NFL WEEK 7 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.

Last week saw me go 7-7 on my picks after a brutal early game slate. I also went 2-1 on high confidence picks. I have a 41-34 record overall and a 14-7 high Confidence record. Fall weather is finally here which means the NFL is in mid-season form. Let’s talk about this week’s slate of games!

Chiefs 4-2 vs Broncos 2-4 (+3)

The chiefs are reeling after two consecutive losses to the Colts and Texans respectively. Losing star defensive tackle Chris Jones and veteran linebacker Anthony Hitchens to injury have hampered the chiefs run defense as the Texans controlled the football for over 40 minutes last week. Expect the Broncos to use running backs Phillip Lindsey and Royce Freeman early and often in this one. QB Patrick Mahomes is also dealing with ankle problems, and now has to deal with two of his starting o-linemen out in Eric Fisher and Andrew Wylie. That doesn’t bode well for Mahomes as the broncos are coming off a seven-sack performance as a team against the Titans, so expect the front 7 to tee off on Mahomes when given the chance. While all that favors the Broncos, their offense has limped around for the entire season, and last week was no different with QB Joe Flacco gaining a 67-passer rating last week. I think this will be a competitive game between division rivals, but I don’t believe Denver will be able to exploit the chiefs defense on a short week. I got the Chiefs bouncing back and covering the spread.

Chiefs 24, Broncos 17/ Low Confidence

Cardinals 2-3-1 vs Giants 2-4 (-3)

The Cardinals have won two games in a row as three-point underdogs and will now travel across the coast to play the New York Giants. The storyline in this game is between the two rookie quarterbacks in Kyler Murray (Cardinals) and Daniel Jones (Giants). Murray is coming off of a 340-yard, 3 touchdown performance against the Falcons (bottom 5 defense), while Daniel Jones threw three interceptions against the Patriots (top 5 defense). That should change for the Giants as the Cardinals defense struggled in the 2nd half against the Falcons, giving up a 17-point lead. The Giants also may be getting some ammunition back on offense as Saquon Barkley and Even Engram are likely to play. This game should be a fun shootout, and I got the Giants winning the game late.

Giants 31, Cardinals 27/ Medium Confidence

Texans 4-2 vs Colts 3-2 (-1)

The recent conquerors of the Chiefs and AFC South rivals meet for the first time this season. Texans QB Deshaun Watson has made his early case for league MVP with eight total touchdowns in the last two games. He should continue on his momentum against a Colts team that has won 4 of their last 5 games against the Texans. Colts QB Jacoby Brissett has performed like a true starting caliber quarterback this year throwing for 10 touchdowns to only 3 interceptions. Both teams have ran the ball effectively throughout the season with the Colts 4th and Texans 5th in rushing yards in the league. The big key in this game will be which team can make the big stop on defense. While Darius Leonard is still out with a concussion, the defense still neutralized the Chiefs offense to 13 points and will need another performance like that for this game. It’s a tough game to pick, but I have the Texans and Deshaun Watson continuing the momentum they have built up over the last two games with a third win in a row.

Texans 30, Colts 24/ Low Confidence

Jaguars 2-4 vs Bengals 0-6 (+3.5)

It looks like Minshew mania could be slowly dying off. The Saints double teamed Minshew’s favorite target DJ Chark, and once that happened the Jaguars offense broke down. They also lost both tight ends in James O’Shaughnessy and Geoff Swaim in back to back weeks. Luckily for them, they play a winless Bengals team, but as we know in the NFL, players start playing desperate around this time and leave it all on the line for just one win. That being said, the Bengals can’t stop anybody in the run game, and will most likely struggle to stop Jaguars RB Leonard Fournette. It’s just as bad on offense as they average 7.7 points in the first half. They haven’t mustered up a touchdown on offense for the first three quarters in three consecutive games. This game will show how out-matched the Bengals are on the offensive and defensive lines. I’ll take the Jaguars to win handily.

Jaguars 24, Bengals 13/ High Confidence

Rams 3-3 vs Falcons 1-5 (-3)

This was not expected to be an underwhelming game when the schedules came out, but the Rams and the Falcons have both underperformed to their talent levels this season. The Rams have over a 12-game stretch accumulated 26 turnovers to 13 touchdowns. The defense has given up 105 points in the last three games. Give them credit however for not sitting on their hands however (\*cough\* Falcons \*cough\*), as they acquired all-pro cornerback Jalen Ramsey from the Jaguars via trade. He should add some validity to the secondary after the struggles of Marcus Peters (traded to Baltimore). The offense however still has problems with the run game as Todd Gurley still has a thigh injury to deal with, as well as three o-linemen on the shelf. They will have to continue to lean on the passing game, which won’t be a problem this week as the Falcons gave up 340 passing yards to the cardinals and are 27th in points yardage per play. Atlanta will once again have to lean on the offense and QB Matt Ryan who has found his rhythm after a rough start to the season. While I think the Falcons offense has found its comfort zone, the defense is way too unreliable to trust that they can stop a Sean McVay offensive scheme. I got the Rams winning a shootout, and Falcons Head Coach Dan Quinn’s seat heating up even more as they approach a bye week.

Rams 37, Falcons 30/ Medium Confidence

Miami Dolphins 0-5 vs Buffalo Bills 4-1 (-17)

Well the Dolphins finally covered a spread, and still lost (just what the front office wanted). Because of Ryan Fitzpatrick’s efforts to win the game and ruin the planned tanking, Miami will go back to Josh Rosen this week to get obliterated by an intense Bills defense. If there is one way for the Dolphins to compete, it’s to force Bills QB Josh Allen into making tough decisions that he won’t be able to comprehend. Allen has 9 turnovers through five games (7 interceptions, 2 fumbles), putting the Bills at a -3-turnover difference. I however don’t see Miami forcing plays on defense as they have only come away with 2 turnovers on the season. I would’ve considered picking Miami in the spread if Fitzpatrick played (he still might knowing the dolphins) but with a timid Rosen on the road in a tough Buffalo environment, I got the bills in the spread.

Bills 27, Dolphins 7/ Medium Confidence

Vikings 4-2 vs Lions 2-2-1 (+2)

The heartbreaking loss for the Lions has led to the longtime debate of how NFL referees need to officiate the games moving forward. While we debate that, the Lions will have no time to dwell on it as they play a Vikings team that has bounced back nicely with two dominant wins against the Giants and Eagles. The Vikings have the third ranked rushing offense, while the Lions are 27th in rushing defense, which means a big game for RB Dalvin Cook is in the works.

The Lions defense in total gives up over 400 yards per game, 29th in the league. This game points to a Vikings win on paper, but the Lions have played close games with everybody this year, and they usually have a late lead. While Patrick Mahomes and Aaron Rodgers can make the plays late, I don’t have the same faith in Cousins to get it done. I got the Lions in an upset to win.

Lions 26, Vikings 23/ Low Confidence

Raiders 3-2 vs Packers 5-1 (-4.5)

This game started as a 6.5 point spread but has quickly dropped as betters have taken a liking to the surprising raiders. The raiders offense has young pieces stepping up such as RB Josh Jacobs with 4 rushing touchdowns and over 400 yards in the season, and TE Darren Waller with 359 receiving yards and a nice 3-year extension. QB Derek Carr hasn’t pushed the ball downfield much this season (5.6 yards per pass attempt) but is efficient underneath with a 73 percent completion percentage. They have the balance between the run and the pass that can keep Green Bay on their toes on defense. Green Bay’s offense still doesn’t know when WR Devante Adams is ready to play, but if he’s ready then expect him to show out against a weak Oakland secondary. This game is one of the more interesting ones on the schedule, and I’m feeling bold this week for some reason, but I like the Raiders to cover the 4.5 point spread. I’ll take the Packers in a two-point affair, but I would absolutely not be shocked if the Raiders stole another game this week.

Packers 26, Raiders 24/ Medium Confidence

49ers 5-0 vs Redskins 1-5 (+10)

The Niners May have finally flipped the doubters into believers after a definitive statement from the defense in a win against the Rams. The defense allowed 126 passing yards…. In the last two games combined! A big part of that is the amount of pressure they force with 30 percent of opposing QB drop backs affected by pressure. Now they will get after a Redskins offense that nearly lost to the Dolphins. I’m going to comfortably take the 10-point spread for the Niners and keep it moving.

49ers 28, Redskins 7/ High Confidence

Chargers 2-4 vs Titans 2-4 (+2.5)

The Chargers are in a bad state. They lost to a third-string quarterback at home, have a plethora of injuries, are now under .500, have a crowd filled with opposing teams’ fans, and now they’re playing the road teams music too. This actually may be a good week to a have a long trip, and they get that to play a Titans team that’s making a switch at quarterback. Ryan Tannehill gets the start this week after Marcus Mariota threw 2 interceptions last week against the Broncos and led the Titans to the fifth-worst scoring offense in the league. His inconsistent play has led to problems for the Titans for multiple seasons now, and the Titans are ready to get out of their slump. This game on paper says that the chargers should win, but the Titans have a lockdown defense that has gone unnoticed this season, and with the decline of the Chargers run game, I believe the Titans can sneak in a win at home.

Titans 17, Chargers 14/ Low Confidence

Ravens 4-2 vs Seahawks 5-1 (-3)

This is one of the two big late games as Earl Thomas returns to Seattle to play his former team. The Ravens need a win here to prove that they are a contender, as the opponents they have defeated have went for a combined 3-18-1. This game and the game against the Patriots in 3 weeks will tell us a lot about the Ravens. Their defense is banged up in the secondary and on the defensive line and haven’t generated pressure this season. That’s good news for Russell Wilson who has been an MVP caliber player this season. On defense the Seahawks have been inconsistent but will get DT Jarran Reed back from a six-game suspension. Despite that, I still see a lot of points being put up by both teams, with the Seahawks coming out on top in this one.

Seahawks 30, Ravens 24/ High Confidence

Saints 5-1 vs Bears 3-2 (-3)

An Underrated part of the Saints team is how good the defense has been this season. They held the Jaguars to 6 points last week and have stepped up to the plate in light of Drew Brees’ absence. With only 4 touchdowns given up in three games combined, Teddy Bridgewater has had it easy in managing the offense. The Bears offense still doesn’t know who will play at quarterback, but either way it will still be a struggle. Will the Bears let RB David Montgomery loose this game? It may be their best chance to stay in the game. The Saints have given up 102 rushing yards per game, but Chicago has had multiple injuries and poor performances from the offensive line. It’s a tough matchup in this one, but I like the Saints to win this game on the road as the Bears will continue to struggle on offense.

Saints 20, Bears 13/ High Confidence

Eagles 3-3 vs Cowboys 3-3 (-2.5)

This battle for first place in the NFC East sees two teams that have been exploited in recent weeks in the Eagles and Cowboys. Doug Pederson guaranteed a victory and then backtracked his comments (lame), but theirs no guarantee for Desean Jackson to return from his abdomen injury. Injuries are also common place in the secondary as cornerbacks Ronald Darby (hamstring) and Avonte Maddox (concussion may not play for an already struggling secondary. The good News however is that wide receiver Amari Cooper may not play for the cowboys this week with a bruised thigh, so that may take some weight off a secondary that dealt with Diggs and Thielen last week. The Eagles only allow 72.8 rushing yards per game, so it will be a fight between them and the Cowboys O-line to see who wins that matchup. It’s between a very inconsistent Eagles team and a Cowboys team that hasn’t beaten anyone serious this year. I will take my bet on the Eagles reaching first place in a Charmin ultra-soft NFC East.

Eagles 27, Cowboys 23/ Low confidence

Patriots 5-0 vs Jets 1-4 (+10)

Sam Darnold showed the difference he made in his first game back from mono in an upset win over the cowboys. While that’s good for momentum, that doesn’t help fix the obvious holes plaguing this team. They didn’t create a single turnover against the Cowboys and got one measly sack on Dak Prescott. That won’t cut it against Tom Brady, however the Patriots offense has a lot of injuries to its skill position players. Josh Gordon (knee) is expected to play, but fellow receiver Phillip Dorsett is ruled out, while Julien Edelman and RB Rex Burkhead are questionable. That still won’t be a problem as this defense will continue to play lights out football. I got the Patriots covering, but I wouldn’t be surprised to see the Jets hang around for most of the game before New England pulls away.

Patriots 26, Jets 13/ low confidence