

2019 COLLEGE & PRO FOOTBALL NEWSLETTER

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Games of November 5 - 11, 2019

NFL – By the Numbers

Most of our analysis and insights concern covering the pointspread. Yet there is also much to be appreciated and utilized in looking at straight up results in pro football. Here in Las Vegas there are numerous contests that offer handsome payoffs for contestants able to pick the straight up winners of NFL games without regard to the pointspread. Many of them involve weekly as well as season-long prizes and we suspect there are many more informal weekly ‘office pools’ around the country that also reward contestants for just picking the straight up winner of NFL games. Additionally, most sports books offer “money line” wagering where you can wager on who wins the game without regard to the pointspread. With those thoughts in mind we present the following historical NFL statistics that cover all regular season games between 1982 and 2018. Over 8,800 games are included in the study. There have been 131 pick ‘em games, the results of which are shown below for the Home Team but which are not included in the cumulative Home Favorites summation (1 pick ‘em game, played in London, is also not included)..

Pointspread Range	S/U Winners Home Favorite	Pct.	S/U Winners Road Favorite	Pct.	S/U Winners All Favorites	Pct.
Pick ‘em	61 - 71 - 0	46.2%				
1 to 3	959 - 724 - 4	57.0 %	707 - 588 - 3	54.6 %	1666 - 1312 - 7	55.9 %
3 ½ to 7	1658 - 803 - 7	67.4 %	779 - 366 - 2	68.0 %	2437 - 1169 - 9	67.6 %
7 ½ to 10	742 - 205 - 0	78.4 %	220 - 70 - 2	75.9 %	962 - 275 - 2	77.8 %
10 ½ to 14	477 - 94 - 1	83.5 %	88 - 22 - 0	80.0 %	565 - 116 - 1	83.0 %
14 ½ +	134 - 7 - 0	95.0 %	18 - 1 - 0	94.7 %	152 - 8 - 0	95.0 %
TOTALS	3970 - 1833 - 12	68.4 %	1812 - 1047 - 7	63.4 %	5782 - 2880 - 19	66.8 %

The Chart reflects the results of how frequently Favored teams in various pointspread ranges win games straight up, broken down by Home, Road and Overall performance. As the overall results show, two thirds of all Favorites win games straight up, with Home Favorites faring better than Road Favorites as we’d expect. Historically, experience shows that it takes approximately 73-75% winners to win one of the season-long contests. In most cases it takes a perfect week to win a weekly prize, although there are weeks with several upsets and 1 loss is good enough to cash. Rarely do 2 or more losses win a weekly prize.

The Chart can be used to determine the most likely scenarios to select upsets – and the pointspread ranges in which upsets are extremely unlikely and should be avoided. In general, to win a weekly prize you would want to concentrate on picking more upsets in a higher pointspread range. But to contend for the season-long prizes it is best to (a) avoid picking upsets involving Favorites of more than a touchdown, (b) limit your picking of upsets in the 3 ½ to 7 point range and (3) focus on picking upsets in the 1 to 3 point range, especially involving Road Favorites in that range which historically have won barely over 54% of the time.

And, of course, the chart can also be used in deciding whether or not to play teams on the Money Line, either favorites or underdogs or straight plays or parlays. (Note that the percentage of Straight Up success for underdogs is calculated by subtracting the Favorite’s winning percentage from 100 percent such that Road Underdogs of between 3 ½ and 7 points have won at a historical rate of 32.7% (100 % minus the Home Favorite percentage of 67.3 % equals 33.0 %).

COLLEGE SELECTION OF THE WEEK: Notre Dame - 8 over DUKE – With their CFP hopes all but gone Notre Dame’s focus will be on winning their remaining games and playing in a major Bowl. Perhaps a bit shell shocked from their 45-14 beatdown at Michigan the Irish needed a last minute TD to defeat Virginia Tech 21-20, never threatening to cover as 17 point chalk. Duke had to replace QB Jones yet started the season with 3 wins and covers following a lopsided loss at powerful Alabama. But the Blue Devils have had trouble holding onto often big leads over the last month, dropping 3 of 4 that includes a beatdown of their own, losing 48-14 at Virginia. Duke is the level of program that rebuilds rather than reloads whereas Notre Dame almost always attracts top tier talent. They also have revenge for a 38-35 home loss to Duke in 2016 when the Irish were 4-8 and coach Kelly was feeling the heat. Though it happened 3 seasons ago Kelly can use that loss as motivation for his team to regain focus for the stretch run. Notre Dame wins 41-23.

Other Featured College Selections

Louisville + 6 ½ over MIAMI FLA – Both teams are 1 win away from Bowl eligibility. Miami is off their win at Florida State, which defeated Louisville earlier this season. Louisville’s other losses were to undefeated Clemson and highly rated Notre Dame. They handed surprising Wake Forest its lone loss. 3 of Miami’s 4 losses have been to modest competition (North Carolina, Virginia Tech and Georgia Tech – the latter 2 at home) in addition to their season opening loss to highly regarded Florida. Louisville has the better offense but the weaker defense. New coach Satterfield has been able to erase the bad memories of last season’s disastrous play. Miami has underperformed under first season coach Diaz for whom the expectation for this season were higher. Louisville is off a Bye and should be well prepared as they catch Miami off what was an emotional win over its in-state conference rival. Louisville wins 35-27.

Penn State - 6 ½ over MINNESOTA – It’s surprising that both teams are unbeaten. Penn State lost several key players from last season’s team and faced a challenging early season schedule. Minnesota was thought to be improved but has taken advantage of an easy schedule to date. The Gophers are well coached under Fleck who led Western Michigan to a 13-0 regular season in 2016 which led to his getting the Minny job. This is by far Minnesota’s toughest test to date but Penn State should not take the Gophers lightly as they still have a game next week hosting Indiana before the showdown at Ohio State a week later. Penn State allows just 2.2 yards per rush which is the strength of Minnesota’s offense (4.5 ypr). Against other foes the Gophers’ opponents are 33-29. Penn State’s foes are 38-24 against other the Nittany Lions. Had Minnesota faced even one quality foe it would make for an attractive take. But having faced and beaten Iowa, Michigan and Michigan State back-to-back-to-back with two of the wins on the road their experience combined with Minnesota’s lack thereof justifies a call on the visitors. Penn State wins 30-17.

Georgia State - 2 ½ over UL MONROE – We go off the beaten path for this Sun Belt encounter. Georgia State started its season with that impressive road win over Tennessee as 24 ½ point road dogs. The Vols have gone on to win 3 of its last 3 games in SEC play, making State’s win even more impressive than it was at the time. UL Monroe is in the midst of a disappointing season and has lost its last 2 home games. GSU was 2-10 last season yet has a chance to play for the conference title after Appalachian State was upset last week. GSU hosts the Mountaineers next week which suggests a possible look ahead here. Yet at 6-2 a win here guarantees a winning regular season record. This is also a matchup of a team (GSU) that averages over 200 yards both rushing and passing against a team that allows an average of 200 yards both rushing and passing. That combo of strength/strength vs weakness/weakness is strong. Georgia State wins 31-20.

Best of the Rest (Opinions)

COASTAL CAROLINA + 14 over UL Lafayette [3]	Temple - 1 over SOUTH FLORIDA [3]
TULSA + 17 over Central Florida [4]	Florida State + 2 over BOSTON COLLEGE
Texas Tech - 2 ½ over WEST VIRGINIA	VIRGINIA TECH + 2 ½ over Wake Forest
Appalachian State + 5 over SOUTH CAROLINA	Vanderbilt + 26 over FLORIDA
PURDUE + 2 over Northwestern	ARIZONA STATE - 2 over Usc
Liberty + 17 over BYU	TCU + 2 ½ over Baylor
Lsu + 6 ½ over ALABAMA	MISSISSIPPI - 28 over New Mexico State

ARKANSAS - 1 ½ over Western Kentucky	OKLAHOMA - 14 over Iowa State
Uab + 5 over SOUTHERN MISS	Kansas State + 17 over TEXAS
LOUISIANA TECH - 5 ½ over North Texas	Iowa + 9 ½ over WISCONSIN
CALIFORNIA + 8 over Washington State	

The Rest (Leans)

TOLEDO - 6 over Kent State [1]	WESTERN MICHIGAN - 6 ½ over Ball State [1]
OHIO U - 7 over Miami Ohio [2]	Washington - 10 over OREGON STATE [4]
NORTH CAROLINA STATE + 32 over Clemson	Georgia Tech + 16 over VIRGINIA
Maryland + 43 ½ over OHIO STATE	ARMY - 35 over Massachusetts
CINCINNATI - 35 over Connecticut	Illinois + 15 over MICHIGAN STATE
NEW MEXICO + 22 over Air Force	COLORADO + 3 ½ over Stanford
UT San Antonio + 4 ½ over OLD DOMINION	BOISE STATE - 13 over Wyoming
UTEP + 13 over Charlotte	SMU - 21 over East Carolina
TEXAS STATE - 7 ½ over South Alabama	Troy + 2 ½ over GEORGIA SOUTHERN
Tennessee Pick 'em over KENTUCKY	Missouri + 17 over GEORGIA
Florida Int'l + 10 over FLORIDA ATLANTIC	FRESNO STATE - 6 over Utah State
SAN DIEGO STATE - 17 over Nevada	SAN JOSE STATE + 7 ½ over HAWAII

[1] Tuesday Nov 5

[2] Wednesday Nov 6

[3] Thursday Nov 7

[4] Friday, Nov 8

NFL SELECTION OF THE WEEK: GREEN BAY - 5 over Carolina – Carolina rebounded from its one sided 38 point loss at San Francisco with an impressive home win over Tennessee. Now it's Green Bay's turn to rebound from an uninspired and lethargic effort in a 26-11 loss at the Chargers in which Packers offense was held in check. Defensively Green Bay should focus on containing Panthers RB McCaffrey and force QB Allen to challenge the Packers defense. The Pack recorded season lows in both rushing and passing yards last week, limited to just 49 offensive plays with just 24 minutes of possession. Expect a much better effort from both sides of the football with the Packers having their Bye next week. This is an important game for the Packers who are off back to back road games with 2 more roadies after the Bye. Green Bay wins 31-20.

Other Featured NFL Selections:

CLEVELAND - 2 ½ over Buffalo – Halfway into what was thought to be a breakout season the Browns are 2-6 with no shortage of criticism and blame to go around. The main targets are QB Mayfield and rookie head coach Kitchens. The offense has a solid ground game that averages 5.2 yards per rush. The alarming stat is the - 8 turnover margin. Buffalo's all about its defense but the offense is average at best. Buffalo is #3 in allowing just 4.9 yards per play. QB Allen's not progressed much from 2018. 5 of their 6 wins have been vs. the Jets, Giants, Bengals, Dolphins and Redskins (a combined 5-37.) Cleveland's played much better competition and showed their potential in a 40-25 road win at Baltimore, amassing 530 total yards of offense. That they are favored here is indicative of linesmakers recognizing how stats and records can often be very misleading. The Bills play their first road game since Week 5. Cleveland wins 23-13.

PITTSBURGH + 3 ½ over L A Rams – The Rams return from their Bye that followed a pair of wins over the Falcons and Bengals who are a combined 1-15. Pittsburgh's won 3 straight with 2 of the wins against decent competition (Colts and Chargers). The defense has gelled in recent weeks, especially against the pass, holding 4 of their last 5 foes to under 190 net passing yards. QB Rudolph is more comfortable directing the offense with each passing week. The offense has had its 3 best rushing games of the season in the last 3

games, averaging 124 yards per game, a number the Rams have topped just once and that was in their opener. The Steelers also have the much better turnover margin of + 10 versus even for the Rams. Getting more than a FG is an attractive take in a game the Steelers can clearly win. Pittsburgh wins 23-20.

Seattle + 6 over SAN FRANCISCO (Monday) – This result of this attractive matchup could have a major impact on who wins the NFC West. Although San Francisco is the lone unbeaten team at 8-0, Seattle is 7-2 and a win by the Seahawks would allow them to control their destiny which includes a home rematch with the 49ers in Week 17. In contrast to past seasons in which Seattle enjoyed a huge home advantage this season finds Seattle struggling at home with a pair of 1 point wins, last week's overtime win and a pair of losses to New Orleans and Baltimore. Yet Seattle is unbeaten on the road (4-0) including a pair as road underdogs. It's hard to knock anything the 49ers have done aside from noting that their 8 wins have been against teams that are 22-35 against the rest of the NFL. Seattle had won 9 straight in the series prior to the Niners winning their second meeting last season. The 49ers are clearly a team on the rise but in this matchup the preference is to back veteran coach Carroll and QB Wilson in a big game. Seattle wins 24-20.

Best of the Rest (Recommendations)

OAKLAND + 1 over L A Chargers (Thursday)	Arizona + 4 ½ over TAMPA BAY
CHICAGO - 2 ½ over Detroit	DALLAS - 3 over Minnesota (Monday)

The Rest (Opinions)

Kansas City - 4 over TENNESSEE	N Y Giants - 2 ½ over N Y JETS
Atlanta + 13 over NEW ORLEANS	CINCINNATI + 10 over Baltimore
INDIANAPOLIS - 10 over Miami	

Byes	Denver	Houston	Jacksonville	New England	Philadelphia	Washington
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Best of the NFL Totals

Buffalo/Cleveland UNDER 40 ½	Arizona/Tampa Bay OVER 51 ½
Carolina/Green Bay OVER 47	Detroit/Chicago UNDER 42
L A Rams/Pittsburgh UNDER 45	Minnesota/Dallas UNDER 47 ½

Money Line Recommendations

College:	Louisville	VIRGINIA TECH	Appalachian State	Purdue
Pro:	CLEVELAND	CHICAGO	PITTSBURGH	Seattle

NOTE: All Selections are picked to win Against the Spread (ATS). Unless otherwise indicated, HOME TEAMS are in CAPS. All material is provided as news matter only and is not to be used in violation of any Federal, State or Local law(s)

