

### NFL 2008 - Week 6

by Joe Mulder

Week 5: 7-6-1

Overall: 37-35-2

The Smartest Thing I Said Last Week:

We may have all underestimated the Giants. Which is dumb of all of us, considering that they're the defending Super Bowl champions.

The Dumbest Thing I Said Last Week:

[you know what? I'm giving myself a pass on this one. Sure, I missed six games, but going back over last week's picks, I didn't say anything particularly stupid. Don't worry; I promise it won't happen again]

BEARS @ Falcons +3

We start things off with a nice matchup of 3-2 teams that not a ton of people thought would be 3-2. And I mean that literally: if you took all of the people in the entire world who honestly thought that the Atlanta Falcons (in particular) would be 3-2 at this point, the total combined weight of those people would not equal 2,000 pounds. But 3-2 they both are.

Although, now that I look at the Falcons' schedule, they hosted the Lions and the Chiefs, so it's not like you wouldn't have given them an excellent chance to be 2-3. The win last week over the Packers at Lambeau Field, though, finally made people think, "hey, are the Falcons kind of good?"

(well, either that, or "hey, are the Packers kind of bad?")

Want to know something kind of interesting? Both the Falcons and the Bears, at 3-2, have lost to the same two teams, the Panthers and the Buccaneers. Not sure what that means, if anything, but, there you go.

Anyway, the Bears have a pretty solid run defense, which could help negate running back Michael Turner, Atlanta's biggest weapon. And Atlanta's near the bottom of the league in passing, so this ought to be another week in which the Bears edge ever closer to the proverbial driver's seat in the wide-open NFC North. And if I'm going pick them to win, I may as well pick them to cover that three point spread, no?

DOLPHINS @ Texans -3

To the folks who set this point spread, and who obviously just emerged from a coma they fell into back in late August, I would like to say the following two things:

1) She's the governor of Alaska. Yeah, I know, she's super-hot for a politician. And for a 44-year-old. Hell, for

anybody. And it's not so much that she's dumb, just that she was probably unprepared to play at this level.

And,

2) In their last two games, the Dolphins have defeated the two participants from last year's AFC Championship Game. And the Texans are winless and had part of their stadium wrecked by a hurricane. So I understand that, since you just got out of your coma and had no way of knowing these facts, you figured the Texans should be three point favorites. But the Dolphins are good now, and the Texans turned out not to be.

RAVENS @ Colts -3.5

Is it possible that the Colts actually aren't that good? Their two wins have to rank as two of the all-time garbage wins in garbage-win history, and they came against teams with losing records (although, to be fair, one of those teams, the Vikings, only has a losing record because the Colts beat them). Their two losses came at the hands of the Bears and Jaguars, solid teams perhaps but teams that are by no means setting the league on fire.

The Ravens might be tougher to figure out; they can't really score, but with the league's #1 defense they don't hardly need to. Since their two losses were both by three points, to arguably the AFC's two best teams, I'll go with them. Three-and-a-half might be a little bit high for a Colt's team that you really can't be sure is good.

LIONS @ Vikings -13

Sort of getting an early start on next week's "The Dumbest Thing I Said Last Week?" No; I just think this Vikings team has no business being favored my more than five or six points against anybody, ever, for any reason. They needed a blown face mask non-penalty, a blocked field goal returned for a touchdown and a fumble recovery deep in Saints territory to get to 30 points last week; who wants to count on stuff like that happening again? Not this guy!

(you couldn't see it, but after I typed the "this guy" part I pointed both of my thumbs in roughly the direction of my head)

Raiders @ SAINTS -7

The Saints just lost a bad one at home, and really need a win, so you've got to like them this week, even with some banged-up receivers.

Al Davis's Raiders, whom you may have heard just fired their coach over the bye week, were competitive in their last two games, so you know that won't happen again.

And you've got to feel for interim Raiders coach Tom Cable;

## POOP READING

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really, would anybody other than a Make-A-Wish kid who always wanted to be on the sidelines during an NFL game even consider taking the Raiders job now? Al Davis is officially the football version of George Steinbrenner at this point, except Al's team doesn't win.

(or, to make that analogy more apt to the last several years, Al Davis is officially the football version of George Steinbrenner at this point)

Bengals @ JETS -5.5

Remember how we discussed that the Dolphins' last two wins came against last season's AFC Championship Game participants, the Patriots and the Chargers? Well, the Jets' only two losses have come against those same two teams. And while they aren't quite the same Patriots and Chargers they were last season, they're not chopped liver either. If there's anything to the 2008 Jets, anything at all, they should handle the Bengals.

And isn't it nice to see the Bengals being really bad again? It just sort of seems like that's how it should be. It's comforting. I didn't quite know how to feel a couple of years ago when they went 11-5 and hosted a playoff game; it weirded me out a little bit, made me kind of uncomfortable, like when Jim Carrey did *The Number 23*; now, this fall, the Bengals stink and Jim Carrey is doing a comedy in which he's required to say "yes" to everything anyone asks him and he licks people's faces. All is as it should be.

PANTHERS @ Buccaneers -1.5

Hey, I remember you, Panthers and Buccaneers. You're the two teams that beat the Bears and the Falcons, right?

If only that helped us here.

The 4-1 Panthers can seize early control of the division with a win here, and I say they do it. They're a darn good team, their only loss – to the Vikings – coming in one of those "a mediocre team happens to put absolutely everything together for 60 minutes, and there's not a whole lot you can do" games that seem to happen to the elite teams a couple of times a year. Not that the Panthers are necessarily an elite team. Although I wouldn't rule out the possibility.

Rams @ REDSKINS -13.5

The Rams defense is next-to-last in the league, but the good news is that they just fired their coach and gave their defensive coordinator, Jim Haslett, the job. So it's not like he'll have a lot on his plate this week or anything.

The Redskins, despite their charge to the top of the NFC pile, have won their games by five points, seven points, two points and six points, respectively. Some might take that as a sign that they're not the sort of team that will blow anybody

out. This week, I'm going to choose to take it as a sign that they're just about due to – in the words of the great WWE announcer Jim Ross – stomp a mud hole in the Rams' ass and then walk it dry.

Jaguars @ BRONCOS -3.5

The Jaguars just generally don't score a lot of points, and the Broncos defense, which had been bad, held Tampa Bay to 13 last week.

The Broncos generally score a lot of points, so since I'm getting tired I'm going to go ahead say that's reason enough for me to pick Denver.

COWBOYS @ Cardinals +5

Do you realize that the Cowboys, a 4-1 team that just about everyone thought was the NFL's best a short two weeks ago, are now in third place in the NFC East? There's no way another division has any chance at getting a Wild Card berth, is there?

That said, you absolutely have to figure that the Cardinals are winning the NFC West and going to the playoffs, don't you?

Even so, I figure the Cowboys win this one, and if I'm figuring that they're going to win, I may as well figure that they're going to win by at least six.

EAGLES @ 49ers +5

The Eagles really need a win to stay in it. So do the 49ers, but, the Eagles are better.

PACKERS @ Seahawks -1.5

I realize the bloom might be off of the Packer rose a little bit after that grim home loss to Atlanta, but let's not go crazy, here. Remember how it took like three years and a trip to the Super Bowl for everyone to finally agree on the fact that the Seahawks were good? Let's not let the same thing happen with regard to agreeing that the Seahawks are bad. Which they are. The Packers aren't great, but, the Seahawks are baaaaaaad.

PATRIOTS @ Chargers -4.5

Well, here we have those two teams that, as has been mentioned, met in last year's AFC Championship Game. I think I just trust the Chargers a little less than I do the Patriots, so let's just go with that.

GIANTS @ Browns +7.5

I sure picked lot of road teams this week, didn't I? Oh, well. What's one more?