

2016 NFL Picks - Week 6

by Joe Mulder

My 5-0 Vikings, clearly and un-jinxably the best team in the NFL and the odds-on favorite to win the Super Bowl, are off this week so it'll be tougher than usual to make money. But we soldier onâ€¦

Last Week: 7-5-1

Overall: 30-27-2

THURSDAY NIGHT:

BRONCOS (-3) @ Chargers

I tweeted on Sunday that anybody who doesn't just bet the "over" in all Chargers games for the rest of the season is simply being fiscally irresponsible. Thursday's over/under was 44, so, now I'm basically standing at a chalkboard Bart Simpson-style and writing, over and over, "Thursday games are low-scoring duds, any half-decent team can accidentally win one, and we certainly do not put them in the Fiscal Five."

SUNDAY EARLY:

BROWNS @ Titans (-7.5)

Even though they don't, necessarily, I feel like the Titans and Browns always play close games. The Browns stink, to be sure, but everybody (except the 2008 Lions) stumbles back-assward into a win eventually. I'm not saying the Browns will win, and this might be a dumb pick because the Titans might compete for a playoff spot in the mediocre AFC South, but 7.5 seems like a lot.

They finally announced after some hemming and hawing who will be playing quarterback for the Browns this week (Cody Kessler) but does it really matter? Sometimes the Browns themselves don't know. During the game.

49ERS @ Bills (-7.5)

The only comment I have on the Colin Kaepernick situation is something I'll steal from a friend's tweet: "Sitting is always preferable to standing, no matter what song is playing in the background."

I know the Bills are on a little bit of a roll here but it be very Bills-y; and very, very Rex Ryan-y; and very, very, VERY Rob Ryan-y for their defense to fall apart at home in front of a jacked-up crowd that's finally been given some hope. I think "West Coast team traveling east for an early game" will get trumped by "the Bills are the Bills."

And if not, if the Bills win, then they probably have to be considered – gulp – playoff contenders. Which is quite

something – the Bills last made the playoffs during the same century that the Cubs last won the World Series.

JAGUARS @ Bears (-2)

Apparently this is "screw it, these crappy road teams are bound to put a decent game together sooner or later" week. This might not go well for me.

STEELERS (-7.5) @ Dolphins

The Dolphins should be 0-5. The Steelers are nigh on unstoppable (I know they were stopped by the Eagles in Week 3. Shut up). It's hard to feel good about giving away seven-and-a-half points on the road, but here we are.

Bengals @ PATRIOTS (-9)

Not that you care but I've got Tom Brady and Aaron Rodgers on my most expensive fantasy football team, so unless I swing a trade I'll be in a "my gold shoes are too tight!" situation every week, agonizing about which one to start. Good problem to have.

In contrast, the Bengals not being able to run the ball? Bad problem to have.

Eagles (-2.5) @ REDSKINS

Both of these teams have played the Steelers. If you remove those Pittsburgh games then the Eagles haven't beaten anybody good and just lost to the middling Lions last week, and the one-loss Redskins are riding a three-game win streak into a rivalry game at home.

This is the kind of logic you use when you don't really know anything about football, but hey, check my year-to-date record: so far, so not-necessarily-that-bad.

Panthers (-3) @ SAINTS

Saints are rested, Panthers are reeling. Around the time the vaunted Panthers defense was letting Sam Bradford and the Adrian Peterson-less Vikings blow by them, I remember thinking "that's going to be one regressed-to mean." These don't look like last year's 15-1 Panthers, is what I'm saying.

These DO look like last year's 7-9 Saints, but I think the Panthers have come back down to their level. A while ago every intra-division NFC South game was and total crapshoot and if the Falcons aren't as good as they seem then we might be getting back to that point. I think we're close enough that I don't want to back a road favorite in the division.

Ravens @ GIANTS (-3)

The scheduling gods were not kind to the Giants, sending

POOP READING

them on the road to Minnesota and Green Bay to face arguably the NFL's two best teams back-to-back. It's probably a bit of a do-or-die game. For both teams, actually.

SUNDAY LATE:

Rams @ LIONS (-3)

That Jeff Fisher-coached teams never creep too far from .500 is a cliché for a reason, so the 3-2 Rams are due for a loss. And the Lions can always be surprisingly dangerous when they're just playing out the string (read: the Lions can always be surprisingly dangerous).

CHIEFS @ Raiders (-1)

Running back Jamaal Charles is nearing full strength, fearsome linebacker Justin Houston is eyeing a late-October return – in general, the Chiefs seem to have tented team headquarters in order to smoke out that darned injury bug. That's a tortured metaphor and I immediately apologize for it. The point is, the Chiefs are in the thick of the incipient playoff race but they need to beat the Raiders. I expect them to dink and dunk their way to a crucial win.

Falcons @ SEAHAWKS (-6)

We keep waiting for the Falcons to fall apart and so far they haven't. But to be fair to us, they looked like this last year when they got off to a 5-0 start before cratering and missing the playoffs at 8-8.

The Seahawks are coming off a bye and seem to have found their footing after a very sluggish 1-1 start against the Dolphins and Rams. They haven't played anybody good yet, though, so this should be a hell of a game.

Cowboys @ PACKERS (-4)

One of these teams is a mirage. Mark my words: one of these teams is a mirage.

SUNDAY NIGHT:

Colts @ TEXANS (-3)

Life's too short to spend too much time analyzing AFC South games.

MONDAY NIGHT:

JETS @ Cardinals (-7.5)

Carson Palmer vs. Ryan Fitzpatrick. Fitting. You know how whenever a character on a schlocky sci-fi TV show meets the evil version of himself, he looks the same except he's got a beard? I'm not saying either of them is evil, but in terms of how they give their respective fanbases a silver of hope only

to come up short, Carson Palmer is the NFC version of Ryan Fitzpatrick.

THE FISCAL FIVE

I call these games my "Fiscal Five" because they're the games I feel best about this week, and if you wager on these games and these games only then you are guaranteed to make tons of money.

[Guarantee not valid in AL, AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY, the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, on foreign soil, or in international waters]

BRONCOS (-3) @ Chargers

Ravens @ GIANTS (-3)

Rams @ LIONS (-3)

CHIEFS @ Raiders (-1)

Colts @ TEXANS (-3)

FISCAL FIVE LAST WEEK: 2-2-1

FISCAL FIVE OVERALL: 6-13-1

At this point the Fiscal Five is really just a nice way of reinforcing to myself how bad an idea it would be for me to start regularly gambling on sports.
