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Dennis Stagliano's Award Winning Football Newsletter

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DRESS REHEARSAL WEEK 3 PRESEASON GETS SERIOUS, ALL VETERANS GET MORE PLAYING TIME THIS WEEK

Preseason Week 2 NFL Capsule

BENGALS 21, COWBOYS 13

Dak Prescott and the Dallas Cowboys had another efficient preseason showing. Andy Dalton bogged down a bit with his Cincinnati Bengals. Prescott led a pair of scoring drives in three possessions, capped by a scrambling 6-yard scoring pass to Terrance Williams, before the Bengals rallied after halftime for a 21-13 exhibition victory Saturday night. The Bengals had just two first downs in three Dalton-led possessions a week after he threw for two touchdowns with an offense that was revamped after finishing last in the NFL. One of the first downs was on Dalton's 13-yard scramble after the Bengals (2-0) started with a pair of three-and-outs. A week after throwing a 30-yard touchdown to rookie Michael Gallup on his only drive of the preseason opener in San Francisco, Prescott was 10 of 15 for 86 yards. The TD drive for a 10-0 lead was kept alive by an 8-yard slant to Gallup, who reached out for a nice catch inside the Cincinnati 10.

TEXANS 16, 49ERS 13

Deshaun Watson threw a touchdown pass and Houston earned a preseason win over San Francisco. Watson led the Texans down the field, going 5 of 8 for 73 yards, capped off by a 1-yard touchdown pass to Bruce Ellington. It was a much lengthier outing than the preseason opener in Kansas City when Watson attempted just one pass in his return to game action after missing the second half of his rookie season with a torn ACL. Watson's efficiency matched a nice opening drive from San Francisco's Jimmy Garoppolo, who threw a 2-yard touchdown pass to Trent Taylor. Garoppolo's night ended after his second drive when a deep pass to Dante Pettis bounced off Pettis' hands and was intercepted by Johnson Bademosi. Garoppolo was 10 of 12 for 136 yards.

BUCCANEERS 30, TITANS 14

Jameis Winston gave Tampa Bay a potent reminder of what it will miss when the quarterback sits out his three-game suspension to start the regular season. Winston threw for 226 yards and two touchdowns after coming off the bench in the second quarter, and the Buccaneers beat Tennessee in the teams' second exhibition game. Ryan Fitzpatrick started for a second straight week as the Buccaneers (2-0) prepare the veteran to run the offense while Winston sits out for violating the league's personal conduct policy after the NFL investigated an allegation Winston groped a female Uber driver in Arizona in March 2016. Fitzpatrick helped the Bucs hold the ball for 9 minutes of the first quarter, but they settled for a field goal as the quarterback was 5 of 13 for 46 yards passing. Winston completed eight of his first nine passes and left with a 151.4 passer rating. He threw for big chunks, hitting Mike Evans for 38 yards and then DeSean Jackson on a 54-yarder. Winston found Chris Godwin in a pack of Titans (0-2) in the end zone for an 8-yard TD and connected with Justin Watson for a 21-yard TD that gave the Bucs a 20-7 halftime lead.

CHARGERS 24, SEAHAWKS 14

Philip Rivers and Los Angeles looked almost ready for the regular season from their first series. Russell Wilson and Seattle probably feel like they've got more work to do. Melvin Gordon rushed for a short touchdown to cap a strong 70-yard opening drive by the Chargers' first-team offense, and Rivers went 6 of 7 for 62 yards in Los Angeles' 24-14 preseason victory over the Seahawks on Saturday night. JJ Jones returned a punt 72 yards for a touchdown late in the first half, and Mike Williams caught a 25-yard touchdown pass from Geno Smith in the second half of a solid performance by the Chargers (1-1) in the preseason home opener of their second season at compact StubHub Center. While Rivers played only two series, Wilson was 13 of 21 for 193 yards while playing the entire first half for the Seahawks (0-2). His offense was limited to two field goals by execution mistakes in the red zone.

RAMS 19, RAIDERS 15

Rookie John Kelly rushed for 56 yards and a touchdown, and the Rams welcomed the Raiders back to the Coliseum with a preseason victory over Oakland. Chris Warren rushed for 110 yards and a touchdown for the Raiders in their return to the venerable stadium that was their home for 13 seasons during their largely successful tenure in Los Angeles. Their still-passionate Southern Cal fan base turned out in force, filling the 95-year-old arena with black jerseys and loud cheers.

BRONCOS 24, BEARS 23

Case Keenum moved the chains for the first time for Denver in a 24-23 exhibition loss to Chicago, and Chad Kelly threw another touchdown after leapfrogging Paxton Lynch on the depth chart. Lynch's second straight poor performance opened the door for the Bears to come back from a 23-10 fourth-quarter deficit. Bears backup QB Chase Daniel threw two TD passes in the final five minutes, including a 12-yarder to tight end Ben Braunecker with 1:53 left to tie it. Pat O'Donnell's extra point gave Chicago (1-2) its first lead. Lynch had the Broncos (0-2) close to field goal range when Isaiah McKenzie, who had a half dozen fumbles as a rookie last year, coughed up the ball after a catch, and linebacker Isaiah Irving recovered for Chicago with 58 seconds left. After a pair of three-and-outs in his dud of a Denver debut last week, Keenum rebounded from another three-and-out to lead two scoring drives on his final two possessions, finishing 8 for 13 for 78 yards with no touchdowns and no interceptions.

JAGUARS 14, VIKINGS 10

Yannick Ngakoue had an 11-yard sack that helped Jacksonville's defense hold Kirk Cousins and Minnesota's starting offense to three completions and three points, and the Jaguars reserves rallied for a victory over the Vikings. Cousins was crisp in his only series last week, but the Vikings went three-and-out on two of their four possessions with their new quarterback. Latavius Murray's second fumble, stripped by Malik Jackson, was recovered by Calais Campbell to end another drive. Cousins finished just 3 for 8 for 12 yards. Minnesota's defense was closer to midseason form, though, with an interception by Harrison Smith of Blake Bortles and another sure pick by Mackensie Alexander that was bobbled and dropped. Bortles played the entire first half and went 12 for 20 for 159 yards, producing a touchdown run by Leonard Fournette on one of his seven series, the last of three possessions the Vikings starters were still in the game.

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 Slotter, 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	Deshawn 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

Friday August 24th

MINNESOTA – 3½ Over Seattle by 10

Seattle just can't rush the pigskin. The hope was that Rashaad Penny would help cure their ails, but the rookie has been sidelined with a broken finger that will keep him out of preseason. The ground game doesn't figure to go off in this spot against a Vikings starting defense that chewed up and spit Leonard Fournette out last week holding him to 12 yards on eight carries.

After going into the Mile High City and rocking the Broncos in its opener, Minnesota returned home and laid a huge egg on a number of different levels. Offensively, the unit was a joke. Kirk Cousins managed a 3 of 8 showing and threw for a whopping 12 yards. Trevor Siemian and Kyle Slotter were nothing to write home about either. When the dust cleared, the Jags held onto the pigskin for 13 more minutes which allowed them to shorten the game to their liking. You can bet your bottom dollar the offense is getting extra reps leading up to this one.

The average yardage (126) the Seahawks have conceded on the ground over the last two weeks. While the starting defense held up its end of the bargain, the backups most definitely haven't. The Chargers just gouged Seattle for 176 yards on 37 carries for a 4.8 yard per carry average. If the Vikings are to get the offense firing on all cylinders like it did at Denver, it would be wise to take advantage of Seattle's weak rush defense; especially once the backups enter the game in the second half.

After gouging Denver for 147 yards in Week 1 and following it up with 128 more yards against Jacksonville, it's safe to say the Vikings will look to its ground attack to soften the Seahawks defense up early and often. Once that happens, Minnesota should pull away and do so quickly. Mike Zimmer likes to win in the preseason, so a crisper and more determined effort is to be expected in Week 3. Zimmer will have his guys locked in right from the opening kick, and they will run roughshod over the banged up Seahawks.

Projected Score: Vikings 23, Seahawks 13

DJ PRO FOOTBALL PRESEASON PREVIEW

Friday August 24th

NY Jets – 2.5 Over NY Giants by 10

The annual preseason battle for Big Apple bragging rights is set to go down this week when Pat Shurmur's New York Giants locks horns with Todd Bowles' New York Jets. The G-Men have held the upper hand in the recent rivalry taking last year's meeting by a 32-31 final count to move to 3-1 SU and 2-2 ATS in the last four meetings. Early betting finds the public backing that trend with nearly 73 percent of the action riding the team donning blue.

After getting embarrassed at home by the Cleveland Browns in their preseason opener, the Giants hit the road for Motown with the look of a team determined to get into the win column for their new head coach. And win is exactly what they did after logging the comeback 30-17 outrightwin and cover as 3 point underdogs.

Though Eli Manning, Saquon Barkley and Odell Beckham Jr. didn't take a single snap, the offense still managed to rack up 299 yards of combined offense and thrived both on the ground (96 yards) and through the air (203 yards). Backup Davis Webb led the charge completing 14 of 20 passes for 140 yards and a touchdown, while Wayne Gallman was the standout in the backfield logging 26 rushing yards and two total touchdowns. Manning is expected to go in this week's dress rehearsal.

The Jets pitched a shutout in their exhibition opener at home against Atlanta whom they defeated 17-0 by way of playing some stifling defense. Though Matty Ice, Julio Jones and a bevy of other key cogs didn't suit up for that one, it was still impressive to see New York hold the Falcons to a grand total of 254 yards. It also registered three quarterback sacks.

Unfortunately, the team's defensive prowess wasn't carried over into last week's tilt in Washington against the Redskins whom they fell to at the gun by a 15-13 final count. Gang Green conceded nearly 350 yards of total offense!

NYG coaching uttered these words > "I think we're a little unsettled along the offensive line. We still have to figure out which OL we're taking onto the 53." Couple that with the Jets five QB sacks through the first 2 weeks of X play. This will be a solid litmus test for a unit still in flux.

The Jets have a battle of NY revenge motive and they have the tools to control the line of scrimmage. With the Giants looking to get a better idea of who it will be going into the regular season with along the front line.

Projected Score: Jets 24, Giants 14

BAGS PRO FOOTBALL PRESEASON PREVIEW

Friday August 24th

Oakland – 7.5 Over Green Bay by 3

Holy cow! News release of the Packers starting offense getting a rest, and not playing in this game and the line shot up to Oakland – 7½ at a few online sportsbooks. Through two exhibition matchups, the Packers have given up an average of 25.5 points per game (No. 25) and had a rough go of it stopping the run (No. 23). Now you see why the big line move.

But that won't be the case for the Packers defense which needs to shore some things up before the start of the season. Most of the damage has been incurred by the backups, so the starters running up against Oakland's No 1s will be a good barometer as to where this unit truly is heading into the regular season. If nothing else, statistical improvement is expected. Running up against a Raiders offense that's been held in the teens both games should see an uptick in production.

While it hasn't been flat out ugly, it hasn't been drop dead gorgeous either. Gruden's Raiders troop have split the first two games under his watch to move him to 31-17 and 25-19-4 against the spread lifetime during the exhibition season. It took until late in the second half for them to make a game of it at LA last week, and by that time, it was too late.

With the Rams on the regular season docket, Gruden elected to rest a number of his offensive starters. Derek Carr, Marshawn Lynch, Amari Cooper, Jordy Nelson and a whole host of others didn't see a single snap. With that the case, you would expect the starting offense to get a bunch of work in this matchup. With the passing game pretty much nonexistent the last two weeks, it's highly likely a bulk of the plays called for the No 1s will be of the passing variety. It will be a good test with Green Bay's defense defending the pass (No. 17) better than the rush (No. 23) thus far.

DeShone Kizer boasts the second best quarterback rating on the team behind Rodgers, and has averaged 9.4 yards per attempt with a long of 82. He's thrown a pair of touchdown strikes, and most importantly, hasn't thrown an interception after logging a whopping 22 a year ago.

The Raiders have shut opposing pass attacks down allowing 141 yards per game, but didn't have to face Stafford in the opener nor Goff last week. If Kizer is to come up with one of the more shocking position battle wins of the preseason, he's going to have to shine in this spot with the nationally televised cameras zooming in on him for all to see.

Oakland's starting offense hasn't shown much and I'm sure we'll see more of what the unit has up its sleeve, but will it be enough to cover the touchdown spread? With Kizer and Hundley duking it out for the backup QB gig and the starting defense set to run up against Oakland's No. 1s, I'll gladly take the extra cheddar and not buy into either of the enormous line swings. Back the Pack with a TD and the hook.

Projected Score: Raiders 23, Packers 20

SAMMY PRO FOOTBALL PRESEASON PREVIEW

Saturday August 25th

Tennessee + 4 Over Pittsburgh by 3

The Mike Vrabel era hasn't gotten out to the greatest of starts. Through two games, the results have been ugly. The Titans stand 0-2 both straight up and against the line. To add insult to injury, they've been outscored 61-31. Only four teams have averaged scoring fewer points than that of Tennessee, and the defense has been abysmal giving up over 30 points per game (no. 29) while getting shredded via the pass (No. 32). Much of that has to do with key components to the secondary going down with season ending injuries. If nothing else, the Steelers are sure to be one of the more higher scoring teams in the league this season.

The Steelers defense looks to be an issue. The defense has gone out and allowed an average of 32.5 points per game the first two weeks of the exhibition season. That's something that needs to be rectified sooner rather than later, and with the starting unit set to get its most reps in weeks, starting now would be a good idea. Taming Marcus Mariota will be a good test for the unit, but the defense also must show well against the backups who've had a pretty decent go of it navigating the Titans offense. Pass that test, and the city of Pittsburgh will breathe a bit easier about its stop unit.

While Tomlin has proven to be a winner in exhibitions in the past evidenced by his 29-22 SU career record, he hasn't been a good bet with the Steelers 22-26-3 ATS in those matchups. Pittsburgh's vaunted passing attack is something Tennessee should get up for, and the Steelers have played to low scorers in each of their previous two dress rehearsals. I'm looking at the – 4 line and saying why is the line so low? I may be wrong, but this smells funny to me, kinda like a trap game. I'm going to with the Titans in this spot looking for a hard fought close game and an upset win for the Titans.

Projected Score: Titans 23, Steelers 20

SATURDAY COLLEGE FOOTBALL PICKS

The first regular season college football games kickoff this Saturday and we're psyched to get the season started. We will have one free pick here, so check back here on Friday.

We will have 5 college football picks in our Gridiron Gold Sheet subscription newsletter.

We will also be offering these as guaranteed or no guarantee college football picks in our website at <http://www.gridirongold.com/guaranteed-college-football-picks.htm> .

College Football Lines Saturday			
Date/time	Rot	Team	Line
08/25/18 5:30 PM ET	295 296	Duquesne Massachusetts	Pending
08/25/18 7:00 PM ET	297 298	Prairie View AM Rice	Pending
08/25/18 7:00 PM ET	309801 309802	North Carolina AT Jacksonville State	44.5 -7
08/25/18 7:30 PM ET	293 294	Hawaii Colorado State	56.5 -14
08/25/18 10:00 PM ET	291 292	Wyoming New Mexico State	-3.5 45

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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
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