

2016 NFL Picks - Week 8

by Joe Mulder

Last Week: 7-6-1

Overall: 44-40-5

First, a correction. Last week in this space, the following was published:

The Bills should win this one with or without running back LeSean McCoy, who is a game time decision with a bum hammy. Although that's not particularly remarkable in and of itself; every game in NFL history has been won either with or without LeSean McCoy.

That prediction was wrong, which wouldn't warrant a correction on its own, but it was brought to our attention that the entire paragraph was incorrect because it disregarded ties.

PoopReading.com regrets the error. Onto the picks...

THURSDAY NIGHT:

Jaguars @ TITANS (-3.5)

Good start.

SUNDAY EARLY:

REDSKINS @ Bengals (-3) [in London]

Offense travels across the pond and defense doesn't, according to former NFL front office man Mike Lombardi on the Bill Simmons Podcast. That proved true last week, at least kind of – the Rams, who've been scoring lately, only scored ten and the Giants covered the spread against them, albeit only by 7. Anyway, "offense travels across the pond and defense doesn't" will probably be the extent of my analysis for London games in the years ahead.

Cardinals @ PANTHERS (-2.5)

The Panthers are dunzo, or at least they would be in any other division. Anybody trust the Falcons? Didn't think so. Anyway, the Panthers badly need a win.

And the Cardinals are playing like they ran off the edge of a cliff two years ago, kept their legs chugging and hovered in the air for a while, but then in mid-September looked down and noticed that they were the Cardinals.

Jets (-2.5) @ BROWNS

I've said it before, maybe I'll say it again: everyone but the 2008 Lions wins one eventually. Might be now or never for the Browns. At least the Cavs and Indians are great; that

would give hope to Minnesota sports fans like me if the Minnesota sports teams weren't the Twins, Vikings, Wild and Timberwolves.

LIONS @ Texans (-2.5)

Are the Lions, like, good? They might be. Wouldn't that be weird?

CHIEFS (-2.5) @ Colts

Nobody's really any good this season; the Chiefs might go to the damn Super Bowl. I don't know and neither do you.

Seahawks (-3) @ SAINTS

The Saints are still the Saints at home. They can really score, and the Seahawks might not have the firepower to keep up. The Seahawks are 4-1-1 and I feel dumb picking against them – they might be the best team in the NFL despite failing to score a touchdown last week. But nobody's any good this year (see above), so who the hell knows?

It's worth mentioning that Seahawks coach Pete Carroll has a reputation as a 9/11 truther (I have no idea whether he is or not), and somebody on Twitter noticed that if the Seahawks win their next five games in a row, their record will make the internet explode.

RAIDERS @ Buccaneers (-1.5)

Ah hell, I don't know. This game might be a dud. It might be the Raiders/Buccaneers Super Bowl of 2016 regular season games.

I'll take the Raiders, for two reasons. One – they played in Jacksonville last week and stayed in Florida in the interim, so the whole "west coast team going east to play an early game" thing doesn't really come into play. And two – despite the fact that the Raiders suck, they're kind of good this year.

SUNDAY LATE:

Chargers @ BRONCOS (-4.5)

I wouldn't be remotely flabbergasted if the Chargers won, but I'll stick with the defending champs at home. Anyway, we know what the real story is this year, don't we? Right – bet the "over" in every Chargers game, and retire to Monte Carlo at the end of the season. In this game it's a ridiculously low 43.5. Seriously! I checked like three places! I guess because these two teams combined to score 34 points a couple weeks ago? But that was a Thursday game; you can't count those. They're the substitute teachers of the NFL schedule. Nothing that happens during a Thursday night game really matters or tells you anything about anything.

43.5. My goodness. Sheldon Adelson and Steve Wynn might

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as well just drop hundred dollar bills from a dirigible over the Vegas strip at this point.

PACKERS @ Falcons (-2.5)

The Packers aren't even that good and they're still winning mostly just to piss me off.

SUNDAY NIGHT:

Eagles @ COWBOYS (-4.5)

Remember when I said nobody was good this year? Actually, the Cowboys are good. I don't feel like looking it up but I think they're the only team in the league that hasn't played at least one complete stinkaroo this season. The Eagles might be getting a little bit of extra credit for making the Vikings look hapless last week, but take it from a lifelong Vikings fan: the Vikings are capable of looking hapless anytime, anywhere, against anyone.

MONDAY NIGHT:

VIKINGS (-5.5) @ Bears

That said, if the Vikings can't manage to beat this particular Bears team then I don't even know anymore. This game is being played on Halloween night, which begs the question of why Vikings coach Mike Zimmer decided to break out his Mike Tice costume a week early against the Eagles.

I kid; there's not much Zimmer can do when the offensive line consists of career backups and the shell of Jake Long, the offensive coordinator consists of Norv Turner, and the offense comes away from the red zone empty handed like eleven times. Throw in a muffed punt return (don't you love that fumbled punt returns, uniquely among all things in life, are exclusively referred to as "muffed?") and the Vikings didn't have much of a chance.

Every Minnesota fan saw that game coming, by the way. I picked them to beat the spread as road favorites last week, but only because I'd been picking them and they'd been winning. We all knew it was too good to be true. And then of course on Wednesday night the Timberwolves – with their promising young core and hot new coach in Tom Thibodeau – went out and Timberwolved (got a big early lead, promptly let the other team back in it, and let a close one get away down the stretch). It was as if the sports universe course-corrected specifically to deliver the message "Hey Minnesota fans, you will never, ever have nice things."

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]

[The Fiscal Five is taking the week off. This is my column and I can do whatever I want; I only feel good about one game this week so that's going to be it. Take all the money you were going to bet on the entire Fiscal Five and put it on this one and the Broncos/Chargers "over."]

Eagles @ COWBOYS (-4.5)

FISCAL FIVE LAST WEEK: 4-1

FISCAL FIVE OVERALL: 12-15-3
