

NFL Week 12 Picks

Welcome to Caesar's Picks Everyone! This will be a weekly project where I pick every game from the NFL Schedule. I'll offer my quick thoughts, some stats, and predictions for each game. I'll give a final score for each game as well as a confidence scale. My confidence scale is based not on the winner of the game, but the point spread of the game from the Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The scale simply ranges from low (games to stay away from), to medium (games that are 50-50, bet with caution), to high confidence (Games to pick). These spreads and picks are made as of Thursday, November 21st, 2019.

Another below .500 week for yours truly as my hot start has been a distant memory. A 6-8 record leaves me at 70-74 on the season, but there is still time left to finish with a strong record. I split my high confidence picks again this week with a 2-2 record, putting me at 26-17 on the year on those games. It's getting closer to Thanksgiving time, which means we are close to the home stretch of the Regular Season (time flies fast). Let's get into the games this week!

Colts 6-4 vs Texans 6-4 (-3.5)

The Texans were embarrassed on the road against the Ravens but will have a short week to get over it as they return home to play the division rival Colts on Thursday Night. Quarterback Deshaun Watson got hit 10 times and sacked seven last week, setting him up for a poor performance (167 yds, 0 tds). The Colts only average 2.5 sacks per game, so maybe Watson has a little more breathing room this week. The Texans also have confidence in Receivers Deandre Hopkins and Kenny Stills, who combined for 211 yards in their first meeting with the Colts. If WR Will Fuller is good to go with the duo, expect the Colts to struggle dealing with three talented receivers on the field. The Colts are in a tough situation with RB Marlon Mack out indefinitely with a Fractured Hand. WR TY Hilton is also out this game with a calf injury. Expect RB's Nyheim Hines, Jonathan Williams and WR Zach Pascal to get some looks early as they will have to step up with the starters out. The defense will be the key part of winning this game for Indy as they kept the Jaguars out of the RedZone all game. The Colts have some momentum, but the Texans are at home and want to remind everyone why they are a playoff team after getting smacked by the Ravens. Expect the Texans to bounce back with a big win and a covering of the spread.

Texans 27, Colts 21/Low Confidence

Panthers 5-5 vs Saints 8-2 (-9.5)

Anyone who tried to deny that Cam is a better option for the Panthers than Kyle Allen got a rude awakening last week as the wheels came off for Allen, throwing 4 interceptions at home against the Falcons. That's now nine for him in four games with a 1-3 record to boot. Now he will go against the Saints in the Super-dome (Not Fun). The Saints also got back to their usual performance level last week with a 34-17 win over the Buccaneers. Their defense was locked in and Drew Brees had room to throw again. WR Michael Thomas had another eight catches to his season with 114 yards and a touchdown. With 86 catches this season, Thomas has a chance to be the first receiver in NFL history with 150 catches in a single season. The Saints have an advantage in almost all areas, and unless Christian McCaffery pulls off a 250-yard, 3 td performance, I don't see the Panthers hanging in this one. Give me the Saints easily in this one.

Saints 34, Panthers 20/ High Confidence

Broncos 3-7 vs Bills 7-3 (-4)

No matter how you feel about the legitimacy of the Bills 7-3 record, they control their destiny to get a wild card spot as their final schedule favors them to finish strong. None of that is guaranteed of course, and in the Broncos case, they are on the opposite spectrum as they could have been in a position to contend for the AFC West if a few plays went in their favor. QB Josh Allen had his best performance for Buffalo last week, last week, with 4 touchdowns and no turnovers in a dominant win over Miami. He will look to continue that great performance against a Broncos defense that's 13th in opposing QB passer rating and 5th in fewest Passing yards allowed. Buffalo is 3rd in fewest passing yards allowed, which gives Denver an excuse to run the ball more than they already do with Phillip Lindsey and Royce Freeman. Same can be said for the Bills as they possess the 8th ranked rushing unit in football thanks to a mix of Veteran Frank Gore, Rookie Devin Singletary, and QB Josh Allen on scrambles. This will be fun for the old-school football fans to see some slow-paced football (Boomers... and me) and I see the Bills securing the win at home and covering the four-point spread.

Bills 17, Broncos 9/ Medium Confidence

Lions 3-6-1 vs Redskins 1-9 (+3.5)

These are the kind of games that make me think that I shouldn't cover every game in the week. It's the Lions with Jeff Driskel who takes -20-yard sacks vs the Redskins with Dwayne Haskins who has beef with his offensive linemen. The Redskins fans chanted "Sell the Team" last week in their embarrassing loss to the Jets, and I think we all agree at this point that Owner Dan Snyder only hurts the Redskins chances to build anything sustainable. At the very least it seems that the Lions aren't disgruntled to that level (yet) and are still competing. I can't really pick Washington as they have shown no interest in winning anything the rest of this season, despite playing a bottom tier defense and JEFF DRISKEL!

Lions 28, Redskins 17/ High Confidence

Dolphins 2-8 vs Browns 4-6 (-10.5)

Even when the Browns win a game, they find a way to push out this bad energy that hurts its long-term prospects. This time it was DE Myles Garrett who got into a scrum with Steelers QB Mason Rudolph (more on him later) that escalated into Garrett swinging his helmet at Rudolph, causing into an Indefinite Suspension. Now not only are the Browns creating negative controversy, but they lose the best player on their defense which significantly hurts their pass rush. The Browns need to win 5 of their last 6 to go 9-7 and have a punchers chance at a wild card, but that will be difficult under the circumstances their under. Luckily, they have a favorable matchup against a 2-8 Dolphins team that averages 60 rushing yards per game. The Dolphins also give up 148 rushing yards per game, so expect Browns RB Nick Chubb to get a workload in this game. The Browns are still the more talented team without Garrett, but Dolphins QB Ryan Fitzpatrick is a gunslinger, and I can see him getting a backdoor cover on the road. I expect just that, but the Browns will still win.

Browns 21, Dolphins 14/ Medium Confidence

Giants 2-8 vs Bears 4-6 (-6)

Mitchell Trubisky's time in Chicago is unofficially over after getting pulled out late in the Bears Sunday Night loss against the Rams. He is listed as questionable this Sunday, but it doesn't change much between him and Chase Daniel as far as offensive ceiling. The 30th ranked Bears offense may have more wiggle room against a 27th ranked Giants defense that gives up 32 points per game. The Giants have an advantage however of coming off a bye week for this game. Hopefully they were working on controlling the ball as they have 24 giveaways on the season which is second most in the league. Daniel Jones had 4 touchdowns and no interceptions in two of his last three games, but I don't see him pulling that off this week. The like the Bears to win, but because of how inept the Bears offense is, they won't be able to blow out a good giant passing game. I'm taking the Giants cover on this one.

Bears 17, Giants 16/ High Confidence

Raiders 6-4 vs Jets 3-7 (+3)

The Raiders are right there with the Chiefs in the AFC West race as they have won three games in a row. A big part of that is young guard that has stepped up for Oakland. Benson Mayowa and Maxx Crosby have 7 and 6.5 sacks respectively (to make Oakland fans feel even better, Khalil Mack has 5.5 sacks), while on offense RB Josh Jacobs has over 900 rushing yards, and Targets like TE Darren Waller and WR Hunter Renfrow get a good portion of targets. They play the Jets who have won two in a row and return home this week. Sam Darnold has played well the last two games and is the engine to the Jets averaging 34 points in those two contests. The defense is also near the top in run defense, which matches up well with the Raiders balanced attack. The Raiders always stay around in games, but with the team playing on the road in the east coast, they may fall a little flat against the Jets who have started to come alive again. I got the Jets covering and pulling the upset here.

Jets 24, Raiders 20/ Low Confidence

Steelers 5-5 vs Bengals 0-10 (+6.5)

QB Mason Rudolph scrum with Myles Garrett (as mentioned earlier) has led to unnecessary distraction for both teams and players. Some wanted Rudolph to get at least a game long suspension, but from a football, and not a legal standpoint, his suspension doesn't change the Steelers odds at all of reaching the postseason. He has struggled to get the offense moving and now has defensive linemen ready to clock him on the snap. The Bengals have a league worst run defense, but Pittsburgh is 27th in rushing offense. The Steelers will also lose Center Maurkice Pouncey in a three-game suspension as a part of the brawl, as well as potentially losing RB James Conner (Shoulder) and WR Juju Smith-Schuster (concussion) this week. The Bengals played the conservative game last week as they gave the ball to Joe Mixon a whopping 30 times in the game as they were in it till the final minutes. Expect a similar philosophy from them throughout the rest of the year as they give Finley some room to grow. I see the Bengals playing close and playing tough as they are desperate to win. I almost want to pick them outright, but I don't see Ryan Finley leading a big late game drive against Pittsburghs defense. For now, they will have to just take a six-and-a-half-point cover.

Steelers 16, Bengals 13/ Medium Confidence

Seahawks 8-2 vs Eagles 5-5 (-1)

The Seahawks are coming off a bye week to play the Eagles who were hanging close with the Patriots and could have tied it up but... Nelson Agholor you know? The Seahawks will run the

ball like they have always done as they are 7th in Rush Attempts in the NFL, and 6th in rushing yards. When they need to pass, they have #3 in Russell Wilson who has 23 touchdowns to only 2 interceptions, and is 4th in yards per attempt, a big reason why he's in the MVP conversation. For the Eagles, they got to find a receiving threat besides Zach Ertz who can be reliable for Carson Wentz. They are only 24th in Passing yards, and only averaging 6.6 yards per attempt, putting them at 27th in the league. The Seahawks are always in a close game, so I expect the same here, and with the Eagles struggling secondary and offensive skill position players, I don't see them stepping up to make a play on Russell Wilson the way the Niners did (and they still lost somehow). I'll take Russ and the Seahawks on the road.

Seahawks 28, Eagles 21/ Medium Confidence

Buccaneers 3-7 vs Falcons 3-7 (-4)

Jamies Winston already has 18 interceptions on the season! That's just utterly ridiculous (that's how many picks I have in my Madden Franchise by week 12). I usually would then say that he may have a safe week because he's playing against the Terrible Falcons defense, but ever since they switched defensive play callers, they look like a top 5 defense. They have given up 12 points combined in the previous two games against the Saints and Panthers respectively and have garnered 11 sacks in two games after getting 7 sacks through the first eight games. Tampa Bay has given up 36 sacks this year, tied for 27th, and Jamies Winston has a tendency to hold on to the ball too long, so I wouldn't be surprised to see continued success for the Falcons. Tampa does have the 4th most passing yards however, so expect them to keep attacking a weak Falcons Secondary. The same will be said for the 3rd ranked Falcons passing offense against the 31st Bucs Pass defense. This will be a fun shootout that will help a lot of fantasy owners with these players, but I have the Falcons getting their third win in a row and covering the spread in the process.

Falcons 35, Buccaneers 28/ Medium Confidence

Jaguars 4-6 vs Titans 5-5 (-3.5)

Between the Bucs and Jags I can't put my trust into picking these teams any longer. The Jags defense all of a sudden has been non-existent as they gave up 216 rushing yards to the Colts last week. Now they go against RB Derrick Henry who is 5th in the league in the rushing yards this season. Tennessee is also 3-1 under the command of QB Ryan Tannehill who has had a renaissance of his career. He's been efficient with eight touchdowns and only two interceptions. The big test in these teams second matchup is will the Jaguars pass rush be close to as ferocious it was in the first contest. Jacksonville got 10 sacks on Marcus Mariota in that meeting, and if they can get close to that number, they will be able to turn a corner this week. I don't see it happening again however as I got the Titans staying in the AFC South mix with a win to go over .500 (no more Jags picks).

Titans 26, Jaguars 20/ Medium Confidence

Cowboys 6-4 vs Patriots 9-1 (-6.5)

Tom Brady is finished. He's done. He will never be the same again! Well, no. Tom Brady is still a good quarterback, but he has struggled this season. Both can be true, and it is for the Pats as they had just 298 total yards against the eagles last week. It's also true that the Pats lack depth at receiver and Tight End. WR Philip Dorsett is listed as questionable too, so the receiving core

is only getting worse. They wished they had the Cowboys skill players like Ezekiel Elliott, Amari Cooper, Micheal Gallup, etc., that lead the Cowboy offense to the most yards in football. Of course, their Quarterback Dak Prescott is responsible for that as well as he has taken another step forward in his progression this season as he looks for a new healthy contract. The Cowboys defense however has looked suspect as they struggled to contain Jeff Driskel (how?) last week and gave up 27 points. They have also yet to beat a team with a record over .500 this season. The Patriots have the top tier defense to contain the Cowboys, and I think the Patriots get it together this week as close to Thanksgiving is always when the Patriots figure it out offensively. Give me the Patriots in the spread of this game that will be one of the highest viewed of the Season.

Patriots 27, Cowboys 20/ Low Confidence

Packers 8-2 vs 49ers 9-1 (-3)

A Big Sunday Night Showdown takes place with the Packers traveling to Santa Clara to take on the San Francisco 49ers. The Niners got a late win in a fun contest against the Cardinals, but they showed a lot of weaknesses in that game and the two previous games. They have given up 26 points on average over the last three games after only averaging 15 allowed before and have allowed 316 yards per game after the initial 253. The defense hasn't become terrible, but it's not nearly as dominant as they were early in the season. Now Pass-Rusher Dee Ford may be out for a little while with a hamstring injury. The Niners offense needs TE George Kittle to return as he accounted for 22 percent of San Francisco's pass offense. RB Matt Breida also missed last week's game and is listed questionable. He could help as RB's Raheem Mostert and Tevin Coleman were stuffed on Sunday. While the Niners have hit a wall, the Packers have an extra week of preparation to help for this game. Green Bay has been automatic in the RedZone this year with 68.7 percent of RedZone drives ending with touchdowns. A big part of that is RB Aaron Jones as he has 11 on the ground and 3 in the air. This one is going to be interesting, but I'll take the experience of Aaron Rodgers and a rested Packers team to win on the road.

Packers 27, 49ers 24/ Medium Confidence

Ravens 8-2 vs Rams 6-4 (+3)

The Ravens have become the most must see team in the League with the electrifying play of Lamar Jackson. Everybody has been talking him up however, so I don't need to add anything to that. What needs to be mentioned however is the Ravens defense that has been lockdown over the past three games. The last three games have seen Baltimore only give up 13 points on average and only surrender 176 passing yards per game. Back to the offense, the Ravens have two of their top three leading receivers as Tight Ends (Mark Andrews, Nick Boyle). They have done everything to help Lamar find big targets on short routes, making it easier for him to make reads. It of course opens up that league leading rushing attack as well. The Rams on the other side need this game badly to even stay close in a Top- Heavy NFC. Their Offense was bad against Chicago as they were 3 for 10 on third down and scored 17 points. That would be an L against a lot of teams in the league but luckily, they matched up against Mitch Trubisky on defense. On a positive note, we saw the most usage out of Todd Gurley in over a year as he had 28 carries and a score. If he can get rolling, then the Rams have some hope in returning to their 1st half of 2018 form. The defense has also been clamping down on teams with only giving up 12.8 points per game over the last five, albeit some weaker opponents. This game will be must-see, and I got the hot hand in the Ravens winning that game with a spread cover.

Ravens 30, Rams 23/ High Confidence