



**2003 NFL SEASON
SIXTH SENSE SPORTS
WEEKS 1-5**

WEEK 1

Week one of the NFL gets going tonight. Hopefully, I'll pick up where I left off last year, winning 67% of my games during the second half of the season, en route to a 65-49 57% winning year. The preseason was also kind this year, going 7-5 +1.50%.

For Thursday:

WASHINGTON –3 NY Jets 40

This is a very tough game for me to call and I really don't have much interest in the game. I realize the Jets are playing without Chad Pennington and going with Vinny at qb. I also realize Testaverde was terrible last year in the first few games that he played, before Pennington took over. Having said all of that, I also have a difficult time taking Washington as a favorite simply because I don't think they are that good of a team, yet. Washington was very average running the ball last year, gaining 4.3 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr. And, for the season, they were below average passing the ball, throwing for just 5.4 yps against teams allowing 5.7 yps. Over their last five games of last year, they were much better throwing the ball, averaging 6.4 yps against teams allowing 5.6 yps. So, maybe there is hope for the Redskins and Spurrier has finally settled on a quarterback, or so he says, in Patrick Ramsey. They have also, of course, added many former Jets players, including Laveraneus Coles. The Jets defense was nothing too spectacular last year, allowing 4.6 ypr against teams averaging 4.4 ypr and 6.0 yps against teams averaging 5.9 yps. On the other side of the ball, the Redskins were average against the rush, allowing 4.0 ypr against teams averaging 4.1 ypr, although they did break down at the end of the season, allowing 4.3 ypr against teams averaging 3.7 ypr in their last five games. Against the pass, they were pretty good all year long, allowing 5.3 yps against teams averaging 5.8 yps. The Jets offense really came on with Pennington in the lineup, averaging 6.7 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps but their running game never got going, averaging just 4.0 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr. With a pretty good Washington secondary and no Pennington, I don't expect much from the Jets offense. My numbers using last year's stats favor the Jets by about three points. With the Pennington injury and the deletions from the Jets team, which turned into additions for Washington, I would make this line about a pick 'em to maybe a one point favorite for the Redskins. Still, slight value with the Jets. And, my numbers indicate about 42 points being scored in this game. But with the Pennington injury, I think there might be less scoring in this game. Not a strong opinion for me here but a slight lean towards the Jets and the under tonight. **NY JETS 20 WASHINGTON 19**

St. Louis –1 NY GIANTS 46

The Giants finished very strong last year. Their offense, once Fassel took over play calling duties, finished the season averaging 5.9 yards per play against teams allowing 5.0 yards per play, over the last five games. The running game was just average, gaining 4.1 ypr against teams allowing 4.0 yards per rush over those five games but the passing game took off, averaging 7.4 yps against teams allowing 5.7 yps. That's an important number because the Rams pass defense wasn't that good last year and they have numerous injuries in the secondary this year. The Rams allowed 6.3 yps against teams averaging 5.9 yps last year, including a horrendous 7.7 yps against teams averaging 6.5 yps over the last five games. The Rams offense should be better this year with a supposedly healthy Kurt Warner and Marshall Faulk. Last year their offense gained just 5.5 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl. The Giants defense was about average last year, allowing 5.1 yppl against teams averaging 5.1 yppl but they were a little suspect defending the run, allowing 4.5 ypr against teams averaging 4.3 ypr. The Giants qualify in a game one situation which is 70-37-3 including subsets that are 54-25-2, 36-6 and 13-0 when it applies to home dogs. These teams have played each of the past three seasons, with the Giants winning last year in St. Louis, 26-21 and losing by just one two years ago in St. Louis, 14-15. They did lose three years ago in NY, 24-38, but a couple of turnovers did the Giants in before they knew what hit them. The Rams, over the past couple of years, have had trouble with teams who can put pressure on the quarterback. Teams like TB and the Giants with Michael Strahan have caused problems for them. My numbers support the Giants as do the situations. And with the Giants strength being the passing game and the Rams hurting in the secondary, I like it even more. **NY GIANTS 24 ST LOUIS 17**

New England –1 BUFFALO 46

NE looked very, very good during the preseason. How that will carry over to the regular season, only time will tell. The Patriots had trouble running the ball last year, gaining only 3.7 ypr against teams allowing 4.2 ypr but they

should find some success against Buffalo, who allowed 4.4 ypr against teams averaging 4.3 ypr. NE also didn't pass the ball very well, averaging just 5.7 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps, while the Bills actually played pretty respectable pass defense last year, allowing just 5.7 yps against teams averaging 5.9 yps. On the other side of the ball, NE struggled to stop the run last year, allowing 4.7 ypr against teams averaging 4.4 ypr. As good a year as Travis Henry had last year, the Bills still only averaged 4.1 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr, which made their running game below average. The strength of the Bills offense was their passing offense as they averaged 6.2 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps but they will face a very good NE secondary, who allows just 5.7 yps against teams averaging 6.1 yps. The NE rush defense should get better this year with the addition of Ted Washington and linebacker Roosevelt Colvin from the Bears. Not only did Buffalo struggle to run the ball and their passing game was decent, but with the loss of Pearless Price at receiver, their passing game will probably take a hit. The Patriots have won five games in a row against Buffalo. Based on their dominating preseason, they also qualify in a 16-3-1 game one situation. They bring a better defense and I'll take the better defense in this game. **NEW ENGLAND 26 BUFFALO 23**

PITTSBURGH -5 Baltimore 39

A key game between the two best teams in the AFC North. Steelers have won the last four between these two and dominated the last time they lost to Baltimore but lost the game by three because of numerous missed field goals. Both teams are average running the ball, gaining 4.2 ypr against teams allowing 4.1 ypr, while the Ravens are a little better stopping the rush, allowing 3.8 ypr against teams averaging 4.1 ypr and the Steelers allowing 3.9 ypr against teams averaging 4.0 ypr. While both teams allow .1 yards less per pass on defense than their opponents average, the Steelers passing game is head and shoulders above the Ravens passing offense. The Steelers are averaging 6.4 yps against teams allowing 5.8 yps while the Ravens are averaging just 5.5 yps against teams allowing 5.8 yps. I'm not sure those numbers can get any better for Baltimore with rookie quarterback Kyle Boller starting in this game. The Ravens defense should be better with Ray Lewis healthy and the Steelers offensive line has not played well in preseason. And with Joey Porter out for Pittsburgh, the Steelers defense might not be as good as I think. Having said all of that, my numbers still favor Pittsburgh by about seven points. Pittsburgh qualifies in a 70-37-3 situation including subsets which are 54-25-2 and 36-6. The Pittsburgh offense is much better while I don't think their defense is that far behind Baltimore. Combined with the winning situation and the value on Pittsburgh, I think the Steelers are the side in this game. Baltimore has been very good as a road dog but I think Boller in his first start on the road may be too much to ask. I also think this game could be higher scoring than the number, although I do worry about Boller putting up points in his first game. Still, I will lean towards the over and the home team. **PITTSBURGH 27 BALITMORE 20**

CAROLINA -4 Jacksonville 34.5

This is a tough game for me to call. The Carolina defense is very solid allowing just 4.6 yppl against teams averaging 5.0 yppl last year. But, as good as their defense was, the offense was even worse, gaining just 4.4 yppl against teams allowing 5.2 yppl. That should get a little better this year with Stephen Davis running the ball for Carolina. Also, their defense slipped a bit last year when Julius Peppers was suspended for the final four games. They now take on a Jacksonville team that is playing without Jimmy Smith for the first four games. Last year, Jacksonville averaged 5.1 yppl against teams allowing 5.1 yppl, making their offense average. Their defense was surprisingly decent, allowing just 5.1 yppl against teams averaging 5.0 yppl. The did struggle stopping the run, allowing 4.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr but Carolina only averaged 3.5 ypr against teams allowing 4.2 ypr. On offense, Jacksonville's strength is running the ball but Carolina is very solid stopping the run. My numbers suggest this line should be about -1 or -2. But, Carolina qualifies in a week one situation, which is 51-18-3, which will get me leaning their way. **CAROLINA 19 JACKSONVILLE 14**

MIAMI -14 Houston 35

Not much to say here. Miami is a very solid team but laying 14 points is a lot of points in the NFL. Houston doesn't run the ball or throw the ball well at all. Unfortunately, for them, Miami is very good at stopping both so I don't see Houston getting their offense going at all. Miami was below average throwing the ball last year, although those numbers contain the Ray Lucas era, so they are a little deceptive. But the Dolphins do run the ball very well, averaging 4.8 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr. Houston was very good against the pass but just average stopping the

run, allowing 4.1 ypr against teams allowing 4.1 ypr. My numbers favor Miami by 17 points and they qualify in a 70-37-3 week one situation. That's enough to get me leaning towards Miami but there are better games this week.
MIAMI 27 HOUSTON 10

Indianapolis -1 CLEVELAND 46

This game has high scoring written all over it. Having said that, my numbers, using two different sets predict about 44 points or 40 points being scored. With that, I have to pass on the total but the Cleveland defense did not look good during the preseason and I can't believe the Indy defense has improved that much. Both teams allowed 5.2 yppl last year, while Indy did it against teams averaging 5.0 yppl and Cleveland against teams averaging 5.1 yppl. Neither team runs the ball well but both teams don't stop the run either. Both teams do pass the ball pretty well, while both teams are below average in stopping the pass. Again, that should lead to a high scoring game. As for the side, I don't have any situations favoring either team and my numbers are pretty close to the line. I just think Indy is the better team here with a better ability to run the ball and will lean their way because of that. **INDIANAPOLIS 27 CLEVELAND 23**

Denver -6 CINCINNATI 43.5

Another new era for the Cincinnati Bengals. Marvin Lewis takes over and it would seem the Bungles should get better. But, how soon, is the question. The Bengals passing game averaged 5.7 yps last year against teams allowing 5.8 yps but their passing offense improved greatly in the last half of the year, gaining 6.0 yps against teams allowing 5.8 yps over the last five games. I would suspect we'll see more of those numbers this year. Their rushing defense was average over the course of the whole season but, again, played better than average during the final five games. The real problem for Cincy is their pass defense, which allowed 6.7 yps against teams averaging 5.8 yps for the whole season. I'm not sure where Denver will end up at the end of the year but I have to believe they will start out just fine and it will take Cincinnati some time to adjust to the new coaching staff, etc. It always does with new head coaches, especially taking over poor teams. For that reason, I have to lean towards Denver, laying less than a touchdown in this game. I had Cincinnati in their final preseason game. They covered that game, getting three points from Indy. And they moved the ball extremely well, gaining over 500 yards of offense against less than 150 yards for Indy. Now, the starters didn't play much at all in this game. So, you can't really take anything from that. But, what you can take is all the problems that Bungles had in that game, which don't seem to have changed quite yet. Cincinnati gave up a 95 yard kickoff return, a 93 yard interception return, and a 67 yard fumble recovering for a touchdown. They also botched three straight field goal snaps, failing to get the ball down on all three snaps. Once they did finally get the snaps down, they missed the field goal and, once they got another shot because of a penalty, they missed the field goal again. Some things never change for Cincinnati. Being a situational player I can guarantee a couple of things this year. At some point, when nobody wants them, I will take Cincinnati and they will get destroyed and I will look like a fool for taking them. At another point, I will take them and they will cover and I will look extremely smart. Such is the life of a situational player and the history of the Bungles. **DENVER 28 CINCINNATI 20**

DETROIT -4 Arizona 38.5

A couple of bad teams here. Neither team passed the ball well last year but both teams were horrible defending the pass as well. I don't really have an opinion on the side here but I do love the total. For the side, I will lean with the team I think is farther ahead in their rebuilding and that is Detroit. The total is very intriguing here. The number is 38.5. Last year, an average NFL game saw about 43.5 points being scored. During any average NFL season, the average points scored are about 42-44 points. As I said, neither team can throw the ball. Arizona averaged just 4.8 yps against teams allowing 5.9 yps while Detroit averaged just 4.9 yps against teams allowing 5.9 yps. But, both teams were equally as bad defending the pass. Arizona allowed 6.7 yps against teams averaging 6.0 yps and Detroit allowed 6.8 yps against teams averaging 5.7 yps. What that leaves us with is two average teams. Arizona ran the ball better than average last year and Detroit was a little better than average stopping the run, while Detroit was a little below average running the ball but Arizona was below average stopping the run. Again, it leaves us with two average teams. If these teams are just average, then the average points scored in a game should be scored. And that is about 43 points. These two teams played last year and the final score was 23-20. My predicted total is 45 points using three different methods. The game is being played indoors so the conditions should be ripe. I think

Arizona will be able to run the ball enough to put points on the board. And Detroit will be able to throw the ball, especially against a poor Arizona defense, which hasn't gotten any better. Way too much value and things don't have to go completely our way to get the over in this game. **DETROIT 27 ARIZONA 20**

GREEN BAY –4.5 Minnesota 47

An intriguing game between a Minnesota team that some feel will be better this year against a Green Bay team that some feel will take a step backward this year. Since destroying Minnesota 38-10 in their SB year back in 1996, the Packers have won five of the last six games played here in Green Bay. But, none of them have been easy. In 1997, they won 38-32 as 11.5 point favorites. In 1998, they were introduced to Randy Moss on Monday night and lost 24-37. In 1999, it took a last second touchdown pass to win 23-20. In 2000, on Monday night, Antonio Freeman caught the miracle pass in OT to win 26-20. In 2001 they failed to cover again, winning 24-13 and beating Spurgeon Wynn quarterbacking the Vikings. In that game, they returned an interception for a touchdown very late in the game to seal the game. And last year, with the help of some questionable calls, they defeated the Queens on a Sunday night, scoring late to win 26-22. The reason the Vikings have had their number, if you can have a team's number and still lose, is they dominate at the line of scrimmage. And this year, the Vikings offensive line is even bigger and better. And the Packers defense is probably even worse and carries less depth. They are faster on defense but how good they will be is the question. Last year, the Packers defended the pass very well, allowing just 5.4 yps against teams averaging 5.7 yps. But they struggled against the run, allowing 4.8 ypr against teams averaging 4.3 ypr. Meanwhile, the Vikings were gaining 5.3 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr. It would appear, once again, the Vikings will control the line of scrimmage on offense and run the ball once again. Michael Bennett is out. I think the Vikings will still be able to run the ball but Mike Tice said this week, without Bennett, there is no threat to take the ball 60 or 80 yards on one run. Because of that, the safety never has to come up to stop the run, and therefore; the long pass isn't the threat they want it to be. As good as the Vikings are running the ball and as bad as the Packers are stopping the run, the Vikings still have their own problems and that is stopping the pass. They allowed 6.9 yps against teams averaging 5.8 yps last year and they haven't done enough during the off-season to take care of those problems. The Packers should be able to move the ball through the air. The Packers were decimated with injuries to their offensive line at the end of last year. Hopefully, those problems are somewhat healed now, although Marco Rivera is questionable for this game. Only having to lay a short number against a poor defense is just what the doctor ordered for the Packers. They are now 21-6-1 at home in the Favre era when laying five or less points (or a home dog). That includes being 11-1-1 in divisional games. GB also qualifies in a 70-37-3 week one situation, including a 54-25-2 subset and a 36-6 subset. My numbers suggest an 11 point or five point victory. Enough value and the situation favors the home team here. **GREEN BAY 31 MINNESOTA 23**

KANSAS CITY –5 San Diego 47

After a couple of blow out wins over SD in 1999 and 2000, the Chiefs have gotten a couple of close wins at home the last two years, winning 26-22 here last year as -2 point favorites. SD spent most of last year trying to live up to the myth that they actually have a good defense. Well, SD did have a good defense for a number of years, but last year was not one of them. Not only did they give up 22+ points in each of their last three games, they allowed 5.8 yppl against teams averaging 5.4 yppl. That included a horrible pass defense that allowed 6.8 yps against teams averaging 6.1 yps. And that plays right into the hands of the Chiefs who averaged 7.1 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps last year. While SD struggled to throw the ball last year (5.5 vs 6.0), they did run the ball very well, averaging 4.6 ypr against 4.3 ypr. That match-up favors SD because KC allowed 4.8 ypr against teams who averaged 4.4 ypr. The KC pass defense wasn't very good either, allowing 6.5 vs 6.1 yps but SD doesn't throw the ball well enough to completely take advantage of that. They will move the ball through the air simply because KC isn't very good at defending the pass. The difference, in this game, I believe is the KC offense is much better than the SD offense, while the SD defense might be better than the KC defense, it isn't head and shoulders above the KC defense. Lean towards KC here. **KANSAS CITY 30 SAN DIEGO 20**

DALLAS –2.5 Atlanta 36

Looking back, I think I may have bet on or against Dallas at least eight different times last year. I got to see them a lot. The Dallas defense was pretty solid last year, allowing just 4.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl. They did allow 27 or more points in three of their final four games but I think that might have been more of a team quitting on head

coach Dave Campo than anything else. He was definitely in over his head. The Cowboys had a pretty solid defense and they have speed at the receiver position. What they didn't have was a running game, which was average gaining 4.2 ypr vs 4.2 ypr, nor a passing game, which averaged just 5.3 yps vs 5.7 yps. Their defense kept them in games but bad passes to some open receivers, which would have resulted in touchdowns, kept them from moving the ball. Combine that with some poor decisions from the head coach and you have some disgruntled players and more losses than wins. The team still isn't that good but if they could win five games playing with no fundamentals, poor coaching decisions, etc., how many games can they win with Parcells? The schedule looked a little tougher during the summer but with Michael Vick now out as well as Chad Pennington, the schedule might have gotten a little easier. Parcells should be worth a couple of more wins this year. One thing you do know is they will still play with a decent defense and they will play sound fundamental football. Quincy Carter will be put into favorable situations. And this Sunday is the kind of game they can win with Vick out. Obviously, it's much easier to defend the Falcons without the threat of the quarterback running. Atlanta's running numbers were good last year but Vick helped them quite a bit. Taking out Vick's rushing numbers, Atlanta only averaged 3.9 ypr against teams allowing 4.2 ypr. That doesn't bode well against a Cowboy defense that allowed just 3.8 ypr against teams averaging 4.1 ypr. The Falcons passing game was pretty decent last year, gaining 6.0 yps vs 5.8 yps but Dallas defended the pass well last year, allowing just 5.5 yps vs 5.8 yps. Atlanta's passing game will probably continue to do well with Doug Johnson but the real problem for Atlanta is their defense, which is below average. They allowed 4.6 ypr vs teams averaging only 4.0 ypr and 6.0 yps vs teams averaging 5.8 yps. That doesn't bode well, when getting only a couple of points, not able to run the ball against a solid defense. Dallas also qualifies in a couple of solid week one situations. Those situations are 70-37-3 and 51-18-3 including a subset, which is 44-11-3. The numbers support Atlanta in this game but they are based on Vick playing as well. And, of course, they don't account for Parcells now coaching Dallas. I'll count on the solid situations in their favor along with a very good fundamental match-up for Dallas. **DALLAS 27 ATLANTA 14**

SEATTLE -3 New Orleans 48

Along with the Giants, Seattle finished last season with one of the best offenses. Seattle finished the last five games averaging 4.8 ypr vs 4.3 ypr and their passing game was incredible, gaining a whopping 7.5 yps versus teams allowing 5.6 yps. That doesn't bode well for New Orleans, who allowed 6.0 yps versus teams averaging 5.7 yps. NO couldn't stop the run either, allowing 4.5 ypr against teams averaging 4.2 ypr. With Hasselbeck now understanding the offense, he should have a field day against the Saints defense, which has some key injuries as well. On the other side of the ball, NO should be able to move the ball with regularity. The Saints averaged 5.2 yppl against teams allowing 5.0 yppl. Those numbers included quite a dip in production at the end of the season. But, I believe they will start up again with the more potent offense. And, there might not be too many better defenses to face than this Seattle unit, which is without Shawn Springs in the secondary and also has some other major injuries. Seattle allowed 5.4 yppl against teams averaging 5.3 yppl, including allowing 6.6 yps vs 6.1 yps. Two very solid offenses against two questionable defenses. The linemaker knows this as well, by setting this total at 48. But my numbers show about 55-57 points being scored in this game, so there is plenty of value along with the fundamentals on our side. Seattle also qualifies in a 70-37-3 week one situation. The pigskin should be flying through the air come Sunday. **SEATTLE 34 NEW ORLEANS 24**

SAN FRANCISCO -6.5 Chicago 41

SF finished the season as a very average team last year, gaining 5.3 yppl vs 5.3 yppl. And, I don't see them getting any better this year. Matter of fact, with the improvement of Seattle and the Rams looking to bounce back, I can see SF finishing around .500, if not below that this year. But, fortunately for them this week, they take on the Bears, who were extremely below average on offense last year, gaining just 4.6 yppl vs 5.2 yppl. The Bears offensive line, according to Vikings head coach Mike Tice, is not very good, especially after losing Rex Tucker during the preseason. They have one solid offensive lineman and that will make it very tough for their offense to move the ball again this year. Kordell Stewart should actually help simply because he can get them out of trouble with his legs. The numbers in this game support SF slightly and the situations favor them as well, as they qualify in a 70-37-3 week one situation and a 51-18-3 situation. But, SF has plenty of problems with their offensive line due to injuries and I have no interest in this game. **SAN FRANCISCO 24 CHICAGO 17**

TENNESSEE -3 Oakland 46

A rematch of the AFC Championship game last year. If the results from the regular season or the Championship game are any indication of what will happen in this game, Tennessee might as well not even show up. It wasn't even close last year with Tennessee losing 25-52 and 24-41. While I'm not sure if Tennessee is any better this year, I don't think Oakland can duplicate what they did last year. The Tennessee defense played very well at the end of the year, allowing just 4.6 yppl vs 5.0 yppl and I expect to see more of that at the beginning of this year, with Jevon Kearse presumably playing somewhat healthy from the get go. Tennessee qualifies in some solid week one situations this week, including a 70-37-3 situation, a 44-11-3 situation and a 16-3-1 situation that is 10-1-1 for home teams. The numbers from last year don't necessarily support this play, although using just the numbers from the last five regular season games do actually support Tennessee. The situations are just too strong to ignore. **TENNESSEE 28 OAKLAND 17**

PHILADELPHIA -3 Tampa Bay 35

I took a lot of heat for taking TB last year in the NFC Championship game. I took them because of their fantastic defense and an under appreciated offense, which was very solid when Brad Johnson played. TB scored at least 20 points in each game, during the last nine games of the season (including the playoffs) when Brad Johnson started. If they get 20 points in this game, which they should, they will cover and probably win straight up. While TB hasn't gotten any worse, I'm not sure Philadelphia hasn't gotten a little worse. They lost Brian Mitchell, a key figure on their special teams, and some key defensive players, including Hugh Douglas. That doesn't make it any easier, especially when I consider the TB offense to be even better this year now that they know Gruden's offense a little better. Defense wins again and TB qualifies in a week one situation that is 16-3-1. **TAMPA BAY 20 PHILADELPHIA 17**

Week one Best Bets will only be rated 2% because of the uncertainty of each team's profiles. Next week, I'll get back to the regular 3% rated plays.

YTD 0-0

2% DALLAS -2.5

2% TENNESSEE -3

2% ARZ/DET OVER 38.5

2% NO/SEATTLE OVER 48

WEEK 2

I went just 2-2 on my best bets last week but did go 10-5-1 ats on all side opinions, including the best bets. Hopefully that other analysis helped some.

I consider this week to be much more dangerous than week one because we have now seen all teams play and sometimes too much emphasis is put on game one. Remember whom each team played. Some teams played much easier opponents and might have better looking numbers this week. At any rate, be careful and realize there are still 15 more weeks left of regular season football after this week.

Home team in caps.

Miami –3 NY JETS 37

The Jets looked like the Jets at the beginning of last year when Vinny was their quarterback. Last year with Vinny at the helm, they scored 37 points in week one, followed by 7 and 3 point performances. In that 37 point performance, 13 points were scored on kick off returns for touchdowns, so it wasn't even as good as it might seem. Last week, they actually out did themselves by scoring 13 points against Washington. In their last four games with Vinny quarterbacking (three last year and one this year), the Jets have averaged 15 points per game against teams allowing 22 points per game, while giving up 30 points per game against teams averaging 23 points per game. With Pennington at qb, they averaged 24 points per game against teams allowing 23 points per game and allowed 18 points per game against teams averaging 23 points per game. If I listed the yards per rush and per pass, you would see the same dichotomy. The point is this team just can't move the ball with Vinny in there and their defense suffers as well. And it doesn't appear anything has changed because the Jets only had 158 total yards last week against Washington, while allowing 327 total yards at 5.4 yards per play. The Jets averaged 3.4 yards per play. One of those teams they played last year with Vinny was Miami. The Dolphins dominated the game in winning 30-3. Granted the game was in Miami, but the Jets simply couldn't move the ball. Miami had their own problems last week. It wasn't just that they lost to Houston, it was the way they lost the game that raises some eyebrows. David Carr was sacked 77 times last year. Last Sunday, David Carr wasn't sacked once against what is supposed to be a Super Bowl defense. Last year Houston averaged 216 yards per game. Last week Houston gained a whopping 393 yards at 6.0 yards per play. Either Dom Capers was sandbagging it during the preseason (which I'm sure he was to some degree) or this Dolphins defense isn't as good as we might all think. Miami gave up 8.3 yards per pass last week and even if you take out the long pass to Corey Bradford (78 yard pass), they still averaged 6.1 yards per pass, which is much better than the 4.0 they averaged last year. Miami did lose at NY last year but that was with Ray Lucas. The loser of this game will be 0-2 and I just can't see the Dolphins letting themselves fall to 0-2. The Jets don't want to fall to 0-2 either but they might not be able to do anything about it. As long as this line stays at –3 or lower, the Dolphins qualify in an early season situation, which is 60-26-4. They also qualify in a terrific fundamental rushing situation, which is 489-380-29 and a subset of that which is 227-131-11. Just too much going their way to not win this game. If they win, they most likely cover as well. **MIAMI 27 NY JETS 11**

BALTIMORE –2 Cleveland 40.5

This is a very tough game for me to call. I thought, going into the season, the Cleveland defense was below average and most people thought the Baltimore defense was going to be outstanding this year. Both of those may come true, but not based on last week's performances. Cleveland held Payton Manning and Company to just 271 total yards at 4.6 yards per play, including only 204 yards passing at 4.6 yards per pass. That's a far cry from the 6.5 yards per pass Indy averaged last year. The Cleveland offense was pretty average, gaining 280 yards at 5.1 yards per play. Meanwhile, in Pittsburgh, the Baltimore defense was allowing the Steelers to pass all over the field, gaining 339 total yards for 5.2 yards per play. The total yards and yards per play numbers aren't that bad. But they allowed 241 yards passing for 7.5 yards per pass and that was shocking. On offense, with Kyle Boller making his first start, Baltimore only gained 231 yards at 3.4 yards per play. Cleveland has won in Baltimore each of the last two years and they qualify in a 60-26-4 early season situation. Meanwhile, Baltimore's poor defensive performance last week, sets them up in a negative 85-138-9 situation including a 52-108-7 subset of that situation. But, Baltimore did stop the rush last week, while rushing the ball a little themselves (allowed 3.0 and gained 3.8 ypr). In Cleveland, the Browns were struggling rushing the ball and stopping the rush (gained only 3.8 ypr and allowed 4.5 ypr). That effort sets Baltimore up in a 489-380-29 fundamental rushing situation, including a 303-205-15 subset. My different sets of numbers suggest, both a high scoring game and a lower scoring game, so the total is a tough

call. The spread seems to favor Cleveland and the situation slightly favors them as well. Tough call but I will lean with Cleveland until Boller can show me a little more. **CLEVELAND 23 BALTIMORE 20**

INDIANAPOLIS –2 Tennessee 44

Tennessee looked very good last week against Oakland in some areas and not quite so good in some other areas. The Titans passed for 269 yards at 6.9 yards per pass last week but struggled to run the ball again, gaining just 76 yards at 2.7 ypr. They held a very good Oakland passing attack to just 6.1 yards per pass but overall, for the game, Oakland gained more yards per play than Tennessee, out-gaining them 5.6 yards per play to 5.1 yards per play. I'm not sure what happened to Indy last week. Their offense was pathetic, gaining just 271 yards for 4.6 yards per play. Tennessee would appear to be the better team and they have beaten Indy the last three times they have played them, which includes a home and home set last year, winning here by the score of 23-15 and beat Indy in 1999, 19-16 in the playoffs here. So, Tennessee has certainly beaten Indy when they have had decent teams. Indy does qualify in a very solid fundamental rushing situation, which is 489-380-29, including the best subset of that situation, which is an outstanding 129-54-6. While that situation is incredibly strong and does very well in week two, I have to see more before I can play Indy in this spot. I lean towards Indy in this game because of the situation, but past history is enough to keep me off of this game. Although history suggests these contests have been a little lower scoring than this total, my numbers suggest a slightly higher scoring game. **INDIANAPOLIS 26 TENNESSEE 21**

GREEN BAY –6.5 Detroit 46

If there were ever some misleading scores from last week, these two teams represented games where the final scores were a bit misleading. You can make a case that the Vikings dominated GB, and the final numbers were simply a result of Minnesota going to a zone defense in the second half, and the Packers accumulated some yardage because of that. But it's pretty hard to come up with any excuses for Detroit in their game. Let's put it this way. If I told you GB allowed 5.0 yards per play and 337 total yards to Minnesota last week, knowing the Vikings averaged 5.7 yards per play last year and 387 total yards, you might think the GB defense actually played above average. And if I told you Detroit allowed a whopping 6.5 yards per play and 439 total yards to Arizona, who averaged just 4.6 ypp and 285 yards per game last year, that wouldn't look too good. The Lions defense gave up huge chunks of yards, allowing Arizona to rush for 4.8 ypr and pass for 7.2 yps and 344 yards passing. That shouldn't surprise anyone because Detroit allowed 6.8 yps last year against teams who averaged only 5.7 yps. The only way Detroit can stop someone from throwing the ball on them is if, well, all of their receivers are hurt. What? Oh, that is what happened to GB. It still won't matter. If the numbers were so good for GB and so bad for Detroit, why was GB down 27-3 and Detroit won 42-24? Turnovers and special teams baby. GB turned the ball over five times to only three for Minnesota. Besides Minnesota out playing GB at the line of scrimmage, they also benefited from the turnovers. That's something that killed Minnesota last year and greatly helped GB last year. For the Lions, they benefited from a +3 turnover margin and also returned a punt for a touchdown and returned an interception for a touchdown. There are times when one team simply matches up very well against another team and this is one of those situations. The closest Detroit has come at Lambeau within the last 10 years is eight points. The last two years saw GB win rather easily. GB might be coming back to the pack a little and Detroit might be improving, but the gap hasn't closed that much. Yes, the Packers are hurting at receiver, but they picked up Antonio Freeman this week and that will help Brett Favre an awful lot. Minnesota was a team that had played the Packers very tough at home in each of the past six seasons. Detroit isn't that team. GB qualifies in a very solid 120-67-4 bounce back situation. While GB might be just an average team, Detroit is still well below average and I saw nothing last week that would change my mind. Only four of the past ten contests in GB have totaled more than 46 points. This game qualifies in a very solid 75-40-3 under situation. My numbers suggest about 47 points if I use all games from last year and only about 35 points if I use just the final five games from last year. The situation favors the under and with the Packers hurting at receiver this week, they may decide to run the ball a little more. **GREEN BAY 26 DETROIT 17**

ATLANTA –3 Washington 39.5

I had Dallas last week against Atlanta and lost that game, of course. But, much of what I expected to happen did, in fact, happen. I thought Atlanta would give up some yardage and they did just that. Atlanta surrendered 403 total

yards for 6.8 yards per play. Yes, you could take away the 49 yard touchdown pass and the 63 yard touchdown run, but they still averaged 4.9 yards per play, which would then be about average. The point being I don't think the Atlanta defense is any better than the defense that allowed 5.4 yards play last year against teams averaging just 5.1 yards per play. The Atlanta offense did move the ball a little better than I thought they would against Dallas. They didn't run the ball very well, gaining just 98 yards at 3.3 yards per rush. I pointed out last week that Atlanta's rushing numbers were not very good when you took out Michael Vick's numbers, as they only averaged 3.9 ypr without Vick. But, Atlanta did throw the ball pretty well, averaging 7.6 yards per pass. For Washington, well, it's hard to say just how good their defense is because they faced the hapless Jets last week. The Washington rush defense was a little better than average last year but their pass defense was outstanding, allowing 5.3 yards per pass against teams averaging 5.8 yards per pass. Last week they only allowed 4.0 yps but it was against the Jets. Atlanta does qualify in a 102-60-11 home momentum situation, including a subset of that, which is an outstanding 63-20-6. On the other side, Washington does qualify in a 489-380-29 fundamental rushing situation, including a 303-205-15 subset of that. My numbers favor Atlanta but they are based on Vick. It's tough to side with a Washington team that I don't think is that good, but I do like their match-up, which should be able to stop the Atlanta passing game, especially without one of their main receivers, Brian Finneran, who is out for a few weeks. **WASHINGTON 24 ATLANTA 23**

Buffalo -2.5 JACKSONVILLE 43

An outstanding game played by Buffalo last week. Are they that good or were they just overly hyped up for New England, because of Drew Bledsoe and Lawyer Milloy, etc? Only time will tell. For the game, the Bills out averaged NE, 5.1 yards per play to 4.1 yards per play. They had some problems running the ball, averaging only 3.2 yards per rush, but they did average a very healthy 7.2 yards per pass. The Buffalo defense held NE to just 239 yards and a measly 134 yards passing at 3.6 yards per pass. They did allow 5.0 ypr and 105 yards rushing. The Jacksonville score was a little misleading because stat wise they dominated their game with Carolina. I was very surprised to see them put up 23 points on the Carolina defense. But they also gained 331 yards at 5.6 yards per play, which is fantastic against the Carolina defense. And who needs Jimmy Smith, when you can pass for 256 yards at a whopping 8.3 yards per pass. On defense, they held Carolina in check, limiting them to just 242 yards and 4.0 yards per play. The Carolina offense isn't that good so that might not be saying much but what the Jacksonville offense did was amazing. They did allow Carolina to rush for 122 yards at 4.5 yards per rush, which is a little concerning. This is a tough game to call for me but Buffalo does qualify in an early season situation that is 60-26-4. My numbers favor Jacksonville slightly. Even though the situation favors Buffalo, I'm not quite ready to give them the nod when laying points on the road. I have to see a little more from them before I'm completely sold on their resurgence. **JACKSONVILLE 23 BUFFALO 21**

NEW ORLEANS -8 Houston 40.5

Either Houston pulled off the biggest upset of the year last week or they are much, much better than most people thought. Their upset win wasn't fluky like when they beat Pittsburgh last year and only gained about 40 yards for the entire game but lived off of turnovers. They beat Miami fair and square, out gaining Miami 393 yards to 301 yards and 6.0 yards per play to 5.4 yards per play. They held their own rushing the ball, gaining 3.7 yards per rush, which was a modest improvement over their 3.2 ypr average of last year. They gained an outstanding 8.3 yards per pass, which was a huge improvement over their 4.0 yards per pass of last year. And they didn't allow one sack, which was amazing. New Orleans lost their game pretty badly, based on the score, but the stats suggest a little closer game. The Saints averaged 4.8 yards per play and only allowed Seattle to gain 4.6 yards per play. NO did allow Seattle to rush for 151 yards at 4.6 yards per rush so that might be a little concerning but they also lost the turnover battle, 0-4, which created most of their problems. A banged up Joe Horn didn't help their cause either. But, with all that said, NO allowed 20 or more points in their first 15 games last year, before allowing only 10 points to Carolina in a season ending loss and allowed 20+ points again last week. That's a pretty tough way to make a living when laying points and NO is now 0-7 at the last seven times they have laid six or more points. And Dom Capers is now 12-5 when getting more than seven points on the road. Just too many points to be laying when there are still too many questions not answered about NO. **NEW ORLEANS 21 HOUSTON 17**

ST LOUIS -3 San Francisco 47

Either SF is the best team in the NFL this year or Chicago is the worse team. Actually, neither is probably true and the answer probably lies somewhere in the middle. Remember, teams are never as good as they appeared to be the previous week nor are they as bad as they appeared to be the previous week. With all that said, I'm still not sure St. Louis is a very good team. People think the Packers are beginning their fall and trying to live off their reputation. The Rams might be falling into the same category. This team has lost a lot of its key ingredients, which has caused a big problem with their depth. The Rams did nothing to impress me last week. They gained 355 yards at 4.8 yards per play, which is below average and allowed 336 yards but at 6.1 yards per play, which is well below average. The Rams couldn't run the ball, averaging just 3.1 yards per rush and couldn't stop the Giants from rushing the ball, allowing 149 yards at 5.5 yards per rush. St. Louis passed the ball for very average numbers, at 5.2 yards per pass and allowed the Giants to throw for 6.7 yards per pass. The supposedly great offensive line of the Rams allowed a whopping six sacks and the Rams turned the ball over four times. At the same time, don't get too caught up with SF's numbers against the Bears. Let's face it, Chicago is not a very good team right now and their offensive line is in shambles. And despite scoring 49 points, the 49ers offensive numbers were very average, gaining 391 yards but at only 5.1 yards per play. It's pretty hard not to score 49 points when the other team keeps giving you the ball deep in their own territory. The Bears turned the ball over five times last week. I don't think the SF defense is that good but they did hold Chicago to a measly 127 yards of total offense and 2.2 yards per play. Last year, SF beat the Rams rather handily in SF and lost the last game of the season in St. Louis. But, Marucci took most of his starters out of the game rather early. Before that, SF had a lead on the Rams. I'm not a Mike Martz fan and although I don't think SF is that good of a team, I still think they are better than St. Louis, at least right now. SF qualifies in an early season situation, which is 60-26-4 as well as a solid fundamental rushing situation, which is 489-380-29, including the best subset of that situation, which is an outstanding 129-54-6. My numbers support SF in this one and I'll take what I perceive to be the better team, at this point in the season, getting points. **SAN FRANCISCO 23 ST LOUIS 20**

KANSAS CITY -3 Pittsburgh 47.5

This might be the best game on the card Sunday. Two very explosive offenses against a pretty good defense in Pittsburgh and an improving defense in KC. No question the Pittsburgh defense is better than the KC defense but the KC offense is also better than the Pittsburgh offense and the game is in KC. The Pittsburgh offense was actually pretty average last week, gaining 339 yards at 5.2 yards per play, but the fact they did it against the Baltimore defense, is impressive enough. But, when you have an offense like Baltimore, with a rookie quarterback, that can't move the ball, it puts an awful lot of pressure on the Baltimore defense. Too much pressure that they couldn't overcome. Pittsburgh didn't run the ball very effectively last week, gaining just 98 yards at 3.0 yards per rush. They did pass for a very solid 241 yards at 7.5 yards per pass. The KC offense picked up right where it left off last year before Priest Holmes got hurt. Last week they gained 390 yards at 5.8 yards per play against a below average SD defense. But, more impressive was their defense, which allowed just 232 yards at 4.3 yards per play. The Steelers offensive line has had problems all preseason and now during the first game trying to run the ball. They won't be able to simply live off the pass in Arrowhead Stadium. It will be way too loud for them to get the snap off and not have KC defenders in the backfield before they know it. Pitt allowed three sacks last week and KC had three sacks of their own against SD last week. The KC offense is simply too balanced for Pittsburgh to try and stop just one phase. For KC, I'm sure they will take away the Pittsburgh rushing game, which shouldn't be too difficult, and then use their crowd advantage to make it very difficult for Pittsburgh to operate their offense. KC qualifies in a very solid home momentum situation, which is 102-60-11 and they qualify in a subset of that, which is an incredible 63-20-6. That situation only applies if KC is laying -3 points or less. KC also qualifies in a terrific fundamental rushing situation, which is 489-380-29, including the best subset of that situation, which is an outstanding 129-54-6. My numbers also support KC by at least six points in this game, giving us solid value with the home team. The numbers also predict a rather high scoring game, but I caution all total players. There is an extremely solid under situation applying to this game which is 74-42-3 and this game qualifies in a subset of that which is a terrific 52-17-2. It's an early season under situation that has been terrific over the years. I would stay away from the total in this game. I'm very aware of Bill Cowher's 27-17-2 ats record as a road dog or pick 'em. But that record is only 13-12 if the opponent won their last game and just 3-5 if their opponent won their last game at home. So, this game doesn't appear to set up in Cowher's best role as a road dog or pick 'em. Just too much offensive balance from KC and a good enough defense to keep the Pittsburgh offense in check. **KANSAS CITY 27 PITTSBURGH 17**

TAMPA BAY -10 Carolina 34.5

I'm not sure when people are going to start respecting this TB team. They didn't get the respect they deserved in the NFC Championship game last year, nor the Super Bowl and then the same disrespect came again last week in Philadelphia. There was no way TB was going to be able to function with Philly opening up their new stadium, the non-believers said. Well, when you give the best defense over the last 20 seasons (and, yes, TB had a better defense than the '85 Bears and the '00 Ravens) points to play with, you are asking for trouble. And people disrespect the TB offense. This is a very solid offense and they passed for 6.6 yards per pass last week. The offense will continue to only get better. Take out the games Johnson didn't play in last year and this offense was the third best offense over the last half of the season, giving way only to the Giants and Raiders. What was a little disturbing for TB last week was allowing Philly to rush for 7.6 yards per rush. I realize about 50 of those yards came on the James Thrash play, but even if you take out those yards, they still allowed about 4.7 yards per rush. Their pass defense, which was so good last year, played just as well in this game, allowing just 3.1 yards per pass and a measly 124 yards. TB did have trouble rushing the ball, gaining just 90 yards at 2.9 ypr and that could be a problem for them this year. What surprised me the most with the Carolina game was their defense actually surrendered 331 yards, 5.6 yards per play and 23 points. They rushed the ball very well, gaining 122 yards rushing at 4.5 yards per rush but their pass offense was non-existent, gaining just 120 yards for 3.5 yards per pass. That spells trouble against a great TB pass defense. Carolina played TB tough at home last year, losing 6-9 but TB was without Johnson in that game. In the game at TB, they lost 10-23 but the game was much closer than the final score. Simply put though, Carolina couldn't move the ball against the TB defense. I don't see anything different in this game. Carolina does qualify in a solid fundamental rushing situation, which is 489-380-29 and a subset of that which is 303-205-15. My numbers actually favor TB in this game, winning it by around 14-16 points but the situation favors Carolina and this figures to be a low scoring game. Any bad breaks for TB and it will be difficult to cover the large spread. A lean towards Carolina. **TAMPA BAY 17 CAROLINA 10**

Seattle -5 ARIZONA 44.5

I'm a big believer in Seattle this year and their defense looks to possibly be improved over last year. Ray Rhodes is now their defensive coordinator and should be able to work his magic. Seattle's score last week was a little misleading because they benefited from a +4 turnover margin. They were out-gained and out-averaged in last week's game against New Orleans, 270-359 and 4.6 yppl to 4.8 yppl. They did rush the ball quite effectively, gaining 151 yards at 4.6 ypr but they also allowed NO to rush for 103 yards at 4.1 ypr, which is about average, but I expect the big Arizona offensive line to be able to move the ball on the ground against Seattle. Seattle is also hurting in the secondary, although it didn't seem to bother them last week as they only allowed NO to gain 5.1 yps. I've already documented in the Detroit/GB write-up how badly Arizona out played Detroit last week, from a stats perspective, but turnovers did the Cardinals in as they were -3 in the turnover department. Home pick 'ems to dogs who were -2 or worse in turnover margin in their last game versus teams who were >=+2 in turnover margin in their last game are 79-51-3 ats since 1983. While that situation isn't strong enough for me to play Arizona, they do qualify in a subset of that, which is 34-8. Arizona also qualifies in a couple of bounce back situations, which are 59-27-2 and 116-62-3, including a subset of that, which is 43-12-0. The biggest concern for Arizona is they are down to just a few wide receivers. But, Seattle is only playing with four receivers on their roster this year as well. Mike Holmgren felt he had too many good running backs that he didn't want to lose, so he is going with fewer receivers. I had the over in last week's game for both of these teams and won one and lost one. Seattle ran the ball 56% of the time last week. Part of that was due to them having a big lead but I think Holmgren might be running the ball a little more this year to keep his receivers fresh. And it will be hot in Arizona this Sunday. This game has all the makings of a high scoring game but my numbers conflict on this game, with one set predicting about 54 points but the other set predicting only 43 points. With the possibility of both teams wanting to run the ball, I can't make a play on the over. The situations are ripe for an Arizona upset. Seattle did beat Arizona last year, 27-6, but they benefited from five turnovers. And other than that game, Seattle never won a road game by more than six points last year. This is a much improved Seattle team this year but I think the linemaker has over adjusted their week one performance and over estimated the week one Arizona performance, based on scores alone. **SEATTLE 24 ARIZONA 23**

PHILADELPHIA -5.5 New England 37.5

Both of these teams turned in awful performances last week. NE gained just 239 yards on offense at 4.1 yppl and Philly gained just 245 yards of offense at 4.9 yppl. Both defenses actually played decent, allowing only 5.1 yppl

for Buffalo and 4.9 yppf for TB. Both teams ran the ball somewhat effectively but neither team could pass the ball. I have no situations favoring either team here and, quite frankly, don't have much of an opinion on either of these teams. There is a very solid 75-40-3 week two under situation, which also qualifies in a subset, that is 43-17-2. My final numbers on this game conflict as well, predicting about 35 points and about 46 points, so it's tough to make a call on the total as well. Philly is hurting a little on defense, both in the secondary and on the defensive line and NE just lost lb Ted Johnson for a little while as well. When in doubt about two teams, I prefer to take the dog, but I do so reluctantly. **PHILADELPHIA 17 NEW ENGLAND 14**

Denver -3 SAN DIEGO 43

Another tough game for me to call. SD qualifies in a couple of bounce back situations, which are 59-27-2 and 116-62-3, including a subset of that which is 43-12-0. Denver qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 489-380-29, including the best subset of that situation, which is 129-54-6. But as impressive as the final score was in the Denver game last week, 30-10, their numbers weren't that impressive. They did stop the Cincinnati run, allowing the Bengals to only rush for 51 yards at 2.3 ypr and Denver ran the ball for 184 yards at 4.6 ypr, themselves. But Jake Plummer threw three interceptions and the Broncos only passed for 109 yards at 4.2 yps. Meanwhile, they allowed a decent Cincinnati passing offense to throw for 243 yards at 5.9 yps. For the game, Cincinnati actually out-gained Denver 294-293 and 4.7 yppf to just 4.4 yppf for Denver. For SD, their defense really started to slip last year and it was no different in game one against KC. The Chargers allowed KC to rush for 131 yards at 4.1 ypr and pass for 259 yards at 7.4 yps. And the SD offense was nowhere to be found, gaining just 232 yards at 4.3 yppf, including only 64 yards rushing at 3.6 ypr. I'm sure they will make some adjustments this week but it looks like David Boston may not play, and they will face a very stout Denver rush defense. I just don't see how they will be able to move the ball and no matter how ineffective Jake Plummer might be, the SD defense just isn't good enough to stop Denver on a consistent basis. **DENVER 23 SAN DIEGO 17**

OAKLAND -12.5 Cincinnati 45

Oh, the Bungles. More of the same last week, losing badly in their home opener and turning the ball over four times, including a Kitna back handed attempt to pass the ball under heavy pressure, out of his own endzone, which was picked out of the air for and returned for a touchdown. Some things never change. As I said in the Denver analysis, Cincinnati actually played pretty decently, from a stats perspective, last week, out-gaining and out-averaging Denver. But it's the mistakes that kill the Bengals, time and time again. This week they face a very good Raiders team who lost at Tennessee last week, despite playing a solid game. But Oakland is still without Jerry Porter and Rod Woodson will also miss this game. Cincinnati can throw the ball, which is always good when you are trying to come from behind. And the Raiders qualify in a negative scheduling situation, with their big game against Tennessee last week and a possible look ahead to Denver next week. That situation is 66-115-2 and goes against Oakland in this game. While my numbers support Oakland to win this game by close to 20 points, I will ride with the situation, thinking Oakland just wants to get out of town with a win and move on to next week. And, like I said, Cincinnati can throw the ball, which always leaves the back door open. This game also qualifies in a week two under situation which is 75-40-3 to the under. My final points prediction range from about 47 points to about 55 points so there is no value in the under. Probably a good game to stay away from. This game seems to have 'square' written all over it with the favorite and the over. **OAKLAND 27 CINCINNATI 17**

MINNESOTA -8 Chicago 45

Oh, the Bears. How bad did they look last week? Wow! They gained but 127 yards at 2.2 yppf. Lost in their 7-49 debacle was their defensive effort, which wasn't that bad. They only allowed SF to gain 391 yards but at only 5.1 yppf, which is very average. Their problem was five turnovers, that kept giving the ball to SF in great field position. The Bears only score came on a SF turnover that gave the Bears great field position. Meanwhile, the Vikings were beating the Packers pretty handily themselves. But the Vikings were beneficial of five Packer turnovers themselves. Let's face it. If you take away the ball five times from your opponent or give away the ball five times to your opponent, the games aren't going to be very close games. And I doubt that will continue. It just doesn't work that way. While it's very hard to figure out how Chicago is going to move the ball, the Bears defense was pretty solid last week and the Vikings offense did what they had to do but they were just average, gaining just 5.0 yppf last week. This is a tough side to call. It's very hard to take a team that just may not score, although let's not give

the Vikings defense too much credit yet. They were pretty bad last year and have improved. How much have they improved is still to be determined. There is a contrarian situation that favors the Bears in this game but they don't qualify in the best part of that situation. The last two years this game has been very low scoring in Minnesota, 6-13 and 7-25. This game actually sets up in a couple of different under situations, which are 286-216-11 and a week two under situation, which is 43-17-2. The problem with the under, for me, is I predict about 49 points being scored in this game, which means all the value has been sucked out of this total, which is now down to 45 and even 44.5 in some places. I would consider the under if I could get the total back to the 47 and 48 range but not quite this low. I'll side with all the points until I see a consistent effort on defense from the Vikings and recommend looking to the under before the over in this game. The Bears are really hurting on the offensive line and Mike Tice has said he thinks they really only have one decent offensive lineman, which is their center, especially after they lost Rex Tucker during the preseason. He also said he expects the Bears to try and run the ball, given all of their offensive problems right now. **MINNESOTA 24 CHICAGO 17**

NY GIANTS -7.5 Dallas 37

Well, some things haven't changed yet in Dallas and some things have changed. The Cowboys and Quincy Carter still made some costly mistakes last week. But they also connected on some big plays, which the offense failed to do last year and actually moved the ball quite well at times. Dallas gained 403 yards at 6.8 yppl and even though about 100 of those yards came on two different plays, they still would have averaged about 5.3 yppl without those two big plays. So they did some things right on offense. Their defense didn't play as well as I thought they would have and that is a concern. They allowed Atlanta 318 yards at 5.4 yppl. That's not terrible but not up to the standard the Cowboys played last year and not good enough, considering their offense just isn't that good yet. They'll face a very good Giants team that I predicted to win this division and played very well last week, gaining 6.1 yards per play and allowing the Rams to only gain 4.8 yards per play. I have no situations on this game and there are a couple of under situations applying to this game but they don't fit the better subsets and I'm not sure there is enough value on the total to play the under. If this total were at about 43 or so, I would consider the under. As for the side, I will lean with the team I think is playing better right now and that is the Giants. **NY GIANTS 24 DALLAS 10**

I am going to stick with 2% plays for at least one more week until I have a more definite read on these teams.

BEST BETS

YTD 2-2 -0.4%

2% MIAMI -3

2% SAN FRANCISCO +3

2% KANSAS CITY -3 (No higher than -3)

2% ARIZONA +5

WEEK 3

A 2-1-1 week last week. That brings the season total to 4-3-1 +0.70%. All side opinions and best bets went 9-6-1, after going 10-5-1 during week one. That brings the two week total to 19-11-2 this season on all side opinions and best bets.

Home team in caps.

NEW ENGLAND -6.5 NY Jets 37.5

Jets have won five straight games here. You would have to go back seven years since NE actually defeated the Jets by more than today's spread and only twice in the last ten years have they done so. Having said all of that, this Jets team is not good. And they now have injuries in the secondary, which won't help them. The Jets managed a whopping 1.9 ypr last week and 21 yards rushing. They did pass the ball very well against Miami, throwing for 366 yards and 8.0 yps. For the year, the Jets are now averaging 2.4 ypr against teams allowing 3.1 ypr and they are passing for 6.6 yps (which looks good) but that's against teams allowing 6.5 yps, making them about average throwing the ball. On defense the Jets are allowing 4.4 ypr against teams averaging 4.3 ypr but their pass defense has been horrible, allowing 7.6 yps against teams averaging just 7.0 yps. Their numbers, overall, suggest a pretty average team. They take on a NE team who beat Philly last week, but NE was +4 in the turnover margin, which greatly aided their efforts. NE is still struggling to run the ball and they only gained 2.1 ypr last week on 62 yards. For the year, they are very average, gaining 3.3 ypr against teams allowing 3.4 ypr. And they aren't throwing the ball any better, averaging just 4.6 yps against teams allowing 5.0 yps. On defense, their pass defense continues to excel, allowing 4.5 yps against teams averaging 5.5 yps, which will make it very difficult for the Jets to throw the ball. But their rush defense is once again giving up yards as they are allowing 4.1 ypr against teams averaging 3.7 ypr. I have no situations on this game but it's very difficult to cover a fairly large number with a poor offense and series history dictates the Jets here as well. **NEW ENGLAND 17 NY JETS 14**

Pittsburgh -4.5 CINCINNATI 45.5

Nothing too telling with this series history. Pittsburgh has done well here in Cincinnati and, on occasion, Cincinnati has pulled the upset. I had KC last week and got the cover, but truth be told, Pittsburgh did well, from a stats standpoint. The Pittsburgh problems last week were due to special teams (a returned kick off for a touchdown) and an interception returned for a touchdown (although Pittsburgh had one themselves). But the Steelers gained 380 yards at 5.7 yppf to Kansas City's 282 at 4.9 yppf. The Steelers defense has played pretty well this year, allowing just 4.1 yppf to teams averaging 5.1 yppf. Their passing game has also been very solid, averaging 6.8 yps against teams allowing 5.3 yps. But their rushing game is just average, gaining 3.2 ypr against teams allowing 3.2 ypr. Overall their offense is gaining 5.4 yppf against teams allowing 4.6 yppf. They now take on a Cincinnati team who is 0-2. But this isn't the same 0-2 Bengals team that we are used to. Yes, Cincinnati lost to Denver in week one, 10-30, but they played the Broncos pretty tough, from a stats standpoint, gaining 4.7 yppf to only 4.4 yppf for Denver. In that game, they held the Denver passing game to just 109 yards passing at 4.2 yps. Last week they did it again to Oakland, limiting the Raiders to just 103 yards passing at 3.7 yps. They did allow the Raiders to rush for 134 yards at 6.7 ypr and for the season, they are allowing teams to rush for 5.3 ypr but against teams averaging 5.3 ypr so they are about average defending the rush. Their pass defense, as mentioned, is allowing just 3.9 yps against teams averaging 5.2 yps. I have no situations favoring either team in this game and the match-up could favor Cincinnati with their pass defense against the Steelers good passing offense. But, as much as I don't think Cincinnati is as bad as the past, I still side with Pittsburgh, until Cincinnati proves they can actually win these games. **PITTSBURGH 27 CINCINNATI 18**

INDIANAPOLIS -8 Jacksonville 43

Another game with not much interest for me from a side perspective. Indy has looked decent so far, based on their convincing win over Tennessee last week, but they struggled the week before against, what I consider to be a poor Cleveland team. Jacksonville played Indy tough in their last game of the season last year, losing here 13-20, but they were manhandled by Buffalo last week, allowing 371 yards at 6.1 yppf, while only gaining 287 yards at 4.0 yppf. Jacksonville allowed Buffalo to throw for 328 yards at 12.1 yps. For the season, they are now allowing 7.3 yps against teams averaging 6.5 yps. They'll face Indy, who is averaging 5.6 yps against teams allowing 5.2 yps so Indy should have some success in the air. The Jacksonville offense is just above average, gaining 5.0 yppf against

teams allowing 4.7 yppl and they'll face an Indy defense, which is slightly below average, allowing 4.6 yppl against teams averaging just 4.3 yppl. I've never been a big fan of laying points with a below average defense and that is what we have here with Indy. We also get a little extra value with the Jacksonville debacle last week and Indy's big win over Tennessee last week. Indy qualifies in a letdown situation that is 105-44-4 playing against them. Unfortunately, Jacksonville doesn't qualify in the best part of that situation to make them a play. The situation is very strong, however, and should be enough to keep you off of Indy. My projected final score also indicates only about a seven point victory for Indy. This game also qualifies in a 74-42-3 under situation, including a subset that is 52-17-2. And it also qualifies in a terrific 216-117-6 under situation. Using my yards scoring predictor, I only show about 32 points being scored in this game. That's enough to get me on the under here. **INDIANAPOLIS 21 JACKSONVILLE 14**

Minnesota -3.5 DETROIT 46.5

Don't look now but the Vikings have actually won five straight games. Included in their five game winning streak (dating back to last year's final three games) is a season ending win here over Detroit, 38-36. I had the over in that game as well as the Lions. Detroit got a score and missed the two point conversion on the next to last play of the game for the cover. The Vikings out played Detroit in that game but couldn't hold on to the cover. Mike Tice said last week his team has had troubles with the Bears linebackers in the past. This week, he said he thinks his team has the advantage over the linebackers and their secondary. He said they have had trouble pass blocking against the Lions front four but doesn't feel they have had problems rushing the ball. The Vikings offense has been good this year, gaining 5.4 yppl against teams allowing just 5.0 yppl and they are above average in both, rushing and passing. Most surprisingly is their defense, which is allowing 4.9 yppl against teams averaging 4.3 yppl. Now, that doesn't look that good but they are allowing just 19 points per game against teams averaging 19 points per game. The reason is they are not turning the ball over so frequently like they did last year. Couple a somewhat respectable defense with the decline in turnovers and this defense can hold it's own, especially when the offense is playing ball control offense. The problems for the Lions are the same problems as last year. Yes, they won their first game of the year over Arizona but they were badly out played in that game, from a stats standpoint. They were able to return punts and get defensive scores to make the final score look worse than it actually was. But their offense is terrible as is their defense. On defense, the Lions have allowed 5.9 yppl against teams averaging 5.2 yppl. That's not too far from the Minnesota defense but the difference is their defense is allowing 28 points per game against teams averaging 20 points per game. This simply means their offense is also contributing to their poor defense. Both the Lions rush defense and their pass defense are horrible. On offense, Detroit is averaging just 4.4 yppl against teams averaging 4.9 yppl. If Minnesota doesn't turn the ball over and help Detroit, there is no way Detroit can win this game. I'm very well aware that Detroit has played some close games against Minnesota here over the years and many of the games Minnesota has won here were only by two points or so. And, I'm also aware that every game played here for the past nine years has totaled at least 46 points. And this game could also go over the total rather easily but I won't be there this time. First, as stated, the Vikings defense is actually playing a little better as of late. And if their offense isn't turning the ball over to help the Detroit offense, Detroit may not score as many points. The Detroit offense simply isn't very good. And while Mike Tice will do whatever it takes to score, he is very happy running the ball more, to keep Culpepper out of situations that will hurt his game. Tice does expect a high scoring game but there are some things this year that are not as favorable as last year when I took the over. Minnesota also qualifies in some great situations, including an early season situation, which is 93-46-5 and that situation went 4-1-1 last week. They also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation (which went 7-0-1 last week) and is now 496-380-30 including the best subset of that situation which is 132-54-7 (3-0-1 last week with Indy, KC, Denver and SF). If the Vikings don't turn the ball over, the Lions defense isn't good enough to consistently stop them. And the Vikings defense is improved enough to stop a very below average Lions offense. **MINNESOTA 30 DETROIT 17**

TENNESSEE -4.5 New Orleans 44.5

I've seen quite a few people that like Tennessee this week. I don't understand that. I realize NO tanked it again at the end of the season last year and their defense gave up 20 or more points in every game last year except for the last game and allowed 27 points in their first game this year at Seattle. But, they actually played much better than the final score indicated in that first game. A -4 in turnovers against Seattle did them in. NO actually out-gained Seattle 4.8 yppl to 4.6 yppl in that game. Last week NO looked very solid, albeit against Houston, but they gained

292 yards at 5.2 yppl while limiting Houston to just 258 yards and 4.0 yppl. Yes, I realize it's just Houston but Houston was much more effective against Miami the week before. This is a good match-up for NO. Their offense is just above average this year, gaining 5.0 yppl against teams allowing 4.8 yppl but their defense has actually played well. They are allowing 4.0 ypr against teams averaging 4.0 ypr, which makes their rush defense about average. That's all they'll need against a poor Tennessee rushing team, which is averaging just 2.7 ypr against teams allowing 3.2 ypr. Their pass defense has been very solid, allowing just 4.5 yps against teams gaining 6.3 yps. Tennessee has played very solid rush defense this year, allowing just 3.7 ypr against teams gaining 4.6 ypr but their pass defense is well below average again this year, allowing 6.6 yps against teams averaging 5.4 yps. NO passing offense hasn't been great but it is above average and should be able to take advantage of a poor Tennessee pass defense. Aside from that, NO qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation which is 496-380-30 but they don't qualify in any of the subsets of that situation. Tennessee also qualifies in a play against 138-85-9 negative momentum situation including a subset of that, which is 102-52-7. There's not quite enough for me to play NO in this game but I definitely lean their way and will lean towards the over as well. **NEW ORLEANS 27 TENNESSEE 24**

Tampa Bay -4 ATLANTA 35.5

I don't have any situations for this game. TB beat Atlanta rather handily in both games last year. I went against Atlanta in week one and had a lean against them in week two. One of the reasons I went against Atlanta is their defense. And, although they beat me in week one (against Dallas), they were outplayed from a stats standpoint. Last week, Washington not only beat them but beat them in the yards game as well. Washington gained 435 yards at 5.7 yppl and Atlanta didn't move the ball against Washington, gaining just 283 yards at 4.3 yppl. Yes, TB lost the game last week and didn't play great. They still are having trouble running the ball, gaining just 2.8 ypr against teams allowing 2.6 ypr and their defense is allowing 5.2 ypr but that's against teams averaging 5.1 ypr so it's about average. Their pass defense is allowing only 3.3 yps but that's against teams averaging 3.3 yps, which makes their pass defense about average. The Atlanta defense is really struggling, allowing 6.2 yppl against teams averaging 5.7 yppl and they are equally as bad defending both, the rush and the pass. I'll take the better defense. **TAMPA BAY 17 ATLANTA 10**

Kansas City -7.5 HOUSTON 43.5

Tough game for me to call. I have pretty solid situations on both teams in this game. I had KC last week and got the win but the game was closer than the final score, at least from a yards perspective. KC had big special teams play and scored with their defense (as did Pittsburgh) but Pittsburgh out-gained them in the game 380-282 and 5.7 yppl to 4.9 yppl. Houston, who looked so good in week one against Miami, looked more like the Houston we know from last year last week, allowing David Carr to be sacked five times (none against Miami) and only gaining 258 yards at 4.0 yppl. The KC rushing offense is actually below average, gaining just 4.3 ypr against teams allowing 4.7 ypr but their passing offense has been fantastic, gaining 6.7 yps against teams allowing 5.4 yps. And on defense is where KC has made their greatest improvements, allowing just 5.1 yppl against teams averaging 5.1 yppl. That only makes their defense about average but that is a great improvement over last year's defense. The Houston defense is also just average, allowing 5.3 yppl against teams averaging 5.3 yppl. The big difference between these two teams, of course, is the offense. Houston's offense is averaging just 5.0 yppl against teams allowing 5.3 yppl. Houston qualifies in a couple of contrarian situations, which are 43-12 and 34-8. But KC also qualifies in a scheduling situation, which is 34-8-3 and if this line would go down to -7, KC would also qualify in a very strong fundamental rushing situation. My numbers slightly favor KC in this game with a lean towards the over. Too many factors going both ways but I will lean with the better team. **KANSAS CITY 27 HOUSTON 17**

WASHINGTON -2.5 NY Giants 43

Washington only won by two last week but they severely outplayed Atlanta. The Redskins gained 435 yards on offense at 5.7 yppl and limited the Falcons to just 283 yards at 4.0 yppl. And Washington did it from both, the rushing game (125 yards at 4.0 ypr) and the passing game (310 yards at 6.9 yps). This week they take on a Giants team who comes off a terrible showing against Dallas. Not only did the Giants lose but they looked bad in doing so. They only gained 309 yards on offense at a measly 4.4 yppl. The Giants passed for 256 yards but at only 4.8 yps and their running game was nonexistent, gaining just 53 yards at 3.1 ypr. They shut down the Dallas running game, allowing just 107 yards at 3.0 ypr but Dallas was able to move the ball through the air, gaining 296 yards at

6.7 yps. Both of these team's defenses have played well this year with Washington allowing just 3.7 yppl against teams averaging 4.9 yppl and the Giants allowing just 4.9 yppl against teams averaging 5.2 yppl. Both teams are also below average on offense right now. There isn't any history in this series that favors one team or the other, when playing in Washington. They have both had their share of wins here. Washington does qualify in a negative momentum situation, which is a 138-85-9 play against the Redskins. The Redskins don't qualify in the play against better subset of that situation. Meanwhile the Giants qualify in a bounce back situation that is 121-67-4 after winning with the Packers last week. My numbers favor the Giants slightly, as do the situations. The situations favor the Giants and so do I. **NY GIANTS 23 WASHINGTON 20**

Green Bay -7.5 ARIZONA 43

The season is only two weeks old and it can't end fast enough for the Cardinals. This is a real bad team. Last week, Arizona shot themselves in the foot for the second straight week, turning the ball over six times to zero for Seattle. Not only did the turnovers hurt Arizona but they couldn't move the ball with any consistency at all and Seattle moved the ball, at will, on Arizona. Seattle gained 323 yards at 6.2 yppl while Arizona could only muster 286 yards at 4.0 yppl. While football doesn't work this way, Arizona actually outplayed Detroit in week one but couldn't overcome their multiple mistakes and then last week Green Bay dominated a bad Detroit team. That doesn't say much for Arizona's chances this week. I read something last week that I thought was very true. Someone said the Packers will win these games they should win and then we'll see what happens when they play the better opponents again. And that's very true. This Packers team is still very solid and will beat the inferior teams with ease. Lost in their week one loss to Minnesota was a defense that actually played very well. The turnovers did GB in during their week one loss but the defense actually held Minnesota below their normal averages. And last week the Packers defense held down a below average Detroit offense, limiting the Lions to just 293 yards at 4.0 yppl. The Packers defense is now allowing just 4.5 yppl against teams averaging 4.9 yppl. The problem for GB is their offense, which finished very poorly last year and isn't doing much better this year, averaging just 5.1 yppl against teams allowing 5.5 yppl. The running game got on track last week, gaining 200 yards at 5.7 ypr and is now averaging 4.9 ypr against teams allowing 4.8 ypr. The Arizona offense has been about average, gaining 5.2 yppl against teams allowing 5.1 yppl but turnovers have killed them. On defense, well, that's another story. They are defending the run decently but getting burned through the air, allowing 7.5 yps against teams averaging just 5.6 yps. We'll see if GB can take advantage of that. GB played here in 2000 and won that game 29-3 and I don't see anything different happening in this game. Teams opening their season with two straight home games and then go on the road for game number three are 34-8-3 since 1986 as long as their opponent is not undefeated. My numbers favor GB pretty favorably here but I doubt Arizona will continue to turn the ball over quite as much as they have, which should bring the numbers a little closer but still not close enough for Arizona to get the cover. I would think about the over here but the Packers defense is playing pretty well and usually plays well against these types of teams. Not knowing if Arizona can score much more than last week makes it tougher to take the over. And I think Mike Sherman would like to continue to run the ball with a lead to take the pressure off of Favre. **GREEN BAY 30 ARIZONA 13**

SEATTLE -3 St Louis 47.5

Don't look now but here come the Seahawks. Seattle has played two terrific games and is +10 in the turnover department, not having turned the ball over themselves yet. I had SF last week against the Rams and pushed on the game but SF was clearly the right side in that game. The Rams turned the ball over four more times (all fumbles) but still managed to win the game 27-24. But St. Louis was outplayed in that game to the tune of 390 yards to 278 and 6.0 yppl to 4.3 yppl. The 49ers ran the ball for 148 yards at 5.7 ypr and passed for another 242 at 6.2 yps. The Rams could only run for 88 yards at 3.7 ypr and passed for a measly 190 yards at 4.6 yps. And I don't see much changing this week against a very much improved Seahawks defense. Ray Rhodes has done a fantastic job so far with this defense. They played very well in week one against New Orleans and then shut down a terrible Arizona team last week. For the season, Seattle is allowing just 4.4 yppl against teams averaging 5.1 yppl. The Seahawks offense hasn't been spectacular but they are getting the job done, both rushing and passing. They average 4.5 ypr against teams allowing 3.8 ypr and they are averaging 6.5 yps against teams allowing 5.8 yps. That all adds up to 5.3 yppl against teams allowing 4.9 yppl. For the Rams, their offense hasn't been terrible, averaging 4.6 yppl against teams allowing 4.2 yppl and they have been above average, both rushing the ball and passing the ball. But the Rams problems are the same problems they had at the end of last year, their defense. It is not very good. They

are allowing a whopping 5.6 ypr against teams averaging just 4.6 ypr and they are allowing 6.4 yps against teams averaging 5.9 yps. The defense, as a whole, is allowing 6.1 ypl against teams averaging just 5.3 ypl. And Seattle will take advantage of that on Sunday. Seattle qualifies in a home momentum situation, which is 103-61-11 but they don't qualify in the better subset of that situation. They also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 496-380-30 but they don't qualify in the best subsets of that situation either. That isn't quite enough for me to play Seattle here because they are not qualifying in the better subsets but it is certainly enough for me to lean to them. I do like the under in this game. Seattle has now played under in their first two games and the defense is playing very well. If they can get the lead, which I think they can, Mike Holmgren is very happy to pound the ball via the run and take the pressure off of Matt Hasselbeck. Seattle only has four wide receivers on their roster this year. Holmgren kept more running backs because he liked what he had. I doubt he will want to get into too many situations where he wears out his receivers unless he absolutely has to. Not to mention get them hurt. This game qualifies in a 287-216-11 under situation that won on the Bears/Vikings game last week. My final numbers only suggest about 25-30 points in this game based on how these teams have played so far. Part of that is Seattle's ability to keep the opposing team out of the endzone because they are creating turnovers. They won't continue to do that but the defense is good enough to limit the Rams and we're still getting plenty of value here. Since 1983, simply playing under any total 45 or higher would have resulted in 381 winners to only 315 losers for a 54.7% winning percentage for the unders. This game qualifies in a variation of that system that is 216-117-6 towards the under. Seattle beat the Rams here last year 30-10 and that total was 47. Value and plenty of solid situations that suggest a low scoring game make the under the play here. **SEATTLE 21 ST LOUIS 10**

Baltimore -1 SAN DIEGO 40

Baltimore looked very solid last week, running the ball that is, after getting their hat handed to them in week one at Pittsburgh. Meanwhile, for San Diego, they looked terrible for the second consecutive week, losing at home to Denver, 13-37. SD allowed the Broncos to gain 382 yards at 6.1 ypl. SD moved the ball enough to gain 303 yards at 5.1 ypl. They did rush the ball for 121 yards at 6.7 ypr but their passing game was terrible, gaining just 182 yards at 4.4 yps. That doesn't figure to get any better this week against a Baltimore defense that is allowing just 4.9 yps against teams averaging 5.6 yps. And the Baltimore run defense has been solid as well, 3.0 ypr against 3.3 ypr. The problem for Baltimore has been their passing game. Kyle Boller has yet to catch on and their passing game is averaging just 2.9 yps against teams allowing 3.9 yps. The Baltimore running game is just fine, thanks to Jamal Lewis's efforts last week, and they are now averaging 6.7 ypr against teams allowing 5.8 ypr. That could play out just fine against a below average SD defense. The Chargers are allowing 5.0 ypr against teams averaging 4.8 ypr but their real problem has been the pass defense, where they are allowing 6.8 yps against teams averaging 6.0 yps. While the SD running game has been good enough so far (5.1 ypr against 4.0 ypr), their passing game has been terrible, gaining just 4.5 yps against teams allowing 5.4 yps. But this is a hard game for me to call. SD, at the current line, qualifies in a couple of very solid contrarian plays. But, if SD were to become the favorite, then Baltimore would qualify in some solid situations. What that means is this game, for me, is too close to call. I will lean with the situations that currently favor SD, at this line. SD needs this game badly and with Kyle Boller not able to get the passing game going yet, it will make it easier for SD to stop Baltimore. **SAN DIEGO 20 BALTIMORE 17**

SAN FRANCISCO -7 Cleveland 44.5

In a couple of weeks, Cleveland is going to wish they had won their week one game against Indy. This isn't a very good football team and their next chance to win a football game will be next week (Cincinnati), which might be their last chance for quite a while. As stated in the Rams write up, SF deserved better last week, as they controlled that game but gave it away in the end. The Cleveland offense isn't good, averaging just 4.0 ypl against teams allowing 4.3 ypl and their defense is sieve like, allowing 5.4 ypl against teams averaging 4.8 ypl. The SF offense, to this point, has been average, gaining 5.5 ypl against teams allowing 5.7 ypl but they should find some success against a bad Cleveland defense. Meanwhile, the 49ers defense has played terrific, allowing just 3.3 ypl against teams averaging 4.0 ypl. SF qualifies in a 496-380-30 fundamental rushing situation, although they don't qualify in the better subsets of that situation. I like SF here. **SAN FRANCISCO 27 CLEVELAND 17**

MIAMI -3 Buffalo 40

Miami has won six of the past eight played between these two teams in Miami. Buffalo did get the win last year

but that was with Ray Lucas at qb for Miami, who turned the ball over six times. I believe Lucas said after the game that might have been the worst performance by a quarterback in the NFL ever. Nobody was arguing with Ray after he said that. The Bills have looked terrific so far this year, winning both games rather easily, and putting up huge numbers. Buffalo is averaging 5.7 yppf against teams allowing 4.7 yppf and that includes passing for 9.5 yps against teams allowing just 5.7 yps. Yes, they did average 12.1 yps last week but they also moved the ball through the air against NE in their first game. The biggest problem for Buffalo right now is their running game. They are averaging just 2.3 ypr against teams allowing 3.4 ypr. And on defense, they have managed to camouflage their poor run defense, which is allowing 4.7 ypr against teams averaging just 3.3 ypr, because they have gotten out to such big leads. Their pass defense has been stellar, allowing just 4.1 yps against teams averaging 5.3 yps. Now, they face a Miami team whose pass offense has been solid, gaining 7.5 yps against teams allowing 6.8 yps. To date, the Miami running game has been a bit below average, gaining just 4.1 ypr against teams allowing 4.3 ypr. But when you have Ricky Williams, the carries almost become more important than the yards per rush. If Ricky gets the ball enough, that's most important to Miami because he can wear down a defense. The big problem right now for Miami is their pass defense, which has been torched by the likes of David Carr and Houston and Vinny Testaverde and the Jets. Those aren't the first two teams that come to mind when talking about great passing offenses. Miami is allowing a whopping 8.1 yps against teams averaging 6.4 yps. That doesn't look so good against a Bills passing offense that is thriving right now. Miami does qualify in some solid situations this week, including a home momentum situation that is 103-61-11 but they don't qualify in the better subset of that situation. They also qualify in a 496-380-30 fundamental rushing situation but they don't qualify in the best subsets of that situation. The Bills, meanwhile, qualify in a letdown situation, which is a 78-40-5 play against situation and they also qualify in the better subset of that, which is a 47-19-2 play against situation. That is certainly enough to get me leaning towards Miami in this game. But, unfortunately, Miami doesn't qualify in some of the better subsets to get me on them as a best bet. Numbers wise, as you would expect, Buffalo gets the nod. But, in my experience of winning five straight years in the NFL and my research, numbers don't mean as much as the situations. Otherwise, with these types of numbers, Buffalo would go undefeated. We all know they won't continue to play this well. The NFL season is a roller coaster ride. When Buffalo begins to come down the hill is the question. I'm guessing it is this week. This game comes down to two things. Can Miami's porous pass defense stop the Bills high octane passing offense and can the Bills terrible rush defense stop the normally sound Miami rushing game? The winner of those two areas will win this game. **MIAMI 23 BUFFALO 17**

DENVER -5 Oakland 45

Prior to last year, Denver had won seven straight games against Oakland here. But that was last year and this is this year. Much has changed, at least for Oakland, who looks to be a very average team right now. Quite frankly, Oakland was out played last week against Cincinnati. A turnover did Cincinnati in near the end of the game. The Oakland offense hasn't been terrible this year, rushing the ball for 5.6 ypr against teams allowing just 4.6 ypr but their passing game has been below average, gaining just 5.0 yps against teams allowing 5.3 yps. If Oakland can't get their passing game going, they are in for a long season because their defense hasn't really played that well, as of yet. They are allowing 5.1 yppf against teams averaging 4.8 yppf, including allowing 6.8 yps against teams averaging just 6.1 yps. So far, the Denver offense hasn't played any better than average, considering they have only played Cincinnati and San Diego. They are averaging 5.2 yppf against teams allowing 5.3 yppf. Yes, they did beat Cincinnati soundly from a scoring standpoint in week one, but from a stats standpoint, Cincinnati hung right with them. Turnovers did in the Bengals in that game. The Denver defense, which has allowed just 10 and 13 points, has been just average as well, allowing 4.9 yppf against teams averaging 4.8 yppf. Nothing really stands out with those numbers. Denver qualifies in a home momentum situation, which is 103-61-11 but they don't qualify in the better part of that subset. They also qualify in a Monday night situation, which is 24-6-2. Meanwhile, Oakland qualifies in a general situation, which is 142-80-6, including a subset of that which is 119-52-5. My numbers greatly favor Denver in this game and the situations lean towards them as well. **DENVER 27 OAKLAND 20**

BEST BETS

YTD 4-3-1 +0.70%

3% MINNESOTA -3.5

2% JACK/INDY UNDER 43

2% STL/SEA UNDER 47.5

WEEK 4

Best bets went a healthy 3-0 last week to bring the season record to 7-3-1 +7.70% for the year. That keeps me on pace with my 67% record over the final 10 weeks or so last year and hopefully the read on the NFL will continue strong. All side opinions slipped to just 7-7 last week and they are now 26-18-2 59% over the first three weeks this year.

Abbreviations used throughout the write-ups and league averages to compare to.

PF – Average Points Scored (20.5)

YPR – Yards Per Rush (4.0)

YPS – Yards Per Pass (5.6)

YPPL – Yards Per Play (4.9)

Home team in caps.

WASHINGTON –2.5 New England 42.5

NE won their second straight game last week over the Jets but they were far from impressive. Not only are the Patriots hurting big time with key injuries on defense but they were badly out played last week, from a stats perspective. The Jets gained 329 yards at 5.4 yppl to just 294 yards and 4.4 yppl for NE. On top of that, Tom Brady was sacked five times and he is hurting as well. NE hasn't made any adjustments to their deficiencies from last year. They still can't run the ball, averaging just 3.6 ypr against teams allowing 3.9 ypr and their passing game is suffering as well, gaining just 4.6 yps against teams allowing 5.4 yps. That would be a little more tolerable if they were getting it done on defense but they aren't. While their overall defense is allowing just 4.7 yppl against teams averaging 4.8 yppl, their rush defense is playing terrible, allowing 4.0 ypr against teams averaging just 3.4 ypr. They held Buffalo to 3.2 ypr but Buffalo only averages 2.4 ypr. They held Philadelphia to 5.8 ypr and they average 6.7 ypr but that is somewhat misleading because of McNabb and Philly also gained 47 yards on an end around play (in the TB game, which inflates their overall rushing averages). And last week they allowed the Jets to average 3.8 ypr but the Jets only average 2.9 ypr. The NE pass defense is playing well, allowing just 5.0 yps against teams averaging 5.5 yps. Everybody thinks the Redskins are a passing team, and they are and it would appear the NE pass defense would be a good match-up for the Redskins pass offense. The Redskins are throwing the ball 56% of the time but a lot of that came last week when they were forced to play catch-up. Prior to last week's catch-up mode game, Washington was only throwing the ball around 43% of the time. We can expect Washington to go back to the rushing game again this week against a poor NE rush defense, especially considering Washington is averaging a healthy 4.7 yppl against teams allowing 4.2 ypr. On top of that, Washington's defense is playing extremely well, allowing just 4.4 yppl against teams averaging 4.9 yppl. And they are very solid against the pass, allowing 5.3 yps against teams averaging 5.8 yps. So, if NE is forced to play catch-up, Washington should be able to defend against the pass. And I expect NE to be playing catch-up. Washington qualifies in a very solid fundamental rushing situation, which is 70-29-3. They also qualify in a second fundamental rushing situation, which is 498-383-30, including 9-3-1 this year and they also qualify in a scheduling situation, which is a letdown situation for NE that is 31-8-3. All the NE injuries almost make this play too obvious but the fundamentals are there. This game also qualifies in an over situation, which is 42-12-1. **WASHINGTON 27 NEW ENGLAND 17**

Kansas City –3 BALTIMORE 44

KC sure looks good right about now. The Chiefs are 3-0 and riding sky high, having scored 27 or more points in three straight games, including 40+ in their last two games. Yes, the Chiefs are starting to resemble the 1999 Dick Vermeil led Rams, with their high scoring offense (averaging 37 points per game – Rams averaged 33). And it took quite a while for people to realize the Rams defense that year was pretty solid. It's not taking people as long to realize the Chiefs defense this year is a major improvement over last year's squad. The Chiefs defense is allowing just 5.0 yppl against teams averaging 5.1 yppl. While the Chiefs passing game has been very solid, averaging 7.5 yps against teams allowing just 5.8 yps, their rushing offense has been just average, gaining just 4.5 ypr against teams allowing 4.5 ypr. They'll take on a solid defense this week in Baltimore, who is allowing just 4.5 yppl against teams averaging 4.8 yppl. KC has faced two mediocre to poor defenses, in SD and Houston, who are both below average. They also faced Pittsburgh, who they beat 41-20 but were outplayed in that game, from a stats perspective, gaining just 282 yards at 4.9 yppl. So, this Baltimore defense certainly has a chance to hold down the

Chiefs offense. The Chiefs have been scoring so many points because of their special teams play. Again, another similarity to the Vermeil '99 Rams team. The challenge here will be the Baltimore offense against a good Chiefs defense. There is nothing special about Baltimore's passing offense, which has gained less than 100 yards in each of the last two weeks (50 two weeks ago and only 97 last week) and are now averaging just 3.3 yps against teams allowing 4.8 yps this year. Of course, the strength of the Baltimore offense is their running game, which is averaging 6.1 ypr against teams allowing 5.1 ypr. They'll face a Chiefs rush defense, which is allowing 3.9 ypr against teams averaging 3.9 ypr. I had a lean against Buffalo last week, even though the Bills were playing extremely well on offense and defense but the situation just didn't favor them. This week KC is in the same situation. The Chiefs qualify in a letdown situation, which is 79-40-5 and plays against KC based on their recent offensive success. KC has also won and covered three straight games and because of that, they qualify in a letdown mode that is 62-23-4 and again plays against them. The value here lies with KC, based on their recent success, but I've learned over the years that situations are stronger than the value. Otherwise, like I said last week, we'd have a few teams each year that are undefeated and a few teams that are winless. That's only happened twice, I believe, since 1970 so it's quite obvious that teams play below or above their expected tendencies because of different situations they are put in. This is one of them. **BALTIMORE 27 KANSAS CITY 21**

BUFFALO -3 Philadelphia 41

I have leaned against Buffalo in each of the first three weeks. I was finally right last week. I have also leaned against Philly in each of their first two weeks and have been right both times. Philly certainly hasn't played very well so far. Their passing game has been nonexistent, averaging just 3.1 yps against teams allowing 4.3 yps but their running game has been very solid (albeit most has come from McNabb and a wide receiver end around for 47 yards), averaging 6.7 ypr against teams allowing 4.1 ypr. That should set them up rather nice against a Bills defense that is allowing 4.2 ypr against teams averaging 4.0 ypr. The Buffalo pass defense has been very solid, allowing just 4.3 yps against teams averaging 5.5 yps. I don't think Philly will do much through the air but with the threat of McNabb running, that can open up some passing lanes as well. On the other side of the ball, I spoke last week about Buffalo's inability to rush the ball and it showed last week when they averaged just 2.9 ypr on 41 yards. For the season, they are now averaging just 2.4 ypr against teams allowing 3.2 ypr. There hasn't been anything wrong with the Philly rush defense, which is allowing just 2.5 ypr against teams averaging 3.4 ypr. I don't see Buffalo moving the ball on the ground much this week either. The Philly secondary has been hurt by injuries and it is showing up, as the Eagles are allowing 5.9 yps against teams averaging just 5.4 yps. That does play into the hands of Buffalo, who is averaging 7.1 yps against teams allowing 6.1 yps. Buffalo only averaged 2.6 yps last week against a Miami pass defense that was suspect as well, so I think Philly, in desperation mode, off a bye can do enough to slow down the Bills passing offense. Philly qualifies in some solid situations this week, including a fundamental rushing situation, which is 498-383-30, including 9-3-1 this year. They also qualify in an early season situation, which is 95-46-6 and 6-1-1 this year and they qualify in a contrarian situation, which is 106-55-5 that plays on teams coming off of consecutive home games. Again, the value lies with Buffalo, based on early season play, but again, I have discovered the situations outweigh the value in the NFL. With both defenses playing above average, as a whole, and both offense playing below average, as a whole, the lean here would be to the under and my numbers suggest a lower scoring game than 'they' think. **PHILADELPHIA 20 BUFFALO 17**

PITTSBURGH -3 Tennessee 44

Both teams played well last week and shut down their opponents. Pittsburgh allowed just 4.1 yppl to Cincinnati and Tennessee allowed just 4.6 yppl to New Orleans. The Steelers defense has played well this year and they are allowing just 4.1 yppl against teams averaging 5.1 yppl. The strength of the Tennessee offense is their passing game, which is averaging a solid 6.4 yps against teams allowing 5.9 yps but they should find it very difficult to throw the ball against the Steelers secondary, which is allowing just 4.1 yps against teams averaging 5.5 yps. The Steelers rush defense has been above average as well, which will only make it tougher against a Tennessee rushing offense that is well below average, gaining just 2.9 ypr against teams allowing 3.8 ypr. And on offense, Pittsburgh is throwing the ball extremely well again, averaging 6.8 yps against teams allowing just 5.3 yps. Tennessee, meanwhile, is struggling defending the pass, allowing 6.5 yps against teams allowing 5.4 yps. That's a mismatch for Tennessee and should seal their fate on Sunday. Tennessee qualifies in a letdown situation that plays against them and is 167-115-9. My numbers favor Pittsburgh by about 12 points and by three points so there is certainly value with Pittsburgh. This game also qualifies in a 219-117-6 under situation but my numbers show around 49 points

being scored, and thus sucking all the value out of the under play. **PITTSBURGH 24 TENNESSEE 17**

CLEVELAND -4 Cincinnati 41

I don't have anything on the side for this game. There are no situations that apply here. Cincinnati would qualify in my turnover table system but that doesn't begin until next week. For the side, I will lean with the better defense. Cincinnati is allowing just 4.8 yppl against teams averaging 5.2 yppl, while the Cleveland defense is allowing 5.1 yppl against teams allowing 4.9 yppl. This would indicate the Cleveland defense is below average, but from a scoring standpoint, they are only allowing 18 points against teams averaging 25 points, which means they are playing very tough in the redzone and/or getting turnovers that are killing drives. Getting turnovers doesn't last forever and the more yards per play factor will catch up with them. Cincinnati has been just average on offense, gaining 4.7 yppl against teams allowing 4.7 yppl. The Cincinnati rush offense is below par and the Cleveland rush defense is below par, which probably evens out. The Cincinnati pass offense is above average and the Cleveland pass defense is above average, which probably evens those out. The weaker part of the Cleveland offense is their rushing offense, which is also the weaker part of the Cincinnati defense. And the strength of the Cleveland offense, albeit below average, is their passing offense but the strength of the Cincinnati defense is their pass defense. What's all that mean? A lot of strengths and weaknesses, which all even out. But, the better defense, which is Cincinnati, gets my nod. This game would qualify in a solid under situation if the total were 42 or higher. It would qualify in a 219-117-6 under situation at that point. My numbers also predict a very low scoring game, showing only about 25 points being scored in this game. I figure that number will end up a little higher, because, again, the Cleveland defense has been getting favorable results despite giving up yards. And, past history between these two teams here, has shown there has never been a game totaling more than 35 points since Cleveland began playing in 1999. Cincinnati needs the win more. **CINCINNATI 17 CLEVELAND 16**

MINNESOTA NL San Francisco No Total

Can't give an opinion on the side here without knowing the status of Moss or Culpepper or the line. Moss will play but definitely be less than 100%. Culpepper will probably also play but also be much less than 100%. Depending on what they set the total at, I like the under in this game. The Vikings are playing well and while their offense has been above average, gaining 6.0 yppl against teams allowing 5.5 yppl (and equally well with both the run and pass), they will face a SF defense that is playing extremely well. Mike Tice said this week this will be the fastest defense they have faced this year. The 49ers defense is allowing just 3.6 yppl against teams averaging 4.1 yppl. So, they haven't faced very good offenses but they are still playing very well. The Vikings defense is still a bit below average, allowing 4.7 yppl against teams averaging 4.5 yppl but the 49ers offense is also below average, gaining just 5.2 yppl against teams allowing 5.4 yppl. Tice also said if Culpepper played, all he would have to do is hand the ball off anyway. That's a sure indication he would like to run the ball as much as possible, especially because he considers the 49ers to be a very quick team and knows how big, strong and fast Terrell Owens is and how much trouble he can cause, if given a chance. If the total comes out 42 or higher, this game would qualify in a 219-117-6 under situation. My projected score is about 45 points, but would probably be less with less than healthy key players for the Vikings. In addition, the whole 49er offensive line is banged up and they are having trouble moving the ball. I'll recommend only about 40 points being scored in this game and wait to see what the line and total are before making any further recommendations.

CAROLINA -6 Atlanta 35.5

You'd have to go back to 1997 to find a time when Atlanta has lost in Carolina by more than six points. Last year, Atlanta out scored Carolina by a combined 71-0 score! Of course, that was with Michael Vick, so things will change some. I've said it every week now and it has paid dividends in two of the three weeks and that is the Atlanta defense is below average and without Michael Vick, it leads to even more problems because now their offense is below average as well. Atlanta is allowing 5.9 yppl to teams averaging 5.5 yppl and they are equally bad defending both, the run and the pass. Atlanta is allowing 4.4 ypr to teams averaging 4.0 ypr. That doesn't bode well against a Carolina offense this is gaining 4.4 ypr against teams allowing 3.4 ypr. As a whole, the Carolina defense is below average because their passing game has been so atrocious, gaining just 4.0 yppl against 4.3 yppl (passing offense is 3.6 yps against 5.1 yps). But, because of the poor Atlanta pass defense, Carolina should be able to do some damage and they will definitely do some damage on the ground. Carolina is only allowing 16 points per

game but their defense is actually playing below average, from a yards per play standpoint and they have lost some defensive people to injuries already this year. Carolina is allowing 5.1 yppl to teams averaging 4.9 yppl. Their success on defense has come against the run, allowing just 2.7 ypr versus 3.7 ypr. But, their failure on defense has been defending the pass, allowing 6.4 yps against 5.8 yps. Atlanta hasn't done much on offense this year but they have been successful throwing the ball, averaging 5.1 yps versus 4.8 yps. The Atlanta rushing offense has been simply terrible, gaining just 2.8 ypr against 3.7 ypr. Carolina qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 498-383-30, including 9-3-1 this year. That situation also applies to Carolina in the best subset, which is 131-54-6, including 2-0 this year. The value sides with Atlanta in this game as my numbers only favor Carolina by about five points. Again, the situations are stronger than the value. This total is also very low, because of the reputation of the Carolina defense and because Atlanta's offense played so terrible last week. But, like I said, the Carolina defense isn't playing that well. And Atlanta can throw the ball and should find some success against the Carolina pass defense this week. My numbers suggest about 48 points being scored in this game. The only reason I am not on the over (with such a low total) is because both offenses are below average and could bog down, even though their strengths are going against the opposing team's defensive weaknesses. Lean towards Carolina and the over.

CAROLINA 28 ATLANTA 20

ST LOUIS -10.5 Arizona 44.5

Much was made at the beginning of the year about the lack of quality receivers on the Cardinals, including myself thinking the same thing. But, as the season plays out, it looks like that might just be an area of strength for Arizona. Their young receivers are coming along just fine and looking like very good athletes. Arizona is now averaging 6.4 yps against teams allowing 5.9 yps. Their running game has suffered and is only averaging 3.6 ypr against 4.1 ypr. They should be able to move the ball against a poor Rams defense, which is allowing 5.6 yppl against 5.2 yppl, including allowing a whopping 5.2 ypr against 4.3 ypr. On the other side, the Rams offense is slightly above average, gaining 4.7 yppl against 4.6 yppl. Their strength is their passing game, which is averaging 5.4 yps against 5.1 yps. That passing game should fit just fine against the Cardinals pass defense, which is allowing 7.4 yps against 5.6 yps. The Arizona rush defense is actually playing pretty well, allowing just 3.4 ypr against 3.9 ypr. Arizona moved the ball well against a better than average Packers defense last week, gaining 354 yards at 5.7 yppl. They should do the same against the Rams this week. Arizona qualifies in a momentum situation, which is 22-4-2 and they qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 498-383-30, including 9-3-1 this year, including the best subset, which is 131-54-6, and 2-0 this year. Teams who allow 30 or more points in their first two games of the season and then allow 20 or less in a winning effort in their third game are 9-0-1 ats since 1983. There is another variation of that, which is 21-2-2 since 1983 and 9-0-0 in a division game. Arizona hung with the Rams last year, losing 28-30, in a game the Rams probably didn't have much interest in because their playoff hopes were gone. The Rams have now failed to cover the last four times they have been a home favorite by double digits. But this game also sets up well for the total. We have two offenses, which are above average, although just slightly and two defenses, which are well below average. Couple that with a respectable total of 44.5 and this game has a very good shot at going over. My numbers only indicate about 45 points being scored so no value there but no lack of value either. But both teams are throwing the ball well and neither team is stopping the pass very well, which gives us a very good chance of getting the over. **ST LOUIS 27 ARIZONA 24**

Jacksonville -3 HOUSTON 38.5

Tough game to call as I have situations going both ways. Jacksonville qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 498-383-30, including 9-3-1 this year, including a subset, which is 303-205-15. Houston, on the other hand, qualifies in a 38-15-0 situation based on their poor defensive performance last week. The Houston offense is actually respectable this year, gaining 4.9 yppl against 5.0 yppl but their defense has really given ground, now allowing 5.8 yppl against teams averaging 5.3 yppl. They take on a Jacksonville offense that is also playing above average, gaining 4.9 yppl against 4.6 yppl. But the Jacksonville defense is allowing 4.9 yppl against 4.6 yppl. The weak link in that defense is their pass defense, which is allowing a whopping 7.1 yps against 5.8 yps. Houston is just average throwing the ball but they should have some success in the air. Jacksonville won here last year, 24-21, and quite frankly, I don't see any reason why this game won't be just as high scoring. Both defenses are below average and both offenses are good enough to move the ball. My numbers show well over 50 points being scored in this game. I don't know if it will get that high but I think it stands a good chance to go over the total. I do have an under situation, which would play this game under if it were on grass, and that's enough to keep me off the total in

this game. **JACKSONVILLE 27 HOUSTON 21**

OAKLAND -7 San Diego 43

Both teams are in disarray but SD seems to be in even more disarray. SD lost last week against Baltimore but they actually played a pretty good game, minus the turnovers. SD gained 389 yards last week at 5.1 yppf against a Baltimore defense that is allowing just 4.5 yppf and allowed Baltimore to only gain 4.6 yppf. The Chargers offense, thanks to their running game (4.8 ypr against 3.7 ypr) is actually averaging 4.9 yppf against teams allowing 4.6 yppf. Their defense has let them down, especially in the passing game, allowing 6.2 yps against teams averaging 5.6 yps. Last week they only allowed Baltimore to gain 4.4 yps but Baltimore is only averaging 3.3 yps for the year. But they did hold the Ravens to 4.8 ypr and Baltimore is averaging 6.1 ypr this year. Normally that would be trouble against the Raiders but Oakland's passing game has been terrible this year, averaging just 4.7 yps against 5.4 yps. Their rushing game has been solid, gaining 4.5 ypr against 4.0 ypr but they'll face a decent SD rush defense, which is allowing just 4.9 ypr against teams averaging 5.2 ypr. What really hurt SD last week was the turnovers. They lost the turnover battle 4 to 2 but it was really 4 to 1 seeing Baltimore picked up one of their own fumbles and ran it for a touchdown. Take away the -3 in turnovers and the game might have played out a little differently. No reason to think Oakland can stop the Chargers from moving the ball, seeing Oakland is allowing 5.4 yppf against 5.1 yppf. Yes, I know SD is playing without David Boston this week and has multiple injuries on their offensive line and to their receivers. But Vegas also knows this and the way some people talk, this line should be closer to +14 with all the injuries. Vegas doesn't give away gifts like that, especially in the NFL. SD qualifies in a general situation that is 41-15-1 based on taking points between two bad teams coming off of bad performances. Oakland's poor defensive performance last week sets them up in a negative situation that plays against Oakland. That situation is 139-87-9 going against Oakland. Oakland also fits the subsets of that, all the way down to the best subset, which is 56-18-2. My numbers only favor Oakland by about 5.5 points. Good value on SD here against an over rated Oakland team. **OAKLAND 21 SAN DIEGO 20**

NY JETS -3 Dallas 37

I don't care if the Jets are playing my nephew's junior high football team, they shouldn't be favored against anyone. I'll make a case for the Jets actually playing better than most think but that still doesn't give them the right to be favored. Parcells is now 56-39-2 ats as a dog since 1983, including 45-27-1 on the road and 31-11-1 if his teams winning percentage is .600 or lower and greater than .000. The Jets actually played well last week, gaining 5.4 yppf to only 4.4 yppf for NE but couldn't get the ball into the endzone. The Jets can't run the ball if their life depended on it and they are gaining just 2.9 ypr against 3.5 ypr. That means in short yardage situations, they can't run the ball and they can't run the ball when they get near the endzone, which makes it even harder to get in the endzone. Their passing offense is actually playing very well, averaging 6.4 yps against teams allowing 5.6 yps. They should find some success against the Cowboys pass defense, which is allowing 5.8 yps against 5.5 yps. But, unfortunately, the Jets can't stop anybody either. Their defense is allowing 5.2 yppf against 5.1 yppf, including being below average defending both, the run and the pass. Dallas, despite what you might think, is actually moving the ball very well, averaging 5.8 yppf against 5.6 yppf, including throwing the ball for 7.0 yps against 6.6 yps. Dallas has gained 403 yards in each of their first two games and there isn't any reason they can't have success against the Jets defense. Dallas qualifies in an early season situation, which is 95-46-6, including 6-1-1 this year. They also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 498-383-30. Meanwhile, bad teams shouldn't be favored over anyone and the Jets qualify in a negative situation based on that principle, which is a 44-17-1 play against the Jets. I'm amazed at the low total in this game. The total is only 36.5 points. The average score in an NFL game this year is about 41 points combined. We have two above average offenses, from a yards perspective and two below average defenses, from a yards perspective. If the average points scored in an NFL game is 41 points and we have above average offenses and below average defenses, this game should total more than 41 points. And it doesn't hurt to know both teams have been successful throwing the ball and neither has been successful stopping the pass. My projected points in this game, is about 43 points, which gives us plenty of value. Even if I'm wrong about the offenses and defenses, we have some wiggle room because this total is so low. The better team is Dallas and you know they will be prepared with Parcells and especially with his history as a dog. Dallas is better, Jets are too slow on offense and Dallas has too much speed on offense. Wrong team favored. **DALLAS 27 NY JETS 21**

DENVER -12.5 Detroit 43.5

I won't be playing this game and I'll recommend the contrarian side, although Denver could obviously win this game by more than 20. The Detroit offense is terrible. They are gaining just 4.4 yppl against 5.0 yppl and extremely deficient in both, the run and the pass. Their defense is also well below average, allowing 6.3 yppl against 5.5 yppl. The rush defense is terrible, allowing 5.5 ypr against 4.3 ypr and their pass defense isn't much better, allowing 6.9 yps against 5.5 yps. This doesn't bode well knowing they now have to face Denver, who is averaging 5.1 ypr against 4.4 ypr and 5.5 yppl against 5.3 yppl overall on offense. The Denver defense is allowing just 4.4 yppl against 4.8 yppl and is above average in both, the run and pass defense. My numbers favor Denver by about 18-20 points in this game. But, as I have said, situations out weigh value and there is a scheduling situation going against Denver here, with a look ahead to their game at Kansas City next week. Denver qualifies in a play against 115-66-2 situation. This game also qualifies in a terrific under situation, which is 53-17-2 early season under situation. It also qualifies in a 219-117-6 under situation. But, my numbers show about 50 points being scored in this game, which leaves us with too much negative value. The situation is always stronger but the value has to be somewhat reasonable to make the play. I can certainly see this game being low scoring, with Denver just looking to get a lead, and then allow their running game to play out the game. But Joey Harrington might give away a couple of passes, which could lead to easy scores as well. I'll side with the situations but warn there is no value there. **DENVER 27 DETROIT 16**

Indianapolis -2 NEW ORLEANS 42.5

Tough game for me to call here. E. James might not play, which doesn't help Indy. Indy does qualify in an early season situation, which is 95-46-6 and 6-1-1 this year. The value also seems to lie with Indy. Both teams offenses are playing below average this year, with Indy gaining just 4.8 yppl against 5.1 yppl and NO gaining just 4.9 yppl against 5.1 yppl. The Indy pass defense is playing well, allowing just 4.9 yps against 5.4 yps and their rush defense is allowing yards, giving up 4.3 ypr against 3.4 ypr but that might be a product of the cover two, than anything else. Overall, their defense is allowing 4.7 yppl against 4.6 yppl so they are about average, despite only allowing 9 points per game so far against teams averaging 16 points per game. The NO defense is also playing above average, allowing just 4.7 yppl against 5.0 yppl. Two good pretty solid defenses and two offenses playing below average could lead to a lower scoring game. I don't have enough to play the under and I have to feel NO should step up and play a good game here but the situation favors Indy in this game. Lean towards the under and Indy. **INDIANAPOLIS 20 NEW ORLEANS 17**

Green Bay -4 CHICAGO 41.5

Every year on the Packers schedule, you can be sure of two things. GB will beat Detroit at home and Chicago on the road. After all, GB has now won nine straight games in Chicago with only three of those nine wins coming by less than four points. And in their last 21 meetings against the Bears (home and away), GB has won 18 of those 21, and only six of those 21 games have been won (or lost) by less than four points. Or, in other words, GB has won 15 of those 21 games by more than four points. And it shouldn't be any different this time around. The Bears are simply not a good team. They don't have any playmakers that can give the Packers trouble. Chicago's offense is non-existent, gaining just 3.3 yppl against teams allowing 4.1 yppl. That doesn't figure to get any better against a good Packers defense that is allowing just 4.8 yppl against teams averaging 5.2 yppl. The Packers are better than average against both, the run and the pass. GB has struggled on offense, but they are getting healthy again and should improve some. The Chicago defense has played pretty well to this point. Chicago is allowing just 5.5 yppl against teams averaging 5.6 yppl. They have been hurt by the pass, allowing 6.7 yps against 6.5 yps but the GB pass offense has been pretty dreadful, gaining just 6.0 yps against 6.5 yps. The Packers should have TE Walls this week, which could open up things for Favre. He should also have a healthier Donald Driver as well. Green Bay qualifies in an early season situation that is 95-46-6 and 6-1-1 so far this year. They also qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 498-383-30, including 9-3-1 this year. And they qualify in some of the better subsets of that situation as well. The Packers run defense has been solid all year, as they are allowing just 3.4 ypr against teams averaging 4.0 ypr. Their pass defense gave up big play after big play last week against Arizona, allowing the Cardinals to throw for 273 yards at 8.8 yps. But Chicago doesn't have the athletic receivers to burn GB. The Bears are only averaging 3.1 yps against teams allowing 4.5 yps and Kordell Stewart doesn't seem to be the answer. My numbers show GB winning this game quite comfortably. **GREEN BAY 28 CHICAGO 14**

BEST BETS

YTD 7-3-1 +7.70%

3% WASHINGTON -2.5

2% BALTIMORE +3

2% PHILADELPHIA +3

2% ARIZONA +10.5

2% SAN DIEGO +7

2% DALLAS +3

2% GREEN BAY -4 (No higher than -4)

2% ARZ/STL OVER 44.5 (No higher than 45)

2% DAL/NYJ OVER 36.5 (No higher than 37)

WEEK 5

A very solid 6-3 last week, bringing the season total to a healthy 13-6-1 +14.80%. The season win percentage of 68% comes on the heels of a great finish to last season, where I went 41-22 65% over the final 10 weeks of the season (regular season and playoffs). The thinking continues to be very strong and hopefully nothing will change this week. All side opinions went 9-4 last week and they are now 35-22-2 61% over the first four weeks this year.

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

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

Average Points Scored 21.0

Yards Per Rush (YPR) 4.1

Yards Per Pass (YPS) 5.8

Yards Per Play (YPPL) 5.0

Tennessee -1.5 NEW ENGLAND 40.5

I went against NE last week and was lucky to come out with a win. Both these teams played misleading final scores last week. NE lost at Washington, 17-20, but out gained Washington 387 yards to 250 yards and 5.6 yppl to only 4.7 yppl for Washington. NE passed the ball, at will on Washington, throwing for 281 yards at 7.2 yps. I said last week I thought Washington would run the ball against NE and they did just that, gaining 116 yards and ran the ball nearly 57% of the time. The NE rush defense has been below average this year, allowing 4.0 ypr to teams averaging 3.8 ypr but they should have much better luck defending Tennessee this week. For the season, Tennessee averages just 2.6 ypr against teams allowing 4.1 ypr so I doubt Tennessee will get their running game going this week. The strength of the Tennessee offense is their passing game, which is averaging 6.7 yps against teams allowing 6.0 yps. But, they'll face a stiff resistance this week against NE, who allows just 5.1 yps against teams averaging 6.0 yps. Tennessee did have luck throwing against a solid Pittsburgh secondary last week, gaining 158 yards at 9.3 yps. Tennessee only gained 5.1 yppl last week, and only gained 198 yards. They allowed Pittsburgh to gain 376 yards at 5.0 yppl. In other words, the game was played pretty evenly, but Pittsburgh lost the turnover battle, 0-2. The NE offense is below average this year, gaining just 4.6 yppl against teams allowing 4.8 yppl but knowing they like to throw the ball (even though they have been below average in doing so, 5.3 yps against 5.7 yps), they should find a little more success against a Tennessee secondary that allows 6.4 yps against teams averaging 6.2 yps. NE catches Tennessee in a bad scheduling spot and because of that, NE qualifies in a 155-85-8 scheduling situation. Also, Tennessee has won the turnover battle the last couple of games and that sets them up in a bad situation. Teams don't consistently continue to win the turnover battle week after week and when they don't win it, it becomes much harder to win games. Tennessee qualifies in a negative 29-76-1 situation based on that premise. My numbers make Tennessee about a two point favorite but the situations clearly give the value to NE. As long as NE remains a pick 'em to a dog, they'll get my money. **NEW ENGLAND 24 TENNESSEE 17**

BUFFALO -8 Cincinnati 40

It's amazing how good Buffalo looked their first two weeks and how average they have looked the last two weeks. Buffalo has some serious problems running the ball. And it's not just because Travis Henry didn't play last week. They have struggled all year and are only averaging 2.3 ypr against teams allowing 3.1 ypr. Their passing game has been solid, gaining 6.9 yps against teams allowing 6.1 yps. On defense, their run defense has been below average, allowing 4.5 ypr against teams averaging 4.2 ypr (a big reason I went against them last week) but their pass defense has been solid, allowing just 4.5 yps against teams averaging 5.2 yps. That might be a little more to their liking this week. Cincinnati has struggled to run the ball, gaining just 3.0 ypr against teams allowing 4.4 ypr and Corey Dillon won't play this week, although I think Rudi Johnson is a capable fill in for them. The strength of Cincinnati's offense is their pass offense, which is averaging 6.1 yps against teams allowing 5.4 yps. But, they might struggle a bit against the improved Bills secondary. On defense, Cincinnati and Marvin Lewis has shored up their pass defense, which was atrocious last year, and is allowing just 5.7 yps against teams averaging 5.9 yps. It's their rush defense, which has struggled, allowing 4.4 ypr against teams averaging 4.0 ypr. It appears Cincinnati's strengths go right into Buffalo's strengths and their weaknesses into Buffalo's weaknesses. Buffalo qualifies in a week five situation that plays on teams coming off consecutive losses and that situation is now 28-8-1. Buffalo also qualifies in a negative scheduling situation that is 66-115-2 but they don't qualify in the better subset of that, which

is only 14-13-0 if they don't qualify in it. My numbers favor Buffalo by about 13 to 17 points in this game. It's also interesting to note Marin Lewis has played four straight unders with the Bengals, which is a trend worth watching. My total numbers on this game are pretty close to the total. **BUFFALO 23 CINCINNATI 13**

NY GIANTS –1 Miami 37.5

Both teams are coming off a bye week and should be plenty rested. Miami has looked much better since losing their opening game at home to Houston. But, the fact still remains they allowed the Jets in week two to throw for 366 yards at 8.0 yps. That's not too surprising seeing Miami has always played much worse defense on the road than at home. Since 1998, Miami has allowed about 13 points per game at home while allowing about 22 points on the road. Their offense has been pretty steady at home and on the road but the defense has suffered. That could spell even more trouble for a defense that doesn't appear to be playing quite as well this year. Their defense is allowing 5.4 yppl against teams averaging 5.0 yppl and is below average against both, the run and the pass. They'll face a Giants offense that is above average, thanks to their running game, which is averaging 4.4 ypr against teams allowing just 3.7 ypr. The Giants passing game has been about average but I don't have too many worries about their passing game getting on track. It will, of course, depend on how well their makeshift line plays, but I have confidence they can turn that around. The surprise of the Miami offense has been their passing offense, which is averaging 6.6 yps against teams allowing 5.9 yps. The rushing offense has actually been below average, gaining just 4.0 ypr against teams allowing 4.4 ypr. The Giants defense has been pretty average defending both, the run and the pass, being a little bit better against the run. Miami should be able to move the ball some in this game. But, Miami is in a letdown spot here and the Giants qualify in a 31-8-3 situation based on that. More importantly, NY qualifies in a terrific fundamental rushing situation, which is 128-50-7 since 1983. That situation kicks in this week but would have played Minnesota last week. It is based on the Giants ability to rush the ball against a below average Miami rush defense and the overall decent Giants defense, as a whole, which should limit Miami's success on offense. My numbers support the Giants in this game anywhere from three to six points, giving us plenty of value on them as well. This game also qualifies in a 286-216-11 under situation. My different numbers conflict on whether this game will go over or under the total but I'll lean towards the under because of the situation. **NY GIANTS 23 MIAMI 13**

GREEN BAY –2 Seattle 45

Reunion number one in the NFL this weekend. Seattle's Mike Holmgren and Ray Rhodes come back to where they enjoyed so much success. At least Rhodes enjoyed his success as a defensive coordinator. He was fired by the Packers after one year as head coach. It's also a reunion for Mike Sherman, who coached with Holmgren in Green Bay and at Seattle before taking the Packers job. I have been saying all year the Packers numbers are actually decent but their home loss to the Vikings (who are undefeated) and their road loss at Arizona have masked some of their numbers. Turnovers, which are a key to any team, are the key to any Packers game. If they avoid them, their talent is good enough to win any game. If they commit them, their talent isn't good enough to overcome their mistakes, especially against good teams. The GB offense is about average this year but they are running the ball very well, averaging 5.0 ypr against teams allowing 4.4 ypr. Their passing offense is still below average, gaining just 6.1 yps against teams allowing 6.4 yps. But the defense has been solid (as it was in the first game against Minnesota – turnovers killed them in that game), allowing just 4.8 yppl against teams averaging 5.0 yppl. The rush defense is actually playing very well, allowing just 4.1 ypr against teams averaging 4.2 ypr. That rush defense took a bit of a hit last week at Chicago but the final numbers are a bit misleading. Kordell Stewart ran for about 70 yards and that was because of good coverage by the secondary (and a lack of quality Bear receivers). Anthony Thomas also had a 67 yard run. Take away those two runs and the Packers allowed only about 44 yards rushing at about 2.9 ypr. You can't discount the big run and the Stewart scrambling but it's not as bad as it might seem. Now they take on Seattle, who is coming off a bye week, rested and ready. The Seahawks have played terrific ball and have taken advantage of a +12 turnover margin. Teams don't consistently continue to win the turnover battle. Oh, a few teams do but it is rare. And when you take away the turnover success the Seahawks have had, they become a pretty ordinary team. Seattle is averaging just 5.2 yppl against teams allowing 5.3 yppl, including a very below average passing offense, which is gaining just 5.8 yps against 6.6 yps. Their rushing offense has been very solid, gaining 4.4 ypr against 3.8 ypr. On defense, they have played well, allowing just 4.6 yppl against teams averaging 5.0 yppl. This will be their toughest offense they have faced yet. For Green Bay, this is the toughest defense they will have faced yet. Seattle has been very solid defending the pass, allowing just 5.1 yps against 5.8 yps and average defend-

ing the rush, allowing 3.6 ypr against 3.6 ypr. Green Bay qualifies in a 63-20-6 home momentum situation. My numbers are conflicting as to which side has the value but the situation clearly lies in GB's favor. I also like their ability to rush the ball and stop the rush and that could be the difference in this game. Either way, both team's defenses are under rated and their offenses, I believe, are a little over rated. That leads to a high total and plenty of value to the under. My final total on this game is anywhere from 32 to 38 points, giving us plenty of value towards the under. And, with such a high number, things have to go just right for this game to go over the total. Mike Sherman knows Brett Favre's success comes when his team can run the ball and I think he will make it a priority this week. **GREEN BAY 21 SEATTLE 17**

Oakland -4 CHICAGO 42.5

Well, the Bears are a bad, bad team. Their offense is terrible and their defense isn't very good. The Bears offense is now averaging just 3.9 yppf against teams allowing 4.7 yppf. Their rushing offense has actually been decent, gaining 4.9 ypr against 3.8 ypr but they simply can't throw the ball. They are averaging just 3.3 yps against teams allowing 5.2 yps. That is a product of Kordell Stewart simply not being a very good quarterback and their receivers are below average. The pass defense has been average but their rush defense is allowing 5.2 ypr against 4.7 ypr and allowed GB last Monday to gain 187 yards at 7.5 ypr. Take out the Ahman Green 60 yard run and they still allowed 127 yards at 5.3 ypr. It's also about time people start realizing how bad the Raiders are. Oakland is averaging just 5.2 yppf against 5.1 yppf on offense, making them just an average offense. And it isn't like they have faced a bunch of solid defenses. They have faced San Diego and Cincinnati in that mix. And, even worse, the defense has been atrocious, allowing 5.6 yppf against 5.1 yppf, including allowing 7.0 yps against 6.1 yps. Can the Bears offense take advantage of that? I'm not sure. Oakland qualifies in a negative letdown situation that is 37-69-3 and this week marks the beginning of my turnover table, which is 747-579-30 over the last 20 seasons and that situation plays on Chicago this week. This game also qualifies in a 48-20-4 under situation as well as a 286-216-11 under situation. But, it also qualifies in a 35-11-1 over situation and my final numbers indicate closer to 55-60 points being scored in this game. I can't play the over because of the strong under situations and I can't play the under because of the over situation and the value leaning towards the over. The 'right' play here is on Chicago but it's very hard to play them in this spot. When you compare Gannon to Stewart, Garner to Thomas, Rice and Brown to Terrell and Booker, the decision is pretty easy. Having said that, I am here to warn you the NFL is a contrarian league and this is the exact spot where the contrarian GODS usually shine. I have to see a better Bears team before I can actually play them. **OAKLAND 21 CHICAGO 20**

CAROLINA -7 New Orleans 37.5

Many people were on Atlanta last week but the match-up was not a very good one for the Falcons last week. Carolina is now 3-0 and has beaten Tampa Bay but their numbers are a little skewed. For the year, Carolina is averaging only 4.5 yppf against 4.9 yppf and on defense they are allowing 5.1 yppf against 4.8 yppf. Those numbers would suggest they are below average on both, offense and defense. Their defense isn't allowing points, only 12 points against teams averaging 18 points, which means they are getting turnovers and playing stingy defense when it counts. One area which has helped them considerably is their rushing offense, which is averaging 4.6 ypr against 3.8 ypr and that is allowing their offense to control the clock. They should find some more success this week against the Saints, who are allowing 3.6 ypr against 3.4 ypr. The Saints pass defense is also below average, allowing 6.8 yps against 6.4 yps but Carolina's passing offense has been dreadful this year, gaining just 4.4 yps against 5.9 yps. New Orleans should have some success moving the ball, as they are gaining 5.1 yppf against 5.1 yppf, including averaging 4.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr. And they'll go against a Carolina defense that is allowing 3.8 ypr against 3.6 ypr and 5.9 yps against 5.6 yps. NO qualifies in my turnover table situation, which is 747-579-30 over the last 20 seasons. My numbers favor Carolina by around 12 to 14 points but the situation clearly favors NO. I look for NO to bounce back this week and play a closer game than this spread. **CAROLINA 21 NEW ORLEANS 17**

Minnesota -4.5 ATLANTA 43

This is another tough game for me to call. The situations favor Atlanta in this game but Minnesota is clearly the better team and they have a strong situation in their favor as well. The Vikings offense didn't miss a beat last week without Culpepper and he likely won't play again this week. For the season, Minnesota is now averaging 6.1 yppf against teams allowing 5.2 yppf. That ranks their offense tops in the league, but unlike other years, their defense is

holding their own this year. The defense is allowing just 4.9 ypl against 4.9 ypl, making them average from a stats standpoint. They are allowing just 14 points per game against teams averaging 21 points per game. So, the turnovers are certainly going in their favor. For Atlanta, I have said it from week one that their defense is below average. And, now that Michael Vick is hurt, their offense is well below average as well, which makes it very hard to win games. The Atlanta defense is allowing 5.8 ypl against 5.2 ypl, while their offense is averaging just 4.3 ypl against 4.7 ypl. The weakest part of their offense is the passing game, which is averaging just 4.9 yps against 5.4 yps. On defense, they are bad against both, the run and the pass, allowing 4.6 ypr against 4.2 ypr and 6.9 yps against 6.1 yps. The weakest part of the Vikings defense is their pass defense, which is allowing 5.2 yps against 5.1 yps, which makes them just average defending the pass. Their rush defense is above average, allowing just 4.2 ypr against 4.5 ypr. On offense, the Vikings have been very solid with both, their rush and passing offense. Mike Tice said this week he expects Atlanta to come out and run the ball. Atlanta ran the ball 23 times last week against Carolina and gained 144 yards at 6.3 ypr. Tice also said Atlanta is hurting big time on defense, especially in the secondary. Atlanta qualifies in a number of contrarian situations, which are 26-2-1 (a game five situation where a team plays in desperation mode), a home underdog contrarian situation, which plays on home teams coming off bad performances against road teams off good performances, and another game five situation, which is 35-6-2. They also qualify as a turnover table play, which is 747-579-30 and as a contrarian turnover situation, which plays against road teams coming off consecutive games where the turnovers were in their favor. That situation is 76-29-1. Minnesota, on the other hand, qualifies in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 499-385-30, including 10-5-1 this year. My numbers also favor Minnesota by around 7 to 11 points. Having said all of that, this is another game where I must warn you the contrarian GODS are to be respected and they favor Atlanta in this game. Injuries and the fundamentals are enough to keep me off Atlanta as a best bet here. **MINNESOTA 24 ATLANTA 23**

KANSAS CITY -3.5 Denver 45.5

This should be a great game. Denver almost got caught looking ahead last week as they barely escaped with a victory over Detroit, 20-16. Detroit played a good game and actually ran the ball very well on Denver, gaining 144 yards at 6.0 ypr. Meanwhile, in Baltimore, Kansas City was winning but was actually out played, allowing Baltimore to out gain them, 326 yards to 265 yards and 5.0 ypl to 4.5 ypl. The saving grace for KC last week was four Baltimore turnovers. KC is much like Minnesota this year, in that their offense is playing well, but their defense is holding their own. The KC defense is now allowing just 5.0 ypl against 5.0 ypl, which makes their defense average, but that's very good when considering how good their offense is and now their special teams. The KC offense is averaging 5.5 ypl against 5.1 ypl and they have been successful with both, the run and the pass. Their rushing offense is averaging 4.5 ypr against 4.2 ypr and they'll face a Denver defense that is allowing 4.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr. The Denver rushing offense has been good this year, gaining 4.8 ypr against 4.6 ypr but their passing offense has been slightly below average, gaining just 6.4 yps against 6.5 yps. The Denver passing defense has been solid this year, allowing just 4.6 yps against 5.4 yps but KC should be able to run the ball enough to also be able to throw a little bit. I don't have any situations that favor either team but my numbers favor KC by about five points in this game. Couple that with KC's ability to run the ball and their advantage at special teams, which has played a role in every game, and I'll side with KC. I also have a situation that plays on the under in this game, which is 216-117-6 to the under and my numbers actually only call for either 32 to 42 points scored. Even with the value and the situation, I am reluctant to take the under because of the capabilities of both of these teams to score. Since Vermeil got to KC, they have played three of the four games against Denver over this total. **KANSAS CITY 24 DENVER 20**

DALLAS -7 Arizona 37

Reunion number two in the NFL this week. Emmitt Smith comes home this week. No since in comparing past results between these two teams since Dallas is a completely different team with Bill Parcells at the helm. Their offense is suddenly somewhat explosive. While they didn't reach the 403 yards they had gained in each of their first two games, last week they only gained 360 yards at 5.5 ypl. They allowed the Jets to gain 285 yards at 5.2 ypl. Most impressive for Dallas was their rushing game, which garnered 202 yards rushing at 4.9 ypr. Parcells is quite content to sit on a lead by rushing the ball once he feels they have a comfortable lead. This offense has enough playmakers, as long as Quincy Carter just plays within himself. They have plenty of speed at receiver and Parcells can make the running game work. This team is probably a great play to go over the total when they are playing a good team that will force Dallas to run their offense the whole 60 minutes. For Arizona last week, they played an

average game but ran into problems because they couldn't get their defense off the field. The Rams played ball control offense and controlled the clock for over 42 minutes, running 84 plays to only 36 plays for Arizona. Overall, Arizona averaged 4.5 yppl to only 4.8 for the Rams. The Arizona offense is an average offense, gaining 5.2 yppl against 5.2 yppl but their passing offense is averaging 6.3 yps against 5.8 yps. It's their passing defense that has really hurt them this year, allowing 7.0 yps against 5.5 yps. Their rush defense is allowing just 3.4 ypr against 4.1 ypr but that might be more a product of teams willing to throw rather than run on them. For Dallas, their rush defense has been above average, allowing just 3.0 ypr against 3.6 ypr but their passing defense has been a bit suspect, allowing 6.3 yps against 5.8 yps. The Dallas offense has been above average with both, the run and the pass, and they are averaging 5.7 yppl against 5.5 yppl. I like the Arizona receivers to be able to get open and make some plays. That probably won't be enough to win the game but I think they can keep it competitive. Dallas qualifies in a 105-44-4 negative situation but they don't qualify in the better part of that subset, which is 89-23-2 but only 16-21-2 without the subset. Arizona is also a turnover table play, which is 747-579-30 over the last 20 seasons. My numbers favor Dallas by about 11 to 17 points but, like I said last week, I consider the situations to be stronger than the value and the situations favor Arizona in this game. The real play I like here is the over. My numbers predict anywhere between 38 to 47 points being scored and I like the match-up here. Like I said, the Dallas pass defense is their weak spot against the Arizona pass offense, which is their strength. They should be able to score some points and the total in this game is only 37 points, which is five points below the league average. Again, a below average result will still result in a chance for the game to go over the total. I like the value and the match-up. Arizona has allowed 42, 38, 13 and 37 points this year. Going back to last year, on the road, they have allowed 37, 42, 37, 30, 49, 38, and 38 points in their last seven games. Those defensive performances alone would put this game over the total most of the time. **DALLAS 28 ARIZONA 24**

JACKSONVILLE -3 San Diego 42

Another game where I really like the total. I had SD last week and they played a great game, at least from the offensive side of the ball, where they gained 430 yards at 6.1 yppl. SD gained 222 yards on the ground at 5.7 ypr and another 208 yards at 6.5 yps. They also allowed plenty of yards to Oakland, allowing 120 yards rushing at 5.0 ypr and 328 yards at 7.1 yps. Jacksonville moved the ball extremely well again last week, gaining 342 yards at 5.8 yppl and their defense actually played pretty well, allowing Houston just 339 yards at 4.5 yppl. Both teams offenses are above average and both teams defenses are below average to just average. Jacksonville is averaging 5.2 yppl against 5.1 yppl, including 5.9 yps against 5.6 yps. That should be just fine against a San Diego defense, which has allowed 5.8 yppl against 5.3 yppl, including 6.5 yps against 5.5 yps. For SD, their offense is averaging 5.2 yppl against 4.9 yppl, which includes a healthy 5.1 ypr against 4.2 ypr. That too, should be just fine against a Jacksonville defense, which is allowing 4.8 yppl against 5.0 yppl but their pass defense is allowing a whopping 6.8 yps against 6.2 yps. The Jacksonville rush defense has played well this year, allowing just 2.8 ypr against 3.5 ypr and that goes against San Diego's strength but their pass defense is so bad that SD should be able to do some damage though the air and open up the running lanes. Both teams get their best receiver back this week as well, with Jimmy Smith coming back for Jacksonville and David Boston coming back for SD. SD qualifies as a turnover table play, which is 747-579-30 and my numbers favor Jacksonville by about three to four points. The situation clearly favors SD in this game and I will side with them based on their strong running game. My total points predicted in this game are 50 and 51 points, which gives us tremendous value to the over and the total in this game is just the average points scored in an NFL game so we are not required to go over a large total. **JACKSONVILLE 28 SAN DIEGO 27**

PHILADELPHIA -5 Washington 38.5

Washington actually got out played last week but the clock was on their side and they hung on to a victory over NE. Washington gave up 387 yards at 5.6 yppl to only 250 yards at 4.7 yppl for themselves. Now they take on Philly who won their first game last week against Buffalo, 23-13. Philly controlled most of that game but did get out gained, 5.4 yppl to 5.2 yppl. The Redskins have played Philly pretty tough here in Philly, except for last year, when they lost 21-37. But Steve Spurrier is running the ball more this year (57% of the time last week) and that gives his team a chance here. Washington's offense is above average, gaining 5.6 yppl against 5.3 yppl, while their defense has been just average, allowing 4.8 yppl against 4.8 yppl. Their rush defense has been above average, allowing just 3.4 ypr against 3.6 ypr. They'll take on a Philly offense, which has been just average, gaining 4.4 yppl against 4.4 yppl but Philly's rushing game has been solid, gaining 5.9 ypr against 4.3 ypr. Yes, some of that is

McNabb but it is there every week and a bona fide threat. Their passing offense is averaging just 3.6 yps against 4.4 yps. On defense, Philly is just average, allowing 4.7 yppl against 4.8 yppl but their rush defense has been strong, allowing just 2.4 ypr against 3.1 ypr. This is a tough game to call and I don't have any situations favoring either side. I'll lean with the points in a game that I think can come down to the wire. My numbers favor Philly by only a couple of points and I like the commitment Spurrier is making to the run this year. **PHILADELPHIA 24 WASHINGTON 21**

SAN FRANCISCO -7 Detroit 41

The Lions hung tough last week at Denver, before finally losing 16-20. Detroit ran the ball very well last week, gaining 144 yards at 6.0 ypr. Whether that was a lack of effort on Denver's part or Detroit starting to put their offense together, time will only tell. For San Francisco, they were blown out at Minnesota in a game they never had a chance to win. They were blown out early and often. SF allowed 354 yards at 6.7 yppl, including 252 yards passing at 11.0 yps. Yes, a lot of those yards were long throws down the field for Randy Moss to jump and catch, but Charles Rogers has some of those same capabilities. SF ran the ball well, gaining 145 yards rushing at 5.8 ypr but much of that came in the second half when Minnesota had put it in cruise control. And for the year, SF is only averaging 4.5 ypr against teams allowing 4.9 ypr so they have not run the ball very well at all. The Detroit offense is still very poor, gaining just 4.5 yppl against teams allowing 4.9 yppl. Meanwhile, their defense is also below average, allowing 6.1 yppl against teams averaging 5.6 yppl. Both their run and pass offenses and defenses are below average as well. For SF, their offense is about average, averaging 5.2 yppl against 5.3 yppl. Their defense has been pretty solid, allowing just 4.3 yppl against 4.9 yppl but they struggled when it mattered most against the Rams and were never in the game last week. SF qualifies in a negative situation this week after their poor defensive outing last week. In fact, because of that, they qualify in a 85-138-9 situation, including subsets all the way down to 22-65-2. That is a play against SF. Detroit is also a turnover table play for me and that situation is 747-579-30 over the past 20 seasons. SF also qualifies in another negative scheduling situation, which is a play against situation with a record of 66-115-2, including a subset of that, which is 52-102-2. SF does qualify in a fundamental rushing situation, which is 499-385-30, including 10-5-1 this year. My numbers only favor SF by 4 to 7 points. The situations and the value clearly lie with Detroit. Very tough to take Detroit in this situation but they are the side to play here. **SAN FRANCISCO 24 DETROIT 20**

PITTSBURGH -6.5 Cleveland 42

Pittsburgh couldn't put away Cleveland in any of their three contests last year and I see no reason why they will this year either. Cleveland lost at home to Cincinnati last week but they outplayed Cincinnati, from a stats standpoint, gaining 339 yards to only 295 and 5.7 yppl to 4.9 yppl for Cincinnati. Pittsburgh played even with Tennessee last week, from a stats standpoint but came up way short on the scoreboard, partly due to a -2 turnover ratio. The Cleveland pass defense has been pretty solid this year, allowing just 4.9 yps against teams averaging 5.7 yps but their rush defense has given up big yards, allowing 5.2 ypr against 4.3 ypr. But their rush defense shouldn't have too many problems against Pittsburgh because the Steelers rushing offense is averaging just 3.3 ypr against 4.0 ypr. It's the Pittsburgh passing offense that is excelling, averaging 6.6 yps against 5.6 yps but they'll face a very tough Cleveland secondary. Nothing special about the Cleveland offense, which is below average rushing the ball and just average throwing the ball. They'll face a very solid Pittsburgh defense, which is above average against both, the run and the pass. Cleveland has hung tough against every passing team they have played this year, losing by three to Indy, beating SF and losing by seven to Cincinnati. The only team that blew them out was Baltimore and that's because Baltimore can run the ball. I don't have any situations that favor either team but the value does favor Cleveland as my numbers only predict Pittsburgh to win by about 3 to 7 points and the match-up favors Cleveland as well. **PITTSBURGH 21 CLEVELAND 17**

TAMPA BAY -4 Indianapolis 37.5

Welcome to the TB defense Peyton Manning. Peyton is about to find out what Brett Favre and Jeff Garcia and Michael Vick, etc. have already found out. The TB defense, with their speed, will make a good quarterback look very, very average very quickly. Indy destroyed NO last week, gaining 418 yards at 7.5 yppl but their defense did allow 363 yards at 5.8 yppl. That defense is giving up a lot of yards via the run, allowing 4.8 ypr against teams averaging 3.5 ypr. A lot of that is because of their cover 2 schemes, which give up the rush and take away the pass, were they

are allowing just 5.1 yps against 5.8 yps. While the TB offense isn't rushing the ball very well, averaging just 3.1 ypr against 3.8 ypr, they will find success against Indy if they wish to take it because Indy will give them the rushing game. TB can methodically move the ball down field against the Indy defense because their defense is so good, TB doesn't have to worry about playing from behind and being forced to throw the ball. The Indy offense is lead by their passing game, averaging 7.1 yps against 6.2 yps but good luck against the TB pass defense, which is outstanding again this year, allowing just 3.3 yps against 4.3 yps. And, with a not so mobile Manning, things will only get worse for Indy. Indy is on a roll, having covered three straight games, but that's not good news for them this week, as they qualify in a negative letdown situation that is a 23-62-4 play against them. TB also qualifies in a Monday night situation that is 24-6-2 and another Monday night situation, which is 59-24-2. The value in this game actually lies slightly with Indy, because of their performances up to this point, but the situations, in my research are much more important than the value. **TAMPA BAY 24 INDIANAPOLIS 13**

BEST BETS

YTD 13-6-1 +14.80%

3% NY GIANTS PK

2% NEW ENGLAND +1

2% TAMPA BAY -4

2% SEATTLE/GREEN BAY UNDER 45

2% ARIZONA/DALLAS OVER 37

2% SAN DIEGO/JACKSONVILLE OVER 42