

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

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Dennis Stagliano's Best Bets Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

Volume 44 Issue 17

NFL Week 17, 2025

NFL LANDSCAPE:

Purdy shines in 49ers 48-27 win over Colts

Purdy completed 25 of 34 passes (74%) for 295 yards, five touchdowns, and one interception. His top targets were George Kittle (7-115-1) and Jauan Jennings (5-71-1). Note that Kittle left late with an ankle injury and is uncertain for next week. Christian McCaffrey, as per usual, had a big night, totaling 146 scrimmage yards (117 rushing, 29 receiving) and two touchdowns on 27 touches (5.4 ypt).

Philip Rivers was highly impressive, completing 23 of 35 (66%) for 277 yards, two touchdowns, and one interception. Alec Pierce caught all four of his targets for 86 yards and two touchdowns. The Colts' defense failed to support Rivers, giving up 440 yards and 28 first downs.

Patriots beat Ravens 28-24

New England (12-3)

QB Drake Maye had an MVP-worthy performance, accounting for 405 yards (380 passing, 25 rushing), two touchdowns, and two turnovers. He completed 31/44 (79%).

WR Stefon Diggs caught nine of ten targets for 138 yards.

RB Rhamondre Stevenson totaled 78 scrimmage yards (51 rushing, 27 receiving) and a touchdown on ten touches (7.8 ypt).

Baltimore (7-8)

QB Lamar Jackson (7/10, 101, 0, 0) exited late in the second quarter after getting kneed in the back (he'll have an MRI today). Taylor Huntley (9/10, 65, 0, 0) was decent in relief.

RB Derrick Henry rushed for 128 yards and two touchdowns on 18 carries (7.1 ypc) before the coaching staff effectively (and senselessly) pulled him for "rotational reasons."

Henry last touched the football with the Ravens up 24-13 at the 12:50 mark in the fourth quarter.

Jaguars beat Broncos 34-20

Jacksonville (11-4)

QB Trevor Lawrence had a great game, accounting for 299 yards (279 passing, 20 rushing), four touchdowns, and no turnovers. He completed 23/36 (64%).

WR Parker Washington caught six of ten targets for 145 yards and a touchdown.

TE Brenton Strange caught five of seven targets for 39 yards and a touchdown.

Denver (12-3)

QB Bo Nix (28/47, 353, 1, 1) played worse than his stat line.

WR Courtland Sutton caught six of 12 targets for 86 yards and a touchdown.

RB RJ Harvey totaled 121 scrimmage yards (50 rushing, 71 receiving) and a touchdown on 11 touches (11.0 ypt).

Steelers beat Lions 29-24

Pittsburgh (9-6)

QB Aaron Rodgers played well, completing 27/41 (66%) for 266 yards, one touchdown, and no interceptions.

RB Kenneth Gainwell totaled 128 scrimmage yards (50 rushing, 78 receiving) and a touchdown on 14 touches (9.1 ypt).

RB Jaylen Warren rushed for 143 yards and two touchdowns on 14 carries (10.2 ypc).

Detroit (8-7)

QB Jared Goff completed 34/54 (63%) for 364 yards, three touchdowns, and no interceptions.

RB Jahmyr Gibbs was busy as a receiver, catching ten of 13 targets for 66 yards and a touchdown.

As a team, the Lions rushed for only 15 yards on 12 carries (1.3 ypc).

Panthers beat Buccaneers 23-20

Carolina (8-7)

QB Bryce Young (21/32, 191, 2, 0) was solid.

WR Tet McMillan caught six of ten targets for 73 yards and a touchdown.

S Lathan Ransom sealed the game with an interception.

Tampa Bay (7-8)

QB Baker Mayfield (18/26, 145, 1, 1) did not play well.

WR Mike Evans caught five of nine targets for 31 yards and a touchdown.

Chargers beat Cowboys 34-17

Los Angeles (11-4)

QB Justin Herbert was in MVP form, accounting for 342 yards (300 passing, 42 rushing), three touchdowns, and no turnovers. He completed 23/29 (79%).

WR Quentin Johnston caught four of five targets for 104 yards and a touchdown.

RB Omarion Hampton rushed for 85 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries (5.3 ypc).

Dallas (6-8-1)

QB Dak Prescott (21/30, 244, 2, 0) was hot early, but fizzled in the second half.

WR George Pickens caught seven of nine targets for 130 yards and a touchdown.

Bills beat Browns 23-20

Buffalo (11-4)

QB Josh Allen (12/19, 130, 0, 0) was held in check.

RB James Cook rushed for 117 yards and two touchdowns on 16 carries (7.3 ypc).

DE Greg Rousseau had 2.5 sacks.

Cleveland (3-12)

QB Shedeur Sanders accounted for 206 yards (157 passing, 49 rushing), one touchdown, and two interceptions. He completed 20/29 (69%).

TE Harold Fannin totaled 35 scrimmage yards (1 rushing, 34 receiving) and two touchdowns on five touches (7.0 ypt).

RB Quinshon Judkins suffered a major knee injury (fractured fibula plus dislocated ankle), and could miss most of next season.

Texans beat Raiders 23-21

Houston (10-5)

QB CJ Stroud completed 23/35 (66%) for 163 yards, one touchdown, and no interceptions.

TE Dalton Schultz caught all five of his targets for 35 yards and a touchdown.

RB Jawhar Jordan totaled 70 scrimmage yards on 20 touches (3.5 ypt).

Las Vegas (2-13)

QB Geno Smith (16/23, 201, 2, 1) was decent against one of the league's best defenses.

RB Ashton Jeanty had his best game as a pro, totaling 188 scrimmage yards and two touchdowns on 25 touches (7.5 ypt).

Bengals beat Dolphins 45-21

Cincinnati (5-10)

QB Joe Burrow was fantastic, completing 25/32 (78%) for 309 yards, four touchdowns, and no interceptions.

WR Ja'Marr Chase caught nine of 11 targets for 109 yards.

RB Chase Brown totaled 109 scrimmage yards (66 rushing, 43 receiving) and three touchdowns on 16 touches (6.8 ypt).

Miami (6-9)

QB Quinn Ewers completed 20/30 (67%) for 260 yards, no touchdowns, and two interceptions in a somewhat promising first career start.

WR Jaylen Waddle caught five of nine targets for 72 yards.

RB De'Von Achane rushed for 81 yards and a touchdown on 15 carries (5.4 ypc).

The logo for "Bowl Picks" features the words "Bowl Picks" in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The text is set against a black rectangular background. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a three-dimensional appearance as if they are floating above or attached to the background.

Falcons beat Cardinals 26-19

Atlanta (6-9)

Kirk Cousins completed 21/35 (60%) for 197 yards, two touchdowns, and one interception.

TE Kyle Pitts caught seven of nine targets for 57 yards and a touchdown.

RB Bijan Robinson was in All-Pro form, totaling 171 scrimmage yards (79 rushing, 92 receiving) and a touchdown on 23 touches (7.4 ypt).

Arizona (3-12)

QB Jacoby Brissett (16/31, 203, 1, 1) underwhelmed.

TE Elijah Higgins caught seven of eight targets for 91 yards.

Saints beat Jets 29-6

New Orleans (5-10)

QB Tyler Shough had another impressive performance, completing 32/49 (65%) for 308 yards, one touchdown, and no interceptions.

WR Chris Olave caught ten of 16 targets for 148 yards and two touchdowns.

TE Juwan Johnson caught eight of nine targets for 89 yards.

New York (3-12)

QB Brady Cook (22/35, 188, 0, 1) struggled.

RB Isaiah Davis totaled 60 yards (8 rushing, 52 receiving) on seven touches (8.6 ypt).

Vikings beat Giants 16-13

Minnesota (7-8)

QB JJ McCarthy accounted for 128 yards (108 passing, 20 rushing), one touchdown, and one interception before leaving with a hand injury in the second quarter. He was replaced by Max Brosmer (7/9, 52, 0, 0).

WR Justin Jefferson caught six of eight targets for 85 yards.

RB Aaron Jones rushed for 85 yards on 21 carries (4.0 ypc).

New York (2-13)

QB Jaxson Dart was shockingly unproductive, completing just 7/13 (54%) for 33 yards, no touchdowns, and one interception.

RB Tyrone Tracy rushed for 71 yards on 16 carries (4.4 ypc).

Titans beat Chiefs 26-9

Tennessee (3-12)

QB Cam Ward played well, completing 21/28 (75%) for 228 yards, two touchdowns, and no interceptions.

RB Tyjae Spears totaled 105 scrimmage yards (52 rushing, 53 receiving) and a touchdown on 18 touches (5.8 ypt).

RB Tony Pollard rushed for 102 yards on 21 carries (4.9 ypc).

Kansas City (6-9)

QB Gardner Minshew (3/8, 15, 0, 0) tore his ACL in the first quarter. He was replaced by Chris Oladokun (11/16, 111, 0, 0).

RB Isiah Pacheco totaled 75 scrimmage yards (34 rushing, 41 receiving) on 14 touches (5.4 ypt).

Eagles beat Commanders 29-18

Philadelphia (10-5)

QB Jalen Hurts was smooth, accounting for 265 yards (185 passing, 40 receiving), two touchdowns, and no turnovers. He completed 22/30 (73%).

Hurts' top targets were WR AJ Brown (9-95) and WR DeVonta Smith (6-42-1).

RB Saquon Barkley rushed for 132 yards and a touchdown on 21 carries (6.3 ypc).

Washington (4-11)

QB Marcus Mariota (7/14, 95, 0, 0) left with a hand injury in the third quarter. He was replaced by Josh Johnson (5/9, 43, 0, 1).

RB Chris Rodriguez rushed for 63 yards and a touchdown on 15 carries (4.2 ypc).

Bears beat Packers 22-16 in OT

Chicago (11-4)

QB Caleb Williams (19/34, 250, 2, 0) connected with DJ Moore (5-97-1) on an unbelievable 46-yard touchdown pass to walk-off the game (view here).

Undrafted rookie WR Jahdae Walker (2-21-1) had a clutch fourth-down touchdown catch to tie the game in the final seconds of regulation (made possible by an onside kick recovery).

RB Kyle Monangai totaled 93 scrimmage yards (50 rushing, 43 receiving) on 12 touches (7.8 ypt).

Green Bay (9-5-1)

QB Jordan Love (8/13, 121, 1, 0) suffered a concussion in the second quarter.

He was replaced by Malik Willis, who played well, accounting for 165 yards (121 passing, 44 rushing), one touchdown, and no turnovers. He completed 9/11 (82%).

WR Romeo Doubs caught five of six targets for 84 yards and a touchdown.

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Dennis Stagliano's Award Winning Football Newsletter



COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS FIRST ROUND

Alabama swung the momentum *dramatically* in comeback win over Oklahoma

College football is a game of momentum. Always has been, always will be. And on Friday night, the momentum swung like a pendulum, at first in favor of Oklahoma and later for Alabama. After falling into a deep hole early, the Crimson Tide made its own luck and momentum, going on a 34-7 run for a triumphant 34-24 victory in the first round of the CFP.

Entering the game, two of the major talking points centered around what happened in the two previous matchups. In those games, Oklahoma had two pick-sixes and dominated on special teams. But on Friday night, it was Alabama that secured a timely, second-quarter pick-six and thoroughly outplayed the Sooners on special teams, both of which played a big role in the final outcome.

Early on, Oklahoma looked primed and ready. The Sooners jumped out to an early 17-0 lead, thanks to quarterback John Mateer's dual-threat abilities. He scampered home on the first touchdown, and after a Tate Sandell field goal, he pinged a seven-yard touchdown pass to Isaiah Sategna III to put the home team up big near the midway point of the second quarter.

At this point, it's hard to overstate how much momentum was in the Sooners favor. The crowd was electric. The Alabama offense was in shambles, failing to protect Ty Simpson and forming no semblance of a run game. The Crimson Tide defense was barely generating pressure to boot, allowing Mateer plenty of time in the pocket. Social media was ablaze with jokes about blowouts, whether Notre Dame should've been in this position instead of Alabama. and whether Kalen DeBoer could take the Michigan job at halftime.

But then everything changed.

Simpson, who finished with 232 yards and two touchdowns on the night, engineered a nine-play, 75-yard drive, which included a gutsy fourth-and-two conversion in the red zone with multiple broken tackles by wideout Lotzeir Brooks, to cut the lead to 10 points. For my money, that's when the Crimson Tide started to believe they had it within themselves to make this a fist-fight.

What came next were two bizarre sequences that summed up Oklahoma's night. First, the Oklahoma punter dropped the ball on a punt attempt, allowing the Crimson Tide to kick an easy field goal with a short field. Next, Mateer and a wideout had a miscommunication, one that saw Mateer throw a dud of a 50-yard pick-six, making it 17-17 before halftime. All of Oklahoma's goodwill dissolved in a flash.

In the second half, Alabama kept the gas pedal down. Simpson threw a dime for a 30-yard touchdown strike to Brooks to put the Crimson Tide up seven. After a Connor Talty field goal, Alabama was up 10 before Mateer and company answered with a big score to trim it to three.

But ultimately, it was too little too late for the home team. Alabama punched in a short rushing touchdown to go up 10 before Sandell missed a pair of critical late field goals to sink the Sooners.

Alabama's resurgence on offense, coupled with its ability to get pressure on Mateer and some timely turnovers, totally flipped the game. It was a momentous win for Alabama and head coach Kalen DeBoer.

The Crimson Tide will face No. 1 Indiana in the next round of the College Football Playoff.

Miami outlasted Texas A&M in a slugfest

It wasn't pretty. It wasn't perfect. But this time of year, winning is all that matters, and that's exactly what No. 10 Miami found a way to do.

In a game that featured four missed field goals, four turnovers, and just 13 total points, Miami pieced together the only successful touchdown drive of the game late in the fourth quarter to cap a 10-3 win over Texas A&M to advance to the quarterfinals of the 2025 College Football Playoff.

After thirty minutes of slog to open the game—the first ever scoreless half in the College Football Playoff era—it was anyone's guess which way this one might go. In the first half, the Aggies had a chip-shot field goal blocked, while Miami missed a pair of field goals thanks to swirling winds. Neither offense could establish a rhythm. The quarterbacks looked shaky. And both defenses looked primed for a prizefight.

To open the third quarter, Miami quarterback Carson Beck engineered a nine-play, 72-yard drive that resulted in a short field goal to put the Hurricanes up three. After Texas A&M quarterback Marcel Reed threw an errant interception, Miami had a short field and looked primed to punch it in. But the Hurricanes' drive stalled out, and Miami's kicker donked a ball off the upright. Miami had three trips inside the Aggies 30-yard line and had just three points to show for it, a damning indictment on the type of offensive football we were treated to Saturday afternoon.

After switching kickers, Texas A&M converted on a 35-yard field goal attempt to tie the game with 8:03 remaining in the fourth quarter. What came next was a hero's arc if I've ever seen one.

Miami superstar freshman Malachi Toney, who nearly broke off an incredible punt return in the first half, coughed up a fumble (just the second Miami has lost all year) that resulted in solid field position for the Aggies. Texas A&M failed to convert, however, giving the Hurricanes another bite at the apple.

In what was shaping up to be the final offensive drive of regulation for Miami, the Hurricanes needed a few moments of magic, and that's exactly what they got. First, running back Mark Fletcher Jr., who finished with a game-high 172 yards on 17 carries, broke off a monster 56-yard run to put the Hurricanes in good field position. Later, Toney got his redemption moment, as he took a cleverly designed reverse play to paydirt for what would be the game-winning touchdown.

Texas A&M had less than two minutes to drive the field down seven points. Reed, who was up and down all day, led an efficient drive, getting the Aggies inside the 10-yard line. Attempting to make a game-saving play, Reed tried to hit a man in the end zone, but his pass was picked off, ending the Aggies' comeback bid.

Miami's defense had a heck of a showing Saturday afternoon. That unit forced three turnovers, sacked Reed seven times, and had nine tackles for loss. In a game that was clouded by bad offense and shaky special teams, the Hurricanes' defense played lights out.

With the win, Miami head coach Mario Cristobal gets arguably the biggest win of his career. His team will move on to face No. 2 Ohio State in the Cotton Bowl.



Ole Miss handled its business against Tulane

No. 6 Ole Miss comfortably defeated No. 11 Tulane 41-10 in a game that got out of hand midway through the third quarter.

Behind a raucous Rebel crowd, Ole Miss opened the game with back-to-back scores to go up 14-0 in a flash. Through seven plays, the Rebels had 135 yards and two scores. It was clinical execution from the jump.

But after those two scores, Tulane did a nice job of settling into the game. The Green Wave basically matched Ole Miss's efficiency and outgained the home team in the first quarter, but failed to finish drives. Tulane notched a 39-yard field goal early in the first quarter to get on the board, but was down two touchdowns at the break.

In the second half, things got out of hand. After surviving some first-half injury scares to star quarterback Trinidad Chambliss and running back Kewan Lacy, the Rebels stretched their legs and comfortably put the game to bed.

Chambliss finished with 282 passing yards, one passing touchdown, and two scores on the ground, while Lacy chipped in 87 yards and one touchdown.

Despite the tough showing on Saturday evening, Tulane should feel proud to have had such a fantastic season. Losing to this version of Ole Miss, even without Lane Kiffin at the helm, is nothing to scoff at.

With the win, Ole Miss moves on to face No. 3 Georgia in what will be a rematch of the October 18 matchup that saw the Bulldogs win 43-35.

Oregon wins big over James Madison

No. 5 Oregon scored on its first five offensive possessions in the first half, jumped out to a monster lead, and ultimately kept a fairly comfortable lead for the second half in its 51-34 win over Sun Belt champ James Madison.

Oregon opened the scoring in the blink of an eye. First, quarterback Dante Moore, who finished with 211 yards and three touchdowns in the first half, found Jamari Johnson on a 41-yard strike in four plays. Then, after a well-operated Dukes' drive that resulted in a field goal, Moore scampered home a zone read play, capping a five-play drive that put the home team up 13-3.

James Madison managed to pull off a nifty double pass as an answer, but got stopped in the red zone and got a field goal attempt blocked. Then the floodgates opened, with the Ducks scoring on their next three drives to amass a hefty halftime lead, effectively putting the game to bed.

Give James Madison some credit, though. The Dukes fought to the very end and managed to put some scores on the board in the second half. Doing that they killed our ats pick on Oregon.

Some complained about James Madison being in the game in the first place. That feels like misplaced anger, if you ask me. If you want to be upset, be angry at the ACC for producing an 8-5 conference champion. With the win, Oregon moves on to face No. 4 Texas Tech in what will be one of the more intriguing quarterfinal matchups.

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

Baltimore at Green Bay

Line: Green Bay -2.5, O/U 41.5

Green Bay games have increasingly been decided by **who protects the ball and who survives the down-to-down grind**, not by track-meet pace. That matters here because this matchup sets up as a “hidden yards” game: field position, punts that flip the field, and long drives that chew clock. When Green Bay is at its best, it isn’t trying to win 38–34 — it’s trying to win with **efficient early downs**, forcing third-and-longs, and making opponents snap it again and again. Baltimore can absolutely score, but their recent profile has leaned more toward **methodical possessions** than nonstop explosives, and that’s exactly what you want when you’re holding an Under in the low-40s.

The biggest reason this number is playable is pace and possession shape. With Green Bay laying -2.5, the market is asking them to control the game — and controlled games typically mean **fewer clock stoppages, fewer desperation throws, and fewer short fields**. Even a “normal” game script here can bleed minutes: both teams can string together 10–12 play drives that end in punts or field goals, and those drives are still gold for an Under ticket. The only real danger is the classic Under killer: a pair of sudden turnovers that hand out short fields. But this is where the matchup helps again — both teams can win snaps in the trenches, which often produces **conservative decision-making** (play for field position, avoid the giveaway, take the points when you have them).

Also: 41.5 is a key “decision zone” total. You don’t need a masterpiece. You just need a game that looks like **20–17, 21–17, 23–16** instead of a 28–24 type. And with two defenses that can force longer drives and tighten in scoring territory, there’s a strong path to red-zone stalls that turn into threes instead of sevens. Keep it clean and let the clock do the heavy lifting. **TAKE: Under 41.5**

Tampa Bay at Miami

Line: Tampa Bay -5.5, O/U 46.5

This is a classic “favorite who can dictate terms” spot, and laying -5.5 makes sense if you believe Tampa Bay’s strengths travel. The way to cover numbers in this range isn’t always fireworks — it’s stacking advantages: win the line of scrimmage, avoid sudden swings, and force the opponent to play a style they don’t want to play. Miami has been volatile week to week, and when they’re not winning early, they can drift into **empty possessions and bad field position**.

Start with game script. Tampa Bay -5.5 implies Tampa is the team more likely to play from in front, and that’s critical because it unlocks **clock control** and keeps Miami from living on quick-strike rhythm. When Tampa can stay on schedule offensively, they’re tough to get off the field — and long possessions create two benefits at once: they produce points, and they keep Miami’s offense standing on the sideline. Even if Tampa doesn’t explode, a steady diet of “first downs + field position” creates pressure on the underdog to answer with lower-percentage football.

Defensively, the ask is straightforward: make Miami earn it. Miami can score, but they’re far more dangerous when they’re getting clean looks and staying ahead of the chains. If Tampa can win early downs and force third-and-7+ situations, Miami’s drives become longer, and longer drives invite mistakes — penalties, negative plays, stalled red-zone trips. That’s how 27–17 covers happen without needing everything to be perfect.

The other piece is situational: this time of year, favorites cover when they avoid the one thing that flips spreads fast — **short fields**. If Tampa plays a disciplined game (no cheap giveaways, no special-teams disasters), Miami has to beat them in the slowest way possible: full-field drives against a defense that can tighten. That’s not the underdog profile you want when you’re catching less than a touchdown. Lay the points with the team more likely to control tempo and leverage both sides of the line. **TAKE: Tampa Bay -5.5**

New England at NY Jets

Line: New England -13.5, O/U 43.5

When you see a big spread like -13.5 paired with a total of 43, the market is telling you the Jets' scoring expectation is **low** — and that's exactly the setup that makes an Under attractive. This doesn't need to be pretty. In fact, "ugly" is the friend of 43 Unders: punts, sacks, conservative play-calling, and possessions that die before they cross midfield. And if New England is the team expected to control the game by nearly two touchdowns, there's a very real chance the second half becomes **clock-drain mode** rather than pedal-down offense.

The simplest angle: if New England plays to expectation, the Jets are forced into a script that doesn't fit a low total. Unders usually lose when the underdog can score enough to keep the favorite aggressive for four quarters. But if the Jets struggle to finish drives — or struggle to sustain them at all — New England doesn't have to do much beyond playing clean football, stacking field position, and taking points. You can get a 24-10 type game and cash with margin. You can even get a 27-13 type game and still be alive because 43 gives you room for one "normal" quarter without a track meet.

This matchup also lends itself to stalled drives. Big favorites often see opponents tighten up in obvious passing situations, and that leads to drive-killers: sacks, penalties, negative runs, and conservative fourth-down decisions. The Jets, as an offense, are exactly the kind of team that can get stuck in that loop — a couple of first downs, then a negative play, then a punt. That rhythm bleeds clock while producing nothing on the scoreboard. And even when they do get a short field, red-zone efficiency becomes the separator — and low-confidence offenses often settle for three points.

On the other side, New England doesn't need to be explosive. A big favorite can cover with **field position + defense + situational scoring**, and that's also the recipe for Unders. If New England gets ahead and then turns the game into "don't give it away," the final 25 minutes can disappear quickly. It's a number that asks the Jets to contribute meaningfully to the scoring. I'd rather bet they don't.

TAKE: Under 43.5

LA Rams at Atlanta

Line: LA Rams -7.5, O/U 49.5

This is a spread built on one core idea: the Rams are the more complete team, and Atlanta's path to hanging around requires near-perfect discipline. That's a problem, because Atlanta has repeatedly shown a tendency to **beat itself** — penalties, drive-killing mistakes, and momentum swings that hand away hidden points. When you're catching +7.5, you can survive some sloppiness. When you're trying to *avoid* losing by double digits to a superior opponent, you usually can't.

The Rams' advantage in this matchup is that they can win multiple ways. If the game starts fast, they can trade scores and still separate because they're more likely to finish drives. If the game starts slow, they can still separate because they're better at stacking possessions: punt, short field, points; punt, long drive, points. Atlanta, meanwhile, tends to rely on timing and rhythm — and nothing destroys rhythm like flags, second-and-longs, and chasing the game. This is where the number matters: at -7.5, you don't need a 40-burger. You need a clean Rams game where Atlanta gives you a couple of "free" possessions via mistakes or stalled drives, and the Rams convert those into points.

The spread also pairs nicely with not betting a 17-13 grinder — you're betting a game where points are available. That environment usually benefits the team with the more reliable scoring profile because explosive quarters turn into separation. A 31-20 final is enough. A 34-24 final is enough. Even 30-20 cashes. In higher-scoring settings, the better team covers more often because the underdog has to match efficiency, not just effort.

Lay it with the side that can turn Atlanta's mistakes into points and keep the pressure on for four quarters. **TAKE: LA Rams -7.5**

PRO FOOTBALL QUICK PICKS

Dallas Cowboys at Washington Commanders

Line: Cowboys -7 | **Total:** 50

Dallas continues to dominate efficiency metrics when facing below-average defenses, particularly in first-half scoring. Washington's inability to generate consistent stops has forced shootout scripts that inflate totals beyond sustainable levels. Even with Dallas controlling the game, their tendency to slow tempo late keeps full-game scoring in check. Washington's offense struggles to convert long drives into touchdowns, especially against disciplined fronts. That combination supports Dallas control without runaway scoring.

TAKE: Under 50

Detroit Lions at Minnesota Vikings

Line: Lions -6 | **Total:** 44

Detroit's offense remains highly efficient indoors, particularly on early downs where they generate favorable second-down situations. Minnesota has consistently played faster when trailing, which pushes game totals upward even if drives stall late. Detroit's defensive profile allows yardage but limits explosive stops, leading to extended possessions rather than quick punts. That's a strong recipe for cumulative scoring rather than isolated spikes. With pace and environment aligned, the total has room to climb.

TAKE: Over 44

Denver Broncos at Kansas City Chiefs

Line: Broncos -13 | **Total:** 36

Denver owns a rare **double-digit favorite edge** even at an inflated number. Kansas City's offensive limitations cap upset probability, while Denver's approach consistently creates separation when ahead. Low total actually *helps* margin scenarios once control is established.

TAKE: Broncos -13

Houston Texans at Los Angeles Chargers

Line: Chargers -1.5 | **Total:** 40

Both teams have leaned toward faster neutral pace when games remain within one score, which favors incremental scoring throughout. The Chargers have been particularly efficient converting short fields into points, while Houston's defensive profile struggles to finish drives without yielding field goals. Neither team profiles as overly run-heavy in neutral situations, keeping clock stoppages frequent. Even modest second-half urgency pushes this past the number.

TAKE: Over 40

[GUARANTEED COLLEGE FOOTBALL BOWL GAME PICKS](#)

Pittsburgh Steelers at Cleveland Browns

Line: Steelers -4 | **Total:** 34

Both offenses rank near the bottom in explosive plays, creating long stretches of clock bleed between scoring attempts. Cleveland has consistently shortened games at home with conservative sequencing, while Pittsburgh's approach prioritizes ball security over aggression. Division familiarity further suppresses variance and scoring volatility. With sustained drives rare and red-zone efficiency limited, points come at a premium.

TAKE: Under 34

Jacksonville Jaguars at Indianapolis Colts

Line: Jaguars -6.5 | **Total:** 48

Jacksonville's road profile shows difficulty separating on the scoreboard despite controlling stretches of play. Indianapolis has stayed competitive by limiting explosive passes and forcing longer drives, even in losses. Laying nearly a touchdown in a divisional road spot magnifies risk, especially with Jacksonville relying on efficiency rather than volume scoring. The Colts' defensive structure keeps back-door coverage very much in play.

TAKE: Colts +6.5

New Orleans Saints at Tennessee Titans

Line: Saints -2.5 | **Total:** 40

This is a smaller side edge, but still positive and acceptable given the low spread. New Orleans has been more consistent scripting early offense, while Tennessee struggles defensively on extended drives. In a tight range, efficiency favors the road favorite.

TAKE: Saints -2.5

Arizona Cardinals at Cincinnati Bengals

Line: Bengals -7 | **Total:** 54

Arizona's defensive profile allows chunk yardage, particularly in the middle of the field, which inflates scoring opportunities. Cincinnati games have increasingly tilted toward faster pacing when favored, especially if challenged early. Neither defense consistently forces three-and-outs, leading to extended drives and high snap counts. In a number this large, possessions add up quickly.

TAKE: Over 54

Seattle Seahawks at Carolina Panthers

Line: Seahawks -7 | **Total:** 42

Seattle has shown a clear ability to separate against teams that struggle sustaining offense. Carolina's inability to flip field position places repeated stress on its defense, which eventually breaks down late. Seattle doesn't need aggressive tempo to cover; defensive stops and short fields are enough. This matchup strongly favors scoreboard separation. **TAKE: Seahawks -7**

Las Vegas Raiders at New York Giants

Line: Raiders -1 | **Total:** 42
Las Vegas carries a strong positive side edge in a near-pick'em, which is exactly where side value matters most. The Giants' red-zone inefficiency suppresses scoring and makes winning outright difficult. With minimal number resistance, the Raiders don't need style points — just execution.
TAKE: Raiders -1

Philadelphia Eagles at Buffalo Bills

Line: Bills -2.5 | **Total:** 44
Both teams are far more methodical when facing capable opponents, especially early. Buffalo has consistently slowed second halves when protecting a lead, while Philadelphia prefers longer possessions over tempo-based attacks. Explosive plays exist, but overall drive count stays modest. That dynamic favors suppression rather than escalation.
TAKE: Under 44

Chicago Bears at San Francisco 49ers

Line: 49ers -3 | **Total:** 52
San Francisco's offensive ceiling remains among the league's highest when healthy, especially against defenses that struggle with layered route concepts. Chicago can score enough to force continued aggression rather than clock control. Even moderate efficiency translates into quick scoring bursts given pace and skill mismatches. This sets up a game where points accumulate rapidly.
TAKE: Over 52



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