

Written by Patrick Mayo

Thursday, 04 February 2010 11:20 - Last Updated Thursday, 04 February 2010 11:42

Below, we explore what should happen in this week's NFL games. Of course, in the NFL, only half of what should happen actually does happen, but playing the percentages gives you the best chance of winning. Remember, think twice before benching a stud based on match-ups! We list the Vegas odds spread in parentheses and the Over/Under number in brackets.

Ask a question about your lineup in our [FORUM](#). Leave a comment about this article down below.

SUNDAY EVENING

Indianapolis v New Orleans at Miami (-4.5) [55.5]

It's offense vs. offense when the Colts and Saints clash in Miami. After twenty-one grueling weeks, we have two teams left standing, and the book is out on both of them. The Peyton Manning-led Colts will need to be firing on all cylinders to keep up with Drew Brees and the high-octane Saints offense. Per usual when two high scoring teams meet, the defenses will be the deciding factor. No one expects either defense to keep the offenses at bay, but a timely turnover or a red-zone stand will be the difference.

Both teams employ the same basic strategy of spreading the field, creating mismatches, and hitting the open man. Both teams' best players are their signal callers, and both will have to be at the top of their game to come out on top. The Colts get the edge at receiver with the compliment of Wayne, Garcon, Collie and Clark. After being taken out of the game by Darrelle Revis in the AFC Championship, look for Wayne to reemerge as Manning's go-to option against the weak Saints secondary.

The edge in the running game goes to Thomas, Bell, Hamilton, and the rejuvenated Reggie Bush. Because the Colts linebackers have so much speed, expect a lethal dose of Thomas and Bell pounding the ball up the gut, while Reggie Bush flanks out to draw attention away from the middle of the field. If the Saints have any chance of completing the big plays they've been accustomed to all season, they will need to establish an effective running game to keep the

Written by Patrick Mayo

Thursday, 04 February 2010 11:20 - Last Updated Thursday, 04 February 2010 11:42

defense guessing.

A lot is being made about Dwight Freeney's ankle, but frankly, whether he plays or not won't be a huge factor. Of course the Colts will be better off with their top rush end, but they've won without him in the past and they can do it again. Against a far more formidable pass rush in the NFC Championship, the Saints were able to keep the Vikings pass rush to a minimum. It's no knock on Freeney, but he's no Jared Allen. If you think Freeney can get to Brees when the [elk spearing Jared Allen](#) couldn't, you're dreaming.

In the end, all we can hope for is a high scoring, close game. When all is said and done, I expect experience to be the deciding factor between two eerily similar teams. Manning has the chance to elevate himself into history's all time greats with a win -- and Peyton isn't the type to squander this type of opportunity.

IND 38, NO 30 (Pick: Indianapolis -4.5, over 55.5) □ □

Again, ask a question about your lineup in our [FORUM](#) . Leave a comment about this article down below.