2013 COLLEGE & PRO FOOTBALL NEWSLETTER

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NFL Overs & Unders – A Total-ly Different Perspective – Part 1

For over three decades wagering on the total points scored in NFL games has increased greatly in popularity. Totals allow the handicapper to concentrate on the flow or pace of a game rather than which team will have greater success. Obviously there is much overlap between the quality of the teams involved and the total points that will be scored but by looking at a game from an Over/Under perspective several weaknesses in the Totals line can be exploited. Of paramount importance is a knowledge of 'key' numbers for Totals much as 'key' numbers are important from a regular pointspread perspective. Here's a look at the key numbers for total points scored in the 7,502 NFL regular season games played between 1981 and 2012.

Total Points	Pct.		Total Points	Pct.		Points Range	Pct.
37	4.68 %		33	3.12 %		0 - 21	6.11 %
41	3.91 %		43 - tie	3.00 %		22 - 33	23.40 %
51	3.55 %		48 - tie	3.00 %		34 - 41	22.30 %
44	3.35 %		47	2.96 %		42 - 51	25.26 %
30	3.32 %		45	2.93 %		52 +	22.93 %

The first part of the Chart shows the ten most common total points results over the past 32 seasons and the percentage of the time that each has occurred. For example, 37 total points is the most common result and it has occurred 4.68% of the time, or just under one game in 20. The 10 most common results have accounted for 33.80% of all results. In other words, slightly more than one game in three will fall on one of these ten 'key' numbers. The right hand part of the Chart looks at how frequently the total points in a game falls within one of five ranges. About 1 game a week will feature total points of 21 or less while about 3 or 4 games each week will see 52 or more points scored. Next week we will present some interesting data which will show why wagering on Overs and Unders presents some very good opportunities based partly on the above data and also on how the linesmaker is restricted in setting lines for Totals.

The college season starts winding down as 37 teams are playing their eleventh game of the season. Over the next few weeks we shall see many games involving traditional season ending rivals. Often the weaker team – the underdog – makes for a solid play in these games as they have a chance to salvage an otherwise disappointing season with a win over their most bitter foe. In some games the lesser foe can make its season by spoiling a great season for its rival. Bowl bids may be on the line for one or both teams and that adds to the intensity of the rivalry. That's part of the pageantry and great appeal of college football.

As the college season winds down the chase for a berth in the BCS Championship game becomes more in focus and the annual debates continue to rage. Currently the front-runners are Alabama and Florida State but Ohio State, Baylor, Northern Illinois and Fresno State join the Crimson Tide and Seminoles as the only remaining unbeaten FBS teams. Of these half dozen perfectos Baylor has the easiest path as the Big 12 does not have a Conference Championship game. But for Baylor to move up in the BCS standings it one of the top three teams would have to lose. Alabama will be tested at 9-1 Auburn at the end of this month and, if successful, have another challenge in the SEC Title game. Florida State has to win at Florida and then in the ACC Title game. And Ohio State will be favored to win at Michigan and then face either Michigan State or Nebraska in the Big Ten title game. Playing in minor conferences both Northern Illinois and Fresno State have virtually no chance of finishing in the top two of the BCS Standings although one of these teams could well earn a bit to one of the other BCS Bowls if they go through the season unbeaten, including the MAC and Mountain West Conference Championship games.

An additional 10 teams have only 1 loss and have little chance of making to the big game although several of those teams have solid credentials – credentials that would have most of them invited to complete in a ful fledged college football Playoff. Our annual rant – and proposal – will be presented in a few weeks.

COLLEGE SELECTION OF THE WEEK: Michigan + 2 ½ over NORTHWESTERN – Both teams' strong starts are distant memories. After opening the season 4-0, Northwestern has dropped 5 straight. Michigan started 5-0 but has lost 3 of 4. Northwestern has not recovered from its tough loss at Ohio State and has lost 3 of its last 4 by narrow margins. Both teams are off of tough late losses to Nebraska with Northwestern off a Bye. Michigan does have the better overall statistics but their edges are not great. They arguably do have the better athletes. The Wolverines also have history on their side as they've won 2 straight and 7 of 8 against Northwestern over the past decade. And this is the first time during this period that Northwestern has been favored. Michigan has played the tougher non-conference schedule and although they did struggle in winning all 4 of those games (2-2 ATS) Michigan is 4-5 ATS whereas Northwestern is just 3-7 ATS. After being held to negative rushing yards in losses to Michigan State and Nebraska the Wolverines will find the going much easier against Northwestern's more permissive run defense. Michigan pulls the minor upset, winning 34-27.

Other Featured College Selections
Oregon State + 13 ½ over ARIZONA STATE – Arizona State had a tougher than expected time in Utah last week, needing a pair of late scores to edge the Utes 20-19 but failing to cover as a TD favorite. Oregon State is off a much needed Bye as the Beavers are off losses to USC and Stanford that followed a 6 game winning streak. Both teams have strong offenses with ASU having the better running attack and OSU better through the air. Both defenses have excelled at forcing turnovers. This has been a competitive series over the past decade with OSU winning 6 of 10 meetings. 5 of the last 6 meetings have been decided by a dozen points or less. Both teams are already Bowl eligible but the game carries bit more importance for the Sun Devils who have a one game lead over both USC and UCLA in the Southern Division of the Pac 12. The stats and the situation so support ASU being favored but not by nearly 2 touchdowns. Arizona State wins but by just 38-31.

Georgia + 3 ½ over AUBURN – What a difference a few months make. Over the summer Georgia was a double digit favorite for this game at Books that posted advance lines. While Georgia has fared well for the most part their 6-3 record is a disappointment. The Bulldogs have battled injuries for much of the season and that explains losses to Missouri and Vanderbilt that followed a tough 3 point loss at Clemson in the opener. Meanwhile new coach Malzahn has made progress much quicker than expected in his first season at Auburn with the lone blemish a 35-21 loss at LSU in September. Auburn has displayed the better offense whereas Georgia has a significant defensive edge, especially against the rush. Georgia has defeated Auburn 45-7 and 38-0 the past two seasons. Auburn does have its big game vs Alabama up next but that is in two weeks so there should be no look ahead here. But there will be pressure as a win here means the winner of the Iron Bowl goes to the SEC Title game. Georgia is still a formidable foe and although they are reduced to playing conference spoiler they clearly have the talent to do so. They do have the better QB, the better defense and are getting players back from injury. It really should not be viewed as an upset at Georgia wins 31-28.

USC + 4 over Stanford – There are a number of factors that favor Stanford in this game including 4 straight wins in the series, including 2 as favorites. But Stanford is off of that big win over previously unbeaten Oregon and can make it to the Pac 12 Title game by winning out. USC can still win the Pac 12 South but will need help but the Trojans are a much different team than when they lost at Arizona State. The coaching change from Kiffin to Orgeron has been well received by the players and USC has gone 4-1 SU & ATS in support of their popular interim coach, losing only at Notre Dame (14-10). This is huge revenge for the seniors and yet another chance to make a case for giving Orgeron the permanent gig. The statistics are similar with neither team having any significant edges. Considering the recent play of the Trojans that suggests they were great underachievers early in the season perhaps this game should be closer to pick 'em. There are good reasons to support both teams but the stronger arguments, and the spot, calls for the hosts. USC wins 23-17.

Best of the Rest (Opinion)	
Ball State + 7 over NORTHERN ILLINOIS [2]	Miami Ohio + 17 ½ over KENT STATE [2]
DUKE + 3 over Miami Fla	WISCONSIN - 21 ½ over Indiana
Kentucky + 13 over VANDERBILT	Houston + 16 over LOUISVILLE
BOSTON COLLEGE - 7 ½ over North Carolina St	SOUTHERN MISS + 17 over Florida Atlantic
EAST CAROLINA - 26 ½ over Ala-Birmingham	COLORADO - 2 ½ over California

Oklahoma State - 3 over TEXAS	South Alabama + 9 over NAVY
Michigan State - 6 ½ over NEBRASKA	MISSISSIPPI STATE + 25 over Alabama
Colorado State - 6 ½ over NEW MEXICO	SOUTH FLORIDA + 1 ½ over Memphis
KANSAS STATE - 10 ½ over Tcu	Troy + 18 ½ over MISSISSIPPI
ARKANSAS STATE - 7 ½ over Texas State	Washington State + 13 over ARIZONA

The Rest (Leans)

BOWLING GREEN - 9 ½ over Ohio U [1]	Buffalo + 4 ½ over TOLEDO [1]
Georgia Tech + 10 ½ over CLEMSON [3]	Marshall - 13 ½ over TULSA [3]
Washington + 2 ½ over UCLA [4]	Central Michigan - 3 over WESTERN MICHIGAN
Maryland + 14 ½ over VIRGINIA TECH	Cincinnati Pick 'em over RUTGERS
PITTSBURGH Pick 'em over North Carolina	Central Florida - 16 over TEMPLE
PENN STATE- 21 ½ over Purdue	Florida + 13 ½ over SOUTH CAROLINA
Syracuse + 39 over FLORIDA STATE	MASSACHUSETTS + 7 ½ over Akron
SMU - 14 ½ over Connecticut	West Virginia - 6 ½ over KANSAS
UL Lafayette - 21 ½ over GEORGIA STATE	Baylor - 27 over Texas Tech (Arlington, TX)
BOISE STATE - 23 over Wyoming	OKLAHOMA - 24 over Iowa State
OREGON - 27 over Utah	Ohio State - 32 over ILLINOIS
San Jose State - 7 over NEVADA	RICE - 17 over Louisiana Tech
UTEP - 6 over Florida International	HAWAII + 4 ½ over San Diego State

[1] Wednesday, November 14   [2] Thursday, November 15
[3] Friday, November 16   *** PROJECTED LINES**

NFL SELECTION OF THE WEEK: CINCINNATI - 6 over Cleveland – A pair of overtime road losses the past two weeks have seen Cincinnati drop to 6-4 to make things interesting in the AFC North. Cleveland is off its Bye which followed the end of a three game losing streak when the Browns defeated Baltimore for the first time in 12 meetings. The Browns also upset Cincinnati 17-6 in September, making this a revenge game for the Bengals. Cincinnati is still the most talented team in the Division on both sides of the football, although the play of QB Dalton has been shaky the past two weeks. But those games were on the road and the Bengals are 4-0 both SU and ATS at home. This is the right spot for the Bengals to get back on track against a rested and confident Division rival. The Browns are a solid defensive team but the Bengals have the playmakers. And even though Cincy has injured defensive players, that unit played well in holding the Ravens to under 200 total yards last week. With a Bye next week the Bengals should be well prepared and should give a fully focused effort as they look to stay atop the Division. Cincinnati wins 24-13.

Other Featured NFL Selections:
Washington + 3 ½ over PHILADELPHIA –Philadelphia won at Washington on the first Monday night of the season with a dominating first half before having to hold on for a 33-27 win. It took a half for the Redskins to make adjustments to the debut of Philly coach Kelly's offense but it came too late. It was also the season debut for Washington QB Griffin III who did not play at all in the preseason. Although he started slowly, RG III has started to show the form he displayed in leading the 'Skins to the Playoffs last season and the game plans have more and more been opened up him to use his natural talents. Philly QB Foles has been brilliant the past two weeks and will face Washington for the first time as starter Vick is still injured. This is a bigger game for the visitors who trail Division co-leaders Philly and Dallas by just one loss. And they are better prepared for the Eagles offense this time around having already faced it and having film of how other foes have been able to defend it. And the Eagles have yet to win at home, losing all 4 this season and 10 in a row dating back to last season. These teams are very evenly matched. Washington gets the win, 30-27.

MIAMI + 1 ½ over San Diego – Miami is off of Monday night's loss at Tampa Bay which was played amid the turmoil stemming from the much publicized lockerroom "bullying"" issues that dominated headlines for much of the prior week. Often those issues become less of a distraction as time marches forward. San Diego was outplayed early in its loss to Denver but did mount a rally in the second half that came up short. This is a tough scheduling spot for the Chargers who are making their third cross country trip in their last four games and play east of the Mississippi for the fifth time this season!. And they are at Division rival Kansas City next week. Who did they anger on the NFL's scheduling committee? That is somewhat offset by Miami's shorter week of preparation. Miami's defense has been respectable, allowing over 27 points just once. And they will face a defense last in the league in forcing turnovers and one that ranks #29 overall. With the distractions largely behind them, the preparation and focus returns to football. Miami wins 24-20.

New England + 2 ½ over CAROLINA (Monday) – Aside from unbeaten Kansas City, Carolina is the next hottest team in the NFL, having won 5 straight games including a physical, 10-9 defensive battle at San Francisco last week. That win was the first in the streak in which the Panthers scored fewer than 30 points. It was also the first win in the streak against a winning team. New England is 7-2 and off its Bye. After struggling on offense for much of the season, QB Brady has developed a nice rhythm with his running backs and receivers, aiding greatly by the return of TE Gronkowski from injury. Here they are catching points against a team off one of the biggest regular season wins in franchise history. The Patriots have been a dominant team over the second half of the season in recent years, having won 24 of 25 games after game 8 since 2010. Earning the top AFC remains a priority for Brady and coach Brady and this goal remains very much alive with next week's game hosting Denver and the Broncos and Chiefs still having to face each other in Kansas City the week after next. As well as Carolina is playing its hard to go against the Pats' experience in critical spots in the season's second half. New England wins 23-20.

Best of the Rest (Opinions)

TAMPA BAY + 1 ½ over Atlanta	BUFFALO - 1 over N Y Jets
JACKSONVILLE + 7 over Arizona	DENVER - 8 over KANSAS CITY
San Francisco + 3 over NEW ORLEANS	

The Rest (Leans)

Indianapolis - 3 over TENNESSEE (Thursday)	Baltimore + 2 ½ over CHICAGO
PITTSBURGH - 2 over Detroit	Oakland + 7 over HOUSTON
SEATTLE - 13 over Minnesota	N Y GIANTS - 6 over Green Bay

Byes:	Dallas	St Louis	-----	-----

Best of the NFL Totals

N Y Jets/Buffalo UNDER 41	Washington/Philadelphia OVER 52 ½
Cleveland/Cincinnati UNDER 42	Arizona/Jacksonville UNDER 41
San Francisco/New Orleans UNDER 47 ½	New England/Carolina UNDER 46

Money Line Recommendations

College:	DUKE	Michigan	Georgia	USC
Pro:	Washington	MIAMI	San Francisco	New England

NOTE: All Selections are picked to win Against the Spread (ATS). Unless otherwise indicated, HOME TEAMS are in CAPS. All material is provided as news matter only and is not to be used in violation of any Federal, State or Local law(s).