

NFL - 2009 Fantasy Football Week 14 Spread Pick'em Preview

Written by Patrick Mayo

Tuesday, 08 December 2009 00:05 - Last Updated Sunday, 13 December 2009 23:46

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.

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Last Week:

- Against Spread: 2-14
- Straight Up: 5-11
- Over/Under: 11-5

Well, I'll never forget Week 13 of the 2009 season. It easily ranks as my all time worst week for picks. Things always get dicey when you predict five upsets, but to miss them all and witness two huge ones you gave no chance of happening is just embarrassing. I guarantee a rebound in week 14.

THURSDAY NIGHT

Pittsburgh at Cleveland (+10) [36]

Troy Polamalu should return to action next week. When he does, the Steelers become scary again. Standing in between now and then, we have the Cleveland Browns. A short week for both teams should be a huge advantage for the superior team. Even with Hines Ward likely to miss the game with an ankle injury ([who's soft now Hines?](#)), the Steelers should still be able to overwhelm the lowly Browns Thursday night. Reasons to watch the Browns? How about Jerome Harrison. Harrison was explosive out of the backfield last week scoring two touchdowns and is doing his damndest to keep the job for next season. Pittsburgh should be able to win

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handily, but the Browns should score enough garbage time points to cover.

PIT 20, CLE 12 (Pick: Cleveland +10, under 36)

SUNDAY EARLY

Buffalo at Kansas City (Pk) [37.5]□

Next, we move to Arrowhead where my two big upset picks from last week get to compete in the "Shame Bowl". The good news? The Chiefs defense is so bad that my beloved Bills get a chance to compete on offense. Fortunately for the Chiefs, the Bills aren't stalwarts on defense either. Expect big game on both sides of the ball for anyone who plays running back, as both teams rank in the bottom five in rushing defense. It's always tough when two terrible teams face off, so I've decided to compare and contrast. The Bills give up 21.8 points per game, and the Chiefs give up 27.2. The Bills score 16.6 on average, and the Chiefs score 16.3. The Bills have 4 wins, and the Chiefs 3. The Bills stack up nicely and don't want to lose to Kansas City and Cleveland in the same year. Let's go Bills! **BUF 23, KC 17 (Pick: Buffalo Pk, over 37.5)**

Carolina at New England (-13.5) [44]

The Pats have now lost two straight games for the first time in years,. Don't expect them to make it three. New England was Blitzkrieged in their two losses, letting Drew Brees and Chad Henne throw all over them. I suppose the Pats have never been more happy to learn that it's Matt Moore who will try to extend the losing streak. Moore was very efficient against a bad Tampa defense last week, but I assure you that he doesn't complete 80% of his passes in Foxboro. If the Panthers want a chance to compete, they'll have to keep the ball on the ground, which will be hard to do with a banged up DeAngelo Williams and nine men in the box. The Patriots are 5-0 at home and should finally blow off some steam when they put a pounding on the Panthers. **NE 31, CAR 10 (Pick: New England -13.5, under 44)**

Cincinnati at Minnesota (-6.5) [43.5]

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While the Eagles-Giants game will be getting all the attention this Sunday, the game of the week will actually take place in the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, when the 9-3 Bengals square off against the 10-2 Vikings. Both teams boast excellent run defenses and excellent running backs, but something's gotta give. As strange as it sounds, Cedric Benson has flourished in this situation all season long. Benson's best games of the season have come against Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Green Bay. All three rank among the top 5 run defenses, along with Cincinnati (3rd) and Minnesota (4th). On the flip side, Adrian Peterson has crumbled in tough match ups. AD finished with less than 70 yards against Pittsburgh, Green Bay, and Arizona (11th) and should be bottled up by this upstart Bengals defense. Despite the Vikings' prolific aerial attack, Benson and the Bengals should keep this close enough where they'll have a chance to win on the last possession. They've been deadly in that area all year long. Go with Cincy in the upset. **CIN 20, MIN 17 (Pick: Cincinnati +6.5, under 43.5)**

Denver at Indianapolis (-7) [44]

Denver has gotten over their mid-season slump and are now winners of two straight. The bad news is that their opponents are winners of twelve in a row. The Colts are a match-up nightmare for the Broncos. If Champ Bailey is able to shut down Reggie Wayne, Manning simply has too many other weapons to beat them with. The climate controlled conditions in Indy will enable the Colts to continue their winning ways. I'm convinced Jim Caldwell is a mute. Has anyone ever heard him talk? I'll bet he dominates silent auctions. **IND 28, DEN 17 (Pick: Indianapolis -7, over 44)**

Detroit at Baltimore (-13.5) [42.5]

After the loss on Monday night, the Ravens sit at 6-6 and now need to win out to keep their playoff hopes alive. Their season will likely come down to a Week 16 clash at Pittsburgh. Their other three games involve the Raiders, Bears and the Lions, who they get this week. There should be no better cure for their offensive woes than the Lions. They made the Browns offense look explosive. Baltimore has put up points on bad defenses all season long and now, reeking of desperation, will show up in a big way this week when they put a hurtin' on ol' Motor City. Don't forget the defense that loves to bully inexperience. **BAL 35, DET 13 (Pick: Baltimore -13.5, over 42.5)**

Green Bay at Chicago (+3) [43]

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Green Bay is flying high and getting closer to clinching a playoff birth at 8-4. The Bears barely left Soldier Field with a win against the Rams last week. I don't give them much of a chance against a hungry Packers team. Matt Forte will be an ultimate bust this week due to the combination of the Packers' premium run defense and Forte himself (mainly his disdain for making people miss). The Rodgers-led offense will have their way with the depleted Windy City defense and put this one out of reach early. **GB 30, CHI 17 (Pick: GB -3, over 43)**□

Miami at Jacksonville (-2.5) [44]

Coming off a huge win against New England, the Dolphins have swum themselves back into the playoff picture. Now they travel to Jacksonville for a game that will have serious ramifications on the AFC playoff picture. The Jags currently hold down the 6th seed at 7-5 and can go a long way in retaining that spot with a win. They've won five in a row at home, but Miami will be no pushover. Both teams play similar styles, and this game will be won in the trenches. Whichever offensive line can get the most push will ultimately determine the outcome -- simple as that. The game will come down to the wire and could unquestionably swing either way. Miami is undefeated against the state of Florida this season, and you can count on them keeping it that way in a nail-biting affair. **MIA 22, JAC 20 (Pick: Miami +2.5, under 44)**

New Orleans at Atlanta (+9.5) [51]

Chris Redman will start again this week. That's good news for Roddy White's fantasy owners and terrible for Atlanta's playoff prospects. Redman is the equivalent of the Madden player who can't figure out how to move his QB vision. He drops back and just locks onto White, this explains his ludicrous 20 targets last week. The Falcons could really use a boost with the return of Michael Turner, but his status is still up in the air. The only team the Saints can't beat right now is themselves. And they definitely try every week. The Bad News Bayou Boys revel with the chance to stake their opponents to fourth quarter leads just to see how little time they need to come back. It's an advanced game of Russian Roulette, for which [they should consider hiring Christopher Walken as a consultant](#)

. In the end, without Matt Ryan, Atlanta really seems lost. The Saints should "Brees" through town and exit with a win.

NO 40, ATL 10 (Pick: New Orleans -9.5, under 51)

New York Jets at Tampa Bay (+3.5) [37]

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The Jets need a win to stay in the playoff race and will have to do it with a gimped up Franchise who just can't seem to be reached. I mean, [his sliding instructor couldn't even get through to him](#) (maybe they should hire [Michelle Pfeiffer in a badass leather jacket](#) to teach him again... pretty sure that's him on the right). Josh Freeman showed his greenness last week by throwing almost as many picks as his age. The Shadow, Darrelle Revis will promptly shut down Antonio Bryant, taking away Freeman's only viable deep threat. Expect a lot of Kellen Winslow and punts from Tampa. Thomas Jones will exploit the Bucs 31st ranked run defense, as the Jets will take care this one in sort order.

NYJ 20, TB 10 (Pick: New York -3.5, under 37)

Seattle at Houston (-6) [44.5]

Seattle is 1-5 on the road and won't be able to match the offense that Houston brings, even with a banged up Matt Schaub. Now that the Texans have played themselves out of the playoffs, they can start to win again. It wouldn't be the Texan way if they didn't make us feel optimistic heading into next year. Despite their win last week, this is a lost season for the Seahawks who will probably mail it in from here on out. Expect Julius Jones to get more touches than Justin Forsett. Jones must have a clause in his contract that decreases his salary with every touch. What's the point of giving him the ball? See what you have with Justin Forsett, Seahawks, because if Orange Julius is your future, you'd better find a stable pizza box to stay in at the bottom. Look for Andre Johnson to dominate all day long, which will be a joy to watch. **HOU 28, SEA 10 (Pick: Houston -6, under 44.5)**

SUNDAY LATE

San Diego at Dallas (-3) [48.5]

It turns out that [Pope Gregory XIII put a hex on the Cowboys in 1582](#) (yes Pope Powers include hexing, much like Voodoo Priests and Gypsies). He gave them the choice between excommunication or a one month curse -- a simple 31 days of misfortune every year in what he would call "December". Pffff, what's a curse compared to being censured by the Catholics? As it turns out, being excommunicated isn't what it once was, but that pesky curse keeps cropping up. Now as legend has it, once a vessel is cursed, another dines with fortune. The Chargers, winners of seven straight, are the ones who enjoy lady luck come December.

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Expect San Diego to add to the Cowboys' year-end misfortunes and the first rumblings of Philip Rivers MVP talk. □ **SD 31,**

DAL 25 (Pick: San Diego +3, over 48.5)

St. Louis at Tennessee (-13) [41.5] □

A hiccup last week in Indy shouldn't stop the Titans ending the year strong. Unless Vince Young goes on one of his "[sad walks](#)" before the game, expect a rout in Nashville. Need a reason to tune in? The league's leading rushers go head to head with Chris Johnson still on his historic pace to break the all time rushing record. Get used to hearing about it as the season winds down. He's a fun guy to root for.

Tennessee -13, over 41.5)

TEN 33, STL 10 (Pick:

Washington at Oakland (+1) [37.5]

Oakland has beaten Cincinnati and Pittsburgh over the last three weeks and seems about ready for a vacation. Washington has been close the last few weeks and should finally break through here. Jason Campbell is adding more to his price tag every week and will continue his sterling play in the Bay Area. Take the 'Skins. **WAS 24, OAK 17 (Pick: Washington -1, over 37.5) □**

SUNDAY NIGHT

Philadelphia at New York Giants (-1) [45.5]

The winner of this NFC East battle will find themselves in the playoffs, while the other will be leaving nose prints on the window. The Eagles look like they're getting it together at the right time again this year, even without the services of DeSean Jackson. The Giants are coming off a December win against Dallas -- not that huge of an accomplishment. Manning still isn't 100% and will be pressured by Philly's attacking defense all day long. Except turnovers from both sides, but bet on the Eagles to capitalize on them. **PHI 35, NYG 30 (Pick: Philadelphia +1, over 45.5)**

MONDAY NIGHT

Arizona at San Francisco (+3) [44.5]

San Francisco essentially took themselves out of the playoff picture last week with their loss at Seattle. A win this week will just prolong the inevitable clinching celebration in the desert. Arizona will want to get things wrapped up this week so they can get their December rest in hopes they can replicate last year's playoff run. Arizona tends to play better against good teams, and the 49ers qualify as a bottom of the barrel good team. If you want a case for San Fran, know that the season series has been swept the last five years, and the 49ers prevailed in Week One. But go with Warner, as he always plays better when his wife's happy -- [she feels at home in the sapphic city](#)

. Quality mullet.

ARI 31, SF 24 (Pick: Arizona -3, over 44.5) □

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