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Dennis Stagliano's Best Bets Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

Volume 44 Issue 2

NFL Week 2, 2025

NFL LANDSCAPE:

Minnesota 27-24 over Chicago

The J.J. McCarthy show got off to a very slow start for the Vikings. Over the first three quarters, McCarthy completed just 7 of 12 passes for 56 yards with a pick-six, but then something must have clicked, because he caught fire in the fourth quarter, going 6 of 8 for 87 yards and two touchdowns. If the McCarthy who showed up in the fourth quarter is the McCarthy the Vikings are going to get this season, they can certainly be a playoff contender. As for the defense, Brian Flores' unit deserves a lot of credit for keeping Minnesota in the game during the offense's slow start. The Vikings showed a lot of guts to overcome a double-digit deficit in the second half, and it's the kind of comeback win that should give McCarthy a lot of confidence going forward.

The Ben Johnson era got off to a promising start when the Bears scored a touchdown on their opening drive, but Caleb Williams and the offense did almost nothing after that. Williams opened the game by completing 10 straight passes, but after the first drive, he was wildly erratic, going just 9 of 23 to finish the game. Johnson's offense is still clearly a work in progress, and based on what we saw in Week 1, there's still a lot of work to be done. The Bears defense played a nearly perfect game for three quarters, surrendering just 85 total yards, but the wheels fell off the wagon during a fourth quarter where Minnesota put up 21 points. Cairo Santos also added to the second-half struggles with a missed field goal in the third quarter. The Bears blew an 11-point lead in the second half, which is not what you want to see in your coaching debut. This loss is certainly going to leave a bad taste in Johnson's mouth.

Tampa Bay 23-20 over Atlanta

The Buccaneers might have found a star in Emeka Egbuka. The rookie receiver caught two TD passes against the Falcons, including a 25-yarder with under a minute to play that ended up providing the game-winning points. The Bucs got outgained by nearly 100 yards (358-260), but they converted 50% of their third downs and they were able to come up with big plays whenever they needed one. Baker Mayfield was a perfect example of that: No one will be wowed by his numbers, but he went 4 of 5 for 48 yards and a TD on the drive that led to Tampa Bay's game-winning touchdown. There's a good chance the NFC South could come down to these two teams, so this was a huge road win for Tampa Bay.

After Youngbowe Koo struggled last year, the Falcons decided to keep him, but they might be regretting that decision now. The Falcons got a strong performance from their defense and Michael Penix Jr. played well, but Koo threw that away by missing a 44-yard field goal with six seconds left. The Falcons had a nonexistent rushing attack, so that put the pressure on Penix, who came through by throwing for 298 yards and a TD (He also rushed for another TD). Bijan Robinson showed just how much of a weapon he can be in the passing game by catching six passes for 100 yards and a TD, including a 50-yard score where he did all the work. It's only one loss, so the Falcons shouldn't be panicking, but this one is going to sting.

Cincinnati 17-16 over Cleveland

The Bengals offense sputtered on Sunday, and last season, the defense was so bad this would have been an automatic loss, but the 2025 defense came ready to play. With new defensive coordinator Al Golden running the show, the defense came up big, especially during a second half where the unit picked off Joe Flacco twice. Although the offense struggled, Joe Burrow did manage to lead two touchdown drives on a day where the Bengals totaled just 141 yards. This marked the first time in 55 years that the Bengals were able to win a game where they were held under 150 yards. It was an ugly win, but for a team that hadn't won an opener in four years, the Bengals will definitely take it.

Joe Flacco was good and the Browns defense was great, but Cleveland still managed to lose this game thanks to two missed kicks. Andre Szmyt, who was making his NFL debut, missed an extra point in the third quarter and then followed that up by missing a go-ahead field goal from 36 yards out in the fourth quarter. The missed kicks wasted a nearly perfect performance from a Browns defense that held Joe Burrow to just 113 passing yards. As for Flacco, he threw 290 yards and he also threw two interceptions, but both turnovers bounced off the hands of his receiver. This a game that Browns probably should have won, but they gave it away. The silver lining here for Cleveland is that the Browns proved they might be competitive this year.

Indianapolis 33-8 over Miami

You can't win in the NFL if your quarterback keeps giving the ball away and Tua Tagovailoa kept giving the ball away against the Colts. Tua turned the ball over three times on Miami's first four drives with two interceptions and a lost fumble, and the Colts scored 17 points off of those turnovers. The Dolphins committed \$212.4 million to Tua before the start of the 2024 season and so far, he's not living up to the deal. If he doesn't figure things out soon, it could be an ugly year for Miami.

This was a day of redemption for the Colts. On offense, Daniel Jones quieted his critics by playing a nearly perfect game that saw him total 283 yards and three touchdowns (two rushing, one passing). Rookie tight end Tyler Warren showed that he could be a force this year by catching six passes for 61 yards. On the defensive side of the ball, Lou Anuramo also redeemed himself. The former Bengals defensive coordinator, who was fired by Cincinnati in January, put together a game plan that essentially shut down the Dolphins' high-powered offense. This was arguably the most impressive win by any team in Week 1.

Las Vegas 20-13 over New England

It's only been one game, but the Raiders' decision to make a trade for Geno Smith is looking like a brilliant one. The new Raiders quarterback diced up the Patriots defense for 362 yards, including a perfect 26-yard scoring strike to Tre Tucker on Las Vegas' opening possession. Smith had immediate chemistry with Brock Bowers (103 receiving yards) and Jakobi Meyers, who combined for 200 receiving yards. With this game, Pete Carroll became the oldest coach in NFL history and it's pretty clear that Father Time still hasn't figured out how to slow down Carroll.

The Patriots rebuilt their defense this offseason and if Week 1 was any indication, there's still a lot of work to be done. On the bright side, the Patriots did hold the Raiders' rushing attack to just 56 yards, but they had no answers for Geno Smith, who carved up New England's secondary. The Patriots offense disappeared during a second half where they simply couldn't come up with any big plays. The unit went just 1 of 6 on third down in the final two quarters and 4 of 14 in the game. Part of the problem for the Patriots is that Drake Maye got zero help from a ground game that totaled just 60 yards. The Patriots went 4-13 last season, and so far, it doesn't look like they've improved much.

Arizona 20-13 over New Orleans

The Cardinals' offensive attack wasn't firing on all cylinders in this game, but it could be scary once that finally happens. From James Conner to Trey Benson to Marvin Harrison Jr. to Trey McBride, the Cardinals have multiple offensive weapons and Arizona used them all. Harrison made several

impressive catches on a day where he caught five passes for a team-high 71 yards and a touchdown. Kyler Murray didn't put up big numbers, but he was efficient: He completed 72% of his passes while totaling 201 yards (163 passing, 38 rushing). If this team puts it all together, it can be an unexpected playoff contender in 2025.

In Kellen Moore's coaching debut, New Orleans came close to pulling off the upset and that was mostly thanks to a Saints defense that was able to keep the Cardinals offense in check. Cam Jordan (1.5 sacks) and the defense sacked Kyler Murray five times while holding the Cardinals QB to just 163 yards passing. The problem for the Saints is that Spencer Rattler still doesn't look like a starting QB in the NFL. Rattler completed just 47% of his passes (11 of 23) during a fourth quarter where the Saints had a chance to tie the game. The Saints' biggest struggles came in the red zone: They made four trips inside Arizona's 20, but they only came away with one touchdown. It seems like it will only be a matter of time before Moore gives rookie Tyler Shough a chance to start.

Pittsburgh 34-32 over N.Y. Jets

In the Aaron Rodgers revenge game, the 41-year-old QB definitely got revenge on his old team. Rodgers didn't put up huge numbers -- he only completed 22 passes for 244 yards -- but he made every single one of those completions count in a game where he threw four touchdown passes. DK Metcalf and Rodgers already seem to have plenty of chemistry with the receiver catching four passes for 83 yards. The Steelers defense unexpectedly struggled and it will be interesting to see if this was an opening week hiccup or something that could eventually be a concern. Either way, the Steelers escaped with a win and a big reason for that was Chris Boswell, who drilled a 60-yard field goal with just over one minute left for the game-deciding points.

The Jets blew a nine-point halftime lead and the meltdown started after Xavier Gipson fumbled away a kickoff in the third quarter that ended up turning into seven points for the Steelers. The turnover came after the Jets had just played a nearly flawless first half. Justin Fields and the offense looked impressive for most of the game, but they came up empty on a key fourth down late in the fourth quarter. Defensively, the Jets surrendered just 98 yards in the second half, but the Steelers still managed to score 17 points, which really tells you how back-breaking the Gipson fumble was. The Jets showed plenty of fight and this could certainly be a feisty team going forward.

Jacksonville 26-10 over Carolina

After a strong finish to the 2024 season, the Panthers were hoping that Bryce Young would take a step forward this year, but instead he took a giant step back in Week 1. Young turned the ball over three times with two interceptions and a lost fumble. He also completed just 18 of 35 passes for 154 yards. If Young doesn't improve quickly, it could be another lost season for the Panthers and if that happens, this team could be looking for a new QB next year. Young got benched after his first two games last season and if he keeps playing like this, Dave Canales might be forced to bench him again.

Not even a one-hour rain delay could slow down the Jaguars offense. In Liam Coen's debut, the new Jags coach did what worked for him last year in Tampa Bay: He ran the ball. The Jaguars' rushing attack was nearly unstoppable in this game and that was mostly thanks to Travis Etienne Jr., who rushed for 143 yards on just 16 carries. The Jags defense had its way with Bryce Young with two interceptions and a forced fumble. The Jaguars' opener couldn't have gone any better for Jacksonville and it will now be interesting to see how they look when they play the Bengals in Week 2.

Washington 21-6 over N.Y. Giants

The Giants might already have a quarterback controversy. In his first game with the team, Russell Wilson was mostly off the mark, completing just 45.9% of his passes for 168 yards. The Giants played well enough to keep New York in the game, but the offense couldn't get out of its own way. The Giants had TWO different drives where they got inside of Washington's 5-yard line, but they only scored a total of three points. If the offense keeps struggling, it will be interesting to see how long

Brian Daboll will wait before turning things over to rookie Jaxson Dart.

For three quarters, the Commanders simply couldn't put the Giants away, but then they took over in the game's final quarter. The Commanders rushed for 220 yards with 114 of those coming during a dominant fourth quarter. Jacory Croskey-Merritt already looks like a star in the making after a debut where he carried the ball 10 times for 82 yards and a touchdown. The offseason trade for Deebo Samuel is also looking like a brilliant move. Not only did Samuel lead the team with seven catches for 77 yards, but he also had a 19-yard scoring run. This team should definitely be a threat to win the NFC East this year.

San Francisco 17-13 over Seattle

The return of Robert Saleh as the 49ers' defensive coordinator is already paying huge dividends. The 49ers won this game on the back of a defense that smothered the Seahawks in the second half. The 49ers forced two turnovers, including a forced fumble by Nick Bosa in the final minute that saved the win. On the offensive side of the ball, Christian McCaffrey definitely looked healthy: He touched the ball 31 times (22 carries, nine catches) for 142 yards (69 rushing, 73 receiving). This wasn't a pretty, but opening the year with a win on the road over a divisional opponent will certainly help the 49ers forget their ugly 2024 season.

It's definitely too early to judge, but after one game, Sam Darnold doesn't seem like an upgrade over Geno Smith. Darnold threw for just 150 yards, and on top of that, he lost a fumble with under a minute left to that killed Seattle's chances of winning. Jaxson Smith-Njigba, who hauled in 124 of Darnold's 150 passing yards, also lost a key fumble in the second half. The offense wasn't able to get anything going on the ground either on a day where the rushing attack averaged just 3.2 yards per carry. If the Seahawks are going to have any chance of competing for a playoff berth this year, the offense is going to have to be much better.

L.A. Rams 14-9 over Houston

The Texans had one of the best defenses in the NFL last year and it looks like it might be just as good this year. Will Anderson Jr. led a unit that gave the Rams' offense fits, sacking Matthew Stafford three times while also forcing a key fourth quarter turnover. The problem for the Texans is that there was no consistency on offense. They only had one drive the entire game that got inside the Rams' 20-yard line and that ended in a field goal. C.J. Stroud took the second-most sacks in the NFL last year and things aren't off to a good start this year: He was sacked three times against the Rams and faced constant pressure. Dare Ogunbowale also lost a fumble on a potential game-winning drive in the fourth quarter. One bright spot for Houston was Nick Chubb, who rushed for 60 yards on just 13 carries. The Texans struggled last year against good teams -- they went 1-5 against teams that eventually made the playoffs -- and it looks like those struggles are going to continue in 2025,

The Rams defense already appears to be in midseason form. The Rams pitched a shutout in the second half and that happened thanks to a strong performance from a defense that forced two massive turnovers. The Rams' pass-rush kept constant pressure on CJ Stroud, which led to three sacks and one interception. The big question mark in this game was Matthew Stafford. Despite missing more than half of training camp, Stafford didn't show very much rust, throwing for 245 yards and a touchdown. He was nearly perfect throwing to Puka Nacua, who caught 10 of 11 passes thrown his way for 130 yards. Stafford also took advantage of having Davante Adams, who caught four passes for 51 yards in his L.A. debut. The Rams only scored 14 points, but Sean McVay probably isn't complaining: His QB looked good and it's only a matter of time before his offense is putting up big numbers.

Denver 20-12 over Tennessee

The Titans almost pulled off the biggest shocker of Week 1, but the offense kept that from happening. The Titans started FIVE different possessions in Denver territory, but they were unable to take advantage of that. Cam Ward struggled in his first start: He completed just 12 of 28 passes for 128

yards in a game where the Titans converted just 2 of 14 third downs. The Titans defense kept this close by forcing four turnovers, but Ward and the offense were only able to get six points off the big plays. The Titans might be able to pull off an upset or two this year if their defense keeps playing like this, but if the offense doesn't improve, this team might be in line to get the No. 1 overall pick for the second straight year.

This is the kind of win where you set the game film on fire and move on. It's too early to say whether Bo Nix is going to go through a sophomore slump, but it sure looked like the start of one against the Titans. He threw two interceptions and lost a fumble in a game where the Broncos passing attack struggled. The good news for Denver is that the defense was dominant. The Broncos sacked Cam Ward six times, they didn't allow a touchdown and they forced two turnovers. When your defense is this good, your QB can afford to have an off day.

Green Bay 27-13 over Detroit

The most unexpectedly bad performance from Week 1 definitely came from the Lions. They looked terrible on offense, they looked terrible on defense and Dan Campbell got outcoached by Matt LaFleur. This was Detroit's first game since losing offensive coordinator Ben Johnson to the Bears and the offense looked lost without him. Overall, the Lions somehow didn't look prepared for a game that they had all off-season to prepare for.

This was a total domination by a Packers team that steamrolled the Lions. The defense beat up on Jared Goff, sacking him four times, including one that came from Micah Parsons. The Packers also shut down the Lions' vaunted rushing attack. It almost felt like the Packers knew what the Lions were going to do on offense before the Lions even did it. Offensively, Jordan Love showed some love to nearly every receiver on the roster by completing at least one pass to 10 different players. The Packers made a statement in this game and that statement is that they might be the best team in the NFC North this year.

Buffalo 41-40 over Baltimore

For three quarters, the Ravens played a nearly perfect game, but things fell apart fast in the fourth quarter. Derrick Henry rushed for an impressive 169 yards and two touchdowns, but he coughed up the ball late in the fourth quarter to give Buffalo life. Lamar Jackson was unstoppable for most of the game, but he got cramps late in the fourth quarter, which might explain why the Ravens were held to just 28 total yards on their final three possessions combined after. The Ravens offensive meltdown happened at the same time as their defensive meltdown and that led to Baltimore getting outgained 264-87 in the fourth quarter. That's how you blow a 40-25 lead with four minutes left to play. The Ravens have to figure out how to close out games or this could be another season that ends in disappointment.

As long as the Bills have Josh Allen, they're never out of it. The Bills won this game because Allen put on his Superman cape in the fourth quarter: The reigning NFL MVP threw for 251 of his 394 passing yards in the final quarter while also totaling three touchdowns (one passing, two rushing). It was an epic performance that led to an epic win. Keon Coleman had a breakout game that saw him catch a career high eight passes for 112 yards and a score. The Bills defense also deserves some credit. The unit gave up 345 yards through the first three quarters, but managed to shut down the Ravens in crunch time when Buffalo needed it most. This was a matchup between two Super Bowl-contending heavyweights and it should give the Bills plenty of confidence going forward knowing that they can pull off a dramatic comeback like this against one of the best teams in the NFL.

L.A. Chargers 27-21 over Chiefs (Friday in Brazil)

The Chiefs had to play short-handed on offense for the entire game after losing Xavier Worthy to a shoulder injury on the third play from scrimmage. That caused the offense to look sluggish in the first half, but Kansas City's biggest problem wasn't the offense, it was a defense that couldn't stop Justin Herbert. For the most part, the Chiefs struggled to get pressure on Herbert as he diced them up for

more than 300 yards passing. The defense simply looked slow against a Chargers offense that piled up 394 yards. No one is worried about this team after one loss, but this was a below-average performance against a Chargers team that the Chiefs almost always find a way to beat. This might not quite signal a changing of the guard in the AFC West, but it's pretty clear the Chiefs are going to be in a dogfight as they try to win a 10th straight division title this year.

The Chargers might want to ask the NFL if they can play all their games in Brazil. Going into Week 1, the Chargers had lost seven straight games to the Chiefs, but Justin Herbert made sure to end that streak by playing a nearly perfect game. Not only did the Chargers QB throw for 318 yards and three touchdowns, but he sealed the win with a 19-yard run on third-and-14 late in the fourth quarter. Herbert was dominant on third down in the game, completing 7 of 8 passes with two touchdowns along with the 19-yard run. Quentin Johnston caught two TD passes, which tied a career high, and Keenan Allen, who didn't sign with L.A. until August, caught seven passes for 68 yards in his return to the Chargers. This team has suffered some devastating losses in franchise history, but was able to hang on here and even though it's only been one game, the Chargers feel like they're going to be dangerous this year.

Philadelphia 24-20 over Dallas (Thursday)

The Cowboys came close to pulling off an upset in Philadelphia, but they were let down by CeeDee Lamb. Although the star receiver caught seven passes for 110 yards, he also had three drops, including two in the final three minutes of the fourth quarter. The Cowboys defense, which was expected to struggle without Micah Parsons, played reasonably well. The defense held the Eagles to just 86 yards in the second half, but the Cowboys did struggle on third down with Philly converting 8 of 13 attempts in the game. Overall, the Cowboys played a solid game and Dak Prescott looked impressive in his first action since last November. If we learned one thing from Thursday night, it's that Dallas might be better than everyone thought.

If there was ever any question about whether Jalen Hurts can carry this team, he answered it on Thursday night. Not only did Hurts complete 82.6% of his passes for 152 yards, but he also had a strong night on the ground, with a team-high 62 yards and two touchdowns. Hurts had multiple big scrambles and five of them ended with a first down. Defensively, the Eagles seemed a little shell-shocked in the first half after losing Jalen Carter to an ejection, but they settled down during a second half where they shut out the Cowboys while holding Dallas to just 130 yards. The Eagles might not have been perfect in this game, but they walked away with the win and that's all that matters.

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Cleveland Browns at Baltimore Ravens — Sunday 1:00 ET

Baltimore put up 40 points in Week 1 and looked unstoppable for three quarters before late miscues swung the game away. Lamar Jackson was efficient, throwing for 200+ yards and 2 TDs while adding 70 on the ground, and Derrick Henry bulldozed his way to a monster rushing day. The Ravens' offense generated explosive plays at will, while their defense forced key stops early before wearing down late.

Cleveland, meanwhile, collapsed in a one-point loss despite outgaining Cincinnati by nearly 200 yards. Joe Flacco threw for 290 but tossed two costly interceptions off receiver errors, and the Browns' run game was stuck in mud at just 2 yards per carry. Missed field goals and turnovers doomed them in a game they should have controlled.

Baltimore has clear edges on both sides: Jackson and Henry against a Browns defense that had trouble setting edges, and a defensive front that can pressure Flacco into more mistakes. Coaching and situational football tilt heavily toward the Ravens, who excel at burying weaker opponents at home. This spread is lighter than the true gap between these teams.

TAKE: Ravens -10.5

Jacksonville Jaguars at Cincinnati Bengals — Sunday 1:00 ET

The Bengals escaped Week 1 with a one-point road win despite offensive struggles. Joe Burrow managed only 113 passing yards, but Cincinnati's defense saved the day with multiple takeaways and big stops in the red zone. Even when badly outgained, they found ways to win with pressure and turnovers.

Jacksonville dominated Carolina as Travis Etienne ripped off chunk plays and Trevor Lawrence played mistake-free. But the Jaguars benefitted from a sloppy opponent that gifted short fields and couldn't stay on schedule. This week presents a tougher test against a Bengals defense that thrives in coverage and red-zone stands.

At home, Cincinnati should lean on a steadier Burrow, improved protection, and a balanced passing attack to expose Jacksonville's secondary. The Bengals' opportunistic defense matches well against Lawrence, who still struggles under heavy heat. This is a spot where Cincinnati's floor last week creates line value, and the matchup tilts in their favor.

TAKE: Bengals -3.5

Los Angeles Rams at Tennessee Titans — Sunday 1:00 ET

The Rams took down a strong defense in Week 1 thanks to Matthew Stafford's precision and Puka Nacua's relentless production. Stafford threw for over 240 yards, Nacua caught 10 passes for 130, and the offense avoided mistakes apart from a red-zone fumble. Los Angeles proved it can win ugly with defense and still generate enough offense to control tempo.

Tennessee, by contrast, couldn't find footing. Their quarterback was sacked six times, the run game sputtered, and the Titans settled for field goals all afternoon. When given a chance to take control in the fourth quarter, the offense collapsed under pressure. Their defense showed flashes but gave up explosive plays that flipped the game late.

The Rams have advantages in both passing efficiency and defensive pressure. Stafford and Nacua

can overwhelm a Tennessee secondary that already showed cracks, while the Rams' front should feast on a leaky offensive line. The visitors are better equipped to grab a lead and close it out without drama.

TAKE: Rams -5.5

San Francisco 49ers at New Orleans Saints — Sunday 1:00 ET

San Francisco needed a late drive to slip past Seattle in a game marred by turnovers and missed kicks. Brock Purdy threw for 270 yards and two touchdowns but also tossed two interceptions, and the offense bogged down repeatedly in the red zone. The 49ers leaned on Christian McCaffrey to grind out yards, but drives stalled often.

New Orleans managed just 13 points in a loss to Arizona, as Spencer Rattler dinked and dunked his way to 214 yards on 46 attempts. Their offense produced only one touchdown, and their red-zone trips ended in mistakes and missed kicks. While the defense kept them in the game, the lack of explosive plays was glaring.

Both teams lean heavily on their defenses and slower-paced offenses. The 49ers will control tempo with their run game and pass rush, while the Saints' offense will struggle to sustain scoring drives against an elite front. With both units grinding clock and limiting big plays, this matchup points strongly toward a defensive struggle.

TAKE: Under 42

PRO FOOTBALL QUICK PICKS

Washington at Green Bay — Thursday 8:15 ET

Washington opened with a dominant 21–6 win as rookie QB Jayden Daniels threw for over 300 yards and kept drives alive with third-down darts. The Commanders' defense bottled up the Giants, allowing just two field goals until garbage time. Green Bay, meanwhile, cruised 24–6 past Detroit with Jordan Love firing two touchdowns and Josh Jacobs pounding in a late score. The Packers' defense forced turnovers and kept the Lions out of the end zone. Washington's defensive front should still create pressure here, but Green Bay has more balance.

TAKE: Green Bay -3.5

New England at Miami — Sunday 1:00 ET

The Patriots fell 20–13 at home to the Raiders despite an impressive start from rookie Drake Maye, who threw accurate back-shoulder balls before being shut down in the second half. New England's offense produced only three points after intermission, and turnovers proved costly. Miami looked lifeless in a 33–8 blowout loss at Indianapolis, where Tua Tagovailoa threw two interceptions and the defense collapsed. Both sides have issues, but the Patriots' physical front and a rookie QB showing early poise point to line value on the road.

TAKE: New England +1.5

Buffalo at NY Jets — Sunday 1:00 ET

Buffalo rallied from down 15 to stun Baltimore 41–40 behind Josh Allen's 400+ total yards and four

touchdowns. Keon Coleman and Joshua Palmer emerged as big-play targets in the comeback. The Jets poured in 32 points of their own, with Justin Fields rushing and connecting deep to Garrett Wilson, and Breece Hall slashing through Pittsburgh's front. But New York's defense folded late, coughing up a lead and allowing 34 points. With Allen rolling and the Jets leaky defensively, the edge is clear.

TAKE: Buffalo -6.5

Chicago at Detroit — Sunday 1:00 ET

Detroit managed only six points in a 24–6 loss to Green Bay, stalling in the red zone and failing to capitalize on drives despite Sam LaPorta's 79 receiving yards. Jared Goff couldn't find the end zone, and costly mistakes buried the Lions. Chicago fell 27–24 to Minnesota after blowing a 17–6 lead, as rookie QB Caleb Williams started hot but unraveled late with turnovers and missed reads. The Bears' defense couldn't stop J.J. McCarthy's late surge, giving up three straight touchdowns. Both teams' defenses are vulnerable, and the quarterbacks are capable of splash plays.

TAKE: Over 46

Seattle at Pittsburgh — Sunday 1:00 ET

The Seahawks battled San Francisco in a 17–13 loss, with Sam Darnold showing flashes but coughing up a late fumble to seal defeat. Jaxon Smith-Njigba moved the chains, yet turnovers kept Seattle from finishing drives. Pittsburgh survived a wild 34–32 shootout with the Jets thanks to Chris Boswell's 60-yard game-winner. The Steelers' defense was gashed by the run and gave up repeated explosives, but Aaron Rodgers steadied the offense late. Both defenses looked shaky, so points are the stronger angle.

TAKE: Over 40.5

NY Giants at Dallas — Sunday 1:00 ET

The Giants stumbled badly in a 21–6 loss with Russell Wilson averaging under 4 yards per attempt and Malik Nabers nearly invisible. The offense mustered just two field goals before garbage time and looked lifeless throughout. Dallas also fell short, losing 24–20 to Philadelphia despite multiple chances late. Dak Prescott threw for over 200 but costly drops and penalties sealed their fate. The Cowboys' defense is a mismatch for New York's shaky line.

TAKE: Dallas -5.5

Indianapolis Colts at Denver Broncos — Sunday 4:05 ET

The Colts dismantled Miami 33–8 with Daniel Jones tossing two touchdowns and rushing for another, while Jonathan Taylor churned out consistent gains. The defense forced three turnovers and built a commanding halftime lead. Denver survived Tennessee 20–12 despite Bo Nix's three turnovers, thanks to a late 50-yard burst by RJ Harvey and a clinching J.K. Dobbins score. The Broncos' defense was strong with six sacks, but mistakes nearly cost them. Indianapolis has the steadier quarterback and stronger recent form.

TAKE: Indianapolis +2.5

Philadelphia at Kansas City — Sunday 4:25 ET

The Eagles survived a 24–20 opener against Dallas despite sloppy penalties and turnovers. Jalen Hurts was steady but missed Jalen Carter's presence up front after a bizarre pregame ejection. The defense bent often but didn't break late, dropping three potential interceptions. Kansas City, meanwhile, fell 27–21 at home to the Chargers as the offense sputtered without Xavier Worthy. Patrick Mahomes missed several deep shots, and the defense couldn't get off the field. With the Chiefs sharper at home and the Eagles showing cracks, the play is on the dog.

TAKE: Kansas City +1

Atlanta at Minnesota — Sunday 8:20 ET

Atlanta lost 23–20 at Tampa Bay despite Bijan Robinson racking up over 100 receiving yards and a long touchdown. Rookie QB Michael Penix showed flashes but fumbled into the end zone and missed on key late drives. Minnesota flipped its opener behind J.J. McCarthy's three second-half touchdowns to beat Chicago 27–24. Justin Jefferson and Aaron Jones carried the offense once McCarthy settled in. Both defenses showed vulnerability, so points are the stronger angle here.

TAKE: Over 45

Tampa Bay at Houston — Monday 8:15 ET

The Buccaneers edged Atlanta 23–20 with Baker Mayfield hitting Emeka Egbuka twice for scores. Tampa Bay's special teams flipped momentum with a big return, and the defense stiffened just enough late. Houston fell 14–9 to the Rams as C.J. Stroud faced relentless pressure and the run game never gained traction. The Texans had chances late but turnovers ended drives. With Houston back home and facing a less dynamic front, they should rebound strongly.

TAKE: Houston -2.5

LA Chargers at Las Vegas — Monday 10:00 ET

Justin Herbert was sharp in a 27–21 win at Kansas City, spreading the ball efficiently and converting key third downs late. The Chargers' offense never let up, and Herbert scrambled to seal the game. Las Vegas pulled off a 20–13 road win in New England as Geno Smith bounced back from an early pick to feed Brock Bowers and Jakobi Meyers. The defense tightened in the second half, allowing only three points. With Herbert rolling and the Chargers' weapons in rhythm, the visitors have the stronger profile.

TAKE: LA Chargers -3



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