

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

\$15

College & Pro Football Best Bets Newsletter

Dennis Stagliano's Award Winning Football Newsletter

Volume 37 Issue 3

September 5, 2018



TIDE ROLLS OVER LOUISVILLE SOONER SCHOONER STAMPEDE BUCKEYES BLASTED BEAVERS NOTRE DAME DUMPS BIG BLUE

College Football Notes

-- Top-ranked Alabama remains the gold standard in college football until further notice. They rolled up a 51-14 victory against Louisville as a 23 1/2-point favorite at Camping World Stadium in Orlando, Fla. The only drama in this game came down to whether or not the over or under would cash. There were concerns that Ohio State might be a bit distracted due to the Urban Meyer suspension, but Oregon State knows the Buckeyes were plenty focused. Ohio State covered the largest spread of any FBS vs. FBS game, hammering the beleaguered Beavers by a 77-31 score. They ended up getting the cover late.. ... On the 11-year anniversary of their colossal upset in Ann Arbor, Appalachian State was at it again at Penn State. They entered the game as 24 1/2-point underdogs, but the Mountaineers put a scare into the Top 10 Nittany Lions. App State scored 28 points in the final quarter to force overtime, 38-38. Penn State survived in OT, 45-38, but soon Big Ten clubs are going to refuse to take calls from Boone, N.C. about future scheduling.

-- Auburn-Washington looked like one of the best matchups of the opening slate on paper, and it certainly lived up to the billing. Sure, there were some mistakes on both sides, but this one came right down to the end. Auburn ended up securing a 21-16 victory, potentially damaging Washington's playoff hopes before their second game of the season, while the Tigers earned a huge feather for their cap.

-- Michigan-Notre Dame was another highly anticipated matchup, as these two storied schools renewed their rivalry. Jim Harbaugh has a new toy under center in QB Shea Patterson, but the Wolverines were tripped up 24-17 to lose for the 17th straight time on the road against a ranked opponent.

-- Two games were cancelled due to inclement weather, including the Akron-Nebraska. It was supposed to be the celebration of Scott Frost's return to Lincoln. His debut will have to wait another week until Colorado pays a visit next week. The other cancelled game was South Dakota State-Iowa State, the first cancelled game for the Cyclones since 1963 when John F. Kennedy was assassinated. There are no plans to make up either contest.

-- The Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) mostly did what they were supposed to do, and that is win. That is, except for Louisville. North Carolina-California was also a bit of a coin-flip game, and the Golden Bears came away with the 24-17 result. UNC slipped to 0-4 SU over the past four season openers, and a disturbing 0-5-1 ATS across the past six season openers dating back to Sept. 1, 2012. ... Wake Forest grinded out a tough 23-17 win in overtime on the road against Tulane as the Green Wave narrowly covered a seven-point number at most shops. The Demon Deacons have been favored by three or more points just four times since the start of the 2010 season. The last time they covered as favorites by a field goal or more on the road was Nov. 28, 2009 at Duke.



-- Mid-American giant killer Northern Illinois entered the weekend 4-1 SU in their past five against Big Ten opponents. Iowa was wearing their upset bug repellent and never gave the Huskies a chance to threaten. It was a 3-0 lead at halftime for Iowa, so the thought was NIU could still make it happen. But the Hawkeyes pulled away in the second half for an emphatic 33-7 victory. ... Indiana hung on tight for a 38-28 road victory against Butch Davis and Florida International despite hot and humid conditions in South Florida. The Golden Panthers did grab the cover, however. ... Northwestern handed Purdue a loss in Thursday's game, 31-27. While the Wildcats won at Ross-Ade, the Boilermakers showed they're not going to be a pushover any longer.

-- Oklahoma was expected to receive a little more resistance from Lane Kiffin and Florida Atlantic, but the Owls remain a cream puff rather than a giant killer like App State, NIU, etc. Boomer Sooner laid down the boom, rolling up a 56-0 lead at one point before the Owls finally lit up their side of the scoreboard. ... It looks like another long season is in the offing for Kansas, as they suffered a 26-23 setback against FCS Nicholls State. Hey, at least the Jayhawks forced them to overtime. ... Kansas State almost joined their rivals in misery, as FCS South Dakota gave the Wildcats all they could handle at Bill Snyder Family Stadium in Manhattan. In the end, K-State survived 27-24. ... West Virginia humbled Tennessee in a neutral-site battle, as QB Will Grier kept his Heisman campaign on schedule.

-- UCLA was unable to pull any comeback heroics like last season against Texas A&M. It was Cincinnati spoiling the debut of Chip Kelly, 26-17. ... Southern California was a bit sluggish in their home opener against UNLV, but the alarm clock went off to start the fourth quarter. The Runnin' Rebels trailed just 19-14 going into the final 15 minutes, but the Trojans outscored the visitors 24-7 and they nearly covered. ... Washington State-Wyoming was supposed to be more of a defensive struggle, at least for the visiting Cougars. The Cowboys have an impressive defense, and they shut down New Mexico State in Week Zero. The Cougs weren't having any of it, piling up 41 points in a 41-19 win. It wasn't as lopsided as it looks, though. Wazzu entered the final 15 minutes up just 20-19 before running away.

-- Ole Miss looked mighty impressive on the road at Texas Tech, winning 47-27 to easily cover a 2 1/2-point number. ... South Carolina was not a very kind host to Coastal Carolina, smashing the Chanticleers by a 49-15 count. The Gamecocks covered the 30 1/2-point number, their largest spread covered since winning 70-10 as 34 1/2-point favorites on Nov. 23, 2013 against, yep...Coastal Carolina. ... Vanderbilt was supposed to receive a bigger test against Middle Tennessee, as they were just a three-point favorite. The Commodores roughed up the Blue Raiders by a 35-7 count.

-- Temple was shocked by FCS Villanova at home, losing 19-17. The Owls led 17-13 heading to the final quarter, but the Wildcats ended up celebrating in the end. For FBS teams nicknamed the Owls (FAU, Temple and Rice), they ended up 0-3 SU and 1-2 ATS. Only Rice earned a cover in their 45-27 loss against Houston. ... Memphis lost a lot of key components, but it didn't show in their 66-14 victory over FCS Mercer. The Tigers piled up 28 points in both the first and second quarter to build a 56-0 halftime lead before letting the reserves bring it home. ... SMU met a revenge minded Mean Green and got drilled by North Texas, 46-23. The two sides combined for 33 points in the fourth quarter, but came up just short of the total (71 1/2).

-- Texas El-Paso entered their contest against FCS Northern Arizona as seven-point underdogs despite the fact the game was being played at home. Vegas got it right, and then some...as the Lumberjacks crushed their FBS opponent by a 30-10 count. ... Marshall picked up a 35-28 road win against rival Miami-Ohio, covering as one-point road 'dogs. The Thundering Herd is now 6-0 SU/5-1 ATS across their past six season openers. ... Old Dominion went to Liberty, favored by five points. The Flames, playing in their first game ever as an FBS program, never flickered in the 52-10 victory vs ODU.

-- Central Michigan opened on the road against Kentucky, and John Bonamego's crew hung around for a while. In fact, they trailed just 21-20 at halftime. But the Chips were scoreless in the second half to slip up 35-20. They were able to hang around for the cover, however. ... Ohio roughed up FCS Hampton in their opener last season, but this year they had trouble with Howard. The Bison won a game against the FBS last season at UNLV, and they were trying to spring another upset as 31 1/2-point 'dogs. Eventually the Bobcats won 38-32, but it wasn't pretty.

-- Idaho dropped back down to FCS, and Fresno State treated them rather rudely in their visit to the Valley. The Bulldogs scored seven rushing touchdowns en route to a 79-13 win. ... Nevada also went for a 70-burger against FCS Portland State, winning 72-19 to cover a four-touchdown spread. ... Offense was not missing in the Islands, either. Hawaii is off to a 2-0 SU/ATS start after sinking Navy. The Warriors are using the run-and-shoot and look like a very entertaining group early on. ... San Jose State were dropped 44-38 at home against FCS UC-Davis. Ouch.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

NOTRE DAME -33 Over Ball State by 41

The outcome likely won't be in doubt even if they play poorly but Notre Dame will aim to put together another solid showing. The Fighting Irish believes it has what it takes to be a College Football Playoff contender and taking care of business against an inferior foe is a big part of that.

Notre Dame knocked off fellow nationally ranked power Michigan by a score of 24-17 to open the year. The Fighting Irish scored 14 points early and led wire to wire. The Wolverines pulled to within a touchdown and had the ball with a chance to tie late but the Notre Dame defense held stout. The Fighting Irish defense only gave up one one touchdown as Michigan's other came on a kickoff return.

Notre Dame was led offensively by quarterback Brandon Wimbush, who threw for 170 yards and a touchdown and added 59 rushing yards. He was effective in the first half and then the Fighting Irish went more conservative after intermission, content to let their defense carry the load.

Ball State cruised to a 42-6 victory over Central Connecticut in its opener. Quarterback Riley Neal was impressive, throwing for 259 yards and two touchdowns. Running back James Gilbert had 14 carries for 100 yards and a touchdown, while Caleb Huntley added eight carries for 73 yards.

275That's the number of total yards the Notre Dame defense gave up against Michigan. The Wolverines have much more firepower than Ball State and could get little going. This does not bode well for the Cardinals' chances at moving up and down the field efficiently.

Wimbush started the year off on the right foot and should have many openings to build on that against Ball State. Ball State picked up an easy win in its opener but the competition level is like night and day. The Cardinals are going to struggle to remain competitive in this matchup in NCAA football betting. The Cardinals looked good in their opener but the fact remains they went 2-10 a season ago and are facing a much more successful top notch program. The play of Neal is one highlight and he will aim to keep Ball State close, but the Irish are looking to roll up a score and hit the top 5. Take ND
Projected Score: Notre Dame 48, Ball St. 7

OHIO STATE - 35 Over Rutgers by 45

The Scarlet Knights looked good in their opener but this is a completely different level of competition. Simply keeping this outcome somewhat respectable would be a moral victory for a Rutgers program which will be outclassed physically on the field. Ohio State lost plenty of talent to the NFL from 2017 but has restocked and will once again be one of the best teams in the country in 2018. The Buckeyes flexed their muscle in the opener and will aim to impress once again as they host the Scarlet Knights in NCAA football gambling.

The Buckeyes dropped 77 points in a blowout win over Oregon State to open the season. While the defense gave up 31, most of it was in the second half and is probably not anything to be concerned about considering the lead was always large. Ohio State quarterback Dwayne Haskins looked right at home taking over for J.T. Barrett as he finished with 313 passing yards with five touchdowns and an interception. He added a pair of carries for 24 yards and will be a handful for Rutgers. Ohio State running back Mike Weber carried the ball 20 times for 186 yards and three touchdowns, while Terry McLaurin had four catches for 121 yards and two scores.

The Scarlet Knights won their opener by a score of 35-7 over Texas State. Rutgers jumped out to a 21-0 lead at intermission and cruised the rest of the way. The Scarlet Knights relied on their running game to lead the way. Jonathan Hillman carried the ball 15 times for 60 yards and a pair of touchdowns, while Raheem Blackshear added 12 carries for 62 yards and a score. Rutgers' leading rusher was Isaih Pacheco, who had 11 carries for 76 yards although he did not find the end zone. The Scarlet Knights accumulated more than 200 yards rushing in the contest.

Artur Sitkowski, the Rutgers' true freshman quarterback did not have the finest of debuts against Texas State. He finished the contest 20-of-30 for 205 yards with a touchdown and three interceptions. He threw a pick in the red zone in the first half and tossed a pick-six in the third quarter for Texas State's only points of the game. Sitkowski didn't have much experience so some of the issues can be chalked up to nerves, but he has to get better in a hurry. Ohio State's defense is extremely formidable and figures to have him under duress for much of this matchup. The Horseshoe is one of the toughest places to play in all of college football and Sitkowski could be in for a rude awakening in this one.

The Buckeyes were a runaway locomotive in their season opener, as poor Oregon St was unable to slow them down. The Ohio State defense is not happy after giving up too many points against Oregon State and will take out its frustration on Rutgers. Meanwhile, the offense should continue to roll. This is a big spread but Ohio St is up to the challenge. The Buckeyes are playing angry without Urban. They will once again show why they are one of the best teams in the nation.
Projected Score: Ohio State 55, Rutgers 10

Virginia +7 Over INDIANA by 3

Both the Virginia Cavaliers and Indiana Hoosiers looked impressive in securing wins the opening week of the season. The Cavs however were the only one to log the win against the CFB odds in a dominant showing against Richmond. The Hoosiers came up a bit short for their wagering supporters, but looked dominant with the offense busting out in a big way. Each will look to remain undefeated in Week 2 when they lock horns from Memorial Stadium in Bloomington.

Bronco Mendenhall was forced to deal with one of the ugliest offenses in the country last season due to a lack of personnel. This past offseason, he brought JUCO transfer Bryce Perkins in to lead the offense. The quarterback's debut was of the solid variety versus the Spiders, and it's one he'll likely look to build upon against a Hoosiers defense which is the heart and soul of the team.

Perkins went on to complete 13 of 24 passes for 185 yards and a 2:1 TD/INT ratio, but also proved to be a fantastic dual-threat after racking up 108 yards on 13 carries and a couple more scores. When the dust cleared, the Wahoos racked up 492 total yards of offense while the defense toyed with its lesser opponent limiting it to 225 total yards. Most impressive was the 34 total yards allowed on the ground.

The Indiana Hoosiers had a tough time putting points on the board last season. that wasn't the case last week in their season opener at FIU where they ended up dropping 38 of them on the Golden Panthers heads. Unfortunately, the defense conceded 28 which amounted to a loss at's after closing as 13 point road chalk.

Let's get back to the offense. The unit put forth a balanced attack with 213 rushing and 252 passing for a grand total of 465 yards. Peyton Ramsey was largely efficient completing 20 of 27 passes for 156 yards and a 3:1 TD/INT ratio, while Stevie Scott got the lion's share of carries and turned 20 of them into 70 yards. All four offensive touchdowns were tallied via the pass.

Indiana suffered a ton of losses on the defensive side of the ball this past offseason. It showed dramatically last week with FIU scoring a lone touchdown in each quarter and converting a pair of fourth down tries to extend tries that ultimately led to scores. On top of that, it had some major issues limiting the Golden Panthers on the ground. That bodes terribly for the home team considering how different and capable the Cavaliers offense looked last week with their new weapon under center.

Indiana's ability or disability to contain Perkins on the ground will go a long way in deciding which of these teams comes out the victor on the CFB odds in this rematch. Remember, Indiana went into Charlottesville and handed the Wahoos an ugly 34-17 defeat as 3.5 point home dogs last season. If Virginia can find a way to control the game on the ground, it will have an excellent shot of avenging that defeat.

Virginia's powerful running game should have its way against an Indiana defense that allowed FIU to rip off 170 yards on 39 carries last week. Jordan Ellis was a monster racking up 146 yards and two touchdowns on 20 carries, and he should have another solid showing against a lesser Indiana defense that held him in check in last year's showdown.

Projected Score: Virginia 31, Indiana 28

Colorado +6 Over NEBRASKA by 3

The Cornhuskers' season opener against Akron was postponed due to severe weather. Colorado rolled to a 45-13 victory over the Rams in its opener. The Buffaloes jumped out to a 28-10 lead at the half and then scored 17 points in the third quarter to turn it into a laugher. Colorado received a great performance from Steven Montez. He completed 22-of-25 passes for 338 yards with 4 TD's. The Buffaloes also had success on the ground, as Travon McMillian went for 103 yards. Colorado wide receiver Laviska Shenault, Jr. had a huge game, catching 11 passes for 211 yards and a touchdown. K.D. Nixon had six catches for 112 yards and another score. If the Buffaloes get this type of production from their pass-catchers again an upset will be in the making.

Adrian Martinez -- Nebraska has chosen the true freshman to take over as the starting quarterback. Martinez will become the first true freshman to be the opening-game starter for the Huskers. Martinez missed his senior season of high school with a shoulder injury but played in an All-Star game in January to prove he was a top-flight recruit.

Nebraska has the higher upside and the hiring of Frost has brought some energy to this once-dominant program. The postponement of the first game should not be taken lightly, as Colorado has a game under its belt while the Huskers have yet to play one.

The talent level between these teams looks pretty even so it could be a very good matchup. Nebraska makes sense as the favorite because they're home. But the Buffaloes played well last time out and should be competitive as they shook off the rust last week. This one should go down to the wire, so we're grabbing the points. Colorado is the choice to win this one straight up and of course, if so, that's a cover.

Projected Score: Colorado 31, Nebraska 31

Arkansas -14 Over COLORADO ST by 6

After getting shocked at home by Hawaii as decided favorites, the Colorado State Rams followed that effort up with an even uglier one against in-state rival Colorado. Because of it, Mike Bobo's kids are being faded in a big way in their second home game of the season against a retooled Arkansas Razorbacks squad.

Ty Storey proved more than capable in his first collegiate start last week against the Panthers. He went on to throw for 261 yards and three touchdowns en route to leading the Hogs to the 55-20 win and push as 35 point home favorites. New DC John Chavis' stop unit also had a fine showing limiting Eastern Illinois to a grand total of 357 yards with only 127 of them coming on the ground.

A week removed from Cole McDonald lighting them up for 418 yards and three touchdowns, the Colorado State defense got ripped once again. This time by Steven Montez who completed 22 of his 25 passes for 338 yards and four touchdowns. It's safe to say John Jancek's new schemes are yet to take shape. The unit will have another tough assignment come Saturday night.

As bad as CSU has looked the first two weeks of the season, it came as no surprise to see them installed large underdogs at home against an SEC opponent. With Arkansas dropping a 55 burger last week and the Rams conceding an average of 44.0 points in their first two games, it's hardly a shock to see total bettors flocking to the over with reckless abandon. Since opening at 65, the number to beat has jumped all the way up to 67.5 and doesn't look to be slowing anytime soon. After managing just 13 points in an ugly loss last week, Colorado State is likely to add to the combined score this time around.

CSU has been gouged both on the ground (No. 110) and through the air (No. 118), so Arkansas is going to be able to do whatever it likes. Once running backs Devwah Whaley and Chase Hayden soften up the underbelly of the Rams weak defense, it should open some gaping wide holes for Storey to take advantage of down field. When that occurs, it will be up to him to make the magic happen. If he does more times than not, Arkansas is likely to pull a wire-to-wire job. If not, it could get a little too close for comfort.

The Razorbacks new smashmouth spread offense should seemingly have its way with the Rams' defense. However, I'm not at all sold on the other side of the ball where the Hogs are adopting new schemes and philosophies, and built up a false sense of security against an overmatched opponent last week. As bad as K.J. Carta-Samuels and the CSU offense was last week, I'm expecting a ton of improvement here back home in Week 3.

This has the makings of an all-out shootout! Arkansas by no means deserves to be laying this type of chalk in just their second game and first on the road under a new coaching staff. Colorado State hasn't been dogged at home by more than a touchdown since 2015 when they closed as 15 point pups to a more veteran Boise State outfit and got shellacked. The Hogs haven't laid double-digits on the road since 2011, and the program has gone a bankroll bursting 1-7 against the spread in that role dating back to 1997. The Razorbacks initially opened as 11 point favorites, but have since been bet up to -14 with a whopping 93 percent of the early action taken siding with the visitors. That's an astounding percentage! The line sits at Arkansas -14 with a total of 69½. We're going to wait to see just how high the betting public pushes the number? Hopefully higher than 14, then we'll back the Rams with the points.

Projected Score: Arkansas 43, Colorado St. 37

COLLEGE FOOTBALL LEANER PICKS

*If a game is not listed, we have no opinion on the game

Date/ET	Line	Games	Analysis
09/07/18 8:00 ET	-22.5 61	Texas Christian Southern Methodist	The Mustangs are better than what they showed LW at North Texas. The Horned Frogs are 3-7 ATS L10 games when favored by 15+ points, They beat this SMU team last year by 20 points. Tough call take Stangs home.
09/08/18 12:00 ET	57 -10.5	Liberty Army	Liberty kicked off their FBS football with a convincing 52-10 demolition of visiting ODU. QB Stephen Calvert had 345 yards on 25-36 & 4 TD's. Army never got their option going in a 34-14 defeat at Duke. Take the underdog.
09/08/18 12:00 ET	-3 56.5	Georgia Tech South Florida	It's been a while since the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets have won a road game (4-8-1 ATS L13 road games. The South Florida Bulls have the atheltes that will help them stop the triple-option. I'll take a slight lean to USF at home
09/08/18 12:00 ET	51.5 -27.5	Western Michigan Michigan	Wow, do you think Harbaugh is upset by all the mistakes made in the matchup against Notre Dame last week. Now their home and in an angry mood. WMU will pay for the that rusty start to the season. Wolverines will crush the Broncos
09/08/18 6:00 ET	-14 52.5	Appalachian St. Charlotte	App State nearly took down a top-10 team LW in Penn St. Will App St be up for this game this week after that tough loss? Charlotte should be a much easier task and as so I'll lay the points with App St. here and hope they show up.

09/08/18 12:00 ET	55 -15	Eastern Michigan Purdue	The Purdue Boilermakers are 6-2-1 ATS in their last nine games when a double-digit favorite. You have to love how the Eagles keep games close to the vest and compete even in losses. Give me the points.
09/08/18 12:00 ET	54 -35	New Mexico Wisconsin	Wisconsin could put up huge numbers. However, the Badgers have failed to cover 5 of L6 when favored by 30+ points and just 5-5 ATS in its L10 favored by 17+ points. The Badgers don't cover big numbers often. Take the Lobos.
09/08/18 2:00 ET	63.5 -10	Air Force Florida Atlantic	Lane Kiffin's crew got embarrassed last week against the Oklahoma Sooners. Many believed they would stay under the big number. This week they play a team that is not nearly as powerful and I believe they will bounce back. Go FAU
09/08/18 7:30 ET	55 -1	Fla International Old Dominion	It's tough to get a handle on these two teams as I thought ODU had the most potential coming in to the season. I'll back FIU, who will hopefully show life.
09/08/18 12:00 ET	49 -3	Duke Northwestern	The Duke Blue Devils are 10-4 ATS L14 when an underdog and 4 of L7 games have resulted in an outright victory. Duke is clearly a live dog given its history and is a team that's now scored 31 or more points in four straight games. Duke
09/08/18 12:00 ET	-9.5 54.5	Mississippi State Kansas State	Bulldogs got an impressive start for their backup QB in a blowout, while the K St offense struggled and almost lost at home as a 24-point fav. K State's offense has a solid OL and they're always tough at home, but slight lean to Miss St.
09/08/18 12:00 ET	65.5 -4.5	Arizona Houston	Arizona QB Montez is really good and should have success against a Houston defense that is not as good as a few years ago. Conversely, the Cougars offense is getting better and I like the over in this game. Go over 65.5
09/08/18 12:00 ET	61.5 -10	Nevada Vanderbilt	I still have questions about the Commodores offense. Wolf Pack can stay close with a few scores. I'll take the points with Nevada in this spot.
09/08/18 12:30 ET	52.5 -24.5	Georgia State North Carolina State	Panthers QB Ellington a one man show (LW 20-28 for 187 and led GSU in rushing 18 for 77 yds. NC St QB Ryan Finley had a solid day in the Dukes win, going 29-43 line for 309 yards and 2 TD's. NC St defense dominates.
09/08/18 1:00 ET	64.5 -10	UCLA Oklahoma	UCLA's offense looked lost after they lost Wilton Speight, who is still ? for this game. Sooner D did a great job slowing down a fast-paced FAU offense. In Speight of it all, I'm going with the Sooners at home in this one.
09/08/18 8:00 ET	57.5 -23.5	New Mexico St Utah State	NMSU doesn't have a lot right now. Utah State will be kicking themselves for their opening loss for some time, but if they can clean a few things up the memory shouldn't stick around for too long. I'm going to go with Utah State.
09/08/18 3:00 ET	54 -6.5	Kansas Central Michigan	This isn't going to be the most watched game in week two but I'll take the touchdown with the Jayhawks because I really don't know which team is the worse of the two. So Kansas is the leaner pick.
09/08/18 9:00 ET	55.5 -24.5	UTEP UNLV	It's a little easier to look at UNLV and find positives, but they're going to have to tighten the defensive screws later in the game. All of that said, I can't pick against UNLV here but I'm also not thrilled. Runnin' Rebs.
09/08/18 3:30 ET	-4.5 72	Memphis Navy	The bottom line is Navy is a money making machine as an underdog and preparing for this triple-option isn't easy. The Middies are 12-5-1 ATS in their last 18 games as an underdog. I have a hard time passing on Navy.
09/08/18 3:30 ET	-16.5 59	North Carolina East Carolina	The North Carolina Tar Heels aren't a perfect team by any means, but they have better players across the board and are explosive enough offensively to get the job done here. Give me the road team and the chalk UNC.
09/08/18 3:30 ET	51.5 -4	Buffalo Temple	The Buffalo Bulls looked good in their debut, but it was puffcake Delaware St. The Owls struggled against Nova and lost. The Temple Owls are 11-5 ATS in their last 16 games when a fav of 3+ points. Home team by a TD. Owls cover.
09/08/18 3:30 ET	-9.5 50.5	Georgia South Carolina	Points at home with South Carolina is tempting, and the Gamecocks have been a tough out at home, Georgia is 9-1 ATS L10 roadies. Give me Georgia to win this one, but I'm taking the Gamecocks at home with the points.
09/08/18 7:00 ET	-15 49.5	Baylor Tex San Antonio	UT-San Antonio pulled off the 17-10 upset against the Bears last season and as I'm encouraged that the Roadrunners QB Cordale Grundy looked decent against the Sun Devils LW. I think UTSA is pointing to this game. Take UTSA.
09/08/18 3:30 ET	63.5 -36.5	Arkansas State Alabama	I love a good underdog, but I shudder to think what Alabama can do to Arkansas State after what they did to Louisville. The public will lay the points with Alabama here. Not me, I'm going with Ark St and the generous points.

09/08/18 3:30 ET	68 -6	UL Monroe So Mississippi	I feel safer backing So Miss after ULM narrowly escaped their game against SE Louisiana. The Golden Eagles are also a much better team at home and ULM has had their issues on the road, so I'll lay the points with Southern Miss here.
.08/18 5:00 ET	49 -3.5	Iowa State Iowa	I don't like that ISU didn't get a warm up game to knock off any rust from a long offseason. Iowa looked sharp in their season opener, as they were solid on D. Even with the game in Iowa City, I'm taking a shot with the Cyclones and points.
09/08/18 6:00 ET	-16 67	Maryland Bowling Green State	Scott Miller led BGSU with 13 receptions for 166 yards and a pair of TD's. I don't know if Maryland is ready to be a big road chalk but I like what I saw this team do against the Longhorns. Again, can they get up for this one. Take Terps.
09/08/18 6:00 ET	61.5 -3	Massachusetts Georgia Southern	GA Southern has a hard time covering at home. UMASS was torn up vs BC, a bad pick for us! A lot of the yardage came through the air and GA Southern doesn't really throw the ball. I like UMASS to get back to form to win and cover.
09/08/18 7:00 ET	-12 54	Clemson Texas AM	This has potential to be the game of the week. TAM as a home dog is extremely tempting, but Clemson has shown that they haven't lost any depth and should be able to maybe squeeze out a cover, but this one will not be easy. Clemson
09/08/18 7:00 ET	-16.5	Wyoming Missouri	I got burned by Wyoming against Washington St LW. Drew Lock is a sharp experienced QB. I know it's not UT-Martin this week, but I think Lock has another dominant performance here, so I'll lay the points with Missouri.
09/08/18 7:30 ET	53.5 -7	Virginia Indiana	The Indiana Hoosiers waxed Virginia last year on the road, 34-17. One reason to consider the Cavs and the points here is the fact they've covered 8 of L11 road games when an underdog of at least three points. Revenge mode with IU.
09/08/18 7:30 ET	49.5 -14.5	Kentucky Florida	Kentucky QB Benny Snell can do it all. 3 of L4 have been decided by single digits, so while I see Florida getting the win, I'm going to take a shot and say that Kentucky does enough to keep this one within the line. I'll take the points.
09/08/18 7:30 ET	-11 49.5	Utah Northern Illinois	The Northern Illinois Huskies saw their defense fall apart in the second half of a 33-7 defeat at Iowa in week one. I expected them to be much better on D. I hate laying points to them at home but have to lean Utah.
09/08/18 7:30 ET	48 -2.5	Fresno State Minnesota	This feels like a bad matchup for FSU. Gopher lines are hugh and Minnesota is going to play bully style football and cruise to a 2-0 start for the third year in a row. Take the Gophers to control the tempo and cover the spread.
09/08/18 8:00 ET	50 -2.5	Cincinnati Miami (OH)	The Redhawks QB Gus Ragland completed 25-46 for 357 yards and 3 TD's LW in a loss. School is still out on both teams but Cincy's effort vs UCLA LW was impressive. I'll take the small road dog.
09/08/18 8:00 ET	61 -21.5	Tulsa Texas	Texas had a chance to prove they are going to be consistent and turn the corner, but they proved they're the same hit or miss program. Texas is now a tough team to trust, especially with big numbers. Take Tulsa
09/08/18 8:00 ET	64 -31	South Alabama Oklahoma State	As for OK State, their opener couldn't have gone a whole lot better. The Cowboys will come in here riding high so I'm sticking with OK State here.
09/08/18 8:00 ET	-9 58.5	Penn State Pittsburgh	Nittany Lions fans are nursing heart conditions from last week's near-miss. Now a tough game against a rival opponent. Pittsburgh looked pretty solid LW. I don't have a high confidence level in Penn St right now so I'm going Pitt for the cover.
09/08/18 8:30 ET	54.5 -3.5	Southern Cal Stanford	USC defeated Stanford by a 31-28 margin in the Championship game LY. Always a hard fought battle. Expect points similar to LY. I'll go over the 54.5.
09/08/18 10:15 ET	46.5 -3	California BYU	I don't like what I saw last week with the Golden Bears offense. I don't think they'll do much damage against a good BYU defense on the road. BYU will do just enough to cover this small spread. BYU
09/08/18 10:15 ET	64 -33.5	Connecticut Boise State	The early returns on Pindell look good, and we'll see if others step up to support him. Boise came out of the gate strong and look like they'll have a lot of weapons. Worried if BSU plays subs often. Big number, Broncos here.
09/08/18 10:45 ET	-7 56.5	Michigan State Arizona State	Michigan State had a surprisingly tough time as 23.5 point favorite at home against Utah St. Arizona St had an impressive performance in Herm Edwards debut. Look out here Spartans, even though leaning your way.
09/08/18 11:00 ET	61.5 -35.5	San Jose State Washington State	It took a half for the Washington St offense to find it's footing, but once it did, it looked mighty impressive against a very good defense in a tough road environment. I'm taking the Cougars to cover this large spread



NFL KICKOFF WEEK! LET'S GET IT ON WITH NFL WEEK ONE NFL WINNING PICKS

NFL Notes

The 2018 NFL preseason came to an end as the second, third and even fourth string players made the final appeal to earn a spot on their respective teams' 53-man roster. For most teams, the preseason finale is used to get one last look at the players who are in grave danger of losing their roster spot. For HC Hue Jackson and the Browns, it was evidently an opportunity to send out the top overall draft pick from the 2018 NFL Draft. QB Baker Mayfield played the entire first-half, passing for 138 yards, leading three scoring drives as the Browns opened up a 25-0 lead at the break. Jackson has remained adamant throughout the offseason and preseason that he would not consider giving Mayfield first-team reps, even in practice, but we all still expect to see Mayfield as the starter at some point this season.

Saints WR Cameron Meredith, formerly of the Bears, had made little impact this preseason entering Thursday's finale. In fact, he had failed to record a reception on just two targets in a pair of preseason game, but that changed against the Rams second and third-stringers. Meredith hauled in a 56-yarder from QB Taysom Hill to land the Saints in the red zone, leading to a short touchdown run from rookie RB Boston Scott. Later, Meredith got in the end zone himself, hauling in a 16-yard score. Meredith is expected to compete with WR Ted Ginn and rookie Tre'Quan Smith behind top WR M Thomas.

It was clearly not a good sign for QB A.J. McCarron when the Buffalo Bills announced the former Bengal would play the entire preseason finale, but it got worse from there. Once considered the favorite to be the team's 2018 starter, McCarron has fallen out of the race between rookie Josh Allen and Nathan Peterman, both of whom sat out Thursday's contest. The Bills fell behind 20-0 by halftime as McCarron struggled mightily. Things did pick up in the second half, including a 25-point final quarter to lead a huge comeback. McCarron finished with three touchdowns but completed just over one-third of his pass attempts. McCarron could find himself out of work pretty soon.

The struggles of the 2018 rookie running backs has been a huge storyline this preseason and that continued in the finale. Tampa Bay second-round RB Ronald Jones entered the game with an average of just one yard per carry. That's right...18 carries for 18 yards in his first three games. That average is now even worse as Jones carried ten times against the Jaguars, gaining only four yards on the ground.

Dolphins QB Brock Osweiler played well, making a strong claim to be the primary backup behind QB Ryan Tannehill. Osweiler had his team up 21-0 after the first quarter as Miami cruised past Atlanta. ... Bengals backup QB Matt Barkley suffered a knee injury against the Colts, possibly giving Jeff Driskel the edge to be Andy Dalton's top backup. ... Ravens rookie QB Lamar Jackson saw plenty of action, throwing for 109 yards and rushing for 25 yards and a score. Many teams will be watching the Ravens and how they handle backup QB Robert Griffin III, who sat out this game. ... Vikings undrafted rookie RB Mike Boone continued his strong push for a roster spot, totaling 109 yards on 17 touches. Boone's main competition is fellow rookie RB Roc Thomas, who suffered an ankle injury and was forced to leave the game... Rookie QB Danny Etling of the Patriots was the star of the night as he rushed for 113 yards, thanks to an untouched 86-yard touchdown run, along with his 157 passing yards and touchdown.

NFL Roster Moves

Last Saturday, all 32 NFL teams trimmed their rosters from up to 90 players to a maximum of 53 players, which means thousands of NFL players lost their jobs. To call that a busy day in the NFL would be an understatement. It's chaos.

Below, you'll find the 32 takeaways -- one for each team -- from roster cuts day, from the monster Khalil Mack trade to the Bills' decision to cut Corey Coleman to veterans like Brian Robison and Michael Johnson getting cut.

1. Arizona Cardinals

One member of the Cardinals' 2018 draft class won't be sticking around for the regular season. The Cardinals decided to cut sixth-round pick Chris Campbell, a cornerback out of Penn St. Additionally, the Cardinals also parted ways with Scooby Wright, who appeared in 13 games over the past two seasons.

2. Atlanta Falcons

The Falcons cut safety Ron Parker, who signed with them in free agency. Parker appeared in 80 games with the Chiefs over the past five seasons, racking up nine picks and seven sacks, making his dismissal somewhat surprising.

3. Baltimore Ravens

2015 first-round pick Breshad Perriman got cut by the Ravens after three disappointing seasons to begin his career. After missing his entire rookie season due to an injury, Perriman caught 43 of 101 targets for 576 yards and three touchdowns over the past two seasons. He never caught on. In other important news, the Ravens kept Robert Griffin III, heading into the season with three quarterbacks (with Joe Flacco and Lamar Jackson as the other two). RG3 could still be traded to a team needing a veteran backup, but he stays in Baltimore for now.

4. Buffalo Bills

Less than a month after trading for Corey Coleman, the Bills cut him. The 2016 first-round pick of the Browns couldn't carve out a role in Cleveland and he couldn't make the roster of a team that is lacking reliable receivers. Even though he won't be with the team during the upcoming season, the Bills will still be paying for him. The Bills will take a \$3.5 million dead money hit against their 2018 cap because of Corey Coleman's guaranteed 2018 salary and his guaranteed 2019 salary, which accelerates into their 2018 cap. That gives Buffalo about \$50M in dead money. Next-highest team is DAL with \$26.5M. That's what you call a trade that did not work out.

5. Carolina Panthers

Efe Obada made the Panthers' 53-man roster, which means he became the first player from the NFL's International Pathway Program to make a final roster. According to the Panthers', Obada, who was born in Nigeria and "abandoned on London streets," didn't start playing football until he was 22 years old. Now, he's on the Carolina Panthers.

6. Chicago Bears

If you didn't already hear, the Bears traded for maybe the best pass rusher on the planet, Khalil Mack. It cost them two first-round picks, a third-round pick, and a sixth-round pick, but they also got a second-round pick and a conditional fifth-round pick back from the Raiders, making this an absolute steal for the Bears and an absolute head-scratcher for the Raiders. The Bears later gave Mack a contract extension that made him the highest-paid defender in football. That's what you'd call a good day in the NFL.

7. Cincinnati Bengals

The Bengals surprisingly cut veteran defensive lineman Michael Johnson, who had five sacks a year ago and 40 sacks in his eight-year run with the team. The Bengals saved roughly \$4 million by cutting him.

8. Cleveland Browns

Three stars of HBO's "Hard Knocks" are no longer with the Browns. Tight end Devon Cajuste, defensive lineman Nate Orchard, and quarterback Brogan Roback all got cut.

9. Dallas Cowboys

In a shocking move, the Cowboys cut kicker Dan Bailey. Are you kidding me! We moved our headquarters from Texas back to Pittsburgh and the only thing we remember good about the Boys was Bailey. He was clutch, winning numerous games for the Cowboys. In franchise history, Bailey ranks third in points scored, first in made field goals, and first in field goal percentage. But the Cowboys cut him, saving \$3.4 million in the process. Now, they'll enter the season with a kicker who's never attempted a field goal in the regular season. I have no idea how this could backfire on them? Nice move Jerry

10. Denver Broncos

This is all about who the Broncos didn't cut: 2016 first-round pick Paxton Lynch, who failed to beat out Trevor Siemian during the first two years of his career, lost his backup job to Chad Kelly this summer, and has been dreadful when given the chance to play in the regular season. But after a stellar preseason finale, the Broncos decided to keep Lynch as their third quarterback. Lynch survived, but only just barely.

11. Detroit Lions

In a somewhat surprising move, the Lions cut cornerback DeShawn Shead, who was signed in the offseason as a candidate to start. Shead might draw interest in the coming days, seeing that he appeared in 54 games with the Seahawks over the past five seasons.

12. Green Bay Packers

Nothing huge happened in Green Bay, but it is notable that the Packers decided to keep only two running backs (Jamaal Williams and Ty Montgomery) while eight receivers made the roster. I, for one, cannot wait to watch Aaron Rodgers drop back to pass 60 times per game -- and neither can Khalil Mack.

13. Houston Texans

A notable cut is punter Shane Lechler, who's been to seven Pro Bowls in his 18 seasons as a pro. The Texans will move forward with rookie Trevor Daniel instead. Hey Texans, Lechler put the other team in poor field position for your big D!

14. Indianapolis Colts

The Colts are rebuilding. Maybe that's why they decided to cut John Simon, who had three sacks in nine games with the Colts last year and 8.5 sacks with the Texans from 2015-16. Simon is still only 27 and seemed like someone who could help the Colts over the final two years of his contract. It seems likely that someone will scoop him up this coming week.

15. Jacksonville Jaguars

The Jaguars didn't make any surprising moves. But here's what might matter: They kept 10 offensive linemen. That could indicate center Brandon Linder, who suffered an injury in the preseason, might not be healthy when the season begins.

16. Kansas City Chiefs

Heading into the season, the biggest concern pertaining to the Chiefs is their defense. The Chiefs already tried to bolster the secondary by signing Orlando Scandrick in August and trading for Cowboys cornerback Charvarius Ward on Thursday night. Scandrick made the roster. So did Ward. What is surprising is that David Amerson, who signed in February, did not make it. Once thought to be one of the Chiefs' top three cornerbacks, Amerson is no longer with the team.

17. Los Angeles Rams

To be completely honest, the Rams didn't do anything notable. What is notable, though, is that they no longer have to play against Khalil Mack when they open up the season against the Raiders. Plus, the Rams signed Aaron Donald.

18. Los Angeles Chargers

Like their AFC West friends in Denver, the Chargers also decided to keep three quarterbacks. Philip Rivers is the starter. Geno Smith is the backup. Those are not surprising. What's surprising is that they kept Cardale Jones as the third-string quarterback. Is he really worth a roster spot? We think they're wasting their money on him.

19. Miami Dolphins

Brock Osweiler just won't go away. After finishing the preseason on a high note, Osweiler earned a spot on the Dolphins' roster. The Dolphins are also keeping three quarterbacks: Osweiler, Ryan Tannehill, and David Fales.

20. Minnesota Vikings

Some interesting moves in Minnesota, where long-time Viking Brian Robison (60 sacks since 2007) got cut, Terence Newman retired to join the coaching staff, and Kendall Wright got cut to make room for Laquon Treadwell.

21. New England Patriots

When the Patriots began the 2017 season, they did so with Mike Gillislee leading the way. He rushed for three TD's in Week 1, leading all of us to make fun of the Bills for letting Gillislee slip through their fingers like Chris Hogan before him. When the Patriots open up the 2018 season, they won't have Gillislee on their 53-man roster. The Patriots cut him. Jeremy Hill ended up beating him out for the final running back spot on the roster. On that note, here's where it's worth noting that the Patriots kept more running backs (4) than receivers (3).

22. New Orleans Saints

With Mark Ingram suspended four games, the Saints needed to figure out which running back would be there to support Alvin Kamara while Ingram is away from the team. The Saints settled on sixth-round pick Boston Scott over J. Williams.

23. New York Giants

Most teams keep two quarterbacks. Some teams keep three. The Giants kept four. Their quarterback room is populated by Eli Manning, Davis Webb, Kyle Lauletta, and Alex Tanney. Expect that to change at some point before Week 1 begins.

24. New York Jets

The New York Jets said goodbye to three members of their 2017 draft class, cutting receiver Chad Hansen (fourth round), defensive lineman Dylan Donahue (fifth round), and cornerback Jeremy Clark (sixth round). Additionally, the Jets cut former third-round pick of the Raiders, tight end Clive Walford, who joined the team in the offseason.

25. Oakland Raiders

Speaking of the Raiders, man oh man did they have a day. They traded Khalil Mack instead of paying him the contract he deserved. Cut Martavis Bryant after giving up a third-round pick for him during the draft. Traded a fifth-round pick for Bills backup quarterback AJ McCarron. Cut former second-round pick Mario Edwards.

26. Philadelphia Eagles

The biggest news coming out of Philadelphia is that the Eagles will reportedly start Nick Foles -- not Carson Wentz -- in their season opener against the Falcons as Wentz continues to recover from a torn up knee. In roster news, they traded for defensive back Deiondre' Hall from the Bears and kept rookie Jordan Mailata, an Australian rugby player OL tackle.

27. Pittsburgh Steelers

When the Steelers drafted Mason Rudolph, they knew they'd face a difficult decision before the season. They made that decision, cutting quarterback Landry Jones and keeping Rudolph and Joshua Dobbs behind Ben Roethlisberger. Jones had been with the Steelers since 2013, compiling a 86.2 passer rating in 19 appearances. Now, the Steelers will roll into the season with two backup quarterbacks who've never thrown a pass in a regular-season game.

28. San Francisco 49ers

Disaster struck San Francisco when running back Jerick McKinnon reportedly tore his ACL at practice, which will end his season. That's a brutal loss for the 49ers, who signed McKinnon to be their primary weapon coming out of the backfield. Without McKinnon, the 49ers will turn to Matt Breida and Alfred Morris.

29. Seattle Seahawks

The biggest news coming out of Seattle is that the Seahawks did not trade Earl Thomas. Thomas, the game's top free safety, is holding out and has drawn trade interest from multiple teams, the most notable, the Dallas Cowboys. Thomas is still a member of the Seahawks. But his holdout has no end in sight.

30. Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Safety Keith Tandy has appeared in 84 games with the Buccaneers since 2012. But his run with the team is over. Tandy somewhat surprisingly found himself on the wrong side of the roster bubble.

31. Tennessee Titans

Good news for the Titans: On Saturday, they activated right tackle Jack Conklin off the PUP list. Conklin, who is coming off a torn ACL that he suffered in the playoffs, was named first-team All-Pro in 2016.

32. Washington Redskins

The Redskins have sorted out their mess at running back. With rookie Derrius Guice sidelined for the season, the Redskins might need to take a running-back-by-committee type of approach. We knew Adrian Peterson would make the team, and he did. The same can be said about Chris Thompson. Three others joined Peterson and Thompson on the final roster: Rob Kelley, Samaje Perine, and Byron Marshall.

Gridiron Gold Membership
Picks-NCAA/NFL Line Sheets & Schedules
Team Pointspread and Handicapping Tools
We Help You Win
Season \$49

SUBSCRIBE



MY BOOKIE.AG

GRIDIRON GOLD



UP TO \$3,000

SIGN-UP BONUS

www.gridirongoldsheet.com

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

Pittsburgh at CLEVELAND Under Total by 9½

Pittsburgh initially opened up 6.5 point favorites for this divisional road tilt with the Browns. Since then, the line has fallen 3 points to -3.5 at Westgate Superbook and many offshore books and the under is set at 46.5

The Browns offense was a flat out joke last season. Much of that had to do with DeShone Kizer's inability to throw the pigskin to receivers wearing the same colored jerseys. There wasn't a go to pass catcher on last year's roster. That's no longer the case in 2018 and moving forward with Landry in town. Though small in stature, his stats are huge! He's been one of the better possession receivers in the game since joining the league.

Though Baker Mayfield is the future of the franchise, it's Tyrod Taylor's time right now. That's great news for the franchise considering he takes excellent care of the football only tossing 16 interceptions his three years starting in Buffalo. The city of Cleveland is in for a treat with Landry, and he should let them know right from the get go why upper management threw him all that cash in the offseason.

Pittsburgh won both matchups with the Browns last season, but it wasn't easy. They scored the 21-18 win and non-cover Week 1 as 10 point chalk in a game Cleveland would've won had Kizer not thrown a terrible interception. The win moved Big Ben and company to 7-3 their last 10 trips to FirstEnergy Stadium. However, they're just 4-6 ATS in those matchups.

I hate that Le'Veon Bell was a preseason holdout once again. He started off terribly slow last season, and likely will have trouble adapting to game speed right out of the chute. On the flipside, I love what I've seen from David Njoku and the Browns receiving corps all throughout camp. Not to mention the addition of Carlos Hyde in the backfield.

I expect the Browns to put forth a max effort in this tilt in hopes of turning the division standings on its head. In the end, will it be enough to win. The betting public seems to think so by evidence of the line move. The Browns will put forth a monumental effort vs their hated rival. Most impressive was Mike Tomlin's squad going 7-1 away from the Steel City last year, and Big Ben has dominated the Brownies. This is going to be a tough defensive battle, so **we prefer UNDER 46.5!**
Projected Score: Pittsburgh 20, Cleveland 17

Jacksonville - 3 Over NY GIANTS by 10

A new coaching staff has been put in place. Odell Beckham Jr. has been paid. Saquon Barkley was drafted to put a spark into a Giants ground attack that's been hibernating ever since Tiki Barber hung up his cleats. New York spent some big money in the offseason to ignite an offensive line that only opened holes for an average of 96.8 rushing yards per game (No. 26) and allowed their quarterbacks to get sacked over two times per game. Former New England Patriot Nate Solder and Patrick Omaneh were brought in, and the hope is they immediately pay dividends. With Jacksonville first up on the docket, upper management will get a great idea if it was money well spent as ferocious the Jags defense was last season. Now it's time to see it all take shape when the Giants take to their home field in Week 1 looking to sweep a miserable 3-13 record under the rug as quickly as possible.

Still, there's a ton of improvement needed to take place for New York to once again become a bona fide competitor in both the NFC East and NFC title races. Though the Giants offer up a +2355 return on investment to represent the conference in Super Bowl LIII, they only sit behind the Philadelphia Eagles on the NFL odds to win the division (+363). We've seen worst to first runs countless times in the NFL, so why not the G-Men?

As good as the Jaguars were defending the pass (No. 1), they were nothing short of average defending the run (No. 17). However, Jacksonville greatly improved defending the run once it snatched Marcell Dareus away from Buffalo in the middle of the season. If the front wall can't find a way to open holes for Barkley to keep the Jags' defense honest, the immobile Eli Manning is going to have a heck of a time shedding Jacksonville defenders all game long.

Along with getting love from the betting public on the NFL futures betting odds, the Giants are also the choice in this Week 1 tilt getting over 57 percent of the action. That's pretty surprising to us. We can't wait to see what Jalen Ramsey has in store for us as he looks to shut down ODB or whoever else lines up on his side. It all boils down to the Giants offensive line being able to withstand the pressure Jacksonville will bring from its front four, as well as the defenses ability to contain the 1-2 punch of Leonard Fournette and T.J. Yeldon out of the Jags' backfield.

Jacksonville is far ahead of New York in terms of building towards a championship, and that should show right from the get go. While a potential look ahead to the Patriots in Week 2 at home is cause for concern, the Jaguars are simply the better of these two teams. New York was nothing short of a dumpster fire last season. It's going to need time to adapt to the new schemes and faces. If that happens right from the get go, so be it. I'll be wagering against that occurring however. We'll be backing Jacksonville - 3 at the windows.

Projected Score: Jacksonville 26, NY Giants 16

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

MINNESOTA - 6 Over San Francisco by 13

Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 305 yards, one touchdown and one interception during the preseason. Kirk Cousins threw for 236 yards and one touchdown during the preseason. Now it's the real deal with an intriguing matchup.

High expectations reign in San Francisco after four seasons without a trip to the playoffs. Quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo will start his first full season under center and fans hope the talented QB can lead them to the playoffs. Garoppolo has several options to hand off and throw to, but it might be the new offensive line that is most important to the team's success. On defense, Richard Sherman brings experience to the secondary but linebacker Reuben Foster will sit out, with Korey Toomer leading the way in his absence.

Minnesota spent large sums of money to sign quarterback Kirk Cousins and his era starts on Sunday. Cousins will have the duo of Dalvin Cook and Latavius Murray as running backs, while Adam Thielen and Stefon Diggs will be just two of the many targets Cousins will have as receivers. However, it is the defense that separates the Vikings from most opponents. Xavier Rhodes, Everson Griffen, Anthony Barr and Eric Kendricks are just four of the talented players on the Vikings defense.

San Francisco is 4-1 ATS in its last 5 on the road. The UNDER has cashed in each of the 49ers last 4 in Week 1. Minnesota is 1-4 ATS in its last 5 versus NFC teams. The UNDER has cashed in 5 of the Vikings last 7 at home. Based on the trends, the play would be Under and the Niners and that looks feasible too.

San Francisco fans have the team already in the playoffs before the opening kickoff of Week 1, but the Niners have much to do to accomplish that feat. With a new offensive line, we see the Niners struggling against the NFL's best defense. Also, factor in the jet engine like noise and that new line and Garoppolo will have a tough time hearing and communicating audibles.

With the arrival of Kirk Cousins the Vikings offense will be much better than last season, and the defense should give Garoppolo fits all game. Garoppolo has been magic, the trends favor the Niners. Nevertheless, we're not fading the Vikings in their home venue. Lay the 6 points here and take the home chalk.

Projected Score: Minnesota 30, San Francisco 17

DETROIT - 6½ Over NY Jets by 15

The Jets come into the 2018 season with plenty of optimism and much of it has to do with number three overall draft pick Sam Darnold. The former USC star, Darnold, has impressed this preseason and figures to draw the starting nod from head coach Todd Bowles. The Jets figure to lean heavily on the running back tandem of Bilal Powell and Isaiah Crowell to help ease Darnold's transition. New York figures to be good on the defensive side of the ball against the run, and landed free-agent CB Trumaine Johnson in free agency to be their shutdown corner.

The Detroit Lions are coming off consecutive 9-7 records and hired former New England defensive coordinator Matt Patricia to replace Jim Caldwell as head coach. Patricia inherits a quarterback in his prime, Matthew Stafford, and an array of offensive weapons to work with. Detroit must improve a rushing game that ranked last in the league in 2017 and drafted Auburn RB Kerryon Johnson to be their workhorse back.

The Lions ranked 27th in total defense a season ago and will likely transition to a primarily three-man front scheme like the one Patricia ran so successfully in New England. DE Ezekiel Ansah must be accounted for by the opposition and finished with 12 sacks last year.

The Jets are a solid 9-4-1 ATS in their last 14 games overall and the Lions are 4-1 ATS in their last 5 games in Week 1. Under is 7-3 in Jets last 10 road games. Over is 7-2 in Lions last 9 home games and Over is 10-1 in Lions last 11 games in Week 1. So all these trends simply balance either out and are useless to apply to this matchup.

New York WR Jermaine Kearse has been ruled out for week one after requiring surgery on his abdominal injury. Darnold looks to be the real deal for the Jets, but he's a rookie playing in week 1, under the lights, and in a very loud dome. Also, the NY Jets offensive line will need to play at a higher level than last year just to keep pass rushers in check, especially Lions defensive end Ansah. On the other side of the ball, the NY Jets need a major improvement in pass-rushing. The Jets ranked near the bottom of the NFL a season ago in pass defense. That definitely plays right into Lions QB Stafford's wheelhouse. Look for the Lions to get after the rookie, and Stafford to be very successful as the Lions pull away late for a decisive win and cover. Lay the touchdown and take the Lions at home.

Projected Score: Detroit 31, NY Jets 16

PRO FOOTBALL LEANER PICKS

*If a game is not listed, we have no opinion on the game

Date/ET	Game	Line	Analysis
09/06/18 8:20 ET	Atlanta Falcons Philadelphia Eagles	45 -2.5	No one really knows how many of the walking wounded will suit up for the champs. Check DJ's guaranteed TNF pick with a free added pick . Until more injury info, slight lean to the Over.
09/09/18 1:00 ET	Pittsburgh Steelers Cleveland Browns	-4.5 45.5	Bold prediction, I think the Browns surpass their win total from last season in just one week in 2018, and they win this one outright, but I'll take the free points at home just to be safe.
09/09/18 1:00 ET	Cincinnati Bengals Indianapolis Colts	47 -3	I don't love either side here, but the Colts are 5-2 ATS L7 home when fav of 3+ and the place should be rocking now that their franchise QB is back on the field. Let's get some Luck & Colts.
09/09/18 1:00 ET	Buffalo Bills Baltimore Ravens	40.5 -7	Baltimore seems a bit more stable and will be out for revenge here. The line is quickly inflating, so grab the Ravens at a comfortable number if you can. Like -7.
09/09/18 1:00 ET	Jacksonville Jaguars New York Giants	-3 43.5	This is a game where points are going to come extremely hard for both squads. Let's face it, the Jags D is terrific, but I really don't like their offense. Therefore, I'm going under the total.
09/09/18 1:00 ET	Tampa Bay Buccaneers New Orleans Saints	49.5 -9.5	What I see in this game is a shootout in the making. Saints have plenty of weapons and the Bucs will be passing often to keep up. I'm going with the over in this game.
09/09/18 1:00 ET	Houston Texans New England Patriots	51 -6.5	Houston is a trendy pick and their D is something to reckon with. They won't dominate at Gillette (no one does). Doubt Pats start out strong. I'm going to take the points here a sketchy bet.
09/09/18 1:00 ET	Tennessee Titans Miami Dolphins	-1.5 45	The Dolphins are 6-3-1 ATS L10 home games as a dog. The Titans are 2-5 ATS L7 as a road favorite. This game may shock the wiseguys. Give me the Dolphins at home.
09/09/18 4:05 ET	Kansas City Chiefs Los Angeles Chargers	47.5 -3	Kansas City is 7-2 ATS in the last 9 meetings between these two teams and 5-0 ATS in the last 5 meetings in Los Angeles. I'm going with the trend and backing the Chiefs.
09/09/18 4:25 ET	Seattle Seahawks Denver Broncos	42 -3	In the preseason, Seattle went 0-4 and are not what they used to be 2 years ago. I'm staying far, far away from this game, until both teams play real games. For the sake of a leaner, go under.
09/09/18 4:25 ET	Dallas Cowboys Carolina Panthers	42.5 -2.5	Panthers are supposed to have a good defense, but the over is 6-2 in Panthers last 8 games overall. The O/U line looks a bit low, therefore, I'm going to go over the total in this game.
09/09/18 4:25 ET	Washington Redskins Arizona Cardinals	44 PK	Bradford isn't special, but he should be solid in a game management role where he can rely on the playmakers around him. I like the home team in this pick em spot
09/09/18 8:20 ET	Chicago Bears Green Bay Packers	47.5 -7.5	Both teams have been putting up tons of points in the preseason and it didn't matter what QB started or who they were facing. Therefore, I'll take the Over. Check DJ's guaranteed SNF pick with a free added pick .
09/10/18 10:20 ET	LA Rams Oakland Raiders	-4 49.5	Laying points on the road is a scary proposition, especially in primetime on the opening week. Rams were highest scoring team LY & Derek Carr threw for 3500 & 22 TD's LY. Take OVER Check DJ's guaranteed MNF pick with a free added pick .

GUARANTEED PRIVATE GOLD PICK RELEASED EVERY SATURDAY AT 11:00 AM ET

Private Gold

Gridiron Gold

**Win Big
With Real
Wiseguys**

**Click Here
Win Now**



**SEASON SUBSCRIBERS LOG INTO YOUR GOLD MEMBERSHIP
PAGE FOR THE HANDICAPPING TOOLS LISTED BELOW**

<http://www.gridirongold.com/gold-member.htm>

COLLEGE FOOTBALL LINE SHEET	NFL FOOTBALL LINE SHEET
COLLEGE FOOTBALL MATCHUP STATS	NFL FOOTBALL MATCHUP STATS
COLLEGE FOOTBALL ATS LOG SHEETS	NFL FOOTBALL ATS LOG SHEETS
COLLEGE FOOTBALL POWER RATINGS	NFL FOOTBALL POWER RATINGS
A GOLD MEMBER FREE CFB PICK	A GOLD MEMBER FREE NFL PICK
WEEKLY CFB TV SCHEDULE	WEEKLY NFL TV SCHEDULE
A WEEKLY FREE COMP FROM FRIENDS	A WEEKLY FREE COMP FROM FRIENDS



**Don't Fumble! This Offer Is Too Good Too Miss
You Get All of the Above in addition to Nine (9)
Best Bets and Leaner Picks for Other Games**



Best Deal! Subscribe For The Season Now!

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET 9 BEST BETS

If you're a heavy hitter, we recommend [handicapper pick packs](#) or [guaranteed NFL](#) and [college picks](#).
Gridiron Gold Sheet Best Bets are selected after those picks noted above, and are rarely the same games.

	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
CFB	Notre Dame -33	Ohio State -35	Virginia +7	Colorado +6	Colorado St +14
NFL	Pit/Cle UN 46½	Jacksonville -3	Minnesota -6	Detroit - 6½	SNF / MNF PICKS

MYBOOKIE.AG

GRIDIRONGOLD.COM



WWW.GRIDIRONGOLDSHEET.COM

859-GIG-GOLD or 859-444-4653