

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 Friday, December 20th, 2019.

Another week, another average week of picks as I went 7-7 with a 2-2 High Confidence record. At a 101-102 record, with a 33-24 High Confidence record, I trust that these last two weeks of the regular season will help me get over .500 on the season.

Happy Holidays to everyone as I hope you all get to spend quality time with your loved ones this holiday season! It's time to enter the final stretch of regular season games as teams jockey for position in the postseason race or for draft position. Let's go!

Texans 9-5 vs Buccaneers 7-7 (+3)

The first of three good Saturday matchups sees the Texans looking to clinch the AFC South with a win against a surging Buccaneers squad. The Bucs will look for their fourth straight win, but will have to do it without both WR's in Mike Evans and Chris Godwin. That could hurt Winston even though he has thrown for over 450 yards in back to back games, becoming the first quarterback to do so. Expect former first round pick Breshad Perriman to get a lot of targets as his usage rate has gone up over the last two weeks. The Texans will have trouble as their 28th Pass Defense isn't up to par with Winston's reckless play style. The Texans can however match the offensive firepower with a plethora of receivers in DeAndre Hopkins, Will Fuller, and Kenny Stills going up against a 30th ranked pass defense. It will be up to the Bucs pass rush, specifically Shaquil Barrett to get pressure on Watson to get him out of his rhythm. This will be a fun game to watch, but I will take the Texans to win in a shootout as Winston will give the Texans more opportunities to take the football away than Watson will for Tampa.

Texans 35, Buccaneers 30/ Medium Confidence

Bills 10-4 vs Patriots 11-3 (-6.5)

The Patriots haven't looked good offensively throughout the second half of the season, and will now have to play a top defense in the rival Bills. The Bills held the Pats to 16 points in a loss last time they played, and it looks like the Bills have improved since then. History however has not been kind to Buffalo in the Brady-Belichick era, as the Bills are 1-15 in road games against the Brady-Belichick combo. 2019 Tom Brady isn't the same as previous Brady's however as his numbers have been some of his worst in years (60.1 completion percentage, 21 TD's, both lowest since 2013). He now has to go against a 3rd ranked Bills Pass defense with 38 sacks on the season, with 9 and a half of them coming from DT Jordan Phillips inside. This game has huge implications as the Patriots can clinch the AFC East with a win, while Buffalo will move to first

place with a win which helps them with only the Jets to play next week. This big of a game has gone the Pats way before, but the Bills look hungry to prove doubters wrong. I think the Bills keep this game close and cover, with the Patriots clutching it out in the end of a defensive battle.

Patriots 17, Bills 14/ Low Confidence

Rams 8-6 vs 49ers 11-3 (-6.5)

They say that the team that's the healthiest in the postseason is the one that brings home the Lombardi most of the time. If that's true, then the 49ers are in trouble. Richard Sherman, Dee Ford, Jaquiski Tartt, D.J Jones, and K'Waun Williams are all injured on just the defensive side of the ball. The injuries have shown to affect the niners after giving up 46 points to the Saints a few weeks ago, and losing on the final drive of the game against the Falcons. This week they play a Rams team that is nearly eliminated from playoff contention as they will need massive help as well as win their last two games. They got schlacked on the run defense last week as Dallas got over 240 rushing yards between Ezekiel Elliott and Tony Pollard. Expect the Niners to go ruin heavy with Mostert, Coleman, and Breida. The Rams will also have to get their running game going as Todd Gurley rushed for only 20 yards on 11 carries last week. Without that run game, QB Jared Goff is easily beatable , so expect the Rams to go with the ground game early. I see the 49ers winning this game and covering the spread despite the injuries, as they will play with urgency as they will want to play for a first round bye against the Seahawks in week 17.

49ers 30, Rams 21/ Medium Confidence

Ravens 12-2 vs Browns 6-8 (+9.5)

The Ravens look for revenge on one of the only two teams to defeat them this season. The irony of that game was that the Ravens went on a 10 game win streak after and are at an all time high in team chemistry , while the Browns are out of postseason contention and as players want out. A win for Baltimore gives them homefield advantage in the AFC and a chance to rest some players in week 17. The Ravens have their MVP in Lamar Jackson of course, but the defense has stepped up big time this season. They have five defensive touchdowns this season to go along with their 6th ranked overall defense. That's trouble for Baker Mayfield with his 17 touchdown to 17 interceptions ratio with an uninspiring completion percentage (60 percent). It's no wonder that Odell Beckham and Jarvis Landry are upset right now. The only consistent source of offense is RB Nick Chubb who made the pro bowl with 1,408 rushing yards, most by a Cleveland running back since the great Jim Brown. That won't matter this week however as I got the Ravens sealing the deal and covering in Cleveland thanks to their great coaching and 12 Pro Bowl players. HC Freddie Kitchens is on borrowed time in Cleveland.

Ravens 38, Browns 24/ High Confidence

Panthers 5-9 vs Colts 6-8 (-6.5)

The Kyle Allen project is finally over in Carolina. The Panthers will start third round rookie Will Grier from West Virginia. Grier had a good college career and was trusted in a pass heavy offense, so we will see how that translates against the better NFL athletes. My guess is when you have Christian McCaffery as your running back, you won't have to worry about being the hero. McCaffery has over 2,000 yards from scrimmage this season along with 18 touchdowns, setting an impressive benchmark against his fellow running backs in the league. He will have to drag the offense to success as the run defense is putrid in Carolina. They allow 5.19 yards per carry, most in the league, while the Colts have the 9th ranked run game. RB Marlon Mack is back for Indy, and with 81 more yards to break 1,000 yards, expect a good performance by him. He will also have to pick up the slack as his quarterback Jacoby Brissett is on a slump with only a 53 percent completion rate in his last two games. This game could be a blowout either way against an Interim led Panther team with a new QB, or the worn-out Colt team that's lost six of their last seven. I'll take the points and Carolina to cover and win outright since I don't have any luck picking the Colts anyway, and Carolina has more of a spark coming in with a new quarterback at the helm.

Panthers 26, Colts 24/ Low Confidence

Bengals 1-13 vs Dolphins 3-11 (+2)

How can a one-win team be favored on the road? I don't care if they are playing the Dolphins, that's absurd to me. The Bengals are one loss away from getting Heisman Winner Joe Burrow in the draft while Miami has some good games under their belt. Miami has been 7-3 against the spread in their last ten games, a testament to the coaching job of Brian Flores with this roster. WR Devante Parker has finally had the season we expected out of him years ago, and is 46 yards away from breaking 1,000. Meanwhile, Andy Dalton threw four picks against the Patriots. The Bengals themselves haven't scored a second half touchdown in seven straight games. Yeah, I'll take the Dolphins to win.

Dolphins 31, Bengals 20/ High Confidence

Jaguars 5-9 vs Falcons 5-9 (-7)

Someone should tell the Falcons that their already out of the playoffs next season so they could actually play to their potential in 2020. It's two seasons in a row now that the dirty birds best version of themselves comes out a little too late to actually make a difference. Still, the Falcons have done something impressive in beating both the Saints and 49ers this season (both games were on the road too!). Julio Jones had a classic performance in the upset win against the niners last week with 13 receptions for 134 yards and 2 touchdowns, including the game winner with two seconds left. Expect him to have another good game against a Jaguars defense that up until last week acted like a revolving door. If one thing is on Jacksonville's side, it's that Atlanta has lost 12 of 13 to AFC opponents. QB Gardner Minshew is 3-2 on the road this season as well, and hasn't thrown an interception on the road this season (London counted as a home game for them). Still, one win against the Raiders doesn't make me trust any Jaguars game, and the

Falcons are the better roster and, in this rare occurrence, the better coached team. I'll take the Falcons with the points.

Falcons 31, Jaguars 20/ Medium Confidence

Giants 3-11 vs Redskins 3-11 (Pick em)

Daniel Jones returns as the starter for the G-Men as Eli Manning got back to his coveted .500 record in a win against the Dolphins last week. He will go against fellow rookie Dwayne Haskins as these two careers will be intertwined for a long time. Haskins wanted to be a Giant but instead will look to defeat them as the Giants are 26th in pass defense this season. Haskins is coming off his best game yet against the Eagles, so this week could be a continuation of his solid play. For the Giants, Jones will play against a Redskins defense ranked 31st in third down percentage, so expect the Giants to extend some drives early in this game. The Giants also have a plethora of receivers in Sterling Shepard, Darius Slayton, and Golden Tate, who can exploit the weak Redskins secondary that has two starters out this week (and that means more Josh Norman....Yikes). This is a coin flip game like Vegas suggests, so in this case, I'm taking the home team in the Redskins to win.

Redskins 24, Giants 21/Low Confidence

Saints 11-3 vs Titans 8-6 (+2.5)

The Saints are in a five-team race for the number one seed in the NFC. The Titans still have a shot at the AFC south if Houston loses or even a wild-card if Pittsburgh loses. That means both teams will be on their A-Game in this one. The Saints had a celebration last week for Drew Brees becoming the All-Time passing touchdowns leader, as well as having the highest completion percentage in a single game at 96.7 percent. WR Michael Thomas is close to history as well as he needs 11 more catches to break Marvin Harrison's single season record of 143 catches. The Titans don't have any history to chase, but they are playing some good football of their own as QB Ryan Tannehill is second in passer rating behind Drew Brees on the season. RB Derrick Henry is second in rushing yards going against a top run defense (4th ranked) in the Saints. The war in the trenches between the Saints d-line and Titans o-line will make the difference in this matchup. I like the Saints to win and cover thanks to the experience factor, but I wouldn't be surprised to see the Titans pull off an upset this week.

Saints 28, Titans 24/ Low Confidence

Steelers 8-6 vs Jets 5-9 (+3)

The Jets are 5-9 but somehow feel like they're either worse or better than their record depending which week of the season you ask me. The Jets are 0-3 against the AFC North (which means they lost to the Bengals....Yikes!) and will try to avoid getting swept in the division by beating the Steelers. This game will see RB Le'Veon Bell against his former team, which

would've meant more if Bell was having a better season. Bell only has 676 rushing yards while averaging 3.3 yards per carry. It wouldn't surprise me if these were Bell's last two games as a Jet before a trade in the off-season. The Steelers defense is ready to wrap up Bell throughout the game. The Steelers offense on the other hand may not be ready after Devlin Hodges threw four interceptions against the Bills in a loss on primetime. The Steelers may not be able to lean on their run game either as the Jets are 2nd ranked in run defense. That means "the duck" will have to improve from last weeks debacle. On the bright side for him, there is nowhere to go but up, but I don't think it will matter this game, because I got the upset pick of the Jets winning this game and potentially hurting the Steelers playoff chances.

Jets 21, Steelers 16/ Medium Confidence

Lions 3-10-1 vs Broncos 5-9 (-7)

This game doesn't matter besides draft position. HC Matt Patricia looks to be retaining his job in Detroit for at least another season after dealing with the injury bug on offense. RB Kerryon Johnson may play this week (although it's not wise to at this point) but if he doesn't then Bo Scarborough will continue to be the bell cow of this run game. The Broncos have more going for them offensively but not by much. The run game of Denver has regressed as they have averaged 77.8 yards per game of their last four. QB Drew Lock only completed 45 percent of his passes against the Chiefs with 3 points to show for it. Lock however has shown his willingness to take shots downfield, and with a 31st ranked defense in terms of points allowed, Lock may have found a matchup that's suitable for him to bomb it. Both of these teams have had their 4th quarter struggles, and with how unpredictable these two teams are, I'd rather take the Lions with the seven points to cover, but with Denver still winning.

Broncos 34, Lions 30/Low Confidence

Raiders 6-8 vs Chargers 5-9 (-7.5)

I'm not playing along with a seven and a half point spread for the Chargers. Yes the Chargers beat the Jags while the Raiders didn't, but in a divisional matchup we see the Chargers in these close encounters far too many times to put seven points up. The Chargers committed seven turnovers last week, putting them at a -16 turnover differential, tied with the Bengals for the worst in the league. The Raiders picked off Phillip Rivers four times last matchup, so there's a precedent for this. The Raiders are reeling yes, but at the very least have played a solid first half in the last two weeks. QB Derek Carr should also be motivated to play hard as his job is on the line in Oakland after rumors of discontent with the QB have surfaced. Give me the Raiders to cover and win in the Chargers final "home" game in Carson before moving into their new stadium next season.

Raiders 27, Chargers 26/High Confidence

Cardinals 4-9-1 vs Seahawks 11-3 (-9.5)

The Seahawks are the number one seed as of this write-up, and control their destiny with two more wins. They had a six-point win against the Panthers that wasn't as close as the final score. The defense had four interceptions on Kyle Allen which they needed after their rough game against the Rams. Their defense is ranked 27th overall and 29th in defense. The Cardinals will like that as their quick passes on offense will give the Seahawks trouble. The Cardinals also have RB Kenyan Drake running like a mad man as he got four touchdowns against the Browns last week. If the Cardinals stay balanced on offense then they may be able to pull out the win outright. I will take the Cards or cover nine and a half points, but the Seahawks will eek out a tough win to set up the showdown with the 49ers in week 17.

Seahawks 30, Cardinals 27/ High Confidence

Cowboys 7-7 vs Eagles 7-7 (+2)

The NFC East Championship is on the line as the Cowboys and Eagles are coming off victories to keep up in the standings. This game will be for HC Jason Garrett's job in Dallas after all the fire that's been put under him over the decade. The Cowboys linebackers are banged up as Leighton Vander Esch and Sean Lee have both missed practice this week. The Cowboys however have went back to their strength on offense in the running game as Elliott and Pollard ran well against the Rams. The Cowboys are 5-0 in games against the Eagles with Elliott playing, so history is on their side as well. The Eagles are third in run defense this year , so maybe they finally buckle down and stop them this year. The Eagles are banged up still, but QB Carson Wentz has been able to keep his team in the game with four consecutive games with two or more touchdowns. That however won't be enough for me to pick the Eagles, as the Cowboys are the better team and show up for divisional rivals. Give me the Cowboys and the points.

Cowboys 27, Eagles 23/ Medium Confidence

Chiefs 10-4 vs Bears 7-7 (+6)

The Chiefs have played exceptional football on the defensive side of the ball over the last three weeks. They have allowed under 300 yards per game and have allowed only 28 percent of third downs to be converted against them, making this team a threat in the postseason with their lethal offense. The Chiefs should expect RB Damian Williams to return from his rib injury, which will help the running game. Meanwhile the Bears have been officially eliminated from postseason contention as their rough mid-season stretch hurt their chances. The Bears have always lacked offensive efficiency and that will most likely continue against the Chiefs this week. Give me the Chiefs and the points.

Chiefs 26, Bears 16/ Medium Confidence

Packers 11-3 vs Vikings 10-4 (-5.5)

The Final Monday Night game of the Season has huge implications on the NFC playoff chase. The Packers haven't looked like a team that currently has a first-round bye, but that's where they are at right now thanks to a favorable schedule and veteran QB Aaron Rodgers. They will get their toughest challenge of the season in the Vikings, whom which they defeated in week 2 of the season, but as we know teams change drastically throughout the season. The Vikings are a lot more efficient on offense then in week 2, but they are losing the most important part of that offense. RB Dalvin Cook will miss the final two games of the season to nurse his injury, so we will see RB's Alexander Mattison and Matt Boone try and wear down the 24th ranked Packer run defense. Kirk Cousins has had a good season but is 0-8 in Monday Night games. While the trend favors the Packers, the rosters and play of these teams says the Vikings should handle their business. Give Me Minnesota in the spread to end Kirk Cousins misfortunes.

Vikings 27, Packers 20/ Medium Confidence