowing just over 21 points for the regular season. That doesn't bode well for a team playing on the road in the Conference Championship game. Since 1970, 12 teams have taken to the road in their Conference Championship game allowing 20 or more points during the regular season. Those 12 teams have gone just 2-10 ats with most recent losses by Indianapolis last year 14-24, Tennessee two years ago, 24-41 and in 2000 by the Vikings, 0-41. The average score in those games was 27-14. In six of those games, the road team was allowing 21 or more points per game and those six teams went 0-6 ats. In other words, Atlanta will be bringing the seventh

worse defense to ever go on the road in a Conference Championship game (68 previous games). Their defense is simply not as good on the road as they are at home.

Let's look at one final area, which is past history for these two teams this season. Atlanta has faced two good offenses on the road this year (with their full compliment of players) and allowed Kansas City 56 points and 7.0yppl and Denver 28 points and 7.7yppl. They will give up plenty of yards again this week. Against the competitive teams they faced on the road this year, they allowed KC 56 points, Denver 28 points, Tampa Bay 27 points and Carolina 10 points. Carolina only scored 10 points but they averaged 5.9yppl and suffered three turnovers in that game, one which was returned for a touchdown. In other words, they didn't stop Carolina, Carolina stopped themselves. Bottom line here is they will allow Philly a minimum of 24 points in this game. Can Atlanta score at least 20 points to have a chance for the cover? I doubt it. Philly held a potent Minnesota offense to just 5.4yppl (they averaged 6.4yppl on the season and 6.6yppl on the road this season and just 14 points (7 which were scored late when the game was over). Philly hasn't allowed more than 17 points at home this season (in games that mattered—last game didn't matter against Cincinnati), including hold a potent Vikings offense to 14 and 16 points and a potent Packer offense to just 17 points. They held Michael Vick to just six points two years ago here in a playoff game and I don't see it being any different against an Atlanta team that can't throw the ball.

There is simply too much for Atlanta to overcome in this game. Fundamentally, they don't match up well. There are extremely solid situations going against them here, which are 42-15-0, 47-19-2 and a situation between those two, which is 18-2-0. Atlanta brings the seventh worst defense to ever go on the road in a Conference Championship game and is only the 13th team to go on the road allowing more than 20 points for the season and those previous 12 teams are just 2-10 ats, including 0-6 ats when allowing more than 21 points, losing by an average of 14-27. Philly has played great defense at home this year and Atlanta has struggled defending good offenses on the road. Final numbers create great value for Philly backed up fundamentally and technically in this game.

I originally liked the under in this game but the total has really come down and probably taken the value out of the game. Any totals betting this weekend will be made on Sunday after an update on the weather is available.
PHILADELPHIA 27 ATLANTA 10

New England –3 PITTSBURGH 35

Much like the other game, these two teams played somewhat misleading games last week as well. NE did a great job of controlling the clock last week by running the ball nearly 57% of the time against a bad Colts defense. But, lost in that game was the fact Indy actually averaged 4.8yppl to NE's 4.7yppl. The game, from the line of scrimmage, was played evenly. The problem for Indy was they committed three turnovers to no turnovers for NE. In the Pittsburgh game, the Steelers out averaged the Jets 4.9yppl to 4.4yppl but allowed the Jets a punt return and an interception return for a touchdown for the only touchdowns for the Jets. That, and a –2 in turnover margin for the Steelers, allowed the Jets to stay in the game. NE was able to control the clock by running the ball last week against a poor Indy defense but that won't be the case in this game against a very tough Steelers rush defense, which is allowing just 3.7ypr against teams averaging 4.0ypr at home this season, including allowing the Jets (4.5ypr on the season) to rush for just 4.1ypr last week. I don't feel as strongly about this game as I do about the other game but the value and situations still apply to Pittsburgh here and give them an excellent chance to win this game. For years now NE has complained they don't get any respect. Well, they are finally getting their respect by being three point favorites in this game. This line, if Pittsburgh would have won more convincingly last week and everybody wouldn't have thought the NE win last week against an overrated Indy team wasn't such an upset, would have been closer to Pittsburgh by three points. Pittsburgh has the better record, has defeated NE here convincingly earlier this year and they are getting three points on a field where they haven't lost yet this year, including a dominating win over Philly as well. The NE road offense is just as good as the Pittsburgh home offense this year, gaining 5.6yppl against 5.3yppl versus the Steelers 5.2yppl against 5.0yppl. The big difference here is on defense, where NE is allowing 5.2yppl against 4.9yppl on the road and Pittsburgh is allowing just 4.5yppl against 5.1yppl at home, including just 4.7yppl to NE earlier and 3.1yppl to Philly. NE has averaged just 4.7yppl in their two road games against good defenses this year at Pittsburgh and Miami. The Steelers qualify in a Conference Championship game situation, which is 47-19-2. Final numbers favor Pittsburgh by 3.5 points and NE by just two points (all stats) and Pittsburgh by three points and NE by one point (home/away stats). No matter how you look at it, the value lies with Pittsburgh and their past history this season suggests they can do it again. Belichick is great at

scheming defenses but against a physical Pittsburgh offense, he won't be able to scheme. His defense will simply have to line up and play smash mouth football and that may not work as well as it did last week against Indy. Final totals suggest about 41 points (all stats) and 47 points (home/away stats), which would give us a nice lean towards the over. Weather will keep me from playing any totals until Sunday. These two teams may want to run the ball and that combined with the weather may keep me off the over but I will reevaluate that on Sunday morning and let you know. NE has scored at least 20 points in every road game this year and Pittsburgh has scored at least 17 points in every home game this year. **PITTSBURGH 24 NEW ENGLAND 20**

BEST BETS

Reg. Season YTD 66-50 +31.80%

Playoffs YTD 3-6 -11.90%

Totals YTD 69-56 +19.90%

4% PHILADELPHIA -5

3% PITTSBURGH +3

Back on Sunday morning (by noon central) with any total updates.

WEEK 21

This concludes the NFL season. I will come back with a season review after the Super Bowl. In addition, please keep in mind the Early Bird offer, which is good until February 11th. You'll save anywhere from 43% to 68% off the regular season price next year and also get extra benefits, including the NCAA Tournament picks, NBA Play-off picks and College Football picks.

I won the larger play two weeks ago with Philadelphia, picking the score exactly. The day ended up being 1-1 after the loss on Pittsburgh but still a winning day with the larger win on Philly. Also, if you played the over in the NE game and were able to get a decent number on the under in the Philly game, you profited there as well. On to the Super Bowl.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0
Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1
Yards Per Pass (YPS) 6.1
Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.2

New England -7 Philadelphia 47.5

How would you feel if I could give you an extra three points with both the side and the total. If you're looking to take Philadelphia this week, that's exactly what you are getting. Minutes after the Philadelphia game ended, the books put up a line of NE -4 44.5 and Pittsburgh -2 42.5. Three hours later after NE looked good in their win over Pittsburgh, the number came out with NE -6 or -6.5. Within an hour, the line was bet up to -7. You can certainly argue if the original number of -4 was valid but it appears public perception has caused this line to be over inflated once again. Philadelphia has certainly looked impressive in their wins over Atlanta and Minnesota. While NE has looked very solid in their wins over Indianapolis and Pittsburgh, there are holes in their wins. Granted, their wins came against better quality opponents, but there are some valid reasons that their wins will not play out the same way again against Philadelphia. Let's remember NE was out averaged in their game against Indy, 4.8yppl to 4.7yppl. It was a +3 in turnover margin that got them the win. I leaned towards NE in that game because they had the advantage of the better defense and were at home. They caused Manning just one interception but also forced two fumbles. The Manning interception was at the end of the game so they really had a +2 advantage in turnovers when the game mattered. Those turnovers generally will account for 8-10 points, which would have made this game closer to a 7-9 point game. Against Pittsburgh, it was more of the same. NE was out averaged 6.3yppl to 5.9yppl and was the benefit of a +4 turnover margin. Again, one of the turnovers was a fumble on fourth down where Pittsburgh didn't convert, meaning only three turnovers were really significant. Those three turnovers accounted for 12-15 points, making this game a near even game. NE had two big plays in that game on offense, which accounted for 105 of their 322 total yards. Take away those two big plays and they averaged just 4.1yppl. Is it fair to not count those plays? In general, it is not, but Pittsburgh's weakness is their secondary and Philadelphia's strength is their secondary. Pittsburgh's other weakness was inexperience at quarterback. Philadelphia's other strength is experience at quarterback. Knowing their game against Pittsburgh played out somewhat evenly, minus the turnovers and the same with Indianapolis, the last thing I want to be doing is laying a full touchdown with a team that appears to have to win the turnover margin significantly just to cover the spread. Knowing Philadelphia, not counting their final two regular season games, was actually better in the turnover margin department, also means there is no reason to expect NE to win the turnover battle in this game. Especially when you consider McNabb was the first quarterback to throw for 30+ touchdowns and less than 10 interceptions. Pittsburgh was in the same situation, but also had an inexperienced quarterback at the helm.

What I think people are vastly overlooking in this game is the Philadelphia defense. Let's remember, these two teams tied for points given up during the regular season but that also includes Philly allowing 20 and 38 points with their subs playing the majority of the final two regular season games. Philadelphia has played three games against solid offenses this year and allowed Minnesota 16 points (regular season), 14 points (playoffs - final score was a meaningless touchdown at the end of the game) and Green Bay 17 points (of which most was scored once the game was out of hand). Philadelphia, minus the last two regular season games, allowed only two teams to score

more than 21 points this season. What that tells me is their defense has been very consistent all season long, including a defensive yards per point average of 19.7 (21.7 before the final two games of the regular season) during the regular season. They are always rated very high with their DYPPO, which simply means they might allow teams to go up and down the field, but they don't allow teams to score touchdowns when they get to the redzone. By comparison, NE also allowed the same amount of points during the regular season, but they allowed more than 21 points in six games, including the playoffs.

I decided to go back and look at past Super Bowl teams who have had similar defenses to Philadelphia, in terms of allowing more than 21 points two or fewer times during the season, including the playoffs. What I discovered was simply amazing. Seven times since 1983 have teams entered the Super Bowl and allowed more than 21 points during the season two or fewer times. Six of those seven teams won the game straight up and six of those seven allowed 21 or fewer points. Those games included Baltimore in 2000, allowing seven points, Green Bay in 1996, allowing 21 points, Dallas in 1993, allowing 13 points, the Giants in 1990, allowing 19 points, the Giants in 1986, allowing 20 points, the 49ers in 1984, allowing just 16 points. The one exception to the rule was the 1989 Broncos, who allowed 55 points in their game against SF. If our team isn't going to allow more than 21 points, it's going to be pretty hard for the game to go over the total or for NE to cover such a large spread.

New England has played six games against defenses that allowed 4.9yppl or better this year (Philly was allowing 4.9yppl before their final two regular season games) and averaged 28 points per game in those games. In those six games, 44 points (about seven a game) came on drives of less than 30 yards or defensive scores or special teams score. Meaning, if they don't achieve the same type of luck or skill in this game, which I don't think they will, they are likely to average somewhere closer to 20 points a game. Philly, as stated before, has played three games against good offenses this year and allowed an average of 16 points per game. Those three offenses are certainly more potent than NE, however, probably not as efficient as NE. Much of NE's success on offense against the good defenses they faced came because of an advantage in turnovers. With those numbers, NE can probably be counted on for about 21-24 points (And closer to 17-20 points without the turnover advantage). That's in line with the previous study of Philly probably not allowing more than 21 points. Philly averaged around 16 points per game against better than average defenses this year. I only counted better than average defenses of teams at .500 or better figuring poor teams give an advantage to Philly in setting up their offense in better scoring opportunities. NE allowed an average of around 17 points per game to better than average offenses this year. We can probably mark Philly down for around 17 points in this game. That leaves us with plenty of room to spare with the total and, again, I don't think NE can get past 21 points, which also leaves us with plenty of room for the cover, seeing Philly could easily score 20 points in this game as well.

In addition, Andy Reid is now 25-7-2 as a dog of three or more, including 18-4-1 against opponents over .500 and 3-1 in the playoffs. Meanwhile, Belichick is now 0-4 when laying six or more points against teams .500 or above, ironically winning three of those games by exactly three points (two during last year's Super Bowl run) and losing the other game badly.

Bottom line here is the Philadelphia defense can compete and unless NE gets the turnovers (which they are certainly capable of getting), I think this line is much too high for both the side and the total. I would make the total play larger but SB's have a tendency to be higher scoring games. I will respect that and just make the total play a normal play. **PHILADELPHIA 21 NEW ENGLAND 20**

BEST BETS

Reg. Season YTD 66-50 +31.80%
Playoffs YTD 4-7 -11.20%

Totals YTD 70-57 +20.60%

3% PHILADELPHIA +7

3% PHILADELPHIA/NEW ENGLAND UNDER 47.5

