

NFL - 2009 Fantasy Football Wild Card Playoffs Week 18 Recap

Written by Patrick Mayo

Monday, 11 January 2010 00:05 - Last Updated Monday, 11 January 2010 22:13

Below, we explore what happened in this past week's NFL games.

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

Wild Card Weekend

- Against Spread: 0-4
- Straight Up: 0-4
- Over/Under: 3-1

What a game! I was having a terrible weekend -- basically the opposite of every prediction I made came true. And, believe me, my dignity hurts almost as much as my bank account because of it. In my start'em/sit'em, I recommended Brian Westbrook and Derrick Mason, who finished with a combined 2 catches for 35 yards. Are you kidding me? What were the Eagles' thinking? But Sunday night turned everything around. After three very sub-par games, the Packers/Cardinals game reminded everyone why we love football. The big plays, the comeback, the drama, overtime, the great ending, [Steve Breaston's Razor Ramon-esque celebration](#) (i guarantee you if Breaston adopted Razor's bad [Cuban accent, or just admitted he uses Chicas for fun](#) , he'd ooze at least twice the macheesmo) -- it had it all. But we'll get back to this later.

DAL 34, PHI 14 [PHI 33, DAL 30 (Philadelphia +4, over 45)]

Westbrook is a true game-breaker who, by all accounts, seemed healthy. On this lone touch, a 27 yard reception, he displayed the speed and elusiveness that I became accustomed in the past. But, Andy Reid decided that a the running back position is a non-existent entity in his offensive scheme. The Eagles threw the ball 39 times. They called a run 10 times -- five for LeSean McCoy, five for Leonard Weaver. Now, it's understandable that when you're down 27-7 in at half, you need to create some big plays in the passing game to get back into it. But the Eagles do two things well on offense -- screen passes and a vertical passing game off of play action. Running the ball, or at least the appearance you may attempt to run at some point, is an

NFL - 2009 Fantasy Football Wild Card Playoffs Week 18 Recap

Written by Patrick Mayo

Monday, 11 January 2010 00:05 - Last Updated Monday, 11 January 2010 22:13

essential element for this offense to be effective. We all know the Eagles hate running the ball. It's not something they do especially well, but to not even establish any semblance of a rushing threat is downright tragic. There wasn't a point in this game where Philadelphia ran on consecutive plays. Not once. It's hard to have a productive passing game when the defense can drop eight men into coverage every play with absolutely no fear of retribution. I suppose I can't take it too hard, I've won a lot of money over the last decade betting on the Eagles and against the Cowboys. I just failed to realize this is a new decade.

BAL 33, NE 14 [NE 31, BAL 27 (Pick: New England -3, over 43)]

Speaking of a new decade, I congratulate everyone who picked the Ravens, because I certainly didn't see that happening (like most things this weekend). It wasn't a lack of faith in the Ravens to win, it was a testament to my faith in the Pats inability to lose. I've had a decade of indoctrination telling me to trust the Patriots, despite my personal hatred for them. What happened? The Ravens defense was possessed to start the game and gave the offense the opportunity to post some easy, quick points that would bury New England for the rest of the day. Turns out being down 24-0 fifteen minutes into the game is basically insurmountable. This was a huge victory for the Ravens, but don't expect another 4/10, 34 yard performance from Joe Flacco to be good enough to upset the Colts next week.

NYJ 24, CIN 14 [CIN 13, NYJ 10 (Pick: Cincinnati -2.5, under 34)]

This game was just frustrating. In my preview, I said the Bengals would shut down Thomas Jones and that would force the Franchise into throwing too much, leading Cincy to victory. Well, Cincy definitely game-planned for Thomas Jones, but like myself, forgot to account for Shonn Greene. Greene was running harder and faster than Daniel Day-Lewis in *Last of the Mohicans* -- he was breaking tackles and running defenders over every time he touched the ball. What happened to Carson Palmer? I've been down on him all season, but this low was surprising to everyone. Every pass he threw was about ten feet over his receivers' head. It looked like he was doing his best Jordan Palmer impression. The only wide-out he didn't overthrow was Andre Caldwell, who seemingly dropped every pass in his direction. Maybe he was anticipating having to jump. Keeping on Caldwell, how bad is the Bengals receiver depth? Caldwell was injured after attempting a leaping grab on the one yard line in the first quarter. He came down hard on his knee and was basically unable to run from that point forward. This was brought to a head when Caldwell caught a short, first down pass with room to run. Instead of making a bee-line up the field, Caldwell simply dropped to the ground. Why? Because he couldn't run. Somehow, between all his drops and seemingly paralyzed legs, there was no one else on the bench that could perform at Caldwell's level, who was playing at about 5% of his abilities. One really tragic

NFL - 2009 Fantasy Football Wild Card Playoffs Week 18 Recap

Written by Patrick Mayo

Monday, 11 January 2010 00:05 - Last Updated Monday, 11 January 2010 22:13

thing about this game will be that Cedric Benson's outstanding performance will be lost to time. He single-handedly kept the Bengals in the game and looked downright explosive every time he handled the ball. It's unfortunate.

ARI 51, GB 45 [GB 34, ARI 24 (Pick: Green Bay +1, over 47.5)]

If you were not enthralled with this game, there's a chance Shang Tsung may have acquired your soul. Possibly through some sort of Kombat, pitting mortal on mortal. The theme of my Preview columns last week was "forget Week 17." I incorporated this sentiment into all of my picks, expect one. This is how you have winless weeks. But as this game went on, all my disappointment from the weekend was quickly washed away. The Cardinals got up 31-10 in the third quarter, when Larry Fitzgerald went unaccounted for and was able to turn a short pass into a 33-yard touchdown. It seemed there was no comeback in store for the Packers. They had yet to make a defensive stop. The only non-scoring drive for the Cardinals to this point was the Fitzgerald fumble. So what did Green Bay do to rectify this problem? Simple. After a six-yard Greg Jennings touchdown (that was easily one of the year's best catches), Mike McCarthy decided to use some trickery. The Packers' subsequent onside kick caught everyone off guard. When Brandon Underwood recovered that onside kick, it became evident to everyone watching that this game wasn't close to being over. It was just getting started.

On the next drive, Jordy Nelson was able to break a tackle near the goal line to get the game back within one score. Not surprisingly, the teams traded touchdowns from Fitzgerald and James Jones, until it finally happened. Green Bay, owners of the regular season's 2nd ranked defense, finally made a stop. It may have taken them 48 minutes, but it couldn't have come at a bigger time. Less than a minute later, the game was tied, 38-38, when fullback Jeff Khun bulldozed his way into the end-zone. As expected, the teams traded a Steve Breaston touchdown with a Spencer Havner touchdown, leaving 1:52 left on the clock for Arizona to win this game. More than enough time. When Neil Rackers lined up for his 34 yard field goal, was there any doubt he would miss? This was a game of touchdowns, thirteen to be exact. No sissy kicker was going to determine this game. So, in a game that was full of surprises, the biggest one was saved for the climax. As soon as Charles Woodson won the toss for the Packers (which Joe Buck referred to as , "his biggest play of the year". Keep trying Joe) destiny seemed to be on Green Bay's side. In a game that featured 1024 yards of offense, it seems almost fitting that the game was decided by the defense. On overtime's 4th play, Rodgers had the ball knocked out of his hand. In an attempt to get the ball back (or just practicing Hacky Sack -- he *is* from California) Rodgers kicked the ball out of mid-air, directly into the hands of Karlos Dansby, who promptly returned it 17 yards for a touchdown and a Cardinals' win.

NFL - 2009 Fantasy Football Wild Card Playoffs Week 18 Recap

Written by Patrick Mayo

Monday, 11 January 2010 00:05 - Last Updated Monday, 11 January 2010 22:13

This was easily one of the most exciting games I've ever witnessed. But there's something lingering in my mind. Two plays before, the Packers were called for holding, but a penalty was missed on the play. After Rodgers released the ball, Bertrand Berry not only delivered a late hit on him -- a helmet to helmet blow, which was very reminiscent of the hit he put on Trent Edwards last season, from which he's never been the same. But Rodgers shook that off, leading to the last play. When Rodgers fumbled, he was clearly the victim of a facemask infraction from Michael Adams. But there was no call. I think we all prefer the refs not deciding the game, but if the Packers aren't complaining about it, and no one is talking about it, then I guess I really don't care either. I wouldn't want to detract from this game in any way because boy, what a game it was!

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