

NFL 2008 - Week 13

by Joe Mulder

Week 12: 8-8

[Woooooo-hoooooooooooooooooo! Non-losing week!
Woo-hoo!]

Overall: 77-97-3

The Smartest Thing I Said Last Week:

LaDainian Tomlinson – Pomeranian Tomlinson

[Gold. Just gold]

The Dumbest Thing I Said Last Week:

Lee Evans – Bee Evans

[Not my best work; I feel like the Buffalo Bills deserved better]

Normally I pick Thursday games on Thursday afternoon, and then post a full preview on Fridays. But I'm certainly not going to feel like working on that this weekend, so let's just do them all now. What am I worried about; I'll have a crappy week with lots of bad picks? Been there!

Let's start with the three Thursday games...

TITANS @ Lions +11

The Lions have to win one, don't they? Nobody goes 0-16. Maybe that's not the case... last year, more than a few people assumed that the Patriots would lose in the regular season, just because nobody goes 16-0.

As far as the Lions are concerned, maybe we should just be saying that no team has gone 0-16 *yet*.

(although they still host the Vikings coming up; they'll win that one. It'll be 2001 all over again; that year, the 0-12 Lions finally won a game when they hosted Dennis Green's Vikings. The Lions are in line to be 0-12 again this year when they host the Vikings a week from Sunday)

Seahawks @ COWBOYS -12.5

The Cowboys look like they might be back. The Giants are the best team in football, but who knows who the #2 team in the NFC is? It could just as easily be Dallas as anybody.

CARDINALS @ Eagles -3

A few weeks ago I said the Eagles were good; I'm not so sure now. The Andy Reid-Donovan McNabb era could be coming to an ugly end sooner rather than later.

Also, the Cardinals can clinch the NFC West in Philly on Thursday. In Week 13. With their eighth win. Not a murderer's row, that NFC West.

COLTS @ Browns +5

Around the same time I said the Eagles were good, I implied that the Colts weren't. I'd like to take both of those assertions back now, please, if I could.

The Colts have won their last four games, but by an average of four points. Still, I'm okay with giving away five, because the Browns are kind of a mess. And because the weather in Cleveland on Sunday isn't supposed to be terrible. A little snow; nothing the Colts shouldn't be able to handle.

RAVENS @ Bengals +7

Baltimore hasn't really had any problems on the road of late, and they really shouldn't have any problems with the Bengals.

In fact, the Colts, Ravens and Patriots, all 7-4, are essentially fighting for their playoff lives every week now; it might not be a good idea to pick against any of them unless you really think you have to. All three teams are in second place, all three teams are really good, but due to the fact that there are only two Wild Card playoff spots available, one team is likely to be left out of the postseason mix (technically they all three could make it if one or more of them end up winning their division, but then that leaves either the Steelers or Jets out of the playoffs, which is just as crazy).

DOLPHINS @ Rams +7.5

I could only find one website willing to list a line for this game, I suppose due to the uncertainty about Rams starting quarterback Marc Bulger. I think that the way the Rams are going, they could start the genetically engineered clone offspring of Johnny Unitas and Sammy Baugh at quarterback and it wouldn't matter much.

49ERS @ Bills -7

Don't let the Bills' offensive explosion against Kansas City last week – or their winning record – fool you... they're pretty lousy. I know I haven't give you much reason to believe me this season, but, believe me on that.

The 49ers are lousy too, of course, but, my point is... you know what? Let's move on to Panthers-Packers.

PANTHERS @ Packers -3 We know the Packers are an up-and-down team; we know the Panthers are among the class of the NFC. Home field advantage, it is often pointed out, is generally thought to be worth about three points. Are oddsmakers saying that they think these two teams are equally matched? I'm not sure I agree.

POOP READING

Saints @ BUCCANEERS -3.5

Here's the thing, and, I looked it up: NFC South teams are 7-0 at home this season within the division. It would follow, then, that NFC South teams are 0-7 on the road this season within the division.

It looks like the Saints are getting hot at the right time, I'm still not all that impressed by the Buccaneers, but I'm not going to go against a nice, juicy trend like 7-0. Can't do it. Wanna do it; can't do it.

GIANTS @ Redskins +3.5

Remember at the beginning of the season when the Redskins fired off four really good wins against four good teams on the way to a 4-1 start?

Yeah; that was right around the time John McCain picked Sarah Palin as his running mate and took a sizeable lead in all of the national polls.

Things change.

Meanwhile, the Giants are the sort of team that can go on the road, play without two of their marquee offensive names (Burrell, Jacobs) for the bulk of the game, and still beat a playoff-caliber team decisively. In other words: the Giants are really, really good. They weren't the last remaining undefeated team in the league this year, and it's hard to get too excited about anyone this early when just last year we saw an undefeated team lose the Super Bowl, so that might be why you're not hearing quite as much about the Giants as you ought to be. You will soon.

FALCONS @ Chargers -4.5

Close personal friend [Bill Simmons](#) has floated a theory on his podcast a few times this season: it takes two years for the effects of a bad coach to show up on a good team. He has floated this theory as a way of explaining Norv Turner's 2008 San Diego Chargers, who are 4-7 after making a trip to the AFC title game last season.

And then you've got the Falcons, who just got done blowing out a really good Carolina team and who could make a major playoff push if they win this week at San Diego and next week at New Orleans. Although I wouldn't hold my breath as far as that New Orleans game goes; that's an NFC South road game, and we know how those go.

Steelers @ PATRIOTS -1

Matt Cassel seems to be taking all of the Tom Brady comparisons to heart; just a few days ago he knocked up a B-list starlet and then ditched her for a European supermodel. Later this week, he plans to pose for some sexually suggestive [photos](#) with farm animals and talk about

how much he likes internet porn.

To complete the picture, on Sunday he'll lead the Patriots to win over Pittsburgh in a gut-wrenching fashion that makes every Steelers fan feel like they have to puke.

BRONCOS @ Jets -7.5

Let down? Let down, anyone? Do I hear let down?

Chiefs @ RAIDERS -3

The Chiefs have played some close games, is the thing. But the Raiders should have enough.

BEARS @ Vikings -3.5

I swear, I meant to pick the Vikings last week. I don't know why I didn't type it up that way in last week's column; I knew they were going to beat Jacksonville. You watch a team enough, sometimes you just know. Like how I knew that they would beat Carolina in Week 3. Still, they're playing for the outright lead in the NFC North on Sunday night; I've got to go back to picking against them for misery insurance. And because when they *do* win, it's usually an excruciating, last-second affair, which means that I can't possibly give away three-and-a-half points.

Three, maybe; not three-and-a-half.

Jaguars @ TEXANS -3

Yech. ESPN should hire the Sklar brothers to goof on this game live as it happens; then, I might watch.
