

### NFL 2009, Week 9

by Joe Mulder

Last Week: 4-9

Overall: 60-55-1

I hear everybody got creamed last week. It happens. One more bad week, though, and I'm in danger of dropping below .500 for the year, and that can't happen. You hear me? *Can't happen!*

The Smartest Thing I Said Last Week:

I think the Broncos go down, and we lose one more unbeaten team this weekend.

One of the least interesting things I've ever said, perhaps, but smart nonetheless as the Broncos lost to the Ravens, 30-7.

The Dumbest Thing I Said Last Week:

What possible reason would the Titans have to show up for this one, other than pride (which, as we all know, is one of the seven deadly sins)?

Well, the Titans are professionals, and are still largely the same team that went 13-3 last season. I failed to heed the titular advice of a certain 2000 Denzel Washington vehicle and, as far as the Titans go, I forgot them. They remembered to beat Jacksonville, however, 30-13.

Redskins @ FALCONS -10

We thought we had these NFC East teams figured out, didn't we? The Giants were the class of the entire conference, Philly had playoff potential, Dallas was a flawed, troubled team and the Redskins just plain stunk.

Well, we were a quarter right: the Redskins just plain stink. They've got next to no chance this Sunday against a good Atlanta team that really, really needs this win.

Dolphins @ PATRIOTS -10.5

Dare we doubt the Patriots at home, coming off a bye week, against a divisional foe? Not to mention a divisional foe who beat them at home last season and scored a playoff berth at 11-5 while the Patriots missed the postseason with an identical record? How about a divisional foe whose coach last week declared that "we're 3-0 in the division... and it still goes through us"?

I dare not.

Packers @ BUCCANEERS +9.5

Remember when Chris Berman used to refer to this matchup

– which in those days took place twice a year, as both teams played in the old NFC Central – as the "Bay of Pigs," because both teams were bad?

I might be the only person older than 14 who still finds Chris Berman endlessly amusing, but I don't care.

Anyway, I smell upset. The Buccaneers are rested and ready, they're not quite as bad as everyone thinks they are (although they are indeed pretty bad), and the Packers might not be all that good. Even if the Bucs don't win, I'd think they're a decent bet to cover. Nine-and-a-half points is a lot of points.

Chiefs @ JAGUARS -6.5

Oh, who the hell knows anymore with the Jaguars? You just can't pick the Chiefs on the road, for any reason, otherwise I'd really be tempted to do so.

CARDINALS @ Bears -3

Were I in Las Vegas this weekend, I would bet some money on the Cardinals to win this game straight up. The Bears aren't great; they're 4-3 but they've only outscored their seven opponents this season by 9 points total, and that's only because of two blowouts of the awful Lions and Browns, whom they outscored by 24 apiece.

Bears fans must just look at Jay Cutler now and get this same dull pang of hopelessness that my wife and I got three four or five years ago when we brought our new computer home, lugged it up the stairs, set it down in its place on the desk, plugged it in, fired it up and, almost immediately, thought to ourselves, "Shit, we probably should have bought a laptop." Much like Bears fans, we were inextricably committed for the foreseeable future to something we already didn't like.

TEXANS @ Colts -9

The Texans are on a pretty nice three-game winning streak, the Colts can't run the ball – somebody has to figure out how to use that against them eventually, right? – and I'm not saying that the Texans will win this game, I'm just saying they're good enough that I don't want to give away nine points to them.

RAVENS @ Bengals +3

The Ravens lost three straight heartbreakers due in large part to questionable penalties, a dumb mistake or two, and a missed field goal. They're still one of the better teams in the league, not much different than last year's 11-5 team that made it all the way to the AFC title game.

The Bengals, on the other hand, are... um...

You know what? I've got small children and a day job, and only so much time to follow the NFL anymore; I'm man

## POOP READING

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enough to admit that I frankly don't know a damn thing about the Bengals. So there.

### Panthers @ SAINTS -13

The Panthers snuck up on the Cardinals last week, but I think that means it'll be tougher for them to sneak up on the Saints. The Panthers could have a lot of trouble running the ball because all of their fullbacks are injured, and they could have a lot of trouble throwing the ball because their quarterback is the 2009 version of Jake Delhomme.

Look for New Orleans to stay unbeaten, and comfortably.

### LIONS @ Seahawks -10

You would normally never pick this year's Seahawks to beat anybody by more than ten... but you would also normally never pick the Lions to cover even a ten point spread. But it seems to me that the Lions are capable of hanging around, especially against a team like the Seahawks that's not so great, so picking Detroit this week is the incremental lesser of two gigantic evils.

### TITANS @ 49ers -4

If one or both of these teams would just make a final decision on whether or not they're going to be lousy, that would be really helpful. Thanks, guys.

### CHARGERS @ Giants -4.5

According to the internet, the last time the Chargers played the Giants in Jersey it was the infamous "snowball" game, a game that the Giants nearly had to forfeit because their idiot fans wouldn't stop chucking snowballs at the Chargers players and coaches.

I just wanted to make sure to bring that up. This seems as good a time as any to reiterate that guys from the East Coast are essentially just apes. They really are. Please, guys from the East Coast, I implore you: evolve a little bit and join us in the Cenozoic Era. I know it's scary, but I think you'll end up liking it.

(Sorry; I don't know where that came from. Maybe it's just a gut response to the sickening idea that Yankee fans are celebrating even as you read this)

### COWBOYS @ Eagles -3

When it's all said and done, I think this game will come down to which quarterback is at his shakiest.

All kidding aside, though, this should be a pretty damn good game. If I can't watch my Vikings this week because they're on a bye, then at least this one should be entertaining.

### Steelers @ BRONCOS +3

Can I be so hackneyed as to suggest that for the Broncos, following a decisive loss to Baltimore, it is "gut-check time?" Yes I can; it's late and I'm tired.

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