

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

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Jets rookie QB Sam Darnold starts this week

PRESEASON WEEK 2 ROOKIE QB's UNDER FIRE AND BACK UPS FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

Whats Up

Philadelphia at New England (-3.5, 42.5), 7:30 p.m. ET: Carson Wentz declared that "it's gonna be close" as to whether he'll be able to participate in this season opener, which increases the likelihood we won't see him participate this preseason. Nick Foles has been getting starter's reps in practice and will take the field for the first time in a game since his MVP performance in Super Bowl LII. He'll likely play the opening quarter before giving way to Nate Sudfeld and Joe Callahan, who struggled against Pittsburgh in a 31-14 loss at the Linc. The offense was able to generate a few big plays in the passing game via second-year WR Shelton Gibson and rookie tight end Dallas Goedert but needs to see more out of other receivers looking to make an impression since Alshon Jeffery may not be ready for the opener. Mike Wallace has an opportunity to impress immediately with Foles back.

Tom Brady was picked off by Philly corner Jalen Mills in Wednesday's scrimmage, so since he's expected to participate despite talk of a back issue opening the week, it will be interesting to see how he fares in what will be his only action in Foxboro until Sept. 9 against Houston. Julian Edelman, Eric Decker and Rob Gronkowski have all participated in workouts against Philly this week, but it wouldn't be surprising to see Bill Belichick pull them back here. Brian Hoyer and Danny Etling will again take the bulk of the snaps, so the post Brady-portion of action in this one should feature an increased emphasis on a running game that thrived in the second half against Washington. Jeremy Hill, Ralph Webb and Mike Gillislee combined for 140 yards and three touchdowns on 39 carries against the 'Skins last week.

Pittsburgh at Green Bay (-5.5/43), 8 p.m. ET: Ben Roethlisberger suffered what appeared to be a head injury in practice, so the Steelers won't expose him in this game and are going to take a long look at their projected backups and roster hopefuls on the heels of an impressive performance against Philly. RB Le'Veon Bell still hasn't reported and Antonio Brown and Cam Heyward have already been ruled out. Landry Jones and JuJu Smith-Schuster hooked up for a 71-yard score and will presumably be out there to start this one before giving way to rookie Mason Rudolph and young Josh Dobbs. The Steelers have won four of their last five exhibition contests and do have the ammunition to hang around here since they've got a stable of running backs looking to impress in order to preserve their spot when Bell does return. Fitz Toussaint, James Conner, Stevan Ridley and rookie Jaylen Samuels will all get work. Thus far, Conner has been the man.

While we won't see Big Ben, you future Hall-of-Fame QB itch should be scratched by Aaron Rodgers' likely appearance. Although it will likely be a cameo, he told reporters that he wants to take a few snaps with some of his new guys, which ramps up the sense of urgency for the drives he'll participate in. Brett Hundley has a ton of experience, while newcomer DeShone Kizer and fourth-stringer Tim Boyle were both productive in last week's impressive romp over Tennessee. Green Bay ended up with 31 first downs last week and will likely want to put on a good show for fans that won't see the team take the field again until the Sept. 9 season opener against the Bears.

N.Y. Jets at Washington (-1.5/38.5), 8 p.m. ET: Sam Darnold's debut has Jets nation excited. He completed 13 of 18 passes for 96 yards and a score against Atlanta, following it up by continuing to excel in practice. If he's going to be out there for the opening snap inside Detroit's Ford Field when the Jets' offense takes the field, he'll need to avoid major missteps over the next two preseason games. In joint practices against Washington this week, he dropped a few jaws and impressed 'Skins star corner Josh Norman, who praised his poise and accuracy. "It's crazy to see that at an early age," said Norman.

Darnold has gotten the bulk of the reps against Washington's first-team defense, so the presumption is that he'll get the nod at FedEx Field with new offensive coordinator Jeremy Bates continuing to test his limits. Teddy Bridgewater was impressive enough that he's now potentially trade bait considering how effectively he managed to move the Jets in his first action since late November and first truly significant work since the 2016 preseason. New York scored 10 points on two 10-play drives before giving way to the rookie. Since the team knows exactly what they have in veteran Josh McCown, it is likely to be the Darnold/Bridgewater show again WR Terrelle Pryor still won't make it back but there are plenty of options who have looked sharp thus far.

Washington lost at New England after surrendering 26 unanswered points but led 17-0 with Colt McCoy at the controls. Although Brady didn't play, the defense excelled before giving way to backups that are unlikely to stick on the final 53-man roster, so they should be up for the challenge of trying to quiet the Jets. Offensively, Alex Smith has shined against New York's secondary in workouts this week and will be making his first appearance after sitting against the Patriots. McCoy, who went 13-for-18 with two TD passes at Foxboro, should against see extensive action before giving way to Kevin Hogan. The former Stanford standout couldn't get the 'Skins offense moving at all in a scoreless second half and fumbled after being sacked with just over 4:00 minutes remaining to cement his team's fate in the preseason opener.

These teams let some bad blood spill over in their practice sessions, so there should be a healthy spirit of competition with the stakes a little higher in this second dress rehearsal.

NFL PRESEASON QB ROTATIONS

A Look at Probable NFL Preseason Quarterback Rotations for 2018

TEAM	QUARTERBACK DEPTH CHART	TEAM	QUARTERBACK DEPTH CHART
ARIZONA	Sam Bradford, Josh Rosen, Mike Glennon, Chad Kanoff	LA CHARGERS	Philip Rivers, Geno Smith, Cardale Jones, Nic Shimonek
ATLANTA	Matt Ryan, Matt Schaub, Garrett Grayson, Kurt Benkert	LA RAMS	Jared Goff, Sean Mannion, Brandon Allen
BALTIMORE	Joe Flacco, Lamar Jackson, Robert Griffin III, Josh Woodrum	MIAMI	Ryan Tannehill, Brock Osweiler, David Fales, Bryce Petty
BUFFALO	AJ McCarron, Nathan Peterman, Josh Allen	MINNESOTA	Kirk Cousins, Trevor Siemian, Kyle Sloter, Peter Pujals
CAROLINA	Cam Newton, Garrett Gilbert, Taylor Heinicke, Kyle Allen	NEW ENGLAND	Tom Brady, Brian Hoyer, Danny Etling
CHICAGO	Mitchell Trubisky, Chase Daniel, Tyler Bray	NEW ORLEANS	Drew Brees, Tom Savage, Taysom Hill, J.T. Barrett
CINCINNATI	Andy Dalton, Matt Barkley, Jeff Driskel, Logan Woodside	NY GIANTS	Eli Manning, Davis Webb, Kyle Lauletta, Alex Tanney
CLEVELAND	Tyrod Taylor, Baker Mayfield, Drew Stanton, Brogan Roback	NY JETS	Josh McCown, Teddy Bridgewater, Sam Darnold
DALLAS	Dak Prescott, Cooper Rush, Mike White, Dalton Sturm	OAKLAND	Derek Carr, EJ Manuel, Connor Cook
DENVER	Case Keenum, Paxton Lynch, Chad Kelly	PHILADELPHIA	Carson Wentz, Nick Foles, Nate Sudfeld, Joe Callahan
DETROIT	Matthew Stafford, Matt Cassel, Jake Rudock	PITTSBURGH	B. Roethlisberger, Landry Jones, Mason Rudolph, Josh Dobbs
GREEN BAY	Aaron Rodgers, Brett Hundley, DeShone Kizer, Tim Boyle	SAN FRANCISCO	Jimmy Garoppolo, C.J. Beathard, Jack Heneghan
HOUSTON	Deshaun Watson, Brandon Weeden, Joe Webb, Steph Morris	SEATTLE	Russell Wilson, Austin Davis, Alex McGough
INDIANAPOLIS	Andrew Luck, Jacoby Brissett, Brad Kaaya, Phillip Walker	TAMPA BAY	Jameis Winston*, Ryan Fitzpatrick, Ryan Griffin, Austin Allen
JACKSONVILLE	Blake Bortles, Cody Kessler, Tanner Lee	TENNESSEE	Marcus Mariota, Blaine Gabbert, Luke Falk
KANSAS CITY	Patrick Mahomes, Chad Henne, Matt McGloin, Chase Litton	WASHINGTON	Alex Smith, Colt McCoy, Kevin Hogan

*Winston suspended first 3 games of regular season

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PRES PRO FOOTBALL PRESEASON PREVIEW

THURSDAY AUGUST 16th

Green Bay – 3 & 44 Over Pittsburgh by 7 & Under by 5

Though each of these teams is amongst the favorites to win Super Bowl LIII, don't expect them to compete against one another as such in this tilt. Ben Roethlisberger didn't see a lick of playing time in Pittsburgh's preseason opener at the Eagles. Even so, the offense went on to rack up an impressive 252 passing yards and gained another 94 yards on the ground over 31 carries. Mason Rudolph gave the Steel City a glimpse of the future by completing 7 of his 12 passes for 101 yards and no turnovers.

Even though it was the first exhibition game before the games really start to mean something, Green Bay is going to have some awfully tough decisions to make at the quarterback position. Though Aaron Rodgers didn't take a single snap and might not this week either, the passing game still looked great with the trio of Brett Hundley, DeShone Kizer and Tim Boyle each throwing for over 100 yards. When the dust cleared, the Packers pass attack torched Tennessee for a whopping 356 yards through the air. Boyle impressed the most in the late stages of the game by completing 7 of 15 passes for 130 yards and a couple scores.

Landry Jones has been the heir apparent in Pittsburgh for a number of years now, but he's largely unimpressed when called upon. That leaves the door open for both Joshua Dobbs and rookie Mason Rudolph to possibly leapfrog him with great showings the next couple weeks. Hundley got all the backup snaps last season but was very hit or miss. Should Kizer continue to limit turnovers and rack up the yardage, he too could land himself the backup role. The QB battles make for riveting drama in this Week 2 preseason clash.

Though it's early, there's been nothing but one way traffic in this matchup with bettors backing the home based Packers. The betting line has since been moved to a full 3 points with heavy juice attached to it. Still, there's no Pittsburgh money to be found. That's quite the headscratcher considering Tomlin's modest success in the preseason that's seen him go 29-21 straight up lifetime. But I surmise that it may be related to the practice incident the Steelers had yesterday. Big Ben was hit and laid face down for a long period of time. He is now in concussion protocol. What does this have to do with this game you say? I know Big Ben is not playing, but has the coaching staff put on the brakes to prevent further injuries? I can see the Steelers being less than their aggressive, while protecting valuable starters from injury. I faded the public at Lambeau last week, and hit the over in last week's newsletter. I'm going to do the same this week as well. I'll fade the public and look for the defenses to rise to the occasion and keep this one relatively low scoring. Steelers look to go home injury free and note that the Pack is 5-1 last 6 ATS at home vs teams with an over .500 win pct. I'll toss cash at the **Pack and Under!**

Projected Score: Packers 23, Steelers 16

DJ PRO FOOTBALL PRESEASON PREVIEW

FRIDAY AUGUST 17th

Detroit Lions – 3 Over NY Giants by 10

The Cleveland Browns committed a ludicrous 13 penalties for 141 yards yet still managed to control its preseason opener against the G-Men from beginning to end. That hardly bodes well for the new regime that took over for a terrible coaching staff that overlooked the franchise previously. While New York's ground attack looked efficient on paper due to rookie Saquon Barkley's 43 yards on four carries with a long of 39 yards, the passing game was flat out embarrassing. As a group, Eli Manning, Davis Webb, Alex Tanney and Kyle Lauletta completed 22 of 45 passes for an unimpressive 193 total yards. We faded the Giants due to their QB rotation last week, and padded the bankroll because of it. Now prized draft pick Barkley might be injured, and out for this game, after coming up gimpy in practice.

Detroit's offense was held to 253 total yards and only 10 points last week. However, take into account that Matthew Stafford and his three favorite targets in Golden Tate, Marvin Jones, and Kenny Golladay didn't see a single snap. With that, it came as no surprise that the run game was the offense's primary concern. They just practiced their run game.

The Giants trotted out one of the worst pass defenses in the league onto the gridiron every passing week last season. So far this season, it looks like New York is going to have a real tough time taking opposing passing attacks evidenced by the whopping 300+ yards it allowed to the Browns last week. If ever there was a week for new HC Patricia to fire up his starting QB and receivers, this is the week! Whether Patricia does it or not remains to be seen.

Shurmur has the lesser of these two rosters, and is being matched up against a new HC looking to score his first win overall and first in front of the hometown faithful. Detroit has the better overall depth and the starting unit that could put the game out of reach early. Looks like the Lions are the right side, especially without Barkley, Lions take care of business.

Projected Score: Lions 24, Giants 16

BAGS PRO FOOTBALL PRESEASON PREVIEW

FRIDAY AUGUST 17th

Kansas City Chiefs + 2.5 Over Atlanta Falcons by 4

Last week, the Chiefs didn't march many of their starters onto the gridiron to battle the Texans, nor did the Falcons who simply went through the motions against the Jets. That could all change in this matchup, but don't expect either teams starters to get long looks with the rash of injuries that occurred last week.

Patrick Mahomes saw limited action in his debut as the Chiefs QB1 and completed 5 of 7 passes for 33 yards. The trio of quarterbacks that followed weren't much better with Chad Henne, Chase Litton and Matt McGloin combining for 193 yards and a 1:1 TD/INT ratio. Pump the brakes if you're concerned about the offense's output in Week 1. The game plan was extremely vanilla. We faded the Falcons last week with the belief that Dan Quinn would continue to take a very basic approach towards the preseason. His team failed to log a win or cover in any of its four played games last year, and that trend once again held true in the team's listless effort in a 17-0 defeat at the hands of the rebuilding New York Jets.

Demarcus Robinson has shined all throughout camp, and his excellent production continued in the Chiefs first live game action of the season after he snagged three of four targets and turned them into 48 yards and a touchdown. With stud pass catching options like Travis Kelce and Tyreke Hill already locked into their positions, Robinson has just about solidified his spot as the No. 2 wide receiver. Kansas City without a doubt is going to have one of the most potent passing attacks in the league this season.

This is a match of preseason don't care coaches. So this is a tough call to make. The second and third string defense was the main reason for KC's loss after allowing Brandon Weeden to light it up for 97 yards and a couple scores. I'm expecting a better overall effort this week and will roll the dice on Reid once again with the hope that the first string offense gives the backup defense enough of a cushion to win the game outright. Take the underdog Chiefs.

Projected Score: Chiefs 24, Falcons 20

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TURKEY WEEK ISSUE FEATURES THESE BEST BETS
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Two Bonus Turkey Day College Basketball Best Bets
Sunday Best Bet: Denver Broncos @ Oakland Raiders

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Pointwise	143	118	54.79%	25
Sports Reporter	102	87	53.97%	15
Power Sweep	88	75	53.99%	13
Winning Points	126	115	52.28%	11
Powers' Picks	103	96	51.76%	7
Playbook	63	63	50.00%	0
Gold Sheet	76	83	47.80%	-7
Power Plays	146	154	48.67%	-8

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