

NFL 2009, Week 12 - Part One

by Joe Mulder

Just a quick three-game picks column for the Thanksgiving Day games; we'll get to the Smartest and Dumbest Things I Said Last Week, as well as an update of my overall record (for all of you who are breathlessly awaiting one), in the regular Friday piece.

PACKERS @ Lions +11.5

This could potentially be the first of three Turkey Day duds, reminiscent of last year when the Titans beat Detroit 47-10, the Cowboys beat the Seahawks 34-9 and, in the only game that any of us had any hope might be good, the Eagles destroyed the Cardinals 48-20.

I happen to be a bit of a traditionalist, by the way, and I'm generally in favor of keeping things the way they are (unless "the way they are" is completely ridiculous, like, for instance, the NFL's overtime procedure). But even I have come to believe that it might be time to reevaluate having the Lions and Cowboys play Thanksgiving home games every year (these were always the two Thanksgiving Day games – at Detroit and at Dallas – until the NFL added a third, floating Thanksgiving Day game a couple of years ago).

For one thing, the Lions stink. They've almost always stunk. In today's NFL, when fortunes swing so drastically from year to year, we can't rightly say that they always *will* stink, but they certainly stink this year (2-8, with their only wins coming against the 3-7 Redskins and the 1-9 Browns). Why keep giving us the Lions every year? They've lost five straight Thanksgiving games, all of them by more than ten points.

It's awfully hard for the fellas to convince the ladies that they need to watch the game instead of visit with the in-laws or keep an eye on the little ones when even the most clueless-about-football mom or aunt can glance at the flatscreen and immediately see that the score is 35-10, is my point.

Anyway, the Lions may be riding high after their dramatic victory over the Cleveland Browns last week, but if you beat the 2009 Browns and there actually needs to be drama involved, that doesn't speak well for your chances against a half-decent team like the Packers.

Raiders @ COWBOYS -13.5

I've had to choose between Tony Romo and Jay Cutler every week for my fantasy football quarterback; it's safe to say that I won't touch either one of them next year with a ten foot pole. Romo puts up good numbers, but he's also more than capable of putting together a 158-yard, 1-TD, 1-INT stink bomb like the one against the Redskins last week.

And the Raiders actually have a better-than-average pass defense. By all rights I should go with Cutler this week, but he's playing the Vikings and I don't want to root for him to have a big day. I want to be able to root for him to get crushed.

Why you should care about any of this, and what it has to do with the actual game, is anybody's guess.

Giants @ BRONCOS +6.5

The Broncos' 6-0 start was clearly a mirage. Following their bye week, Week 7, they've lost four in a row and haven't really even looked competitive in any of those games.

The Giants, however, might not be that much better. Throw in the home field advantage for Denver and it's difficult for me to imagine how this Giants team – who struggled to beat the possibly lousy Falcons at home last week – could be favored by this much.
