

2014 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 7,758 NFL regular season games played between 1981 and 2013.

Total Points	Pct.		Total Points	Pct.	Points Range	Pct.
37	4.58 %		33	3.12 %	0 - 21	5.99 %
41	3.84 %		43	3.04 %	22 - 33	23.17 %
51	3.63 %		47	2.99 %	34 - 41	22.12 %
44	3.42 %		48	2.98 %	42 - 51	25.47 %
30	3.31 %		45	2.91 %	52 +	23.25 %

The first part of the Chart shows the ten most common total points results over the past 33 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 4.58% of the time, or just under one game in 20. The 10 most common results have accounted for 33.82% 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 16 teams are playing their eleventh game of the season this week. 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.

COLLEGE SELECTION OF THE WEEK: Florida State - 2 over MIAMI FLA – Florida State has now won 25 straight games dating back to the 2012 ACC Championship Game. But unlike last season, when FSU was 10-3 ATS, the Seminoles are a money losing 2-7 ATS while going 9-0 SU this season. Several struggles and close calls that included comeback wins have shown that this season's team is well below the level of last season's 14-0 National Championship squad. The statistics also bear this out. Miami has a rather unusual profile for a 6-3 team – all 6 wins have been by double digits – as have all 3 losses. To be fair, all of Miami's losses have been on the road. FSU has enjoyed a decided edge in this rivalry, going 7-3 SU, including 4-1 at Miami, over the past decade. They have won the last 4 in the series by margins of 28, 4, 13 and 27 points. Miami is a much improved team this season, coach Golden's fourth at the helm. Wins have gone from 6 to 7 to 9 in his first 3 seasons. But Florida State has shown its resiliency in battling back from deficits at NC State, vs Notre Dame and at Louisville. QB Winston continues to make big plays in the second halves of close games. Despite some solid statistical edges, Miami may still be a year away from gaining revenge.

Statistics be damned – some teams just have a knack for knowing how to win. Florida State win 27-17.

Other Featured College Selections

GEORGIA TECH + 3 over Clemson – This is the final conference game for both teams and the final home game for Tech which has 2 weeks to prepare for its annual clash at Georgia. Clemson finishes its regular season hosting 1-9 Georgia State next week and rival South Carolina a week later. Tech has fared well vs Clemson over the past decade, including 4-0 SU at home vs the Tigers. In fact, the home team has won each of the last 5 meetings, including Clemson's 55-31 rout last season. This is a fascinating matchup in that Tech has the nation's #3 rushing offense (336 ypg) while Clemson's rushing defense is #4 (91 ypg) and is #2 in total defense. Yet the Clemson offense is down from last season and despite a defense that ranks #76 Tech is a solid 8-2 SU and 6-4 ATS. Clemson is 7-2 SU but 4-5 ATS. This is the first time Tech has been an ACC home underdog since 2011. Tech also upset Clemson here the last time Clemson visited, also as a home underdog. This matchup is one of strength vs strength (Tech offense vs Clemson defense) and weakness vs weakness (Tech defense vs Clemson offense). With that Bye next week before their game with Georgia, Tech should be fully prepared to have success against the Clemson defense. And despite their defensive ranking, Tech's defense has forced 8 more takeaways than has Clemson's. Georgia Tech wins 31-27.

Northwestern + 17 ½ over NOTRE DAME – Both teams are off very disappointing losses that resulted from vastly differently played games. Northwestern lost at home to Michigan, 10-9, opting to go for 2 instead of the tie to force overtime, an attempt which failed. Notre Dame fell behind early at Arizona State, 34-3, only to rally in the second half to pull within 34-31 only to see ASU score a flurry of fourth quarter points to pull back away and win 55-31. Whereas Northwestern's loss was bitter it was not nearly as costly as Notre Dame's as the Irish's loss all but eliminated them from consideration for the newly instituted 4 team Playoff. Which suggests a less than stellar effort this week against an overmatched yet game Northwestern that still looks at Notre Dame as power program. The Wildcats continue to play hard for coach Fitzgerald and Northwestern has already sprung upsets with wins at Penn State and over Wisconsin. Northwestern has not been this big an underdog since they won at Nebraska, 28-25, as 17 point dogs in 2011. While calling for an outright upset is a bit of a stretch, expecting a game effort from Northwestern is not. Notre Dame wins but by just 37-27.

MARSHALL - 21 over Rice – Playing in Conference USA Marshall has no shot at being included in the 4 team Playoff. But that doesn't mean the Thundering Herd can't finish with an unbeaten season and earn a prestigious Bowl assignment. Not only is Marshall 9-0 SU, they are also a money making 6-2-1 ATS. Rice has won 6 in a row following an 0-3 start but they step up in class here. Marshall has held 7 of 9 foes to 17 points or less while scoring at least 42 points 7 times. In recent weeks Marshall has been especially potent in the second half of its games so if Rice is competitive early Marshall likely sprints away after recess. The offense is very well balanced, rushing for 276 ypg and passing for 288 ypg and average 47.8 points/game, #1 nationally, while allowing just 16.6 ppg (#2). Rice is also a very healthy 7-2 ATS but have been favored in each of their last 7 games. As big underdogs to open the season, Rice was crushed at Notre Dame and at Texas A&M. Marshall just has too much for Rice to contain and is playing to avenge last season's 41-24 loss at Rice in the C-USA Title game. That ensures a fully focused effort. Marshall wins handily again, 48-20.

Best of the Rest (Opinion)

Akron - 4 over BUFFALO [1]	MASSACHUSETTS - 3 ½ over Ball State [2]
East Carolina - 2 over CINCINNATI [3]	USC - 14 ½ over California [3]
Temple + 10 ½ over PENN STATE	Ohio State - 12 over MINNESOTA
ILLINOIS + 5 ½ over Iowa	NEBRASKA + 6 over Wisconsin
TENNESSEE - 8 over Kentucky	RUTGERS - 7 ½ over Indiana
DUKE - 5 ½ over Virginia Tech	Nevada + 2 over AIR FORCE
ARKANSAS STATE - 14 over Appalachian State	BYU - 24 over Unlv
Utah + 7 ½ over STANFORD	Lsu + 2 over ARKANSAS
Auburn + 2 ½ over GEORGIA	Memphis - 10 ½ over TULANE
UL Lafayette - 7 over UL MONROE	OKLAHOMA STATE + 2 over Texas

The Rest (Leans)

Toledo + 5 over NORTHERN ILLINOIS [1]	BOWLING GREEN - 13 over Kent State [3]
UT SAN ANTONIO - 9 over Southern Miss [3]	CENTRAL FLORIDA - 19 over Tulsa [4]
NORTH CAROLINA - 2 over Pittsburgh	Wake Forest + 14 ½ over NORTH CAROLINA ST
WESTERN KENTUCKY - 10 over Army	WEST. MICHIGAN - 24 * over Eastern Michigan
SMU + 11 over South Florida	SOUTH ALABAMA - 4 ½ over Texas State
KANSAS + 27 ½ over Tcu	New Mexico + 17 ½ over UTAH STATE
BOISE STATE - 14 over San Diego State	Oklahoma - 12 * over TEXAS TECH
ARIZONA - 9 over Washington	South Carolina + 6 ½ over FLORIDA
Georgia Southern + 3 over NAVY	Miami Ohio + 16 over CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Mid Tennessee - 4 ½ over FLA INTERNATIONAL	SAN JOSE STATE - 10 over Hawaii
IDAHO - 4 over Troy State	Missouri + 5 ½ over TEXAS A&M
OREGON STATE + 9 ½ over Arizona State	ALABAMA - 8 over Mississippi State
Michigan State - 12 over MARYLAND	UTEP - 5 ½ over NORTH TEXAS

[1] Tuesday, Nov 11

[4] Friday, November 14

[2] Wednesday, Nov 12

* **PROJECTED LINES**

[3] Thursday, Nov 13

NFL SELECTION OF THE WEEK: INDIANAPOLIS - 2 ½ over New England – Both teams return from Byes and should be well prepared for what could be a preview of a Playoff game in a couple of months. Both teams have outstanding QBs with Indy's Luck the heir apparent to the Pats' Brady and Denver's Manning as the top AFC signal caller for years to come. The Bye may have been more of a momentum breaker for the Pats who have won 5 in a row, the last 2 of which were home blowouts of Chicago and Denver. The Colts had their own 5 game win streak snapped in Pittsburgh before their Monday night rout at the Giants prior to the Bye. The Colts are at home for the first time in 4 weeks while 3 straight home games and the Bye have New England on the road for the first time in over a month. There are always risks in laying points to Pats' coach Belichick, especially with extra time to prepare. But there are some defensive concerns for the Pats and playing on the road against a QB capable of exploiting those vulnerabilities is a situation in which it can be justified. Since Luck became the Colts' QB as a rookie in 2012 the Colts are, including the Playoffs, 29-15 SU and 28-15-1 ATS. Those are impressive stats for a QB whose best years are still ahead of him. Indianapolis wins 35-27.

Other Featured NFL Selections:

Houston + 3 over CLEVELAND – Although Houston is off its Bye week Cleveland also has extra rest after winning at Cincinnati last Thursday. The Browns are one of the major surprises this season, with their 6 wins their most since going 10-6 in 2007. At 4-5 Houston is on the periphery of Wild Card contention and is much improved over last season. Houston has a powerful defensive presence that could present problems for Browns' QB Hoyer whose play has been shaky even while the team has been winning. Houston is turning to ex-Patriots backup QB Mallett to replace ineffective starter Fitzpatrick. There is not much film on Mallett yet as a backup to Brady he's been able to observe and absorb the qualities that make for a winning QB and team leader. These teams are very close statistically in most categories which is reinforced by the host being favored by a FG. Houston does have significant edges in the ground game on both sides of the football and also leads the NFL with a defense forcing 2.3 takeaways per game. And in Watt they have the best player on the field who has shown several times this season he is a difference maker. Houston wins 24-17.

CHICAGO - 3 ½ over MINNESOTA – Minnesota is off its Bye while Chicago is off of one of the worst losses in franchise history, a 55-14 drubbing Sunday night in Green Bay. The Vikings have performed better than their talent level suggests and have turned the offense over to rookie QB Bridgewater. The Bears have been one of the most under achieving teams in the league relative to their talent. Statistically the Bears have the edge on offense, the Vikings on defense. At 3-6 the Bears have no margin for error but they do play 5 of the final 7 games at home. This is a spot where professional pride should kick in for the Bears, especially since they are winless at home this season. Chicago's main weakness on defense has been against the pass and the Vikings rank #30 in passing offense. This is DE Allen's first game for Chicago against his former team

and his knowledge could play a key role in game planning and in-game adjustments. Chicago wins 27-20.

SAN DIEGO - 10 over Oakland – San Diego returns from its Bye which came at the right time. After an opening week loss followed by 5 straight wins, the Chargers have dropped 3 in a row including an ugly 37-0 loss at Miami before the Bye. San Diego's last win was their dramatic 31-28 win at Oakland in the first of 3 straight Divisional games. Oakland remains winless at 0-9 which makes them dangerous. At least in most situations. Given the tightness of their first meeting San Diego will not take the Raiders lightly. The Chargers are the more talented and experienced team on both sides of the football and have the better QB and head coach. Much in need of a confidence boosting win if they are to remain in contention for a Wild Card, expect San Diego to be well prepared for this rematch. Both teams have weak running games but the Chargers are much better in the passing game, both on offense and defense. After facing Kansas City, Denver and Miami before the Bye, San Diego takes a huge drop in class here. San Diego wins 30-10.

Best of the Rest (Opinions)

Seattle + 1 ½ over KANSAS CITY	Atlanta + 1 ½ over CAROLINA
WASHINGTON - 7 over Tampa Bay	San Francisco - 4 over N Y GIANTS
Detroit + 2 over ARIZONA	

The Rest (Leans)

MIAMI - 5 over Buffalo [Thursday]	GREEN BAY - 5 ½ over Philadelphia
NEW ORLEANS - 6 ½ over Cincinnati	Denver - 9 ½ over ST LOUIS
TENNESSEE + 5 ½ over Pittsburgh [Monday]	

Byes:	Baltimore	Dallas	Jacksonville	N Y Jets
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Best of the NFL Totals

Buffalo/Miami UNDER 42	Minnesota/Chicago OVER 47
Philadelphia/Green Bay OVER 56 ½	Seattle/Kansas City UNDER 42 ½
Cincinnati/New Orleans OVER 50 ½	Oakland/San Diego UNDER 44 ½
Detroit/Arizona UNDER 41 ½	New England/Indianapolis OVER 57 ½

Money Line Recommendations

College:	ILLINOIS	GEORGIA TECH	Nevada	OKLAHOMA STATE
Pro:	Houston	Atlanta	Detroit	TENNESSEE

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).