NFL WEEK 5 PICKS

Welcome to Caesar’ 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, to medium, to high confidence.

I went 8-7 against the spread last week, putting me at a decent record of 26-21 on the season.

I went 3-2 on my high Confidence Picks last week, missing the chiefs- lions and raiders-Colts games. Despite that I’m over .500 on those games, going 9-6 in high Confidence games. Let’s try to push that win percentage higher this week. Let’s get into the action.

Rams 3-1 vs Seahawks 3-1 (-1)

These two rivals are at opposite sides of the spectrum going into their Thursday night game. The Seahawks are coming off their best game of the season against the Cardinals, while the Rams gave up a remarkable 55 points in a loss to the Buccaneers at home. While the defense of the Rams needs to tighten up, 28 of those 55 points came after Rams turnovers on offense and special teams. Now they play on the road on a short week, and Jared Goff has struggled on the road throughout his career. Combine that with a lack of a running game due to Gurley’s nagging injuries and no running back stepping up, and I got the Seahawks in a win.

Seahawks 28, Rams 24/ Medium Confidence

Bears 3-1 vs Raiders 2-2 (+6)

It’s the first London game of the NFL season as the Bears and Raiders are coming off big wins respectively. The raiders offense ranks 25th in pass attempts per game as they like to establish the run with rookie running back Josh Jacobs and veteran DeAndre Washington. The Bears played a team with a similar philosophy last week in the Vikings and gave up 6 points. Carr will look for breakout TE Darren Waller from Georgia Tech, but if the bears can slow him down then it will be easy to throw Carr off his game. That task won’t be easy however as MLB Roquan Smith is out indefinitely. The key storyline of this game will be Khalil Mack’s revenge game, as he said that he’s had this game circled for a long time. Since trade to Chicago, Mack has produced 17 sacks and 10 forced fumbles, while the Raiders produced 18 sacks and 8 forced fumbles as a whole team. Expect Mack to get in the backfield a lot throughout this game, and a win with a spread cover for the Bears.

Bears 21, Raiders 10/ Medium Confidence

Bills 3-1 vs Titans 2-2 (-3)

Every time the Titans look down for the count, they play a great game of football. Case in point, last week they put together a good performance on the road against the Falcons. Marcus Mariota got sacked 0 times last week after getting sacked 17 times through the first three games. While they do get LT Taylor Lewan back, they also face a much more physical defense in the Bills. Buffalo will be without QB Josh Allen (concussion), so USC alum Matt Barkley will get the start against a solid titans defense. If Buffalo can get to a fast start, that will help take the pressure off of Barkley. I don’t believe that will happen however, as this game will be a struggle for both offenses. I’ll take the Titans to win their first home game of the season and keep pace in a winnable AFC South.

Titans 17, Bills 13/ Low Confidence

Buccaneers 2-2 vs Saints 3-1 (-3)

Buccaneers Head Coach Bruce Ariens has given the Bucs a balanced attack on offense through three weeks of the season. Jameis Winston post week 1 has had one of his best stretches of football since being drafted, RB Ronald Jones has found his role on the team, and the pair of Mike Evans and Chris Godwin at WR make it a tough matchup for opposing secondaries. They play a Saints team that’s still kicking after the Drew Brees injury, going 2-0 so far. Teddy Bridgewater has managed the game well while giving the ball to playmakers like Alvin Kamara and Michael Thomas on offense. They’re also one of the top run defenses in football, allowing 153 yards on the ground in the last two wins, including holding Ezekiel Elliott to 35 yards rushing. While the Bucs gave up 40 points to the Rams last week, they created 5 turnovers in the game, and if they can get 2-3 in this game, especially from guys like Shaquil Barrett and Devin White, they can easily come out on top. I’m going out on a limb here, I have a feeling that the Bucs will win this game on the road, as the Saints haven’t had that big play explosiveness with Bridgewater under center, and Tampa Bay will have enough of those plays to win the game.

Buccaneers 24, Saints 20/ Low Confidence

Cardinals 0-3-1 vs Bengals 0-4 (-3)

Two of the worst offensive lines in football do battle in this matchup. The cardinals have given up a league high 20 sacks on the season, followed by the Bengals at 19. John Ross has been placed on injured reserve for the Bengals, which is a big loss for a Bengals offense that needs its playmaker. The Cardinals have regressed on offense since the first two weeks of the season showed promise. WR Christian Kirk will miss this week for the Cardinals with an ankle injury, making it tougher for Murray. 0 wins combined between these two teams means something has to give, and while the bengals are home, they look deflated on both sides of the football. I’ll take the Cardinals on the road for their first win on the season.

Cardinals 20, Bengals 13/ Medium Confidence

Jaguars 2-2 vs Panthers 2-2 (-3.5)

A Cat fight between two young underdog quarterbacks willing their teams to success means a fun game to keep your eye on. The Jags came back from a 14-point deficit thanks to Leonard Fournette and his 225 yards on the ground. They had success by lining up OL Cedric Ogbuehi as an extra tight end, so don’t be surprised to see them use that strategy a lot more in this game. The Panthers rank 23rd in run defense so they may face problems against the Jags run game, however they have a whopping 14 sacks in the last two games. These teams are evenly matched, but I’ll take Gardner Minshew to continue his magic to another late win on the road.

Jaguars 23, Panthers 21/ Low Confidence

Jets 0-3 vs Eagles 2-2 (-13.5)

This prediction is up in the air because of the status of Sam Darnold. He’s still running test to see if he’s eligible to play on Sunday, but for right now it’s still the dynamic and electrifying Luke Falk at QB! Ok, not really electrifying, or dynamic, but he’s the quarterback the Jets will have to roll with against the Eagles who still have big concerns in the secondary. The Jets have to find a way to get Le’Veon Bell in space as defenses will stack the box and force Luke Falk to make a play. As for the Eagles, they found success in the run game with former Chicago Bear Jordan Howard, scoring 3 touchdowns against the Packers. Jets DT Quinnen Williams is still out, so expect the Eagles to exploit that on offense. I will take the Eagles in a high confidence pick with the expectation that Falk starts this week and continues to struggle.

Eagles 28, Jets 10/ High Confidence

Falcons 1-3 vs Texans 2-2 (-5)

These two teams are coming off of disappointing performances. The Falcons are soft on the offensive and defensive line and are poorly coached. The Texans have coaching issues as well as offensive line problems. The Falcons struggle to run the football as well, and the difference between the Falcons and Texans is defense. Expect the Texans to get pressure from J.J Watt and Whitney Marcellus throughout the game, forcing Ryan to throw a few errant passes. This Falcons team looks disinterested in playing for Dan Quinn, and I believe it will continue this week, resulting in a big win for a Texans team that needs one desperately.

Texans 31, Falcons 17/ High Confidence

Patriots 4-0 vs Redskins 0-4 (+15.5)

The Redskins have yet to win a game this season, and now they don’t know who will be starting at quarterback for them this week. Whether it’s Rookie Dwayne Haskins, Journeymen Case Keenum, or system QB Colt McCoy, it won’t save them against the top defense in the NFL currently in New England. The Pats allow 6.8 points per game along with 243 total yards per game, both league lowest. They have a league leading 10 interceptions and a league leading 18 sacks. That’s probably enough said on this game. Pats cover.

Patriots 34, Redskins 7/ High Confidence

Ravens 2-2 vs Steelers 1-3 (+3.5)

This game usually has a big fight feel to it, but the injury to Ben Roethlisberger took a lot of steam out of this matchup. Despite that, expect a close affair between these two teams. Mason Rudolph has played solid football for Pittsburgh, while James Connor finally got going for the Steelers on Monday night after a rough three weeks. They will have to play their best football against a Ravens team that’s number 1 in offensive yards per game. Lamar Jackson has slowed down a bit since his hot start to the season, but I expect a bounce back performance here. Despite that, I like the Steelers to win this game in an upset at home and put the Ravens in a rough hole.

Steelers 26, Ravens 24/ Low Confidence

Vikings 2-2 vs Giants 2-2 (+5.5)

It’s been a rough week for the Vikings as WR Stefon Diggs has his name floating the rumor mill as a trade candidate, due to the run first offense and poor play from QB Kirk Cousins. This week would’ve been a good one to get back on track against a lowly Giants team, except the G-Men have found a sparked since the Daniel Jones start in Tampa. Jones will have Sterling Sheperd back from injury, as well as Free agent signing Golden Tate who has served his four-game suspension. While they got a streak going, they are still a missed field goal away from a 1-3 record, and the defense still has holes at all three levels. Kirk Cousins may shrink in the bright lights, but at 1 pm Est, he can step up and make enough plays to win the game and expect him to do that with Diggs and Thielen in this game.

Vikings 24, Giants 17/ Medium Confidence

Broncos 0-4 vs Chargers 2-2 (-6)

The Broncos have lost 8 straight games dating back to last season, they lost Bradley Chubb to a season-ending torn ACL and will now go on the road to play a deep Chargers roster. This game should be the first we see of Melvin Gordon this season, after holding out of his contract for the first four weeks. Expect him to play a limited role in this game, as Austin Ekeler has stepped up tremendously in Gordon’s absence. The Broncos also let Leonard Fournette run all over them last week, so there’s a template on how to dominate their d-line. Despite multiple injuries to this Chargers team, I expect them to win this football game and cover at home.

Chargers 30, Broncos 20/ Medium Confidence

Packers 3-1 vs Cowboys 3-1 (-3.5)

The Packers lost their first game of the season due to some poor play-calling at the goal line (run the ball at least once), and also lost Star WR Devante Adams (Toe) for this week’s game against a tough Cowboys defense. Green Bay got exposed on defense last week, giving up 176 rushing yards on over 5 yards per carry to the Eagles. They have struggled in run defense against Minnesota and Denver respectively, but now it’s costing them points. As for the Cowboys, they got exposed on the offensive side of the football, generating only 257 total yards of offense and 10 points against the Saints. Tyron Smith also suffered an ankle injury, and his status is day to day. For an advantage, Ezekiel Elliott will have to stand out against the pedestrian Packer run defense. This game is tough to decide on, as the Packers have the advantage of 10 days’ rest, while the Cowboys have homefield advantage. I will take the Packers to cover, with Dallas winning by 3 points in a tight contest.

Cowboys 24, Packers 21/ Low Confidence

Colts 2-2 vs Chiefs 4-0 (-11)

The Colts have a plethora of injuries. T.Y Hilton and Devin Funchess are out at WR, while Marlon Mack left Sunday’s game against the Raiders with an ankle injury. Darius Leonard also missed last week’s game with a concussion. You can’t have this many talented players banged up when you go against the Chiefs. While we know the Chiefs to have a lethal offense, QB Patrick Mahomes threw zero touchdown passes last week. Expect the Colts to study some film and see what Detroit did to contain Mahomes. On defense, the Chiefs are not the 85 Bears by any stretch of the imagination. They’ve given up 6.3 yards per play, ranking them 29th out of 32. They also have given up at least 26 or more points on three of their first four games. If Hilton and Mack are healthy, there is a chance for the Colts to keep up. The Colts however are built for playing with a lead in their ground and pound philosophy, and that strategy will get thrown out quickly by the high-octane Chiefs offense, resulting in a Chiefs win and covering of the spread.

Chiefs 35, Colts 21/ Medium Confidence

Browns 2-2 vs 49ers 3-0 (-3.5)

Finally, a decent Monday Night Football game takes place between two offseason darlings in the Browns and 49ers. The Niners are the only unbeaten team from the NFC left thanks to young players such as Raheem Mostert (162 yards in two game span) and second overall pick Nick Bosa (14 pressures through 3 games). Tevin Coleman is also expected to play after returning from an ankle injury. The Niners have the 5th best run defense and the 7th best pass defense but will now have a big test to show where they really stand. Nick Chubb ran for 165 yards and 3 scores for the Browns in a win over the ravens, while Baker Mayfield only got sacked one time. As for injuries, LB Christian Kirksey was placed on Injured reserve, but CB’s Greedy Williams and Denzel Ward are expected to play despite their shoulder injuries. Jarvis Landry is dealing with a concussion, but if he can’t go, the Browns may get some help from Antonio Callaway, who’s. returning from a four-game suspension. This should be a fun shootout, but I have the 49ers staying unbeaten as long as they don’t turn the ball over at will like they did against the Steelers.

49ers 33, Browns 28/ Medium Confidence