

VSIN PRO

NFL BETTING GUIDE

PRO EDITION

3-PEAT OR DEFEAT?

STRATEGIES FOR BETTING THE NFL

OUR PRO GUIDE INCLUDES

- PREVIEWS OF ALL 32 TEAMS
- STAFF BEST BETS AND PLAYOFF PICKS
- NFL AWARDS DEEP DIVE

VSIN



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COMMON ABBREVIATIONS USED THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE

ATS – Against the Spread • Avg - Average • CL – Closing Line
 DC - Defensive Coordinator • Def - Defense • Dog - Underdog
 Eff Strg - Steve Makinen Effective Strength Rating • Fav - Favorite
 FT – Final Total • HC - Head Coach • H2h – Head-to-Head • L - Losses
 L# - Last number of games • LY – Last Year • MOV – Margin of Victory
 O - Over • OC - Offensive Coordinator • Off - Offense • OL – Opening Line
 OT – Opening Total • Opp – Opponent • O/U – Over/Under
 PA - Points Against • Pct - Percentage • PF - Points For • PPG - Points Per Game
 PYPG – Passing Yards per Game • RS - Returning Starters
 RYPG – Rushing Yards per Game • SM BR - Steve Makinen Bettors' Rating
 SM PR - Steve Makinen Power Rating • SU - Straight Up • TO - Turnovers
 TYPG – Total Yards per Game • U - Under • W - Wins • YPP – Yards per Play
 YPPT – Yards per Point • YPR – Yards per Rush

**ODDS WITHIN GUIDE
ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

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Vecteezy.com

Greetings, all.

It is always football season at VSiN, but now that our 2024 NFL Betting Guide is here, the countdown is truly on. While many believe that the season kicks off on September 5, the race to get involved in preseason markets, including win totals, player awards, season-long props, and futures, is in full swing.

That is why the VSiN 2024 NFL Betting Guide is such a great resource for Pro Subscribers. Over the next 84 pages, you will get analysis on all 32 teams, first-year head coaches and quarterbacks, deep dives into the awards markets and so much more. This is our signature publication of the year and a lot of time and effort goes into it, so sincere thank yous go out to all the hosts, contributors, editors, and the authors.

In this year's Guide, here's what you will see:

- Brent Musburger's Super Bowl pick
- Michael Lombardi on the first-year head coaches
- Steve Makinen's betting systems and trends for first-year head coaches and quarterbacks, plus win total projections
- Adam Burke on MVP, Offensive and Defensive Rookie of the Year, Coach of the Year, the AFC North and NFC North
- Josh Appelbaum on how to use betting splits to win NFL wagers
- Matt Youmans on the AFC West and his talks with bookmakers about Super Bowl LIX early money
- Jonathan Von Tobel on the AFC East
- Wes Reynolds on the AFC South
- Zachary Cohen on the NFC East
- Tyler Shoemaker on the NFC South
- Mike Somich on the NFC West
- Matt Williams' favorite prop betting tips and strategies

If it sounds like a lot, that's because it is a lot. We strive to have the most comprehensive NFL Preview Guide in the industry and want to reward our loyal subscribers with the best that we have to offer.

So, enjoy, good luck, happy reading, and this is only the beginning of our NFL content for the 2024-25 season at VSiN.

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A KC THREE-PEAT IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!

by Brent Musburger

I'm sick of reading about three-peats. I'm sick of seeing Taylor Swift smooch Travis Kelce on the 50-yard line. And I'm definitely sick of the Kansas City Chiefs owning the AFC West. But damn, they're a helluva organization and I can't pick against them winning the whole enchilada again.

Everybody is tired of hearing that no team has won three Super Bowls in a row. Okay. But who's going to beat Kansas City? San Francisco? Bookmakers give the 49ers the best chance, but that's only because the NFC is easier to win than the AFC. The Chiefs would be favored over the Niners in a New Orleans Super Bowl rematch.

How about Baltimore? Not the worst choice, but Lamar Jackson still hasn't proved he can lead the Ravens from behind in the fourth quarter. Remember, Jackson was last seen slamming his helmet on the bench after throwing an interception and two incompletions on the Ravens' final two drives in their AFC Championship loss.

How about Buffalo? That window may have closed. Josh Allen turns the ball over too often and, besides, he didn't throw for 200 yards or have any completion longer than 15 yards when the Chiefs eliminated the Bills in Buffalo.

How about Cincinnati? Last team to beat the Chiefs in the playoffs. Can Joe Burrow stay healthy? Without him, the Bengals were shut out in the second half of a December loss last season in KC.

Three other AFC teams you might consider: Houston, Miami and New York. I'll stick with Patrick Mahomes, thank you.

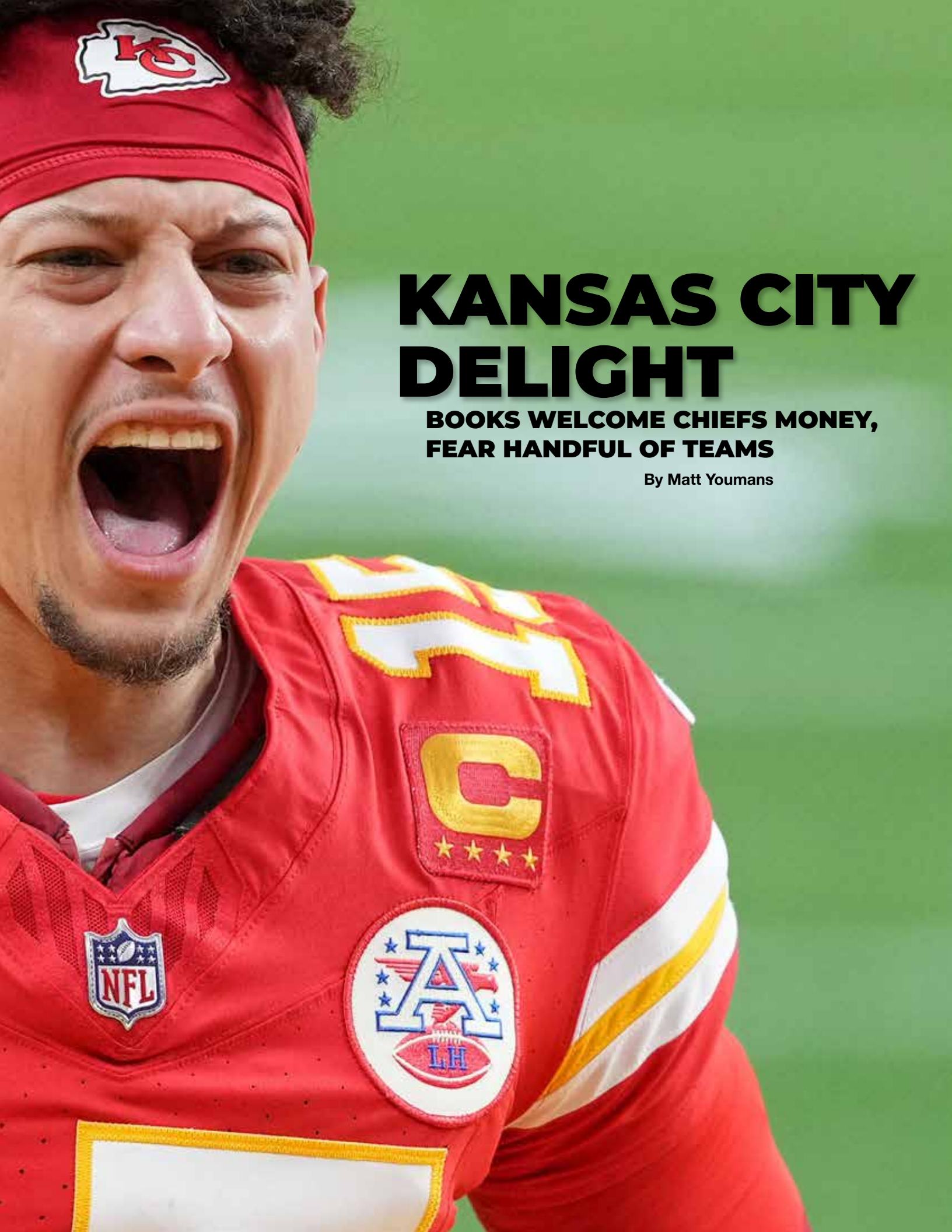
And in the Super Bowl, how about Detroit, Philadelphia or Dallas? Thanks, but I'll take Andy Reid.

History says it won't happen, but I say records are made to be broken! The Chiefs will three-peat and write a large check to former Laker Coach Pat Riley who owns the t-shirt and sweatshirt trademark for "three-peat." Oh, Travis, you're wearing lipstick again!



2024 SEASON PREDICTIONS

	FEMI ABEBEFE	GILL ALEXANDER	MATT BROWN	STORMY BUONANTONY	ADAM BURKE	KELLEY BYDLON	ZACHARY COHEN	PAUL HOWARD	MICHAEL LOMBARDI	STEVE MAKINEN	PATRICK MEAGHER	MITCH MOSS	TIM MURRAY	BRENT MUSBURGER	WES REYNOLDS	TYLER SHOEMAKER	MIKE SOMICH	DUSTIN SWEDELSON	JONATHAN VON TOBEL	BEN WILSON	MATT YOUNMANS
AFC EAST	Dolphins	Dolphins	Dolphins	Bills	Jets	Bills	Dolphins	Jets	Bills	Jets	Dolphins	Jets	Dolphins	Bills	Jets	Dolphins	Dolphins	Jets	Dolphins	Bills	Jets
AFC NORTH	Bengals	Bengals	Bengals	Ravens	Ravens	Bengals	Ravens	Ravens	Bengals	Ravens	Ravens	Bengals	Bengals	Ravens	Bengals	Ravens	Browns	Ravens	Bengals	Ravens	Bengals
AFC SOUTH	Texans	Jaguars	Jaguars	Texans	Texans	Texans	Texans	Texans	Colts	Jaguars	Jaguars	Texans	Jaguars	Jaguars	Texans	Texans	Colts	Jaguars	Colts	Jaguars	Colts
AFC WEST	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chargers	Chiefs	Chiefs
AFC WILD CARD	Bills	Chargers	Bills	Dolphins	Dolphins	Ravens	Bills	Bengals	Ravens	Chargers	Bengals	Ravens	Ravens	Bengals	Bills	Bills	Texans	Texans	Chiefs	Bengals	Bills
AFC WILD CARD	Ravens	Ravens	Ravens	Bengals	Colts	Dolphins	Bengals	Bills	Chargers	Bills	Colts	Bills	Bills	Texans	Ravens	Bengals	Bengals	Bengals	Bills	Chargers	Ravens
AFC WILD CARD	Chargers	Texans	Texans	Chargers	Browns	Colts	Chargers	Jaguars	Jets	Bengals	Texans	Colts	Chargers	Dolphins	Browns	Jaguars	Bills	Browns	Jets	Colts	Chargers
NFC EAST	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Cowboys	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Cowboys	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Cowboys	Eagles
NFC NORTH	Packers	Packers	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Packers	Lions	Lions	Packers	Packers	Packers	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions
NFC SOUTH	Saints	Falcons	Falcons	Saints	Falcons	Falcons	Falcons	Falcons	Saints	Falcons	Falcons	Falcons	Falcons	Saints	Panthers	Falcons	Falcons	Falcons	Falcons	Saints	Falcons
NFC WEST	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	Rams	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers	49ers
NFC WILD CARD	Lions	Lions	Rams	Rams	49ers	Cowboys	Cowboys	Rams	Packers	Lions	Packers	Packers	Lions	Cowboys	Lions	Eagles	Packers	Packers	Cowboys	Eagles	Packers
NFC WILD CARD	Cowboys	Commanders	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Packers	Rams	Packers	Seahawks	Rams	Rams	Seahawks	Cowboys	Lions	Cowboys	Packers	Seahawks	Rams	Packers	Packers	Cowboys
NFC WILD CARD	Vikings	Cowboys	Packers	Packers	Seahawks	Seahawks	Bears	Cowboys	Buccaneers	Eagles	Bears	Cowboys	Rams	Rams	Vikings	Rams	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cardinals	Seahawks	Rams
AFC CHAMPION	Chiefs	Chiefs	Bengals	Ravens	Chiefs	Bills	Chiefs	Chiefs	Bengals	Ravens	Ravens	Texans	Bengals	Chiefs	Chiefs	Ravens	Chiefs	Chiefs	Dolphins	Ravens	Chiefs
NFC CHAMPION	Packers	49ers	Eagles	49ers	Lions	Eagles	49ers	49ers	Lions	Packers	Lions	Lions	49ers	Packers	Eagles	49ers	Lions	Eagles	49ers	Packers	Eagles
SUPER BOWL LIX	Chiefs	49ers	Eagles	49ers	Chiefs	Eagles	49ers	Chiefs	Bengals	Packers	Lions	Lions	49ers	Chiefs	Eagles	Ravens	Chiefs	Eagles	Dolphins	Ravens	Eagles



KANSAS CITY DELIGHT

**BOOKS WELCOME CHIEFS MONEY,
FEAR HANDFUL OF TEAMS**

By Matt Youmans

With three Super Bowl wins in six years as a starter, Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes has earned respect across the board. Still, respect is one thing and fear is another, and bookmakers are not afraid to take futures bets on Mahomes.

In fact, bookmakers are welcoming almost all bets on Kansas City to win another championship as it chases the first three-peat in the Super Bowl era. As expected, the wagers on the Chiefs are showing up in big numbers.

Circa Sports oddsmaker Nick Bogdanovich said his book sees “heavy action” on the Chiefs, the +500 favorites, and the 49ers, the second choice at +550. San Francisco was last season’s bridesmaid to Mahomes.

“It’s always good when they pound the favorites,” Bogdanovich said. “As a bookmaker, when they take a low price for a lot of money, that gives you flexibility in the futures pool.”

Echoing that sentiment is DraftKings sportsbook director Johnny Avello, who said the fear factor with the Chiefs is relatively low.

“With short favorites like that, our liability is not that high,” Avello said. “When you have a quarterback like Mahomes, I would never count them out, but I wouldn’t bet the Chiefs at +550 because you could probably get that price at any point during the season.”

Kansas City is the +550 favorite at DraftKings, followed by San Francisco (+600) and Baltimore (+950). Buffalo and Detroit are each offered at 12-1 odds to round out the top five on the futures board.

The bookmakers do fear heavy action on long-shot teams with a legitimate chance to win it all, and the New York Jets fall into that category as a 20-1 shot at DraftKings. Aaron Rodgers’ debut with the Jets was an abbreviated debacle that ended with an Achilles injury in the first quarter of the season opener. Rodgers is back, and so are the bettors.

“We’re always going to take money on the Jets because of Aaron Rodgers and Jets fans,” Avello said. “I really don’t know what he’s got left, but Rodgers doesn’t need a remarkable season. If the Jets can get a better-than-average effort from Rodgers, they are capable of going to the playoffs and having a good season.”

Red Rock sportsbook director Chuck Esposito, who oversees several Las Vegas books that write a high volume of public action, said the Chiefs and 49ers also lead the ticket count for Super Bowl futures. He’s not going to spend the summer sweating about it. Instead, Esposito listed the Jets and three other teams that have his attention — the Chargers, Packers and Steelers.

The Chargers finished 5-12 and last in the AFC West a season ago, but that fiasco is forgotten now that Jim Harbaugh has been hired as the new coach. Harbaugh has a remarkable track record — coaching the 49ers to a Super Bowl appearance and three NFC Championship games from 2011 to 2013 before guiding Michigan to a 15-0 finish and the national title in January — and a reputation for being a turnaround artist.

“It’s the Harbaugh factor,” said Esposito, who’s currently dealing 40-1 Super Bowl odds on the Chargers after opening at 50-1. “But the Chargers are still playing in the same division with Mahomes.”

Harbaugh’s arrival in Los Angeles will be made easier by the presence of Justin Herbert, who’s an elite quarterback still on the rise.

Jordan Love has not reached elite status yet for Green Bay (20-1 odds), but he did lead the Packers to a 9-8 season and a playoff win at Dallas.

“There is a lot of money and a high ticket count on the Packers,” Esposito said. “I think Love is really good. I’m not ready to say he’s a top-five quarterback in the league. The last eight games of the season, he played great. With Love and the young receivers, the Packers could win the division. In the Packers’ case, you can see them taking the next step.”

Esposito said the annual consistency of the Steelers, who opened at 55-1 odds and have been adjusted to 32-1, is likely attracting bettors. The quarterback competition between veteran Russell Wilson, a Broncos castoff, and young gun Justin Fields, a Bears castoff, is a question mark. Pittsburgh has intriguing potential, if the quarterback situation turns into a positive.

Last summer, the Lions and Bengals were hot teams in the Super Bowl futures market. Jared Goff guided Detroit to 12 wins and the NFC North title, nearly delivering a Super Bowl before coming up one step short with an excruciating second-half collapse in the conference title game at San Francisco. Injuries to quarterback Joe Burrow sidelined the hopes for Cincinnati, which finished 9-8 and bottomed out in the AFC North.

Be aware of teams that were once popular with the public and now fly under the radar — and the Bills, Lions and Bengals (14-1) are a few of those teams. “The Lions are not getting as much love as they did last year,” Esposito said.

The Texans developed into last season’s biggest surprise team in the NFL. Picked to finish last in the AFC South, Houston won 10 games and finished first. The script has been flipped for the Texans, who are getting 16-1 odds at DraftKings.

Avello said the Texans, Eagles and Cowboys are drawing strong Super Bowl betting support.

The 2022 season ended with Philadelphia falling to Kansas City in a thrilling Super Bowl. The thrill was gone last season when quarterback Jalen Hurts slumped, and the Eagles were blown out in the wild-card round of the playoffs.

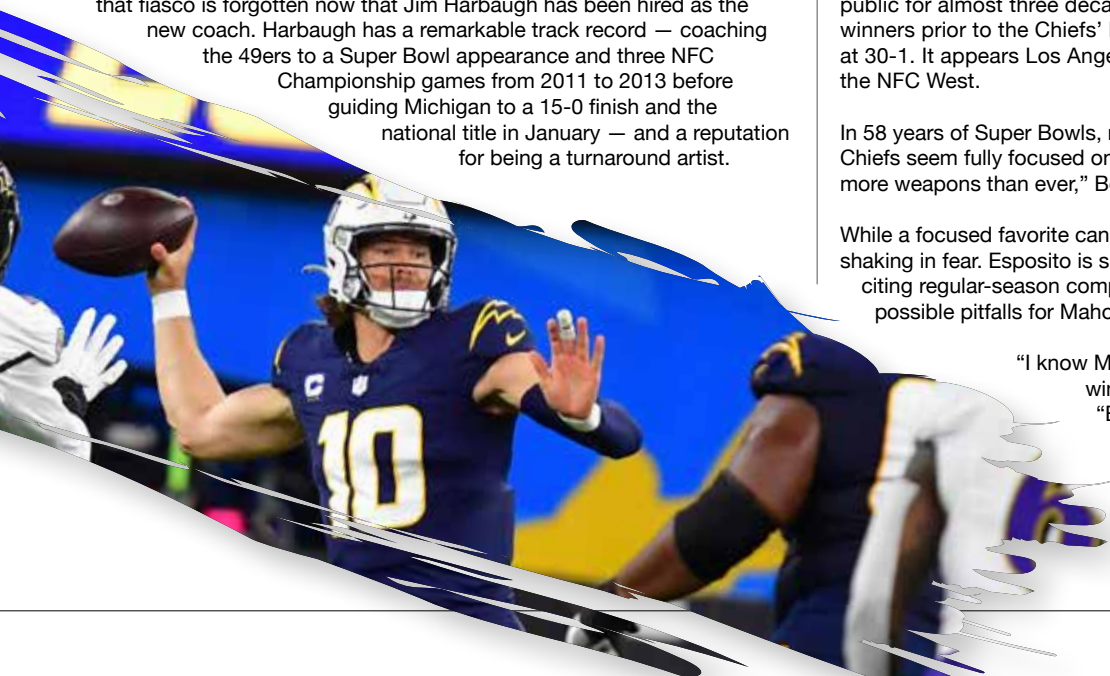
Philadelphia and Dallas, each listed at 17-1 odds, should be contenders, although the Cowboys have been burning the betting public for almost three decades. The Rams, who were Super Bowl winners prior to the Chiefs’ back-to-back titles, could be a sleeper play at 30-1. It appears Los Angeles is again a threat to San Francisco atop the NFC West.

In 58 years of Super Bowls, no team has won three in a row, so the Chiefs seem fully focused on chasing history. “It looks like Mahomes has more weapons than ever,” Bogdanovich said.

While a focused favorite can be a great bet, bookmakers are not shaking in fear. Esposito is skeptical of Kansas City closing the deal, citing regular-season complacency, injuries and stiff competitions as possible pitfalls for Mahomes and the Chiefs.

“I know Mahomes wants to be like Tom Brady and win more Super Bowls,” Esposito said.

“But the AFC is loaded. After you win it a couple of times, all you care about is the postseason, and you don’t care as much about winning 12 or 13 games and having the best record in the regular season. It’s just so hard to three-peat in that league.”



VSIN EXPERT TEAM AND PROP

MATT YOUMANS

EAGLES TO WIN NFC EAST (+105)

Jalen Hurts was the bridesmaid in 2022, finishing second to Patrick Mahomes in the MVP race and also losing to him in the Super Bowl. Hurts was a bust last year, throwing a career-high 15 interceptions and getting bounced in the wild-card round of the playoffs. I believe Hurts is primed for a bounce-back year, with running back Saquon Barkley joining an impressive group of playmakers.

Many of the problems that plagued Philadelphia last season, when a 10-1 start turned into an 11-6 finish, can be fixed by new coordinators Kellen Moore (offense) and Vic Fangio (defense). Pro Football Focus analyzed the top NFL rosters going into this season and ranked the Eagles No. 3, with the Cowboys No. 9. Dallas opened as the division favorite two months ago, but the wrong team was favored and the betting market has corrected that error by the oddsmakers. The Eagles appear superior in almost all areas to the Cowboys, who have not improved in the offseason. I bet this at +135 in early May and still will recommend anything at a plus price.

CHARGERS OVER 8.5 WINS

The skeptics will say new coach Jim Harbaugh needs a year or two to rebuild a 5-12 team, but Harbaugh is not a patient man. He plans to win immediately, and his players are buying the enthusiasm and optimism he's selling. The Chargers are not in need of a total personnel rebuild, not with elite quarterback Justin Herbert as the starting point. Herbert will operate behind an offensive line that ranks among the league's best and is anchored by tackles Rashawn Slater and rookie Joe Alt. This offense will punish defenses with a power running attack, helping to make Herbert a more effective passer.

Harbaugh won a national championship at Michigan with a physical offensive line and dominant defense, and the L.A. defense will be led by veteran edge rushers Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack and All-Pro safety Derwin James. The Chargers have been talented underachievers sabotaged by poor coaching for several years. A last-place schedule that includes Carolina, Arizona, New England and Tennessee will help Harbaugh overachieve and reach nine or 10 wins.

KELLEY BYDLON

BEARS ALT WIN TOTAL UNDER 9.5 (-165)

While I expect the Bears to be a better football team in 2024, I still think this roster needs some work and people are probably getting too excited about how much success Caleb Williams will be able to have in his rookie season.

However, my biggest reason for this bet is the strength of the division they play in. I'm higher on the Vikings than most, and expect both the Lions and Packers to be playoff teams once again, which leaves the Bears very little room in my mind to get to 10 wins. No surprise, I like the Under on their regular win total as well.

TYLER SHOEMAKER

RAVENS +3 VS CHIEFS WEEK 1

If this was a playoff game, I might feel differently, but the Chiefs' TSI power rating has decreased each of the last two seasons. My theory is that they're starting to get championship fatigue, which sounds crazy but is pretty prevalent in sports due to the mental and physical strain it takes to be contending for (and winning) championships for several years in a row – see: Golden State Warriors. TSI projects the Ravens as 1.5-point favorites in Arrowhead, I'll take the field goal with Lamar Jackson and Derrick Henry.

BEST BETS

PAULY HOWARD

BEARS UNDER 9 WINS

Shout-out to Femi Abebefe for pointing this out. The Bears are a good team on paper and upgraded at QB, but this division is tough and I still don't trust Matt Eberflus to get this team to 10-7 and make a playoff run. The Lions and Packers are better, and the Vikings could steal a win. It is asking a lot to get to 10 wins to beat you on this bet.

GARRETT WILSON 1,500+ YARDS (+600)

Last year, Wilson had 95 catches for 1,042 yards with horrific QB play from Zach Wilson, Tim Boyle, and Trevor Siemian. Now he gets maybe the biggest upgrade ever with Hall of Famer Aaron Rodgers. Wilson should have 1,600 yards and 12+ TD and this time we are protected if something happens to Rodgers with the signing of Tyrod Taylor as the backup.

STEVE MAKINEN

CHARGERS OVER 8.5 WINS

For all of the Chargers' fans that had it up to their eyeballs with former HC Brandon Staley and his abandoning of the running game, strange point-after TD decisions, and otherwise highly-controversial coaching tact, the change to Jim Harbaugh should be a welcomed one. Not only has Harbaugh been wildly successful in his coaching life, but he has also been dramatically more predictable and a huge culture guy as well. Harbaugh bled Maize & Blue at Michigan and comes off a season leading that team to a national title at the college level. He is accustomed to winning and has big plans to do so for the Chargers, a team he once quarterbacked.

Now, there are some big question marks on the roster after the franchise chose to say goodbye to a host of veterans that have defined it over the last few years, but let's face it, the team was not as successful as perhaps it should have been. QB Justin Herbert is still in place and remains one of the top young gunslingers in the game. While he will have to get used to an untested set of weapons, he will also likely have much of the pressure off of him as the offense transitions to a more run-oriented attack.

On the defensive side of the ball, this is a team loaded with star talent. If you look back at the last eight games of the '23 season, take away the 63-21 loss to Las Vegas, the defense allowed just 17.1 PPG. This team needed to start over and did. With a lot of uncertainty in Denver and Las Vegas, I think the Chargers have a great chance to benefit. I'll call for at least a 10-7 season and playoff berth.

COMMANDERS OVER 6.5 WINS

Of the franchises that needed to wipe the slate clean in 2024, no one needed it more than Washington. For all of the discussion about how nice of a man Ron Rivera is, and how much he overcame in his battle with cancer and other things, I just never have been a big fan of him as

a head coach. In his last six years, his record is just 38-56. How many coaches get to hang on to jobs in this day and age with that lack of success?

Let's face it, the Commanders were a trainwreck last season, winning just four games while allowing 30.5 PPG and enduring the league's worst turnover differential. All of those stats point to a typical rebound by NFL standards by doing nothing but coming back to the field. The moves the franchise has made in the offseason are the reason I think this team has a chance for the biggest improvement from season-to-season of anyone.

First, with the defense being so awful, the team has turned to Dan Quinn to take over as head coach. Quinn led an explosive, turnover-forcing defense with Dallas the last few seasons and has brought Joe Whitt Jr. along with him to be the new DC here.

Second, they have a new QB in rookie Jayden Daniels, the Heisman Trophy winner out of LSU. While I was a fan of Sam Howell, and thought the team had a lot of offensive potential with him, that pales in comparison to the dual-threat dynamic that Daniels can bring. Plus, with the terrible turnover problems, it was clear the team needed to get better at QB.

Historically, all but two of the 24 teams since 2009 that had a negative turnover differential and were outscored by more than 10 PPG improved their won-lost record the next season, by an average of 24.5%, or 3.9 wins per team. This team has made the changes to make that happen.

EAGLES UNDER 10.5 WINS

One of the biggest stories this season in the NFL will be whether or not the Eagles can return to the form that won them a NFC title two years ago or if they will continue the late season dive that afflicted them in '23. In going 11-6 last season, HC Nick Sirianni's team won eight games by single-possession margins. They also went just 1-6 in their final seven games while losing all of them against the spread. What happened to cause such a sudden change?

Well, if you can point to one game, it would have to be the decisive 42-19 loss to San Francisco in what was built up to be a "king of the NFC" type of battle. The 49ers got after QB Jalen Hurts, stopped the Eagles' running game, and exploited what was quickly becoming a tired defense. In fact, including that game, the Philly D allowed 31.3 PPG in the final eight contests.

The big question for '24 will be if Hurts can find his old form. He never really looked himself after the 49ers contest and there wound up being rumors of internal strife with his receivers and other positional players, some addressing the "tush-push" which bolstered his stats and took away from others. The Eagles show a top 10 level schedule for '24 in terms of difficulty while the rest of their division shows bottom 12. The addition of RB Saquon Barkley is nice, but will it be a bigger signing on paper than on-field impact? I just don't like the way this team fell off the cliff last season. It's hard to come back from that.





WILL HILL

JETS TO WIN AFC EAST (+190)

The Jets last made the playoffs in January 2011, but that streak should mercifully end this season. The schedule suggests there's an opportunity to return to the postseason. When evaluating strength of schedule, nothing is perfect, but it's better to look at projected wins of a team's opponents as opposed to last year's records. Either way, the Jets have a much softer schedule than their AFC East rivals.

The Jets' opponents, based on DraftKings season win totals, are projected to win 120 games combined. Meanwhile, the Bills' opponents are projected to win 139.5 games, the Dolphins' opponents 142.5 games and the Patriots are stuck with a slate of opponents expected to win 154.5 games. The favored Bills must play all four teams from last year's NFC and AFC title games (Ravens, Chiefs, 49ers and Lions) plus the Texans.

As bad as things were for the Jets last year, they still managed to win seven games despite some of the worst quarterback play in the league and an offensive line that was often overmatched. That line has been addressed with first-round pick Olu Fashanu, as well as veterans Tyron Smith, Morgan Moses and John Simpson added to the roster this offseason.

The Jets have the easiest schedule in the division, a revamped offensive line, and a legitimate chance to justify all of the hype that came along with adding Aaron Rodgers.

ZACHARY COHEN

BEARS TO MAKE PLAYOFFS (-104)

Well, I wrote that I like Williams to win Rookie of the Year and said that I view Chicago as a team that can make the playoffs. So, I might as well put my money where my mouth is.

The Bears were a completely different defensive team once they traded for Montez Sweat, who gave Chicago the pass rusher it desperately needed. Now, the Bears should be ready to play great defense right from the jump, as there's a lot of talent in place and Matt Eberflus is a very good defensive coach.

Offensively, there isn't much preventing the Bears from taking off right away. If Williams is half the quarterback people think he is, this is going to be an explosive bunch. Chicago's wide receiver group is absolutely incredible, and the team also added D'Andre Swift in the backfield.

The only thing that could get to the Bears is a lack of composure. Williams is going to need to prove that he can be trusted late in close games. But I tend to think he'll be alright, especially with a reasonable early-season schedule giving him the opportunity to ease himself in.

DOLPHINS OVER 9.5 WINS / DOLPHINS TO WIN AFC EAST (+210)

Last season, the Dolphins were second in the league in Offensive DVOA. Mike McDaniel turned the Dolphins into one of the most explosive offenses in football, with Tua Tagovailoa, Tyreek Hill and Jaylen Waddle giving Miami a high-flying passing attack. The Dolphins also had one of the most effective running games in the league, whether it was Raheem Mostert or De'Von Achane carrying the rock. Well, that offense isn't getting any worse in 2024. In fact, Miami's offensive line play should be a little better, and the team also added Odell Beckham Jr. and Jonnu Smith to the mix.

Where Miami needs to be better is on the defensive side of the ball. The Dolphins were just 19th in the league in Defensive DVOA last year, but I think the team is going to move into the top 10 in that category in 2024. The team replaced defensive coordinator Vic Fangio with Anthony Weaver in the offseason. Fangio is a well-respected coach around the league, but he can be a little too conservative and his defenses tend to struggle in big moments. Weaver is viewed as one of the brightest up-and-coming coaches in the league, and he should do well with the talent at his disposal.

The Dolphins also made a big move in bringing in corner Kendall Fuller. He had a PFF grade of 83.1 last season and should help form a tough cornerback duo with Jalen Ramsey, who should be able to play better than he did in 2023. If those two end up being a force, Miami is going places. And I'm lower on the Buffalo Bills and New York Jets than most. That said, I like the Dolphins to win at least 10 games and also take the AFC East.



STEELERS OVER 8.5 WINS

I picked the Ravens and Bengals to make the playoffs in the AFC, but I was really close to putting the Steelers in. And at plus-money odds, I like the idea of backing them to win nine games. I'm not going to blindly cite the Mike Tomlin stat as a reason for this team to exceed expectations. But the group has won at least nine games in nine of the last 10 seasons. And the only difference between this year's team and last year's 10-win team is a significant upgrade to the quarterback room.

I know Pittsburgh has a very difficult schedule, but this is a team that was fifth in the league in Defensive DVOA last season and the offense is going to get better. Even if Russell Wilson comes nowhere close to being the player he was in 2020, he's a significant upgrade over Kenny Pickett, Mitchell Trubisky and Mason Rudolph. And if he somehow isn't, Justin Fields will come in and give the offense a shot in the arm.

Also, while Arthur Smith might have been a laughing stock in Atlanta, he knows how to run a productive offense. Combining that with an elite defense, along with Tomlin's ability to get his guys up on a week-to-week basis, should allow Pittsburgh to win a lot of the tough games on its schedule.

FEMI ABEBEFE

BEARS UNDER 9 WINS

We're entering the summer of the Chicago Bears. The hype around this team is set to reach a fever pitch in August when they're featured in HBO's *Hard Knocks* throughout training camp and the preseason. While I think there's reason for optimism with Chicago, I do think they're being overvalued in pretty much every betting market.

Like most football bettors and fans, I think highly of rookie quarterback Caleb Williams. I mean, how could you not? The guy won the Heisman Trophy as a sophomore. With that said, I've never seen a team led by a rookie have a preseason win total as high as this one. On principle alone, I like the Under on this team – and I like it a lot.

At some point, Williams should be one of the better quarterbacks in the NFC, but why does that have to happen in 2024? I think the early success of C.J. Stroud is setting unrealistic expectations for Williams. Not to mention the biggest question mark for the Bears is their offensive line. I'm a big proponent of the game being won and lost in the trenches, and I just hate the idea of putting an inexperienced quarterback behind a shaky group.

On the flip side of the ball, the Chicago defense really turned things around during the second half of the 2023 regular season. However, they didn't really do much to improve that unit – which if you gave him truth serum, probably annoys head coach Matt Eberflus. The most glaring weakness on the Bears defense is the three-technique defensive tackle. That's arguably the most valuable position in the Eberflus defense.

Instead of opting to address it, the front office decided to double down on wide receiver Rome Odunze with the ninth overall pick in this past spring's NFL Draft.

This team would be really good in a seven-on-seven league, but that's not the reality of the NFL. On top of all that, while Eberflus is a good defensive coach, he has yet to show real head coaching prowess to justify having a win total of nine. Through two seasons as a head coach, Eberflus boasts a W/L record of 10-24. Now he has to win 10 games in one season just to go Over this number. I think it's time we set realistic expectations for the Chicago Bears in 2024.

WES REYNOLDS

RAVENS UNDER 10.5 WINS

I played this at Under 11.5 (-160) earlier in the summer, but would still play this number.

While Lamar Jackson is just in his second year of a five-year extension signed in May 2023, there are a large number of questions around him and the offense in general. The offensive line loses two starters (Morgan Moses - NY Jets; Kevin Zeitler - Detroit). The Ravens drafted rookie Roger Rosengarten in the second round out of Washington and will likely start Andrew Vorhees, who slipped into the seventh round of the 2023 NFL Draft after tearing his ACL at the Scouting Combine. Ronnie Stanley and Tyler Linderbaum anchor this group, but the former has a long history of injuries and the Ravens are thin up front even if he stays healthy.

The Ravens running game should continue to be one of the better ones in the league with Jackson and even an aging Derrick Henry, who comes to Charm City after eight seasons in Music City. However, Zay Flowers is the only proven playmaker at wide receiver. Another downfield threat will have to emerge because now the league has film on Todd Monken's offense which they did not have in his first year as offensive coordinator last season. Even with a dynamic quarterback like Jackson, the Ravens offense risks becoming predictable.

Zachary Orr has been on the Ravens coaching staff since 2017 but now takes over for Mike McDonald, who is now head coach in Seattle. Two other defensive assistants have also moved on to become defensive coordinators elsewhere (Dennard Wilson - Tennessee; Anthony Weaver - Miami).

The turnover is not limited to the coaching staff. The Ravens had more free agents leave their 2023 roster than any other team in the league including four defensive starters.

Furthermore, every other team in the AFC North looks at least slightly improved from last season.

CINCINNATI BENGALS TO WIN AFC NORTH (+145)

The Bengals managed to go 9-8 despite losing Joe Burrow in Week 11. However, that 9-8 record earned them a last place finish in the AFC North. That record also earned them the last place schedule in the division.

Burrow will have a new offensive coordinator in Dan Pitcher who was promoted from quarterbacks coach after Brian Callahan took the head coaching gig in Tennessee. Zac Taylor will still be the play caller, so not much will change. Ja'Marr Chase saw the contract that Justin Jefferson got in Minnesota and should have a monster campaign in his contract year.

The defense was a bit disappointing last year but got some major upgrades particularly in the secondary with Vonn Bell returning after a disappointing single season in Carolina. Geno Stone led the league with seven interceptions for safeties in Baltimore last year. D.J. Reader is certainly a loss as a run stopper, but Sheldon Rankins comes in from Houston and can come close to matching that production and is a better pass-rusher.

The Ravens will still be solid, but should take a step back. The Browns and the Steelers are also still uncertain at quarterback. Cincinnati is not.

JONATHAN VON TOBEL

DOLPHINS TO WIN AFC EAST (+200)

Miami has a very high ceiling this season, and much of it has to do with its explosive offense. Tyreek Hill and Jaylen Waddle are arguably the best receiver duo in the league, and they are joined by Odell Beckham Jr. this season. Raheem Mostert is one of the most explosive backs in the league. De'Von Achane is a physical runner that averaged 4.94 yards per carry after contact. The Dolphins also have the least questions – by my measure – this season. The Bills are rebuilding key position groups. The Jets have a 40-year-old quarterback. The Patriots are rebuilding everything. This season sets up nicely for Miami to break through and win the division.

DOLPHINS TO WIN AFC NO. 1 SEED (10-1)

If Miami wins the AFC East it can certainly win the top seed in the AFC. The Dolphins have the eighth-easiest schedule in the NFL when rating opponents by win total. From Week 11 on they leave the Eastern time zone just twice. They have the best offense in the league and a manageable schedule. That makes this worth a play at the listed odds of +1000 or better.

FALCONS TO WIN NFC NO. 1 SEED (+750)

This is similar to the argument for Miami to have the top seed in the AFC. Atlanta has the easiest schedule in the NFL by a wide margin. The Falcons are favored to win 14 of their 17 games at this point of the offseason. With Kirk Cousins under center, Atlanta should be one of the best offenses in the league. Pair that with the schedule and the Falcons are worth a wager to grab the top seed in the NFC.

ANTHONY RICHARDSON TO WIN OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR (40-1)

Richardson played in only four games and was on the field for just 173 snaps last season, but the upside is clearly there. He also plays for a great offensive mind in Shane Steichen who got this team to within one dropped catch of the postseason last year. Steichen will get the most out of Richardson and with his dual threat ability he could put up some very strong numbers if he can stay healthy. It's a longshot, but it's one worth sweating if Richardson breaks out in his second season.

DUSTIN SWEDELSON

SAQUON BARKLEY OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR (16-1)

The Philadelphia Eagles made potentially the best non-QB offseason free agent acquisition in RB Saquon Barkley. Adding Barkley has created a perfect combination of talent to run the RPO scheme that made this offense successful in the past. Combining Barkley's dual-threat ability in the backfield with a skilled runner like Hurts will limit how defenses can attack this offense. Add in the passing options at WR and TE with AJ Brown, DeVonta Smith and Dallas Goedert and there just isn't an easy way to focus on limiting this offensive attack.



For Barkley, he now gets to join an offense where he isn't the focal point for defenses to stop. In New York, he basically carried Daniel Jones to the playoffs in 2022. During that campaign, Barkley not only ran for over 1,300 yards but he also had 76 receptions. Defenses knew that he was their go to guy for dynamic plays and he was still able to combine for over 1,600 all purpose yards. Also key, he played in 16 games back in 2022. Despite his durability issues of the past, there is precedent to believe he has the potential to be more available in 2024.

What did Barkley have to gain by forcing himself back from injuries with the Giants in years past? He had yet to sign a long-term contract so his financial security was always up in the air. And the Giants averaged 5.66 wins per year during his tenure in New York so there wasn't much to rush back for. Philadelphia guaranteed him \$26 million over three years. The days of him sitting out when he could play at less than 100% will be fewer and far between.

Just look at last year's Offensive Player of the Year, Christian McCaffrey. He signed his first extension back in 2020 but played just 16 games through 2.5 seasons on bad Panthers squads. Suddenly he gets to a contender in San Francisco and he's more durable? The games mattered more. We saw him play through injuries more. He was also more successful because other teams couldn't key in and focus on just stopping him. I'd also add that Derrick Henry also won this award in 2020 after signing a four-year, \$50 million deal with Tennessee. They paid him and then ran him for 2,000 yards that year. Barkley is in a very similar position to both McCaffrey, when he went to San Francisco and Henry, after Tennessee paid him. Expect a big year.

TIM MURRAY

FALCONS TO WIN THE NFC SOUTH (-115)

The Falcons have had quite the interesting offseason. Atlanta hired Raheem Morris as its new head coach and Morris brought in Zac Robinson as his offensive coordinator. Robinson is a Sean McVay disciple. Robinson spent the past five seasons in Los Angeles and was the passing game coordinator the past two years.

Kirk Cousins heads to Atlanta on a four-year, \$180 million deal. Cousins is coming off an Achilles injury that he sustained in Week 8 but should be ready for the start of the season (Cousins is currently +500 to win Comeback Player of the Year). Cousins has familiarity with the McVay system and Robinson should be a great fit with the veteran quarterback. While he doesn't have Justin Jefferson anymore to throw to, the Falcons group of pass catchers is solid. Atlanta spent back-to-back top 10 picks on TE Kyle Pitts (2021) and Drake London (2022). I expect a big rise in production from both with Cousins under center. RB Bijan Robinson could explode in his second year in Atlanta.

Atlanta should not have spent the eighth overall selection on QB Michael Penix during the NFL Draft, but this franchise is in good shape in 2024 to take down an mediocre NFC South. The Falcons have the easiest schedule in the NFL and are currently only an underdog in four games

in 2024. If you want to risk it, you could wait until after Week 3 to place this bet since the Falcons play the Eagles and Chiefs in Weeks 2 and 3. I, however, am going to ride with Atlanta now as it would certainly be a disappointment if they did not win the NFC South this year.

MITCH MOSS

CHICAGO BEARS UNDER 9 WINS

Tons of hype and very high expectations for a team that has been very bad, for the most part, over the last two years. I think they're the most interesting team in the league as we get closer to the start of the season, but they have to win 10+ games to beat me here. That's a wager worth making for me. I'm buying into this team being at least one year away.

BREECE HALL TO HAVE 1000+ RUSHING YARDS & 500+ RECEIVING YARDS (+450)

Betting the Under on individual player props is typically the best way to approach the NFL season because so many things can go wrong (hello, injuries).

Hall already has an injury history so betting him to have a huge year will be extra tricky. However, the third year RB had 994 yards rushing last year and 591 yards receiving. That came with a pitch count as he was off said injury in his rookie season. The team also had one of the worst QB situations we've ever watched after Aaron Rodgers got hurt, thus making opposing defenses game plan for Hall even more. If Rodgers stays healthy this year, that should mean more running lanes for Hall.

SAUCE GARDNER DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR (72-1)

This award has been around since the early 1970s. A grand total of 11 players in the secondary have won the award. That tells you how difficult it is for a cornerback or safety to bring this award home at the end of the year.

Then look at the names at the top of the odds board this year. T.J. Watt, Micah Parsons, Nick Bosa, Maxx Crosby, Myles Garrett, Aidin Hutchinson, Will Anderson, Jr., Danielle Hunter, Josh Allen, Chris Jones and Montez Sweat are all listed before you find the first secondary player listed (Kyle Hamilton). They have to overcome players with a bigger spotlight and sexier numbers for voters to look at. Consider this: DaRon Bland had nine interceptions and five TDs last year!!! He finished fifth in the voting and had one vote for first place.

It's hard to win if you play one of these two positions. With that said I could not turn down the number on Gardner. Don't forget that Tariq Woolen had better numbers as a rookie than Sauce, but the media and voters fell in love with Gardner and gave him the award. The narrative already exists for him, he plays in New York, and the Jets will have an elite defense again this year. We just watched NBA voters give Rudy Gobert DPOY in the NBA for being the best defensive player on the best defensive team in the league. Can the same thing not happen with Sauce Gardner if he has a great year?





MIKE SOMICH

LIONS TO WIN NFC NORTH (+150)

Let's be honest, one of the biggest wins in the offseason was Ben Johnson staying in Detroit. With his return, this offense is all systems go with LaPorta and Gibbs entering their 2nd year and Goff pulling the trigger. In the draft they addressed their biggest need on Defense at corner. This will be a better Lions team than last year yet they are not priced that way because of the hype around Green Bay and Chicago.

While I do believe that Green Bay could be a contender and Chicago could contend for a playoff spot, the market is priced like both have a 25% chance or better to win the division. I just cannot get there so I'll fade the double hype trains in the NFC North and play the Lions +150.

STORM BUONANTONY

JETS TO MISS THE PLAYOFFS (+120)

I feel like I might be the only person on the planet that's not a believer in the Jets in 2024. Everyone thinks Aaron Rodgers is back healthy and will lead NY to the promised land (betting them to win the AFC East, make the playoffs, go Over their season win total). While I certainly understand the appeal and the roster is talented across the board, I'm resisting the urge. While everyone is zigging, I've elected to zag — which when you think about it is a little comical. I'm simply betting the Jets to do exactly what they've done the last 13-straight years and continue to miss the postseason.

Rodgers is 40-years-old, coming off major Achilles surgery and last time we saw him in Green Bay was one of the worst of his career. I am aware that mediocre Rodgers is still leaps and bounds from Zach Wilson, but are we sure he's going to stay healthy and return in God-mode? He's protected by an offensive line that was musical chairs with 13 different combinations last season. Yes, that OL is bolstered by the additions of Tyron Smith and Morgan Moses but both of them have recent injury history. Smith has missed 37 games over the last four seasons. They also bring in another weapon in Mike Williams to play opposite Garrett Wilson, but wait...isn't he also coming off a major surgery?

Then let's throw in the mix all the off-the-field drama that follows this team, a general lack of leadership from the head coach, and an offensive coordinator in Nathaniel Hackett that appears incapable of adjusting should his star QB find himself unavailable/limited. The defense will be really good, but other than that there's too many "ifs" with this team for me to bet on their success.

RAMS TO MAKE THE PLAYOFFS (+110)

Just when we thought the 2022 Super Bowl champs were going to be in a lengthy rebuild mode, the Rams bounced back from a 5-12 year with a 10-win season and playoff berth in 2024. They took the Lions to the brink in that Wild Card round game mind you and might be a little better than they were a year ago. (I am aware how crazy that sounds on the surface given the retirement of one of the best players in the league, but I'll get there in a moment)

The only reason I didn't put the Rams Over their 8.5 win total as a "best bet" is because the juice is around -155 and I think there might be a better in-season opportunity to hit the Over given the early portion of their schedule. The Rams first five weeks are at Detroit, at Arizona, vs San Francisco, @ Chicago and vs Green Bay. If they're 1-2 early, we could have a good buy-low opportunity before the schedule eases up following their Week 6 bye.

While there's no replacing the presence of a future HOfer in Aaron Donald at DT, I do think fans and bettors might be reading a little too much into that loss on defense. Don't sleep on Kobie Turner for one, and I like the route LA went in the draft grabbing Florida State edge rusher Jared Verse in the first round, as well as fellow Seminole tackle Braden Fiske in Round 2.

Offensively they're going to put up points. Matthew Stafford was tremendous last year when he stayed upright. They brought in Pro Bowl guard Jonah Jackson to the OL, re-signed Kevin Dotson who was great in 2023 and we'll see Steve Avila move back to his natural position at center. If the big guys up front can give Stafford a clean pocket, he's got plenty of playmakers to get the ball to. The emergence of Puka Nacua and Kyren Williams, paired with Cooper Kupp getting back to form, could be a dangerous sight for opposing defenses.

While I think the 49ers will take the NFC West, the Rams are extremely live to make the playoffs back-to-back years.

DANIEL JONES UNDER 16.5 TD PASSES (-125)

I know laying juice on a bet in June-August isn't the most fun way to tie up your money, but I really like this bet. Considering Daniel Jones has only thrown more than 15 touchdown passes once in his five-year career (and it was his rookie season), I don't think it's a stretch to say coming off a torn ACL, multiple neck injuries and playing behind one of the worst offensive lines in football that he goes Under yet again. The former Duke product has also failed to throw more than two TDs in a single game since December of 2019.

In the six games Jones started this past season, he was 1-5 with two TDs and six interceptions with the Giants averaging 11.3 points per game. The offense failed to score a first half TD in any of those games. In fact, a Jason Pinnock pick-six against Miami gave NY more first half points than Jones did in any of those games. The Giants actually averaged nearly a TD more the rest of the season with their "\$40M dollar man" off the field.

While I know this feels like a massively important season for Jones given the "buyers remorse" rumors and discussion around the draft of potentially taking a QB, I'm not sure he's capable of living up to the contract that ultimately cost New York Saquon Barkley. For good measure, let's also throw in the mix Drew Lock was signed this offseason with the belief he could have an opportunity to compete for the job.

MICHAEL LOMBARDI

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VSIN MVP

BEST BETS

The 2023 AP NFL MVP was Lamar Jackson, a repeat winner, and that seems to be a theme. Dating back to 2007, when Tom Brady won the first of three NFL MVP Awards, the only single-time winners have been Matt Ryan, Cam Newton, and Adrian Peterson.

It is entirely possible that with a young crop of promising quarterbacks, a newcomer will emerge on the scene this season. Not that he's young, per se, but Dak Prescott finished a very distant second to Jackson last year, who previously won the award in 2019. Jalen Hurts had that honor behind Patrick Mahomes in 2022.

When it comes to handicapping the NFL MVP market, there isn't a whole lot left to the imagination based on what I just mentioned. Here are the MVPs dating back to 2007:

Tom Brady: 2007, 2010, 2017
Peyton Manning: 2008, 2009, 2013
Aaron Rodgers: 2011, 2020, 2021
Patrick Mahomes: 2018, 2022

Cam Newton: 2015
Matt Ryan: 2016

Adrian Peterson: 2012

Peterson deserves to stand alone because he is the only non-QB since LaDainian Tomlinson in 2006 to gather enough votes for the honor. Peterson got 30.5 of the 50 votes, while Manning secured 19.5. AP ran for 2,097 yards and had 13 total touchdowns that season.

What we've basically seen is that a QB wins MVP and the top RB/WR wins the Offensive Player of the Year award. While we're focusing on the MVP exclusively here, it is worth pointing out that each of the last five winners of that award has been a RB or WR and the last repeat winner for that award was Peyton Manning in 2013. That process seems to be a little more democratic.

It may be just as simple as taking a QB to win the MVP, but which QB are you taking? Or, are you going to take a real gamble and go with a skill-position player?

That is the question we posed to our VSIN hosts and contributors and these are the answers that they gave.

MATT BROWN

JARED GOFF (40/1)

Jared Goff was better last year than most people realize.

2nd in the NFL in passing yards
4th in the NFL in passing TDs
3rd in the NFL in passing yards per game
5th in the NFL in completion percentage
5th graded passer in the NFL by Pro Football Focus (min 400 dropbacks)

There's very little reason to believe he's in for some sort of big time regression when you consider the Lions stellar offensive line and all the weapons at his disposal. We know Amon-Ra St. Brown is a stud. But let's remember, this will be just Year 2 of Sam LaPorta and Jahmyr Gibbs. This will be Jameson Williams' first full offseason with the team. He plays in a dome for all his home games (with five road games in domes and one in California). And with a defense that might still be a little shaky in pass defense, Detroit will likely have to keep their foot on the gas in most games. It's a big number attached to Goff's name and, with last season's numbers well within reach of being repeatable, we should have a ticket that we can monetize one way or another.



ZACHARY COHEN

JALEN HURTS (18/1)

Last season, Jalen Hurts threw for 3,858 yards with 23 touchdowns and a whopping 15 interceptions. He also rushed for just 605 yards and an average of 3.9 yards per carry. Compared to a 2022 season in which Hurts threw for 3,701 yards with 22 touchdowns and only six picks, while also rushing for 760 yards and 4.6 yards per carry, it's clear he wasn't the same player. Well, Hurts did battle some minor injuries throughout the season, and he often was visibly uncomfortable out there. So, I'm expecting him to bounce back after a full offseason to get healthy.

Hurts is still part of one of the most explosive offenses in football, and Philadelphia should only turn things up a notch in 2024. Kellen Moore is a proven offensive coordinator in this league, so he should do a better job of pressing buttons than Brian Johnson did last year. The Eagles will also have a better running game this season, as Saquon Barkley is now the main man in the backfield. That should open up all sorts of opportunities for this passing game, which also happened to add Parris Campbell after the season. Campbell is a very effective slot receiver, so he should give Hurts a reliable underneath option.

All in all, I just don't think of Hurts as a mistake-prone passer. He has been accurate throughout his career, and his Completion Percentage Over Expected was actually higher in 2023 than it was in 2022. So, look for Hurts to significantly cut down on his interceptions. If he does that and continues to put up big numbers in both the passing and running games, he should be in the mix for MVP. And it doesn't hurt that Philadelphia looks like a team that is capable of winning 12 or 13 games.

ADAM BURKE

JARED GOFF (40/1)

My colleague Matt Brown is a very sharp individual. He mentioned this before the NFL schedule even came out and that May 15 release was the extra push I needed to get involved with this.

Goff plays 14 of his 17 games in a dome this season. One road game (Dec. 22) is almost guaranteed to be played in bad weather at Soldier Field. Otherwise, he'll play at Lambeau Field in early November and Santa Clara on Dec. 30. The stage is set for Goff to be able to have a monster season based on venue and timing. He has a 48/10 TD/INT ratio in domed venues over the last two seasons.

Goff and OC Ben Johnson are running it back for the third year in a row. Over those two seasons, Goff ranks ninth in EPA+CPOE composite (Expected Points Added + Completion Percentage Over Expected) per RBSDM and seventh in adjusted EPA/play. In Year 2 under Johnson, Goff's On-Target% went from 76.2% to 80.3% per Pro-Football Reference and a full season of Jameson Williams and more Jahmyr Gibbs should help in that department.

The Lions have huge potential, a defense that will force Goff and the offense to keep the pedal down, and a tremendously-favorable schedule for their QB.

JONATHAN VON TOBEL

TUA TAGOVAILOA (22/1)

MVP is becoming increasingly less interesting to bet on. The top options are all quarterbacks, and the odds are usually much shorter than they realistically should be. But, every once in a while something slips through the cracks. This year, that would be the odds on Tua Tagovailoa.

The fifth-year signal-caller is the starting quarterback for the best offense in the league. Tagovailoa completed 69.3% of his passes for a league-best 4,624 yards and 29 touchdowns last season. Should he match – or improve – those figures while leading the Dolphins to a division crown and a top seed in the AFC, he will have the inside track to winning this award.

VSIN OFFENSIVE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

There are a lot of options in the Offensive Rookie of the Year betting market for 2024. We had six quarterbacks and seven wide receivers drafted in the first round. There were no first-round running backs and a surprise contender could emerge from that position group, but this is an award dominated by guys heavily involved in the passing game at this point.

One would think it takes a lot to win this award as a quarterback because the guys that play right away are often drafted to bad teams with bad offensive lines. While that is true, three of the last five winners have been QBs and nine of the last 14.

Wide receivers have the other two wins in the last five seasons, but Ja'Marr Chase (2021) was something of an exception, in that the last WR to win prior to him was Odell Beckham Jr. in 2014. Before that, you have to go back to Percy Harvin in 2009.

Outliers are definitely a possibility, but let's look at the last 10 Offensive Rookie of the Year winners and attempt to get a baseline for the stats and the circumstances that are required to be in the running.

Offensive Rookie of the Year Winners

- Players: CJ Stroud, Garrett Wilson, Ja'Marr Chase, Justin Herbert, Kyler Murray, Saquon Barkley, Alvin Kamara, Dak Prescott, Todd Gurley, Odell Beckham Jr.
- By Position: 4 QB, 3 RB, 3 WR
- By Draft Position (Round.Pick): 1.2; 1.10; 1.5; 1.6; 1.1; 1.2; 3.67 (Kamara); 4.135 (Prescott); 1.10; 1.12
- Eight of the last 10 have been first-round picks and seven of those eight were top-10 picks. Opportunity matters as much as anything. First-round picks on bad teams, almost regardless of position, are a lock to start.
- First-place votes (L5 years): 48 (Stroud); 18 (Wilson, runner-up Kenneth Walker III had 19); 42 (Chase); 41 (Herbert); 26.5 (Murray, runner-up Josh Jacobs had 13)
- Nobody has been unanimous since Ben Roethlisberger in 2004 with all 48 votes.
- Also, team success isn't exactly a prerequisite. The Texans, Bengals, Saints, and Cowboys were all division winners within the last 10 years, but the Jets, Chargers, Cardinals, Giants, Rams, and Giants were not.

BEST
BETS

Stats of the Winners

CJ Stroud (2023)

Stroud started 15 of the team's 17 games and had 499 pass attempts with a 23/5 TD/INT ratio. He led the league in INT% and passing yards per game with 273.9.

Garrett Wilson (2022)

Wilson played in all 17 games and had 83 catches for 1,103 yards and four touchdowns. Former Ohio State teammate Chris Olave was second among rookies with 1,042 receiving yards and finished fourth in the OROY voting. Wilson was 15th in receiving yards overall.

Ja'Marr Chase (2021)

The Joe Burrow connection definitely helped Chase here, as the rookie had 81 catches for 1,455 yards and 13 touchdowns. It was arguably the best rookie season in this generation for a wide receiver. He was fourth in the NFL in receiving yards and third in touchdowns, which was definitely worthy of breaking the WR drought.

Justin Herbert (2020)

Herbert had a 31/10 TD/INT ratio and started 15 games in his rookie season. He threw for just under 290 yards per game and 4,336 yards total. Only Deshaun Watson, Patrick Mahomes, Tom Brady, Matt Ryan, and Josh Allen threw for more yards and Herbert also finished 10th in TD passes.

Kyler Murray (2019)

Murray threw for 3,722 and ran for another 544 in his rookie year. In total, he accounted for 24 total touchdowns across 16 starts. He was the most-sacked QB in the NFL, but still did enough to garner 26.5 of the 50 first-place votes. That was a weak crop for rookies, but Murray was certainly the most impactful.

Saquon Barkley (2018)

Barkley was a Pro Bowler in his rookie year and led the NFL in yards from scrimmage with 2,028. He ran for 1,307 and added 721 more on 91 receptions and 121 targets. He was second to Ezekiel Elliott in rushing yards and edged him by 27 yards in total yardage. He actually ranked 13th in receptions and only Christian McCaffrey had more among running backs.

Alvin Kamara (2017)

Kamara ran for an insane 6.1 yards per carry during his rookie year and won the award, despite only starting three games. He played all 16 and, much like Barkley a year later, racked up a ton of yardage through the air. His 826 receiving yards are still a career-high. He actually only rushed for 728 yards, but had 13 total touchdowns. Despite the eye-popping all-purpose yardage total, he had 28 first-place votes to 21 for Kareem Hunt, who rushed for 1,327 yards and actually outgained Kamara from scrimmage.

Dak Prescott (2016)

Prescott's relative lack of pedigree was a huge deal, as the fourth-round pick became the latest player drafted since Denver's Mike Anderson in 2000 (sixth-rounder) to win OROY. To this day, Dak and Dennis Shaw (1970) are the only non-first-round QBs to win. He started

all 16 games and had a 23/4 TD/INT ratio and actually finished sixth in MVP voting.

Teammate Ezekiel Elliott was the only other vote-getter and, in fact, got 21.5 of the 50 first-place votes.

Todd Gurley (2015)

In the Rams' final season in St. Louis, Gurley played in 13 games and had 1,106 rushing yards. He only had 10 total touchdowns, all on the ground, but won comfortably. Gurley had 27 first-place votes and ranked third in rushing yards behind Adrian Peterson and Doug Martin.

Odell Beckham Jr. (2014)

Beckham led the league in receiving yards per game with 108.8, as he only played 12 games, but still racked up 91 catches for 1,305 yards. Despite the missed time, he was still 10th in receiving yards and tied for ninth in receptions.

What does this mean for 2024? Well, like I said, opportunity matters. You notice that all of those players stayed healthy enough to play a lot of games to rack up passing attempts, carries, and targets, but they were also on teams that gave them the chance to shine.

Even when Barkley and Kamara won, they were huge parts of the passing game. It is a pass-driven award at this stage, especially with no running back winning since 2018 and the diminished importance of running backs in terms of draft position.

Now, let's turn it over to our VSiN hosts and contributors for their best bets in the Offensive Rookie of the Year market.

MATT BROWN

BO NIX (18/1)

What my (or your) personal opinion of Bo Nix and how good he can be at the NFL level is irrelevant in this discussion. This bet is about price and opportunity. As of this writing, there are three rookie quarterbacks that are guaranteed to start Week 1 for their respective teams. The two favorites, Caleb Williams and Jayden Daniels, have odds 12 (Williams) and 3.5 (Daniels) times shorter than Nix.

The offense is not devoid of talent. Courtland Sutton is a perfectly capable low-end WR1. He gets Year 2 of Marvin Mims. Tim Patrick and Greg Dulcich return from injury. They signed veteran wideout Josh Reynolds, while drafting Nix's college teammate Troy Franklin. The cupboard is not bare.

And finally, the Broncos have a paltry 5.5 win total. This tells us that they should be trailing in several games, giving Nix the opportunity to rack up some counting stats when the team is forced to ditch the run. Speaking of running, Nix ran for 744 yards in his final two seasons with Oregon, so he could chip in some stats there as well. If Nix can somehow guide this team to eight or nine wins, and Williams and Daniels don't do anything to wow the voters, Nix would become the next logical choice. I'm not a huge fan of Nix the player, but again, that doesn't really matter for this bet.



FEMI ABEFE

BO NIX (18/1)

Betting the rookie markets is such a crapshoot since we haven't seen any of these players, but that also makes them really fun. While there's uncertainty in how the rookies will play, there is a rubric you'll want to follow when deciding who to bet on in this market. You want to bet on a first-round pick and ideally you want to bet on a quarterback. With that said, could I interest you in Bo Nix of the Denver Broncos?

Look, I watch college football just like everyone reading this, and if you asked me if I thought Nix would be a good NFL quarterback, I'd definitely say no. However, my GM Shuffle podcast partner, former NFL front office executive and general manager Michael Lombardi, told me when Sean Payton pounds the table for a quarterback – we should listen.

Payton clearly saw something in Nix that he likes for his offense and is betting his job on the 24-year-old quarterback out of Oregon. Payton is an incredibly competitive individual and, having worked in media in the past, I'm sure he's heard all the critics talk about how he reached for Nix with the 12th overall pick in this past spring's NFL Draft. Payton and the organization will do everything in their power to make this work, and to make it work early in Nix's career.

I'd also be lying if I said the price on Nix isn't why I love this pick the most. Barring a terrible training camp this August, Nix is expected to be the Broncos starting quarterback in Week 1. Since the league expanded to 32 teams in 2002, 10 quarterbacks have won Offensive Rookie of the Year. Of those 10, Ben Roethlisberger in 2004 and Vince Young in 2006 started the fewest number of games at 13. A quarterback must play early if they want a chance to win this award, and Nix checks that box on the Broncos.

Lack of playing time is one of the reasons why more quarterbacks haven't won OROY. Teams used to exercise great patience before putting an inexperienced signal caller on the field. That's not the case anymore as we're expecting to see at least three rookie QBs start during Week 1, if not more. Nix has by far the longest odds (Caleb Williams +135, Jayden Daniels +550) of the three expected starters so I'll lean into the uncertainty and back the guy nobody seems to want.

Finally, whether it was justified or not, Nix was a first-round pick. Guys who hear their name called on the first day of the draft receive exponentially more attention than players who had to wait until Friday or Saturday to hear their name called. Get this, over the last 22 years, 18 OROY winners were first-round picks. On the surface, it makes a ton of sense. Theoretically, first-round picks are better prospects than players selected in Rounds 2-7.

However, when you're dealing with voters, you want to be backing the players they're most familiar with because that's what they'll gravitate towards. The four players who won this award since 2002 that were picked outside the first round were running back Clinton Portis (2002), wide receiver Anquan Boldin (2003), quarterback Dak Prescott (2016) and running back Alvin Kamara (2017). Portis finished fourth in the league in rushing, Boldin was third in the league in receptions and receiving yards, Prescott was third in QBR and Kamara benefitted from a Deshaun Watson ACL injury earlier in the season.

So whether you agree with my choice of Bo Nix or not, just make sure you go with a skill-position player who went in the first round. The odds are in your favor.

ZACHARY COHEN

CALEB WILLIAMS (+135)

I'll be honest, I wanted to see Justin Fields get another crack at it with Chicago. I understand the salary cap ramifications of keeping him, and I get that Williams is a tremendous prospect. But I can't help but think that we'd be having a different conversation right now if not for some extremely conservative play calling in the second halves of games the Bears were winning. But that's neither here nor there.

Williams enters the league as one of the more physically-gifted quarterbacks we've seen in quite some time. Sure, Williams doesn't have the prototypical height that teams are looking for. But he makes up for that in arm talent. Williams has an absolute cannon for an arm, and

he can make every throw in the book. And that remains true even when the former USC star is throwing on the move. Williams is also a good enough runner to put fear in opposing defenses. Of course, a lot of that also applies to Commanders rookie Jayden Daniels. But the difference is the Williams is playing in an offense that is absolutely loaded.

There might not be a pass-catching trio in the league that is better than D.J. Moore, Keenan Allen and rookie Rome Odunze. And Cole Kmet is also a weapon at tight end. When you add in the fact that Chicago has been working to build its offensive line, it's just hard to think of a better situation for a rookie quarterback. That said, even if Williams takes some lumps, I see him putting up some big numbers in Year 1. And I wouldn't be surprised if Chicago makes the playoffs. That should all be enough to earn him this award.

It would obviously be nice to get a better number than this, but I decided pretty early on that I'll take whatever I can get here.

ADAM BURKE

KEON COLEMAN (25/1)

This has been a popular pick throughout the offseason, as better prices were available earlier, but I still like it. Coleman has been a media darling already and that's important because reporters vote on these markets.

As I wrote about above, opportunity is the most important thing. Coleman will have opportunities for targets and touchdowns with Stefon Diggs in Houston. Diggs joined the Bills for the 2020 season. From 2020-23, Diggs had 644 targets, 445 catches, and 37 touchdowns. He had 17 of Buffalo's 66 red-zone targets. Gabe Davis was second with 13 and he's also gone.

With Diggs and Davis gone, Coleman was the only WR drafted and he's got good size at 6-foot-3 to be an option in the scoring areas. His college stats don't pop like the other WRs in this class, especially with seven taken in the first round, but Josh Allen needs a guy to rely on and Coleman is the best option.

JONATHAN VON TOBEL

MARVIN HARRISON JR. (+700)

Arizona is my darkhorse team this season, and if I'm correct, then that would mean a strong season from Harrison. The rookie wide receiver was considered to be the best overall prospect in his class and, unlike MVP, receivers have a fair shot at winning this award. Tyler Murray loves to target his best pass-catcher with high volume. Harrison will benefit from that while helping bring the Cardinals to about seven wins this season. He has a better chance at this award than +700 would indicate.

PATRICK MEAGHER

JAYDEN DANIELS (+550)

Daniels is just on a crazy trajectory. The confidence is off the charts and I think it carries over into his rookie season with the Commanders. This sets up nicely for Daniels with a veteran offensive line and receivers. Kliff Kingsbury running the offense will nicely take advantage of his running abilities, which are exceptional. The schedule isn't brutal in terms of opposing defenses and the vibes are just very different and improved with the franchise. The Commanders aren't a great team so there will also be plenty of dramatic, come-from-behind opportunities for Daniels to show off.

TIM MURRAY

JAYDEN DANIELS (+550)

The offense line is a concern in Washington, but Jayden Daniels has the potential to thrive in his rookie season in the nation's capital. While the Commanders do not have an elite wide receiver on the roster, Terry McLaurin is a solid top target. Entering Year 3, Jahan Dotson has been a bit of a disappointment, but the talent is there. Washington spent a second-round pick on TE Ben Sinnott and a third on WR Luke McCaffrey. Kliff Kingsbury enters as the new offensive coordinator and will no doubt look to put Daniels in the best situation to succeed. While +550 is certainly not a "long shot", Daniels will be the starter Day 1 in Washington and has the talent to bring home Offensive Rookie of the Year.

VSIN DEFENSIVE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Fourteen offensive players went off the board in the first round of the 2024 NFL Draft before the first defensive player was taken. It was an historic first round in a lot of ways, but that was one of them and it creates a lot of possibilities for this year's Defensive Rookie of the Year.

Players that get after the quarterback or have the ability to intercept passes are generally the ones to highlight here. Much like the Offensive Rookie of the Year, where running backs are likely to be few and far between going forward after a lot of success in the early-to-mid 2000s and 2010s, this is now a pass-driven award, so linebackers and tackle machines are unlikely to get the benefit of the doubt.

Four of the last five winners have been pass rushers. The last true linebacker to win was Shaquille (formerly Darius) Leonard in 2018. The last one before that was Luke Kuechly in 2012.

Outliers are definitely a possibility, but let's look at the last 10 Defensive Rookie of the Year winners and attempt to get a baseline for the stats and the circumstances that are required to be in the running.

Defensive Rookie of the Year Winners

- Players: Will Anderson, Sauce Gardner, Micah Parsons, Chase Young, Nick Bosa, Shaquille Leonard, Marshon Lattimore, Joey Bosa, Marcus Peters, Aaron Donald
- By Draft Position (Round.Pick): 1.3; 1.4; 1.12; 1.2; 1.2; 2.36 (Leonard); 1.11; 1.3; 1.18; 1.13
- Nine of the last 10 winners have been top-20 picks in the draft. Given that we only have four players that fit the mold this season (Laiatu Latu, Byron Murphy II, Dallas Turner, Jared Verse), this may be a trend that breaks. Also, there weren't any first-round defensive players from Ohio State this year. Four of the last 10 (Bosa x2, Young, Lattimore) have been Buckeyes.
- First-place votes (L5 years): 16 (Anderson, runner-up Jalen Carter and third-place finisher Kobie Turner had 14); 46 (Gardner); 50 (Parsons); 42.5 (Young); 43 (Bosa)
- Anderson's win was clearly the most contested in the last several years and the closest since 2013 when Sheldon Richardson had 23 first-place votes to Kiko Alonso's 19.
- Also, team success isn't necessarily a prerequisite, but seven of the 10 teams made the playoffs. Only four did on the Offensive Rookie of the Year side. Four of the last five

BEST BETS

Stats of the Winners

Will Anderson (2023)

Anderson had 45 combined tackles, 22 QB hits, and seven sacks. He didn't have any interceptions and only one pass defended, hence the very small margin of victory. For reference, Carter had six sacks and Turner actually had nine.

Sauce Gardner (2022)

The Cincinnati product led the league with 20 pass breakups and also had a couple of interceptions. He had 75 combined tackles. Not only was he the DROY, but he was also a Pro Bowler and even finished eighth in the Defensive Player of the Year voting.

Micah Parsons (2021)

Parsons racked up 13 sacks and 84 combined tackles in his rookie year, which set him on a Hall of Fame trajectory. He has 40.5 sacks through three seasons and has finished in the top three in the Defensive Player of the Year voting every year, including a runner-up vote in 2021. Parsons had 30 QB hits that year and 20 tackles for loss.

Chase Young (2020)

Young played 15 games for the Washington Football Team with 7.5 sacks, 44 tackles, 10 TFL, and a touchdown on a fumble recovery. He very comfortably won the award with only three others getting votes, none of whom had more than three sacks.

Nick Bosa (2019)

Bosa had nine sacks, 47 tackles, 25 QB hits, and 16 TFL during his DROY season. He also had an interception and a couple of pass breakups. Even though both Maxx Crosby and Josh Allen had more sacks, Bosa still won the award comfortably. He would go on to win Defensive Player of the Year in 2022.

Darius Leonard (2018)

Now going by Shaquille, Leonard led the NFL with 163 tackles in 2018. He also had seven sacks, picked off two passes, had four fumble recoveries, and broke up eight passes. It was truly an incredible season full of stat filling for Leonard. Amazingly, though, he only got 29 first-place votes, as Derwin James had 20.

Marshon Lattimore (2017)

The Texans swept the OROY/DROY board in 2023, but the Saints did it back in 2017 with Lattimore and Kamara. Lattimore only played 13 games, but had 18 pass breakups and five interceptions. His 18 PD are one off of his career record set in 2021, but his five INT are still a career-best. He easily won the award over Tre'Davious White, who has had quite the NFL career himself.

Joey Bosa (2016)

The third overall pick had 10.5 sacks and 41 tackles over just 12 games in his rookie campaign. Bosa was tied for 13th in sacks overall and did not really have a challenger for the award. He got 37 first-place votes. Jalen Ramsey (10) and Deion Jones (3) were the others to get a nod.

Marcus Peters (2015)

The Washington product had an insane debut season. He had 26 pass breakups to lead the NFL and also led the league with eight interceptions and 280 return yards. He also had two touchdowns and actually has seven pick-sixes in his career. Incredibly, five voters didn't think he was the clear DROY. It was one of the best rookie seasons for a corner in recent memory.

Aaron Donald (2014)

Donald's Hall of Fame career began with a Defensive Rookie of the Year award and he would be the Defensive Player of the Year three times after that. In his rookie season, he had nine sacks over 16 games with 48 tackles and a couple forced fumbles. It was easily the least productive season of his career aside from 2022 when he only played 11 games.

What does this mean for 2024? Pass rushers and defensive backs are absolutely the places to look. History would also suggest that the higher the draft pick, the better that player's chances of living up to the hype and potential as a rookie.

Now, let's turn it over to our VSIN hosts and contributors for their best bets in the Defensive Rookie of the Year market.





FEMI ABEBEFE

CHOP ROBINSON (14/1)

The most difficult awards market to bet prior to the season has to be Defensive Rookie of the Year. The transition from college football to the NFL is much more difficult for defenders than offensive players. Every now and then, you get a dynamic defensive rookie who takes over from the first snap (i.e. Micah Parsons). However, what happens most of the time is you can find great value by waiting to bet this market later during the season.

Before I get into why I like Miami Dolphins rookie edge rusher Chop Robinson, let's get into what criteria you should be looking for. Two things that immediately jump out to me are draft pedigree and opportunity. Like Offensive Rookie of the Year, DROY tends to go to first-round picks. In fact, DROY skews more toward first-round picks than OROY.

Since the league expanded to 32 teams back in 2002, 21 of the 22 DROY winners have been first-round picks! The one player who broke the mold was linebacker Shaquille Leonard (picked 36th overall) back in 2018. All he had to do to win was lead the league in tackles (163!!) and make first-team All-Pro.

It goes without saying that first-round picks tend to be more talented than players selected Rounds 2-7, but I think they also carry the required reputation to win this award. Let's be honest, your average AP voter isn't grinding the All-22 film to see who is actually the best defender. Reputation matters for defensive awards, especially when we're talking about rookies who have yet to become household names.

I can't help but think back to two years ago when Seahawks rookie cornerback Tariq Woolen led the league in interceptions, but finished third in the DROY voting behind first-round picks cornerback Sauce Gardner and edge rusher Aidan Hutchinson. Woolen had three times the interceptions as Gardner, but nobody seemed to care because he didn't enter the season with the pedigree of a first-round pick. In defense of Gardner, he did lead the league in passes defended, but let's be honest, if the roles were reversed, there's no way Woolen beats out Gardner because he led the league in PBUs.

On top of first-round pedigree, the player you bet on also needs a path to get onto the field early and often. The last eight DROY winners played in roughly 67% of their team's defensive snaps during the first four

games of the season. Most young defenders (especially edge rushers) find themselves in rotations early in their careers. You're likely on the right path if you can identify a player who will be involved in a majority of his team's snaps.

This is where Robinson for the Dolphins is interesting. Miami selected Robinson with the 21st overall selection – meaning he's expected to be a big part of their organization in the future. However, the future might be now given the injury status of Miami's top two edge rushers, Jaelan Phillips and Bradley Chubb. Both Phillips and Chubb suffered significant injuries during the second half of the season that will likely keep them out of training camp and perhaps the early portion of the 2024 regular season.

Robinson will likely be forced to play out of necessity and will have the chance to prove that he belongs on the field when Phillips and Chubb ultimately return. If you're looking for a price that could move in your favor during the first month of the season, look no further than Chop Robinson.

ADAM BURKE

DARIUS ROBINSON (35/1)

When Jonathan Gannon was the DC of the Eagles, they set an NFL record with 70 sacks during the 2022 season. One of the biggest reasons why the Eagles were able to go from 29 sacks in 2021 to 70 in 2022 was directly correlated to how Gannon got more out of guys like Josh Sweat, Haason Reddick, and Javon Hargrave.

Robinson reminds me a lot of Hargrave. He's able to be an edge rusher or a down lineman with good size and athleticism. Hargrave tips the scales a little bit higher than Robinson, but there are similarities in their respective games. I trust a guy like Gannon to evaluate not only the talent of a guy like Robinson, but also to evaluate the fit his defense needs. The Cardinals invested heavily in the line and the pass rush and that should create chances for Robinson to make big plays.

Generally speaking, the DROY is a really high draft pick with a lot of visibility, but we didn't get any defensive players in the first 14 picks and I think a lot of the guys that filled out the first round are going to be interchangeable in the minds of voters, which means it will be less about notoriety and more about actual production.

VSIN COACH OF THE YEAR

BEST BETS

There isn't a direct correlation between Most Improved Team and AP Coach of the Year, but it isn't a bad place to start. When it comes to handicapping the Coach of the Year market, you're either looking for a new guy or recent hire that spearheads a huge turnaround or the coach of the team with the best record in the NFL.

Sometimes, you get a true outlier, like what we saw last season with Kevin Stefanski's second Coach of the Year honor in four years, but the Browns overcame a lot, as five different starting quarterbacks were used and four of them won games. The Browns did improve by four games, going from 7-10 to 11-6, and maybe a four-game improvement is the minimum to shoot for with this handicap.

Many felt like Houston's DeMeco Ryans should have won and he nearly did. Stefanski and Ryans tied in number of voting points, but the Browns bench boss had one more first-place vote and that was the difference. It is also worth noting that each of the top seven vote-getters made the playoffs and 11 of the 12 that got votes coached playoff teams.

Before we get the best bets from VSIN hosts and contributors for the Coach of the Year market, let's look at the last 10 winners and the attributes that allowed them to win.

Kevin Stefanski (2023, 2020)

2023: Four-win improvement (7-10 to 11-6); five different starting quarterbacks

2020: First-year head coach (6-10 to 11-5); Browns first playoff appearance since 2002

Brian Daboll (2022)

First-year head coach; from 4-13 (Joe Judge) to 9-7-1; Giants first playoff appearance, first winning record since 2016

Mike Vrabel (2021)

Followed up 11-5 season with a 12-5 record; got zero votes in 2020; second straight division title and third straight playoff appearance

John Harbaugh (2019)

14-2 record, +249 in point differential; four-win improvement over 2018

Matt Nagy (2018)

First-year head coach; from 5-11 to 12-4 (!); Bears first playoff appearance, division title since 2010

Sean McVay (2017)

First-year head coach; from 4-12 to 11-5 (!); Rams first playoff appearance since 2004, first division title since 2003; Jared Goff first year as full-time starter

Jason Garrett (2016)

13-3 record, nine-win improvement over 2015; Dak Prescott rookie year

Ron Rivera (2015)

Eight-win improvement; 15-1 best record in NFL

Bruce Arians (2014)

Second year with Cardinals as first-time head coach at age 60 (won Coach of the Year for Colts in 2012 as interim for Chuck Pagano); navigated Carson Palmer torn ACL

So, we've got success, improvement year-over-year, and adversity, which we aren't really able to handicap before the season as the main ingredients for the Coach of the Year.

Now, let's turn it over to our VSIN hosts and contributors for their best bets in the Coach of the Year market.



FEMI ABEBEFE

KEVIN O'CONNELL (25/1)

To be completely transparent, I'm looking for all sorts of ways to play on the Minnesota Vikings ahead of the 2024 NFL season. I think public perception and the betting market have gone way too far on downgrading the Vikes after the departure of quarterback Kirk Cousins. I think Minnesota can make the playoffs and, if they do that, head coach Kevin O'Connell will be in the conversation to win Coach of the Year.

When deciding who to bet on in this market, I always look at two things - win total and pedigree of the expected starting quarterback. Let's start with the win total where the Vikings are around 6.5 or 7 wins, pending your sportsbook of choice. A win total of seven is the sweet spot when it comes to preseason expectations. It signals that there's a lot of upside to surprise and ultimately impress the voting bloc should the team end up on the right side of variance throughout the season.

History tells us that you want a coach who can go Over their preseason win total by at least two wins to be in the conversation, but probably more to ultimately win. That becomes more difficult for teams that enter the year with high expectations. If the Vikings can win nine or 10 games and make the playoffs, KOC will get a ton of praise from NFL media.

Which leads me to the next criteria - expected starting quarterback. The Vikings will have a quarterback competition this training camp between veteran Sam Darnold and rookie J.J. McCarthy. Neither QB is anywhere close to established enough to take credit away from O'Connell should the Vikings make the playoffs. Regardless if we think it's silly or not, something as trivial as "who gets the credit?" can be the deciding factor in who ultimately wins an award. Essentially, you want to avoid coaches who are attached to future Hall of Fame quarterbacks.

Lastly, whomever starts at QB for the Vikings will be in a great setup. O'Connell is one of the better offensive minds in the sport, the team has great skill-position players (highlighted by All-Pro wide receiver Justin Jefferson) and they have a really good offensive line. On the other side of the ball, they're coordinated by the aggressive Brian Flores and used this offseason to get him some new toys in the front seven in edge rushers Jonathan Greenard and Andrew Van Ginkel.

The Vikings are being priced like a team in a full rebuild, which is disrespectful to the talent on the roster and the head guy on the sidelines. I'll back O'Connell at these prices all day long.

ADAM BURKE

NICK SIRIANNI (40/1)

It isn't easy for an established, successful head coach to win Coach of the Year, but I think Sirianni has the right formula to do it. For non-rookie coaches, finishing with the best record is one way to do it and the Eagles absolutely have the potential and upside to do that. Sirianni didn't get much love for his 14-3 season in 2022 with the Eagles, even though he improved the team by five wins and really should have been talked about in a different way. Maybe he gets a nod from voters this season if he does something similar.

This kind of feels like it could be the 2019 season when John Harbaugh won it with a Ravens team that went 14-2 after finishing 10-6 the year prior. Matt LaFleur's Packers were excellent and had a seven-win improvement, but he finished third as a rookie head coach. The other first-year head coaches were Kliff Kingsbury (5-10-1), Vic Fangio (7-9), Freddie Kitchens (6-10), Brian Flores (5-11), and Zac Taylor (2-14).

Obviously the hype train is high around Raheem Morris, Jim Harbaugh, and even Mike Macdonald, but those are all priced in. Morris is a reasonable choice at +1300, but we're also banking on Kirk Cousins off of a torn Achilles. I'd also look to bet on Morris in-season because the Falcons play the Eagles on the road and Chiefs at home within the first three games. You may very well get a better number if they are 1-2 or even 0-3 with the new-look Steelers in Week 1.

Instead, I think Sirianni makes some sense at a big price. He's upgraded both coordinators with Kellen Moore and Vic Fangio to help an Eagles team that started 10-1 last year and finished 11-6. Jalen Hurts seemed hurt most of last season. The NFC East still features two of the league's lesser teams and the schedule is quite reasonable.

Philly's toughest early-season games are all at home until they go to Cincinnati in Week 8 and then Dallas in Week 10. Sirianni could also get praise for "figuring it out" after the 1-5 ending and the embarrassing loss to the Bucs in the postseason. I think this is a team with a remarkably high ceiling in 2024 and the betting markets back it up with the Eagles +550 to get the NFC's No. 1 seed.

BEN WILSON

MIKE MACDONALD (22/1)

It's comical that the leading candidates for NFL Coach of the Year heading into the season are all in charge of teams with playoff expectations. Of the five coaches who led the preseason odds board, all of them have win totals of at least 8.5 (with heavy Over juice) and only Jim Harbaugh's LA Chargers are underdogs to make the playoffs (+110). Newsflash: coaches of teams with high expectations do not generally win this award! Unless you are the '07 Patriots (16-0), '15 Panthers (15-1), or '19 Ravens (14-2) and put together an undisputedly elite regular season, it's hard to make a case for the head coaches of the perceived upper-echelon teams.

While Seattle did go 9-8 in 2023, expectations are low amidst a competitive and improving division, with a win total at 7.5 and odds to make the playoffs at nearly 2/1. Enter new head man Mike Macdonald, who led Baltimore's top-10 defense each of the past two seasons and brings a breath of fresh air to the Pacific Northwest, where outgoing coach Pete Carroll relied too much on rah-rah energy and too little on attention to detail. A defensive unit that was 31st against the run and 26th against the pass (EPA/Play) while allowing the sixth-most yards/drive in the league stands to take a giant leap with a proven defensive mind in Macdonald at the helm.

Macdonald inherits a quarterback in Geno Smith who has been a top-15 QB (Completion Percentage Over Expectation + EPA/Play) and an offense that's finished top-10 in YPP each of the last two seasons. It's not at all unrealistic to believe the Seahawks can take a leap forward in 2024, which would put Macdonald on the short list for COY. At 22/1, it's a much better value play than any of the other short shots.

SPREAD, HANDLE AND BETS

HOW TO WIN WITH NFL BETTING SPLITS

By Josh Appelbaum

The NFL is king when it comes to sports betting. No other league comes close in terms of public interest, viewership, and most of all, tickets and handle generated. The vast majority of bettors who wager on the NFL are considered “public” bettors, which means they are largely making picks based upon gut instinct and favoritism. Most public bettors will gravitate toward favorites and Overs, as they prefer to bet on “good” teams and root for high-scoring games littered with big plays and touchdowns. In the end, this is a losing strategy because it plays right into the sportsbooks hands, who set razor sharp lines that are hard to beat and prey upon public bias.

One of the best ways to improve your NFL betting results is to leave your bias at the door and instead make wagers based on cold, hard data. This means learning how to study and analyze the betting market so that you can make data-driven bets based on your head and not your heart.

At VSIN, our No. 1 goal is to help bettors make the smartest, most informed bet possible. One of our most popular resources, and most viewed page on our website, is our VSIN Betting Splits, which come from DraftKings and are updated every five minutes.

If you already incorporate betting splits into your handicapping, consider this a refresher. If you are totally new to Betting Splits, here are a few tips to keep in mind when betting the NFL.

NFL Betting Splits Expanded Splits									
Thursday, September 5	Spread	Handle	Bets	Total	Handle	Bets	Money	Handle	Bets
Baltimore Ravens	+3	87%	76%	47.5	6%	27%	+130	72%	49%
Kansas City Chiefs	-3	13%	24%	47.5	94%	73%	-155	28%	51%
Friday, September 6	Spread	Handle	Bets	Total	Handle	Bets	Money	Handle	Bets
Green Bay Packers	+1.5	19%	24%	48.5	9%	28%	+102	41%	32%
Philadelphia Eagles	-1.5	81%	76%	48.5	91%	72%	-122	59%	68%
Sunday, September 8	Spread	Handle	Bets	Total	Handle	Bets	Money	Handle	Bets
Arizona Cardinals	+7	85%	54%	48	50%	34%	+280	60%	15%
Buffalo Bills	-7	15%	46%	48	50%	66%	-355	40%	85%
Carolina Panthers	+5	29%	40%	40.5	9%	40%	+170	24%	17%
New Orleans Saints	-5	71%	60%	40.5	91%	60%	-205	76%	83%
Tennessee Titans	+4.5	45%	57%	43.5	64%	35%	+180	71%	29%
Chicago Bears	-4.5	55%	43%	43.5	36%	65%	-218	29%	71%
Houston Texans	-1.5	75%	83%	48	64%	43%	-122	78%	83%
Indianapolis Colts	+1.5	25%	17%	48	36%	57%	+102	22%	17%
Jacksonville Jaguars	+3.5	39%	36%	49	4%	44%	+150	20%	11%
Miami Dolphins	-3.5	61%	64%	49	96%	56%	-180	80%	89%
New England Patriots	+9	24%	37%	43	8%	27%	+320	21%	10%
Cincinnati Bengals	-9	76%	63%	43	92%	73%	-410	79%	90%
Pittsburgh Steelers	+2.5	77%	69%	43	8%	49%	+120	90%	61%
Atlanta Falcons	-2.5	23%	31%	43	92%	51%	-142	10%	39%
Minnesota Vikings	+1	7%	50%	41.5	26%	42%	-108	26%	65%
New York Giants	-1	93%	50%	41.5	74%	58%	-112	74%	35%

GO CONTRARIAN

It's no secret that the NFL is the most heavily bet public sport. It's also no secret that the sportsbooks generate millions in revenue every football season because, in the end, the public loses more often than they win. If betting the NFL were easy, Average Joes would become millionaires, quit their day jobs and bet full time. But that just isn't the case. In fact, it's the exact opposite. In the end, betting with the masses is a losing endeavor. Instead of being with the herd, savvy, data-driven bettors look to go against the grain and back the unpopular side. In doing so, they can bet against public bias and capitalize on undervalued lines.

The easiest way to go contrarian using VSIN Betting Splits is to focus on the "bets" column listed next to the spread. This refers to the percentage of spread bets each team is receiving. Because spread bets are the most common bet type in the NFL, you want to focus on the spread tickets specifically because that is where the most public bias exists.

Next, set a line of demarcation of 65/35. This means focusing on games in which one side is receiving 65% of spread bets or more and the other side is receiving 35% of spread bets or less. The team getting 65% or more would be considered the "public" side (red flag) while the team getting 35% or less would be the "contrarian" side. You would then want to bet on the unpopular teams getting 35% or less.

In the screenshot shown, here would be the top contrarian plays:

Chiefs -3 (only 24% of bets)
Packers +1.5 (only 24%)
Colts +1.5 (only 17%)
Falcons -2.5 (only 31%)

Keep in mind that going contrarian is even more profitable in primetime games due to the increased public participation and higher ticket counts. This means leaning on teams getting less than 35% of tickets on Thursday Night Football, Sunday Night Football and Monday Night Football.

BET VS. DOLLAR DISCREPANCIES

Going contrarian is a foundational pillar for data-driven bettors as it assures you are betting against the public and placing yourself on the side of the house, who always wins. However, it's only one piece of the puzzle when trying to place a smart wager. The second ingredient is making sure you are also on the sharp side, which means you are betting with the wiseguys who win at a high rate, not against them. One of the easiest ways to look for sharp action is to compare the percentage of bets to the percentage of dollars (or handle). The goal is to identify teams who are receiving more money than bets (ideally at least 10% or more). This means that they are taking in a larger share of money, which is likely to come from wiseguys with deeper pockets.

Once again, focus solely on the spread "bets" and "handle" column, as the spread is the most popular bet type. If a team is receiving 30% of spread bets, but 50% of the handle, that signals smart money in their favor. However, if a team is receiving 50% of bets, but only 30% of the handle, that is a red flag which means they are likely generating mostly public support. Remember this phrase: "Low bets, higher dollars."

In the screenshot shown, here would be the top bet vs dollar discrepancy plays:

Cardinals +7 (only 54% bets but 85% money)
Giants -1 (only 50% bets but 93% money)

LINE MOVEMENT

The beauty of bet splits is that they allow bettors to quickly identify where the public is as well as where the sharp action is leaning. However, bet splits shouldn't be used in a vacuum. The last piece of the bet split puzzle is to study the line movement for each particular game and see how it lines up with the bet split data. Simply put, the bet splits show the current snapshot of the game and how it's being bet in the market. But you need to be aware of how the line opened and how it moved to better understand the overall story. Has the line risen, fallen or stayed the same? This is critical information that can better inform your decision making process.

In order to pull up the line history for each game, simply click the "Expanded Splits" tab in the top right corner of the VSIN NFL Betting Splits page. Then click "History" in the bottom left corner of any particular game. It will then open up another box that shows a snapshot of the betting market from beginning to middle to end. The key is scrolling down to the very bottom and isolating where the line opened at. Then you can quickly see which direction it is moving by comparing the opener to the current odds.

One of the best ways to identify sharp action is through Reverse Line Movement (RLM), which is when the betting line moves away from the popular side and toward the unpopular side. To identify RLM, look for games where the line is moving away from the team getting a majority of bets and toward the team getting the minority of bets. If that team is also receiving a "low bets, higher dollars" bet split, even better.

For example, maybe a team is receiving 30% of spread bets but 60% of spread dollars and has moved from +7.5 to 7. Or maybe a team is getting 35% of bets but 50% of money has moved from -3.5 to -4. The ultimate goal is for the line to be moving in the direction of the team getting low bets and higher dollars.

Lastly: when it comes to bet splits, take the early numbers with a grain of salt, as they are subject to change. The numbers you see on a Tuesday could be vastly different by the time you get to Sunday, especially since the public tends to bet later in the week anyway. As a result, lean on the percentages when they are the strongest, which is closer to game day.

For more information on how to read the betting market and make smart data-driven bets, stay tuned right here at VSIN.com.

MAKINEN'S SIM PAINTS SEASON WIN TOTAL PICTURE

By Steve Makinen

This year's NFL schedule again features 17 games for each team, an odd number that I am still having trouble getting used to. Hopefully after a few years of 17-game slates, bettors are no longer getting tripped up when analyzing the season-win props. However, running power ratings against the full schedule always helps eliminate any confusion.

Bettors can pretty much get in on the season-win wagers at any of their favorite establishments right now, but for this particular piece, we will be comparing my projections against the numbers set by our friends over at DraftKings. If you're a savvy bettor who prides yourself on shopping for and jumping on the best number available, you will be able to find differences up to 0.5 wins or more or variations on money lines associated with the prop at other locales. One of the things I love about the DK offering is that bettors can opt for tiered options on their win total props. For instance, if a team's set -110/-110 number is 8.5 wins, you can also bet them at 4.5, 6.5, 10.5, etc.

In this exercise, I have simulated the 2024 schedules for each team using their actual opponents and my latest power ratings, including the team-specific home and road field ratings. I should note that my current NFL home-field advantage ratings settled at about 1.75 points at the conclusion of last season, and I have kept them at this point heading into 2024. You'll see the standings on the chart below, followed by a team-by-team list of the opponents and projected point spreads. Use these numbers to bet the season win totals or any "games of the year" that have been released by books.

For my power ratings, I generally tend to follow the betting markets first and foremost until teams accumulate statistics. I do make adjustments from the betting markets based on certain factors. For one, if you consider the recent strengths of the last four Super Bowl champion teams, they generally shared a handful of different personnel grouping strengths, and I value them in this particular order:

- 1) Quarterback Play
- 2) Ability to pressure opposing passer
- 3) Defensive back play; shutting down receivers and creating turnovers
- 4) Protecting the quarterback on offense
- 5) Skill/volume of offensive playmakers

When analyzing the results of the schedule simulation, bettors should be able to make their own personal adjustments to the numbers based upon things like how hard the slate is at the outset, grouped road/home games, game difficulty at home or on the road, and placement of the bye week in the schedule. These are all key variables that can lend to a team having a better or worse season than the oddsmakers project. Also, are there any key player situations that need to be accounted for, such as possible suspensions, or injury questions to key players? Are players that teams are counting on really fully healthy?

I've also included all of the pre-set neutral games on the schedule. The teams affected are:

2024 Neutral Games

Green Bay vs. Philadelphia (Brazil)
NY Jets vs. Minnesota (London)
Jacksonville vs. Chicago (London)
Jacksonville vs. New England (London)
NY Giants vs. Carolina (Germany)

Here are a few highlights of the study, and some of my own observations based upon the season win totals offered by DraftKings Sportsbook as of June 17.

STEVE'S TOP 4 TEAMS EXPECTED TO WIN MORE GAMES THAN PROP

1. NEW ENGLAND – DraftKings: 4.5, Steve's Projection: 6, Difference: +1.5
2. ARIZONA – DraftKings: 6.5, Steve's Projection: 7.4, Difference: +0.9
3. LAS VEGAS – DraftKings: 6.5, Steve's Projection: 7.3, Difference: +0.8
4. DENVER – DraftKings: 5.5, Steve's Projection: 6.2, Difference: +0.7

Of note, last year, four teams (Indianapolis, Dallas, Green Bay, and LA Rams) were projected to have a +0.7 win difference, and all four easily surpassed their win props.

STEVE'S TOP 3 TEAMS EXPECTED TO WIN FEWER GAMES THAN PROP

1. PITTSBURGH – DraftKings: 8.5, Steve's Projection: 7.6, Difference: -0.9
2. BALTIMORE – DraftKings: 11.5, Steve's Projection: 10.8, Difference: -0.7
3. DALLAS – DraftKings: 10.5, Steve's Projection: 9.8, Difference: -0.7

Of last year's three teams to have a -0.7 win difference or more (Cleveland, LA Chargers, Cincinnati), two went well below their win props, while Cleveland actually exceeded it significantly.

According to my figures, Houston plays the league's toughest schedule, at least as it stands now, based on opponent/home/road breakdown. The Texans ranked just ahead of the Broncos and Steelers in that regard. Not only will they have to face the tough NFC North division foes, they also get a first-place AFC schedule after winning the South division a year ago. For what it's worth, the Commanders faced the toughest schedule in this column last season and went on to a terrible 4-13 campaign that led to numerous offseason changes.

The league's easiest schedule belongs to the Falcons, a team looking to make a leap in the NFC after acquiring QB Kirk Cousins in the offseason. A primary reason for the schedule softness is that Atlanta is in the weak NFC South division. At this point, my power ratings have the Falcons favored in 13 of 17 games, and the biggest underdog line they face is +3.8 points at Philadelphia in Week 2. This could be a nice bounce-back season for a team loaded with offensive weaponry. For the record, the next easiest schedules on paper belong to the Saints & Cowboys.

Kansas City (11.6) is projected to win the most games of any team in the NFL, followed by San Francisco (11.0), Baltimore (10.8), and the Lions (10.2). There are two other teams among the double-digit win projections. The other projected division winners include Buffalo (10.0), Houston (9.2), Philadelphia (10.0), and Atlanta (9.3).

Last year, only one team was projected to win six (6.0) games or less, and that was Arizona (5.1). The Cardinals went on to a 4-13 season. This year, there are two: Carolina (5.8) and New England (6.0). Of course, those win totals would represent improvements for both franchises, each of which starts new eras under rookie head coaches.

Assuming the projections play out accurately, the AFC's top-seeded team for the playoffs would be Kansas City. Baltimore, the #2 would be slotted to take on #7 Miami in the expanded playoff format. Also, in the wildcard

playoff round, the #4 Texans would host #5 Cincinnati, and Buffalo would face the Jets in the #3-#6 matchup. For the NFC, the top seed would be San Francisco, while the wildcard matchups would be Detroit-LA Rams, Green Bay-Atlanta, and Philadelphia-Dallas.

The largest point spread at the outset of the season is expected to be a November divisional game featuring the Broncos at Kansas City, with the Chiefs shown as 12.4-point favorites. There are seven other games showing double-digit lines, with the majority featuring the Chiefs, Ravens, 49ers, or Bills at home. Notably, there were 11 games projected to have double-digit point spreads last year and 36 the year before, so the parity seems to have been enhanced greatly over two years.

Of the 267 matchups played at host stadiums, 98 of them are showing point spreads designating road favorites, up from 85 in 2022. The Ravens claim the distinction of being projected as road favorites the most times for the 2024 season, appearing as such in eight road games. On the opposite side of the spectrum are the most frequent home underdogs, those being the Panthers and Patriots, each expected to be in that role eight times.

It should be noted that prior to each of the last four seasons, using this same exercise, my power ratings correctly picked eight or nine of the 14 playoff teams each season. Last year I was correct on four of seven AFC teams and four of seven NFC teams. If I'm able to predict about eight of 14 playoff teams once again, that would leave room for six teams not counted in as of now. As a betting man, my best guess for which teams those would be would include the Chargers, Jaguars, Browns, Commanders, Buccaneers, or Bears.

OTHER INTERESTING SCHEDULING TIDBITS

- San Francisco faces an interesting six-game set in Weeks 7-13 as it plays four different teams coming out of bye weeks! Kansas City (Week 7), Dallas (8), Seattle (11), and Buffalo (13) will all have extra rest when squaring off against the 49ers. Their other two games during that stretch are against Tampa Bay and Green Bay. It should be noted that five of the six opponents during that brutal stretch for head coach Kyle Shanahan's club are returning playoff teams.
- There is only one other team that will face three different teams coming out of bye games, although not consecutively. That team is Indianapolis.
- The Lions claim the distinction of facing the most teams heading into their bye weeks, three.
- There are four different situations in which teams have a three-game set against opponents averaging a power rating of less than 19.6. Theoretically, these are the easiest three-game stretches in the league this year:
 1. Atlanta: Weeks 16-18, 19.17 average opponent PR
 2. NY Jets: Weeks 3-5, 19.43
 3. Washington: Weeks 7-9, 19.53
 4. Las Vegas: Weeks 3-5, 19.57

On the argument of toughest stretches, there are five different situations in which teams have a three-game set against opponents averaging a power rating of more than 28.7:

1. Pittsburgh: Weeks 15-17, 29.03 average opponent PR
2. Denver: Weeks 9-11, 28.97
3. Las Vegas: Weeks 8-11, 28.93
4. Las Vegas: Weeks 7-9, 28.73

TEAM	DRAFTKINGS WIN TOTAL	MAKINEN'S PROJECTED WIN TOTAL	DIFFERENCE
ARIZONA	6.5	7.4	-0.9
ATLANTA	9.5	9.3	0.2
BALTIMORE	11.5	10.8	0.7
BUFFALO	10.5	10.0	0.5
CAROLINA	5.5	5.8	-0.3
CHICAGO	8.5	8.0	0.5
CINCINNATI	10.5	9.9	0.6
CLEVELAND	8.5	8.2	0.3
DALLAS	10.5	9.8	0.7
DENVER	5.5	6.2	-0.7
DETROIT	10.5	10.2	0.3
GREEN BAY	9.5	10.0	-0.5
HOUSTON	9.5	9.2	0.3
INDIANAPOLIS	8.5	8.1	0.4
JACKSONVILLE	8.5	8.2	0.3
KANSAS CITY	11.5	11.6	-0.1
LA CHARGERS	8.5	8.6	-0.1
LA RAMS	8.5	9.0	-0.5
LAS VEGAS	6.5	7.3	-0.8
MIAMI	9.5	9.0	0.5
MINNESOTA	6.5	7.0	-0.5
NEW ENGLAND	4.5	6.0	-1.5
NEW ORLEANS	7.5	8.0	-0.5
NY GIANTS	6.5	6.9	-0.4
NY JETS	9.5	9.2	0.3
PHILADELPHIA	10.5	10.0	0.5
PITTSBURGH	8.5	7.6	0.9
SAN FRANCISCO	11.5	11.0	0.5
SEATTLE	7.5	7.6	-0.1
TAMPA BAY	8.5	8.2	0.3
TENNESSEE	6.5	6.8	-0.3
WASHINGTON	6.5	6.9	-0.4

GETTING YOUR PROP ON

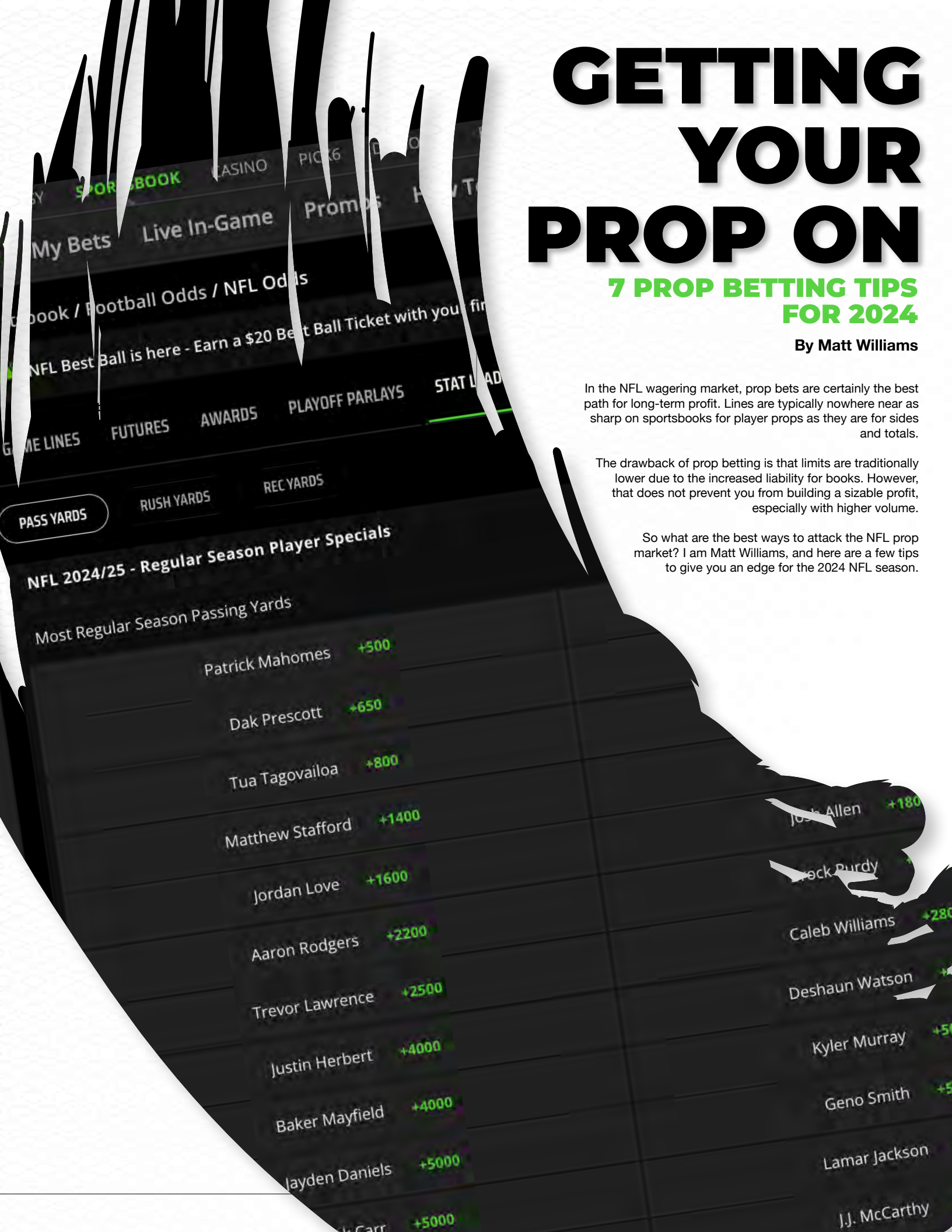
7 PROP BETTING TIPS FOR 2024

By Matt Williams

In the NFL wagering market, prop bets are certainly the best path for long-term profit. Lines are typically nowhere near as sharp on sportsbooks for player props as they are for sides and totals.

The drawback of prop betting is that limits are traditionally lower due to the increased liability for books. However, that does not prevent you from building a sizable profit, especially with higher volume.

So what are the best ways to attack the NFL prop market? I am Matt Williams, and here are a few tips to give you an edge for the 2024 NFL season.



NFL 2024/25 - Regular Season Player Specials

Most Regular Season Passing Yards

Patrick Mahomes +500

Dak Prescott +650

Tua Tagovailoa +800

Matthew Stafford +1400

Jordan Love +1600

Aaron Rodgers +2200

Trevor Lawrence +2500

Justin Herbert +4000

Baker Mayfield +4000

Jayden Daniels +5000

Lamar Jackson +5000

Josh Allen +180

Patrick Mahomes +180

Caleb Williams +280

Deshaun Watson +180

Kyle Allen +180

Geno Smith +500

Lamar Jackson +500

J.J. McCarthy +500

LINE SHOPPING

My first tip is a classic back-to-basics one: line shopping. I am taking the time to explain this crucial point because it is paramount to long-term success in sports betting.

Often, sports bettors will look at a prop listed at -115 and -120 and think, “Well, they are basically the same.”

No. No they are NOT.

Let me give you an example to show just how vital line shopping can be over a full season:

Let’s say, for argument’s sake, that you are a \$100 bettor who placed 100 wagers. Now, let’s also say that you did quite well and won 60% of your bets, going 60-40.

If you placed all of those bets at -110 (52.38% implied probability), you would have made a profit of \$1,454.

If you made those same exact bets at -130 (56.52% implied probability), you would have made a profit of \$615.

If you made those same exact bets at -150 (60% implied probability), you would have broken even.

Eye-opening? It should be.

Minor odds shifts may not matter much for a single wager, but over time that can have a dramatic impact on your sustainability.

Taking the time to open as many sportsbook accounts as possible to secure the best pricing is a fundamental step to successful sports betting.

ALWAYS DO RESEARCH

Tip No. 2 is also a fundamental basic: Never assume and always do the work.

There are often variables you may be unaware of driving the market—injuries, weather, or any other form of valuable information. This can lead to betting lines that are “too good to be true.”

For example, if you notice that a certain running back is listed for Over/Under a threshold in rushing yards that you feel is a slam dunk, be sure to take the time and double-check news reports.

Perhaps the head coach publicly stated there would be a change in the running backs workload. Maybe a teammate is returning from injury, or the running back at hand got banged up in practice.

This may seem obvious to many of you, but it is paramount that you build good habits of being patient and checking for variables that could impact betting lines.

A few minutes of research can save you a ton of money over the long haul.

REDUCE VARIANCE

The beauty of prop betting is being given the ability to hone in on a more specific subset of variables that impact your wager.

For example, if you are betting on rushing yards, you can concentrate on the player's workload, yards before/after contact, offensive line, and run defense.

If you are betting on passing completions, you will focus on quarterback accuracy, wide receiver matchups, and the defensive scheme.

The point is, there are very few variables outside of the scope that will impact your wager. You can, for the most part, build your analysis on data that directly impacts your prop bet. This reduces variance and allows for a more accurate projection.

On the other hand, you should avoid popular prop traps like "Anytime Touchdown."

Just hear me out. I can feel some of you rolling your eyes at me right now. "But Matt, touchdown props are fun!" Maybe. But winning is more fun. Touchdown props have almost no bankable correlation to reliable statistics and are at the mercy of uncontested variance.

Game script can greatly determine whether a running back or wide receiver is more likely to see the end zone or if they see the end zone at all. You also have to rely on the variant decision-making of an NFL head coach or offensive coordinator, who last time I checked can not be trusted to make predictable decisions on a consistent basis.

Touchdowns are also variant in nature. Long touchdowns are an unpredictable occurrence, while red zone touchdowns are often determined by inches. Long story short, there are far too many variables that are impossible to predict, so making touchdown props is a losing proposition long term.

You should focus on limiting the amount of question marks in your analysis so that you can more confidently project the outcome.

ANALYZE SPECIFIC MATCHUPS

This tip piggybacks on the last one in terms of reducing variance, but I am going to take it one step further.

We now live in a world where statistical data is both widely available and incredibly in-depth. So, there is no excuse for not taking advantage of every bit of relevant information we can get our hands on.

If you are betting on total receptions for a slot receiver, you should go well beyond comparing simple metrics like average receptions per game versus defensive receptions allowed.

You should be looking at how many routes the wide receiver runs per game, the amount of targets they are seeing, and even the average depth of target. Why? Because you can compare those metrics to how the opposing defense sets up in terms of zone versus man, how close they play slot receivers to the line, and how many receptions they allow specifically to slot receivers.

The above is a specific example, but the thought process can be used for any NFL player prop where matchups come into play.

If this all sounds a bit intimidating, there are plenty of resources to farm advanced data such as NFL Next Gen, NFL Savant, Pro Football Reference, and the valuable tools on VSiN's website.

BET THE UNDER

Spoiler Alert: It is more difficult for something to happen than to simply not. Action is required for yards, receptions, and interceptions. There are far fewer paths to victory when betting the Over than sitting back and rooting for nothing to happen.

This concept may seem too simple for some, but I assure you it's mathematically sound. Bad weather? Helps the Under. Injuries? Helps the Under. Random stat vultures? Helps the Under.

Furthermore, sportsbooks will typically tax the Over more due to its popularity. People love to bet the over. It's more fun to root for, and the natural default for most sports bettors is to hammer the Over.

However, there are so many paths to victory when betting the Under that your default setting should always be finding reasons for the Over to fail rather than succeed. Unders are boring and somewhat stressful. But if you enjoy winning, they are your secret weapon.

RECOGNIZE ACTIONABLE TRENDS

You always want to be ahead of the market when it comes to sports betting, but you are never going to get there by scraping the surface. It is important to identify actionable trends that can help you find hidden value in betting lines. The easiest way to do this is to pay attention to meaningful shifts in player usage.

Do you notice that a certain player has seen an increase in total snaps in each of the past three weeks? Is there a rookie wide receiver that is always the top target whenever they are on the field? Has a head coach started to rely on one running back in the red zone more often over the past few games?

This data may not be obvious when looking at a box score, but can be invaluable in terms of projecting future results.

BET EARLY AND OFTEN

It's always preferable to have as much information as possible in regard to weather and player injuries.

That said it is inherently advantageous to be aggressive during the early prop market. Sharp bettors will deflate early value almost immediately, giving you a limited window to identify and leverage opening lines.

As mentioned earlier, there is a ton of advanced data available to help bettors expose the prop market. Unfortunately, you are not the only person trying to accomplish this goal. So be sure to jump in and swim around the prop pool early in the week if you want the best opportunity to benefit.

USING NEW ARMS TO GET TO THE COUNTER

By Steve Makinen

In this piece, I'll introduce the five rookie quarterbacks expected to start for their respective franchises this season and then move on to the three veteran quarterbacks who have found new homes for 2024.

FIVE NFL ROOKIE QBS EXPECTED TO TEST BETTING SYSTEMS IN 2024

After just one rookie quarterback saw significant playing time in 2022, last year brought five that started at least seven games for their teams. Two were expected first-season starters, while the other three saw extensive action after taking over for injured incumbents. The overall number would have been bigger had the Colts' Anthony Richardson not been lost for the season after four games. This year's NFL draft was a whirlwind for those who love seeing young quarterbacks get injected into starting lineups, as six QBs were drafted in the first 12 picks. Five of these guys are expected to start for their respective franchises.

CALEB WILLIAMS (CHICAGO)

Williams, the top pick in the draft, takes over for Justin Fields for the Bears. The offense showed sparks of promise under Fields in his three seasons but nothing resembling a consistent downfield passing game. Williams lit up the scoreboard at two different schools in his three years in college football and, according to most experts, was the quarterback most ready for early success in the NFL.

JAYDEN DANIELS (WASHINGTON)

Daniels was the Heisman Trophy winner this past season in college football out of LSU and was as dynamic of a talent as there has been at the QB position in a long time. His ability to run and throw has Washington fans tremendously excited for the future. Interestingly, the Commanders' biggest needs last year were on the defensive side of the ball, as they allowed over 30 PPG while the offense, led by the departed Sam Howell, was, at times, quite prolific.

DRAKE MAYE (NEW ENGLAND)

If any of the top quarterbacks in this year's draft were considered prototypical NFL passers, it would be Maye, who the Patriots selected at #3 out of UNC. He is going to be tasked with taking over an offense that has floundered in recent years under Mac Jones, who has now moved on to Jacksonville. Maye will be the first QB in the post-Bill Belichick era in New England, and most experts expect aggressive changes for the franchise in terms of style of play.

J.J. MCCARTHY (MINNESOTA)

McCarthy guided Michigan to the national title this past January and is probably the "steadiest" of the first-round picks expected to start this

year for their teams. The Vikings could be in somewhat of a rebuilding mode now however after moving on from QB Kirk Cousins. Their win total is set at a meager 6.5, just one full season removed from winning 13 games.

BO NIX (BRONCOS)

Perhaps the most controversial of the early QB picks in the draft, the Broncos have remained steadfast in the thought that Nix was the QB they wanted all along. He is the most seasoned of any of the five I have now named, and will start his first season as a 24-year-old after five college seasons for Auburn and Oregon in which he started 61 games. Nix replaces Russell Wilson after two volatile seasons for the franchise.

Michael Penix out of Washington was also a high draft pick for the Falcons but it is expected that he might wait and learn behind the newly acquired free agent Cousins, who I will address in the veterans section of this article later.

The struggling franchises that picked these former stars don't have the luxury of being patient, so they are thrusting their prized rookies into significant roles right out of the gate. With the importance of the quarterback position in the NFL, the decisions to give these guys starting spots immediately will have huge implications on the outright and betting results of their respective teams.

As such, I've made it a habit of tracking rookie QB records and betting systems in recent seasons. Knowing how they perform historically is of great advantage when it comes to taking on the bookmakers. Thankfully, there have been some discernible patterns in regards to rookie quarterback performance, and bettors should take notice and take advantage.

If you consider that there are 272 regular season games, and five rookies could be starting 80 or more of them, with potential for more depending upon injuries, coaching decisions, etc., understanding when these first-time signal callers perform at their best and worst levels is crucial. Last year, there were 55 starts made by starting rookie QBs.

In order to help readers get a jump on handicapping these rookie quarterbacks, I like to look back at how past rookies have fared in recent seasons. Of course, each new player will have to be evaluated on their own strengths, weaknesses, and team situation, but knowing how past players in similar spots have done or how those setting the odds judge these guys can only help.

I've logged all rookie quarterbacks who have started at least seven games in their initial season in the league over the last two decades. There have been 57 such players since 2004, including five in 2023 alone.

As you can see from the chart, the first players tracked are Ben Roethlisberger and Eli Manning, both eventual multi-time Super Bowl winners. In addition to analyzing the player-by-player performances for all 57 guys, I've also uncovered various betting systems that have been developed using these rookie quarterbacks. As a bettor, you should look to employ some of the more noteworthy systems when any of our 2024 rookie class is inserted as starters in their teams' rotations.

As you look at the chart, one of the first things you'll want to digest is that the majority of these rookie quarterbacks do, in fact, help their teams improve. Only 19 of the 57 teams showed a worse winning percentage in the new quarterback's games started that rookie season than they did the prior season. Four maintained the same winning percentage, while the other 34 helped their teams improve.

The combined success rate of these 57 players was 303-436-2 SU (41%) and 369-358-14 ATS (50.8%). You can't profit by simply backing or fading these rookies and their teams blindly, neither on money lines nor point spreads. That is where the systems below come in, guiding you to the spots in which they are best backed or faded.



BETTING SYSTEMS INVOLVING ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS

Using a 57-player sample dating back to 2004 and their individual game logs in that span, I was able to come up with several definitive betting systems, considering variables such as line ranges, home/road dichotomy, depth into the season, and type of opponent faced, among others. Let's dig right into them.

ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS ARE TRENDING DOWNWARD

- As I indicated winning percentages of 41% straight up and 50.8% ATS for rookie quarterbacks since 2004. The results of late are far worse. Since the start of the 2013 season, rookie quarterbacks who started at least seven games in a season are just 167-300-2 SU (35.8%) and 218-245-6 ATS (47.1%). In addition, only four of 38 rookie QBs in that span were able to lead his team to the playoffs that season, the latest being CJ Stroud of the Texans. Furthermore, this past season saw the #1 pick, Bryce Young of the Panthers, guide his team to the worst won-lost percentage drop in his starts for any QB in the last 20 years.

ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS ARE A RISKY BET IN THE POSTSEASON

- In their last 16 playoff games, rookie quarterbacks are just 5-11 SU and ATS (31.3%). Take away Joe Flacco's 2009 run and the record drops to 3-10 SU and ATS.

ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS HAVE GOTTEN OFF TO VERY SLOW STARTS OF LATE

- As part of their overall recent struggles, rookie quarterbacks have struggled for bettors as early-season starters, going 2-18-1 SU and 5-15-1 ATS (25%) in their L21 Week 1-3 games. They are also on a 22-7 Under the total (75.9%) run in their last 29 such contests.
- After a 45-27-1 ATS run from 2004-20, the tables have been turned on rookie QBs the last couple of seasons, as they have gone just 2-17-2 in their last 17 games while leading their teams to just 16.6 PPG. Obviously, this has meant a lot of Unders on totals as well.

ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS HAVE EXPERIENCED MAJOR LATE-SEASON WOES

- For as much as rookie QBs have struggled early in recent years, over the long haul, or since 2008, the part of the season in which they have struggled worst is in weeks 10-15, as they are just 96-144 SU and 101-129-10 ATS (43.9%) in that time span.

ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS HAVE STRUGGLED ON THE ROAD, PARTICULARLY LATE IN THE SEASON

- The results of rookie quarterbacks on the road lately are startling. Since the start of the 2013 season, rookie starters have combined for a record of 107-105 ATS (50.5%) in home games but just 88-113 ATS (43.8%) in road/neutral games. In later season road games, week 10-EOY, they are just 32-94 SU and 52-72-2 ATS (41.9%).

DON'T FALL FOR THE BIG UNDERDOG POINT SPREADS WITH ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS

- Since 2015, rookie starting quarterbacks facing underdog lines of 6.5 points or more have won 15 games, going 15-108 SU and 45-75-3 ATS (37.5%).

ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS HAVE BEEN SOLID BETS IN THE HOME FAVORITE ROLE OVER THE LAST FOUR SEASONS

- Since the start of the 2020 season, rookie starting quarterbacks have taken care of business in the home favorite role, going 26-8 SU and 23-10-1 ATS (69.7%).

ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS ARE NOT GOOD BETS AS ROAD CHALK

- Over the last 12 seasons, rookie starting quarterbacks are 21-20 SU but 17-23-1 ATS (42.5%) as road favorites.

SCORING MORE THAN 17 POINTS IS A KEY BENCHMARK FOR OUTRIGHT AND ATS SUCCESS FOR ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS

- Since 2009, rookie starting quarterbacks whose teams have scored 17 points or less in a game are 27-253 SU and 56-217-7 ATS (20.5%), as opposed to 216-139 SU and 251-95-9 ATS (72.5%) when topping 17 points.

BY TYPE OF OPPONENT, DIVISIONAL AND NON-CONFERENCE MATCHUPS HAVE BEEN TOUGHER FOR ROOKIE STARTING QUARTERBACKS

- Since 2015, rookie QBs are just 39-92 SU and 52-75-4 ATS (40.9%) versus divisional opponents.
- Since 2018, rookie QBs are just 20-42 SU and 24-37-1 ATS (39.3%) versus non-conference foes.
- Since 2018, rookie QBs have fared well against non-divisional conference opponents, going 42-49 SU but 54-37 ATS (59.3%).

LOSSES HAVE TENDED TO SNOWBALL FOR ROOKIE QBs

- In their last 133 starts with their teams coming off outright losses, rookie QBs have gone just 42-91 SU and 58-73-2 ATS (44.3%). This trend dates back to 2018.

NON-SUNDAY GAMES HAVE BEEN A RESPITE FOR ROOKIE QBs

- Rookie quarterbacks have fared reasonably well under the spotlight of non-Sunday games lately, going 16-16 SU and 21-9-2 ATS (70%) in their last 32 such tries. Moreover, they are 18-5-1 ATS (78.3%) in their last 24 Monday Night contests.

THE KEY SYSTEMS FOR THREE VETERAN NFL QBS LEADING NEW TEAMS IN 2024

As opposed to drafting a rookie quarterback and promptly inserting him into their starting lineup, some franchises choose to go the veteran route and trade for or sign an experienced signal caller to try and bolster their immediate futures.

This strategy has brought fairly mixed results and ranges from winning Super Bowls that first year to plummeting below what they were prior. According to my records, there have been 28 instances over the last two decades in which teams brought in veteran QBs that had been in the league at least eight years and started extensively during that span for one or more teams.

Last year, this was the case for the Saints, who signed Derek Carr after he had spent the first nine years of his career with the Raiders. In a lot of cases, these acquisitions are some of the biggest storylines of the entire NFL offseason.

For 2024, we unofficially have three veteran quarterbacks expected to take over franchises for the first time. As you'll see, I've included Aaron Rodgers, who although he was acquired last year by the Jets, only played one regular season series before being lost to injury. Therefore, I consider this upcoming season to be his first hopefully full season with the team. Here are those three veteran QB faces in new places:

AARON RODGERS (JETS)

As I indicated earlier, the move to acquire Rodgers was actually completed last year for the Jets. However, the season-ending injury in Week 1 cost the franchise, and NFL fans for that matter, a shot at finding out what might have been. Rodgers' passer exploits with the Packers are well-known, and this Super Bowl champion and future Hall-of-Famer hopes to lift New York to new heights in 2024. Interestingly, a few of his top receiving targets were teammates in Green Bay. This will be a huge story to watch.

RUSSELL WILSON (PITTSBURGH)

The Russell Wilson experiment in Denver was a disaster and left the Broncos franchise in trouble both on the field and in terms of the salary

cap. The Steelers have acquired a heavily-discounted Wilson in hopes that he can be the missing piece the team has needed to get back in contention atop of the AFC. This franchise has been gritty and solid defensively and in the running game. Unfortunately, QB woes have held them back. A big season out of Wilson would change that narrative quickly.

KIRK COUSINS (ATLANTA)

The Falcons made a bold move in acquiring Cousins in the offseason to a massive contract. They then proceeded to confuse everyone by drafting QB Michael Penix with the eighth pick in the draft. In any case, Cousins' career has been checkered. While he has proven the ability to stuff the stat sheet with both Washington and Minnesota, postseason success has eluded him. Atlanta has a crop of talented young skill position players and he could be just what they needed to elevate their careers. If it doesn't work out for him, perhaps Penix gets rushed into duty early.

What I've done is logged all the veteran quarterbacks over the last two decades that have started at least eight games in their initial season with their new team after spending at least eight other seasons of extensive starting experience elsewhere. There have been 28 such players since 2004.

In fact, 17 of the 28 teams showed improved win-loss percentages over the previous season in the games that the new QB started. Still, only 15 of 28 had winning records as a starter that season, and only seven of the 28 started a playoff game for that team, highlighted by Tom Brady of the Bucs and Matthew Stafford of the Rams, who won back-to-back Super Bowls in 2021 and 2022. Brady's Bucs and Peyton Manning's Broncos were the most potent offenses of the group, both topping the 30+ PPG mark.

The combined success rate of these 28 players was 210-190-1 SU (52.5%) and 197-190-14 ATS (50.9%). Interestingly, only 10 of the 28 players produced a winning ATS mark, however. If you compare these numbers to those of the rookie quarterbacks in their first seasons, you'll find an improvement of 11.5% outright and 0.1% ATS. So, it is obvious these veteran players are a better choice for winning more games, albeit usually in a more expensive contract situation.



BETTING SYSTEMS INVOLVING VETERAN QUARTERBACKS IN THEIR FIRST YEAR WITH NEW TEAMS

Using a 28-player veteran QB sample dating back to 2004 and their individual game logs (401 games) in that span, I was able to come up with several definitive betting systems, considering variables such as line ranges, home/road dichotomy, depth into the season, and type of opponent faced, among others. Use these when handicapping the games of the Jets, Steelers, and Falcons this season.

VETERAN QUARTERBACKS START SLOW FOR THEIR NEW TEAMS

- It takes a little time for these veteran quarterbacks to find their footing with their new franchises. In fact, dating back to 2006, in the month of September, these guys have gone 37-25 Under the total (59.7%), averaging about 1.5 PPG less than usual offensively.

VETERAN QUARTERBACKS ARE BEST FOR THEIR NEW TEAMS IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

- I just showed how these veteran QBs in new places struggle a bit out of the gate. Well, like should be expected, these QBs play best in the key month of December, when postseason berths are usually on the line, going 47-43 SU and 50-37-3 ATS (57.5%) since 2004.

VETERAN QUARTERBACKS ARE A SOLID BET IN THE POSTSEASON

- In their last 12 playoff games, the veteran quarterbacks in new places are 9-3 SU and 8-4 ATS (66.7%).

NON-SUNDAY GAMES HAVE BEEN A STRUGGLE FOR VETERAN QBs WITH THEIR NEW TEAMS

- Veteran quarterbacks have struggled under the spotlight of non-Sunday games lately, going 19-32 SU and 19-31-1 ATS (38%) in their last 51 such tries for their new teams. Moreover, they are 8-16-1 ATS (33.3%) in their last 25 Monday Night contests.

VETERAN QUARTERBACKS THRIVE WITH THEIR NEW TEAMS AT HOME

- The results since 2005 of veteran quarterbacks playing with their new teams at home are quite impressive, as they have gone 113-65 SU and 95-72-11 ATS (56.9%).
- The point production in these contests has been 23.7 PPG, over 3 PPG better than on the road, a sign that even the most seasoned players can still get motivated by the love they feel from the home crowd. By comparison, in this same span, these vets are a 49.1% point spread cover on the road.

BY TYPE OF OPPONENT, NON-DIVISIONAL CONFERENCE MATCHUPS HAVE BEEN BEST FOR VETERAN STARTING QUARTERBACKS IN THEIR FIRST SEASON WITH NEW TEAMS

- Since 2005, veteran QBs in their first season with new teams have fared well against non-divisional conference opponents, going 77-62 SU but 77-60-2 ATS (56.2%).
- By comparison, these veterans are a little better than a 48% point spread cover against divisional and non-conference opponents.

VETERAN QBs HAVE SHOWN A TENDENCY TO LEAD THEIR TEAMS BACK WELL AFTER LOSSES

- In their last 135 starts with their new teams coming off outright losses, veteran QBs have gone 70-65 SU and 75-57-3 ATS (56.8%). This trend dates back to 2016.

VETERAN QUARTERBACKS HAVE PROVEN RELATIVELY TRUSTWORTHY AS BIG FAVORITES AT HOME WITH THEIR NEW TEAM

- Since 2004, veteran starting quarterbacks facing home chalk lines of 7.5 points or more have been quite successful, going 28-3 SU and 19-11-1 ATS (63.3%).

VETERAN QUARTERBACKS HAVE BEEN ATROCIOUS IN THE ROAD FAVORITE ROLE WITH NEW TEAMS

- Since the start of the 2004 season, veteran starting quarterbacks playing their first seasons with new teams have performed terribly in the road favorite role, 40-30 SU but 25-44-1 ATS (36.2%).

VETERAN QUARTERBACKS ARE CONSISTENT BETS AS SIZEABLE UNDERDOGS WITH NEW TEAMS

- Dating back to 2006, veteran starting quarterbacks in their first seasons with new teams have gone 40-65 SU but 60-40-5 ATS (60%) when playing as underdogs of three points or more.

I specifically used the word consistent in describing this performance level of veterans QBs as 3+ point underdogs in their first seasons with new teams because the records for both home and road are exactly 60% against the spread. Feel comfortable taking the points with these guys when the situations arise this season.



INSIGHT INTO THE IMPACT OF 7 NEW COACHES

By Michael Lombardi

As the New York Yankees owner, George Steinbrenner had a well-earned reputation for being quick to fire the manager. He wasn't interested in excuses; he expected winning results immediately. In Steinbrenner's first 23 seasons, he changed managers 20 times; Billy Martin was fired and rehired five times. The job offered little security as Steinbrenner believed a slight alteration could offer in-season results.

If George owned an NFL team, he would have needed to change. In football, a coach is rarely fired during the season, and an interim coach who is hired for the following season rarely works out. However, when a brand-new coach brings a new system, a new teaching method, and a new offense and defense, rapid change can occur.

Let's face it: Coaching matters in the NFL, from the head coach to the coordinators. Sometimes it's as simple as placing the existing players in their correct places, asking them to do what they are capable of. Managing the game to avoid losing is important. All of this sounds elementary in theory, yet it is often hard to practice.

We enter the 2024 NFL season with a somewhat predictable seven new head coaches. Regardless of the contracts or what occurred the prior season, the NFL always has a six-to-seven coach turnover rate. Dan Quinn, Jim Harbaugh, and Raheem Morris are receiving their second opportunities to be head coaches in the NFL. Meanwhile, Mike Macdonald, Jerod Mayo, Dave Canales, and Brian Callahan are getting their first crack at leading a team.

Mayo and Callahan never were coordinators of their respective areas of specialization, as neither called plays. Canales was a first-year coordinator, and Macdonald was in his second season.

To be successful in your first year, a new coach needs to recognize the team's main problems and then have a systematic plan to solve those issues. The coach who can best identify the problem and then solve it will be the person who turns their franchise around. The hiring process isn't as simple as "we need someone who can fix the quarterback or the defense". Those are the obvious problems that everyone understands. The best of these seven will be the coach who can solve the obvious one and all the others.

Which of the seven will make an impact? Let's examine each one, starting with the second-chance coaches.

JIM HARBAUGH - LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

Harbaugh is 44-19-1 as a head coach in the NFL, with a 5-3 playoff record and one Super Bowl appearance. Harbaugh wasn't fired from the 49ers. He was caught in a power struggle and left for his alma mater, Michigan.

Harbaugh only knows how to be a head coach. He has been nothing else, other than a player. He spent one season as a quarterback assistant with the Raiders, then became a head coach in college. He was destined to become a head coach. His leadership skills are elite, and his ultra-competitive nature becomes infused into his team's culture. He has made every team he has led much tougher, the old-fashioned way — with hard work, practicing football, tackling, being physical and playing hard for 60 minutes.

Harbaugh isn't a schemer; he is a leader of the team in all three phases — a big difference. He will manage the game and coach the coaches. He isn't afraid to make decisions or alter the plan. His situational football acumen is excellent, and that alone will give the Chargers an opportunity to win close games. Harbaugh will make a difference from the first game, and as the year goes along, his team will improve.

The Chargers found the right person to solve their problems, as they previously were not considered a physically or mentally tough team. They were soft front runners and had no accountability as they placed the burden of winning solely on star quarterback Justin Herbert. That all changed the day Harbaugh walked in the door. And for me, this was by far the best hire of the offseason, worthy of betting their Over win total. By mid-October, the Chargers will be tough, playing with great pad level and most of their opponents will be tailoring off.

RAHEEM MORRIS - ATLANTA FALCONS

In 2009, Morris took over for Jon Gruden in Tampa. The Bucs had finished 9-7 the year before, and since their Super Bowl win in 2002, they had two losing Wild Card appearances. That caused the Glazer family, owners of the Bucs, to remove Gruden and hire Morris. Morris won three games his first year, then 10 the following season without making the playoffs. In Year 3, he went 4-12 and was relieved of his duties.

Overall, Morris was 17-31 as head coach. He was hired in Tampa at age 33, let go at 35, and nine years later served as the interim coach of the Falcons, winning four of the 11 games while he was in charge but not retained.

Returning to Atlanta, Morris is more mature and experienced. He understands his downfalls from the Tampa days. However, the Falcons' expectations might be a tad unrealistic. Morris is a good defensive coach who can make in-game adjustments when he has the right type of talent.

Since the Falcons have neglected the defense in the draft for years, he doesn't have a great front or a secondary that would allow him to cut it loose. Jimmy Lake, who was with Morris in Los Angeles, will assume the play-calling duties on defense, which means Morris will oversee the gameday operation.

I respect Morris as a coach, but my issue is that last year's staff wasn't the problem. They didn't have a quarterback who could protect the ball or a defense that could pressure the passer. This year, they do have a quarterback, but there is still no pressure from their defense that can force turnovers.

They also lack explosive playmakers on offense. They have no speed. They need to put 6-10 play drives together to score, which makes life hard for any offense. They finished 25th in percent of drives ending with scores and 17th in yards gained. Who is going to be their down-the-field playmaker? Drake London averaged 13 yards a catch. Was this all Arthur Smith's fault? I doubt it.

Morris will have his work cut out for him, improving the coaching from a year ago. Will he? Call me concerned.

DAN QUINN - WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

After going 0-5 in his sixth season, along with the 2016 memory of the Super Bowl meltdown, and two more 7-9 seasons, the Falcons front office removed Quinn in 2020. Quinn then went to Dallas to reinvent himself as a defensive coordinator. Three straight top-10 seasons in points allowed gave Quinn the opportunity to become a head coach once again.

Taking over a downtrodden Washington team with little organization or discipline, Quinn's positive energy will be a huge uplift for a franchise

riddled with the memories of a horrible owner. Quinn is a player-friendly coach who is ultra-positive in the Pete Carroll style. The new vibe, along with new players, will make Washington better than it was last year. How could they be any worse?

Quinn will have initial success. His tenure won't be defined by his accomplishments in 2024, but rather by how he builds the team through rookie quarterback Jayden Daniels. If Daniels is good, Quinn might get a second contract. If he is average, then he won't.

JEROD MAYO - NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

When I was in New England, many staff members would sit around in the kitchen having lunch and talk about the future of the Patriots without Bill Belichick. To a man, no one wanted to be the one who followed him. History wasn't on their side. From Phil Bengtson replacing Vince Lombardi to Bill "Tiger" Johnson replacing Paul Brown, to even Jimmy Johnson replacing Don Shula, replacing a legend can harm a career.

Any change will be viewed positively at first, as a breath of fresh air. If the losing begins, many will long for yesterday; the old way, saying it was never like this when the legend was here. It's an impossible situation for an experienced coach, and even more impossible for a coach like Jerod Mayo who has only been in coaching for five years.

Mayo has a staff that is triple the size of Belichick's staff, which implies he has help all over. As the great entrepreneur and investor Naval Ravikant once said, "If you want to make a bad decision, ask everyone for advice."

The Patriots lost seven games by six or fewer points as their offense couldn't protect or consistently move the ball. Does Mayo help solve the offensive problems? No. The strength of the Patriots last season was their defense. Eight teams scored fewer than 21 points, which resulted in only two wins. Can the Patriots play as good of a defense with Mayo as they did with Belichick overseeing the operation? I doubt it, which is why the Patriots' four wins from a year ago might be hard to duplicate.

BRIAN CALLAHAN - TENNESSEE TITANS

In Cincinnati, Callahan never called plays, but he helped develop Joe Burrow, which made him a head coaching candidate. General manager Ran Carthon is all in on Will Levis, and Callahan was selected to make sure the 25-year-old is the Titans quarterback for the next 10 years.

It's hard to predict Callahan's ability to make Levis great, as Burrow could handle being in a spread attack and carrying the team. Levis cannot do that. He needs a ground game — a balanced attack to offset his inconsistent throws.

It takes a huge leap of faith to believe Levis can improve, Callahan can be as good a coach as former Titans head coach Mike Vrabel, and that the Titans are headed in the right direction.

Callahan is young. Fortunately, he has his father, Bill, the former head coach at Oakland, to offer wisdom and advice. Pops is a premier offensive line coach, which will help offset one of the Titans' many weaknesses. However, tying everything together will require Brian to get Levis to avoid mistakes and handle the offense. No disrespect to Brian, but I am not sure Bill Walsh could save Levis.

DAVE CANALES - CAROLINA PANTHERS

Sometimes, the people who know you the best never give you the opportunity. Dave Canales was hired by Pete Carroll while at USC and journeyed north with him to Seattle. He started his career with Carroll as a strength coach, tight end coach, assistant quarterback coach, passing game coordinator, and then full-time quarterback coach.

But Carroll never handed the offense over to him. He bypassed Canales for other offensive coordinators, causing him to leave for Tampa to get control of an offense. Then, by succeeding with Baker Mayfield, Canales became a head coach. It's a significant jump, which makes me wonder what Carroll was thinking for the past 11 years.

One thing Canales has going for him is how badly Bryce Young and the Panthers offense was coached last season. The only way for Canales to

go is up. The Panthers have to improve — which they will. How much? That's a fair question.

Much like Quinn in Washington, the Panthers will improve next season. Canales will work much harder than former coach Frank Reich. His enthusiasm will motivate the defense to play at a higher level. Most importantly, because of their horrible reputation, the Panthers will be viewed as an easy win on the schedule.

MIKE MACDONALD - SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

Here is an excerpt of what I wrote about Macdonald on our VSiN website:

Over the last three seasons, Seattle was 20-13 at home, and because the defense Carroll invented spread around to other teams like wildfire, it became antiquated. Many former Carroll assistants copied his defensive approach, which caused offensive coordinators to understand how to attack and be more confident in doing so, especially when the defensive line wasn't dominating. Eventually, Carroll tried to change and shift his philosophy, but after 14 years, time ran out.

Enter Macdonald, a 36-year-old defensive specialist charged with taking all the positives Carroll provided to the organization and adding his original style. General manager John Schneider, who was hired by Carroll, now has the authority to create and mold the team into this new partnership. Schneider was a loyal soldier to Carroll, carrying out his philosophy with each player acquired. They had a tremendous partnership.

Even though Carroll had all the authority to make the decisions, he respected Schneider's opinion and listened to his advice. Schneider is a great evaluator, a daring decision-maker, and isn't concerned about what others think. He believes what he sees from the tape, not what he hears from outside perception. When everyone said he was crazy to trade Russell Wilson, two years later, Schneider looked like a savant.

Macdonald's scheme and coaching in Baltimore last season were outstanding. He gained high-level production from two players who weren't even on the roster at the start of training camp. Kyle Van Noy left the Pat McAfee Show to produce nine sacks, and Jadeveon Clowney had the best year of his career, producing nine and a half sacks and getting a hefty contract from the Panthers.

Macdonald's scheme blended perfectly with the personnel. He highlighted the strengths of Kyle Hamilton, using him as a quasi-linebacker, safety, nickel defender and blitzer. His scheme covered the deficiencies in their secondary, and by playing from in front in most games, he kept teams from exploiting his run defense. In three of their five losses, teams that could run the ball effectively rushed for over 135 yards and won the game. The Ravens ranked 25th in yards allowed on the ground and sixth in facing passing attempts, as their opponents were concerned about handling the unorthodox blitz pressures from all angles.

What's most fascinating is the Ravens played with a +42 point differential after two quarters, ranking 31st in facing passing attempts. Normally, playing from behind forces teams to throw, but against the Macdonald-led Ravens defense, that wasn't the case. The Ravens allowed only 16.5 points per game and held their opponent to 10 points or fewer seven times.

They were the second-best red zone team in the league, the seventh-best on third down, created 25 fumbles and recovered 13. They had 18 interceptions and allowed only 191.9 yards passing per game. The Ravens used different combinations of players, moving them around, creating confusion for the offense. This new approach will create problems for teams traveling to the Pacific Northwest and dealing with the loud Seahawk fans.

I think Macdonald is worth pizza money for Coach of the Year, as I believe Seattle will be a tough team in 2024. His strength is exactly what Seattle needed.

NEW HEAD COACH TRENDS TO CASH IN ON

By Steve Makinen

Seven new men will be put in charge of franchises across the league, four of them rookies and the other three veterans who served in the same capacity previously in other locales. With any changes like this, there is a good supply of data that we can use to make projections for the upcoming season.

Here is a look at each of those new head coaches who will be leading franchises in 2024.

ROOKIE HEAD COACHES

DAVE CANALES, CAROLINA

It was a mess in Carolina from the get-go last season as the Panthers lost their first six games under newly hired Frank Reich. Making matters worse, experts were already questioning the franchise's decision to draft QB Bryce Young with the #1 pick last April. Reich was let go after his team fell to 1-10. Interim replacement Chris Tabor coached the rest of the way. Ultimately, it was a 2-15 season, and the team was outscored 24.5-13.9. The only positive news for rookie NFL head coach Dave Canales is that the disastrous 2023 campaign has left expectations very low for his first season. There is nowhere to go but up.

Canales earned a shot at a head coaching gig after spending the last 14 seasons as an assistant at Seattle and, most recently, Tampa Bay, where he spent the 2023 season as the Bucs' offensive coordinator. This is generally not considered a splash hire, and it probably shouldn't be for a team in true rebuild mode. Young's continued development and the ability to get enhanced production from the offense will be critical for this team to realize any improvement. The OC duties now belong to Brad Idzik, who comes over with Canales from Tampa, where he was wide receivers coach.

JEROD MAYO, NEW ENGLAND

I'm not sure there has ever been a coach in the NFL with bigger shoes to fill than that of rookie NFL head coach Jerod Mayo for the Patriots. Replacing a legend is never easy, and in this case, it's unheard of, as outgoing Bill Belichick won a record six Super Bowl titles for New England. However, since QB Tom Brady left a few years ago, it's been increasingly obvious that the franchise had to make the difficult decision to move on from that successful era.

Interestingly, Mayo was a linebacker for one of those championship teams in 2010, so he already knows how great things can be in Foxboro. He has a big job to do, with the Patriots coming off a 4-13 season, their fewest wins in a campaign since 1992. The biggest question for them will be under center, as they haven't gotten consistent production from the quarterback position since Brady left.

The team made a huge draft night move to straighten out that situation by choosing Drake Maye out of North Carolina with the #3 pick. The offense averaged an anemic 13.9 PPG in 2023. Mayo's coordinators, who will shoulder much of the responsibility, are Alex Van Pelt on offense and DeMarcus Covington on defense. Van Pelt comes over from Cleveland.

MIKE MACDONALD, SEATTLE

While not quite the legend-replacement scenario in New England, there is still a lot of pressure on Mike Macdonald to take over for Pete Carroll, who has been in Seattle since 2010. The fewest games the Seahawks won in any regular season during that time was seven, so success has become the norm. Macdonald has seen his own success as a defensive coordinator for the Ravens over the last couple of seasons. Including the postseason, his team allowed just 16.2 PPG in 2023.

Like most successful franchises in the NFL, Seattle has been hit hard by the salary cap, as their key players have advanced in age and experience. The transition to a younger, more financially flexible team began in recent years but will probably be kicked into higher gear with a rookie coach at the helm. Just this past February, the franchise restructured the contract of QB Geno Smith, and they may find their long-term replacement in the draft.

Coming off a 9-8 season, the experts at DraftKings have set the Seattle win total at 7.5 for 2024, a sign that those in the know see a bit of regression for the team in the first year post-Carroll.

BRIAN CALLAHAN, TENNESSEE

The removal of the popular Mike Vrabel as head coach of the Titans was one of the more controversial coaching moves of the offseason. He had a pretty solid six-year run with the franchise, and even as the team slipped below .500 in each of the last two years after a 41-24 record prior, most experts never felt the coaching was the problem.

With that backdrop, Brian Callahan enters his first NFL head coaching situation. Like the father-son of Tom and Tommy Callahan from the Auto Parts dynasty in the movie *Tommy Boy*, the Bill-Brian coaching family tree is also well-respected in NFL circles. The elder Callahan was a Super Bowl coach for the Raiders about 20 years ago. His son has worked his way up the ranks as an assistant in the league since 2010, most recently as the OC at Cincinnati.

If any of the rookie NFL head coaches has a shot at reviving a team early, it would have to be Callahan. He has the benefit of taking over a competent defensive team that allowed just 21.6 PPG and boasts what could already be its quarterback of the future in Will Levis, who showed some very good signs in his rookie season of 2023.

The Titans have a posted win total of 6.5 after going 6-11 last season. If recent history of successful first-year coaches holds true for Callahan, they could rightfully get to nine wins or more.

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While not 100% reliable, there are some things that we can look for as potential hints of what to expect. I'll go through some of those things in a little bit. On the next page is a chart showing all of the rookie full-season head coach results over the last 10 seasons.

Over the last decade, 40 different coaches have started their careers and lasted at least one full season. For each coach, you'll find their record that season, the next season, and the franchise's record in the season before that coach took over.

For the most part, rookie head coaches have successfully improved their teams in their first seasons. In fact, over the last 10 years, of the 40 different first-time head coaches that spent a full season with their new teams, 26 have led their teams to improved won-lost marks, six have produced equal records, and only eight have seen their teams drop. In 2023, two rookies' teams improved, and one stayed the same.

The average win improvement by rookie NFL head coaches over the last decade has been 2.0 wins per season. The greatest improvement seasons have been seven wins by any team, and that has happened for five different coaches, most recently DeMeco Ryans of Houston in 2023.

			Rookie Season Stats						Franchise Prior Season				Next Season	
Coach	Team	Season	SU	ATS	PF	PA	DIFF	WIN+/-	SU	PF	PA	DIFF	Next	Chg-
PETTINE, MIKE	CLEVELAND	2014	7-9	9-6-1	18.7	21.1	-2.4	3	4-12	19.3	25.4	-6.1	3-13	-4
O'BRIEN, BILL	HOUSTON	2014	9-7	9-6-1	23.3	19.2	4.1	7	2-14	17.3	26.8	-9.5	9-7	0
ZIMMER, MIKE	MINNESOTA	2014	7-9	10-6	20.3	21.4	-1.1	2	5-10-1	24.4	30.0	-5.6	11-5	4
GRUDEN, JAY	WASHINGTON	2014	4-12	4-11-1	18.8	27.4	-8.6	1	3-13	20.9	29.9	-9.0	9-7	5
QUINN, DAN	ATLANTA	2015	8-8	6-10	21.2	21.6	-0.4	2	6-10	23.8	26.1	-2.3	11-5	3
GASE, ADAM	MIAMI	2016	10-6	8-6-2	22.7	23.8	-1.1	4	6-10	19.4	24.3	-4.9	6-10	-4
MCADOO, BEN	NY GIANTS	2016	11-5	8-6-2	19.4	17.8	1.6	5	6-10	26.3	27.6	-1.4	3-13	-8
PEDERSON, DOUG	PHILADELPHIA	2016	7-9	8-8	22.9	20.7	2.3	0	7-9	23.6	26.9	-3.3	13-3	6
KOETTER, DIRK	TAMPA BAY	2016	9-7	9-7	22.1	23.1	-0.9	3	6-10	21.4	26.1	-4.7	5-11	-4
MCDERMOTT, SEAN	BUFFALO	2017	9-7	8-6-2	18.9	22.4	-3.6	2	7-9	24.9	23.6	1.3	6-10	-3
JOSEPH, VANCE	DENVER	2017	5-11	4-11-1	18.1	23.9	-5.8	-4	9-7	20.8	18.6	2.3	6-10	1
MCVAY, SEAN	LA RAMS	2017	11-5	9-7	29.9	20.6	9.3	7	4-12	14.0	24.6	-10.6	13-3	2
SHANAHAN, KYLE	SAN FRANCISCO	2017	6-10	9-7	20.7	23.9	-3.3	4	2-14	19.3	30.0	-10.7	4-12	-2
WILKS, STEVE	ARIZONA	2018	3-13	7-9	14.1	26.6	-12.5	-5	8-8	18.4	22.6	-4.1	---	---
NAGY, MATT	CHICAGO	2018	12-4	12-4	26.3	17.7	8.6	7	5-11	16.5	20.0	-3.5	8-8	-4
PATRICIA, MATT	DETROIT	2018	6-10	9-7	20.3	22.5	-2.3	-3	9-7	25.6	23.5	2.1	3-12-1	-3
REICH, FRANK	INDIANAPOLIS	2018	10-6	8-7-1	27.1	21.5	5.6	6	4-12	16.4	25.3	-8.8	7-9	-3
VRABEL, MIKE	TENNESSEE	2018	9-7	8-8	19.4	18.9	0.4	0	9-7	20.9	22.3	-1.4	9-7	0
KINGSBURY, KLIFF	ARIZONA	2019	5-10-1	9-7	22.6	27.6	-5.1	2	3-13	14.1	26.6	-12.5	8-8	3
TAYLOR, ZAC	CINCINNATI	2019	2-14	7-9	17.4	26.3	-8.8	-4	6-10	23.0	28.4	-5.4	4-11-1	2
KITCHENS, FREDDIE	CLEVELAND	2019	6-10	5-10-1	20.9	24.6	-3.6	-1	7-8-1	22.4	24.5	-2.1	---	---
FANGIO, VIC	DENVER	2019	7-9	9-7	17.6	19.8	-2.1	1	6-10	20.6	21.8	-1.3	5-11	-2
LAFLEUR, MATT	GREEN BAY	2019	13-3	10-6	23.5	19.6	3.9	7	6-9-1	23.5	25.0	-1.5	13-3	0
FLORES, BRIAN	MIAMI	2019	5-11	9-7	19.1	30.9	-11.8	-2	7-9	19.9	27.1	-7.1	10-6	5
RHULE, MATT	CAROLINA	2020	5-11	9-7	21.9	25.1	-3.3	0	5-11	21.3	29.4	-8.1	5-12	0
STEFANSKI, KEVIN	CLEVELAND	2020	11-5	6-10	25.5	26.2	-0.7	5	6-10	20.9	24.6	-3.6	8-9	-3
JUDGE, JOE	NY GIANTS	2020	6-10	9-7	17.5	22.3	-4.8	2	4-12	21.3	28.2	-6.9	4-13	-2
SMITH, ARTHUR	ATLANTA	2021	7-10	7-10	18.4	27	-8.6	3	4-12	24.8	25.9	-1.1	7-10	0
CULLEY, DAVID	HOUSTON	2021	4-13	8-9	16.5	26.6	-10.1	0	4-12	24	29	-5	---	---
STALEY, BRANDON	LA CHARGERS	2021	9-8	8-9	27.9	27	0.9	2	7-9	24	26.6	-2.6	10-7	1
SALEH, ROBERT	NY JETS	2021	4-13	6-11	18.2	29.6	-11.4	2	2-14	15.2	28.6	-13.4	7-10	3
SIRIANNI, NICK	PHILADELPHIA	2021	9-8	8-8-1	26.1	22.6	3.5	5	4-11-1	20.9	26.1	-5.2	14-3	5
EBERFLUS, MATT	CHICAGO	2022	3-14	5-12	19.2	27.2	-8	-3	6-11	18.3	23.9	-5.6	7-10	4
HACKETT, NATHANIEL	DENVER	2022	5-12	7-10	16.9	21.1	-4.2	-2	7-10	19.7	18.9	0.8	---	N/A
MCDANIEL, MIKE	MIAMI	2022	9-8	8-8	23.4	23.5	-0.1	0	9-8	20.1	21.9	-1.8	11-6	2
O'CONNELL, KEVIN	MINNESOTA	2022	13-4	7-9-1	24.9	25.1	-0.2	5	8-9	25	25.1	-0.1	7-10	-6
DABOLL, BRIAN	NY GIANTS	2022	9-7-1	13-4	21.5	21.8	-0.3	5	4-13	15.2	24.5	-9.3	6-11	-3
GANNON, JONATHAN	ARIZONA	2023	4-13	9-8	19.4	26.8	-7.4	0	4-13	20	26.4	-6.4	?-?	N/A
RYANS, DEMECO	HOUSTON	2023	10-7	10-7	22.7	21.1	1.6	7	3-13-1	17	24.7	-7.7	?-?	N/A
STEICHEN, SHANE	INDIANAPOLIS	2023	9-8	9-8	23.3	24.4	-1.1	5	4-12-1	17	25.1	-8.1	?-?	N/A
CANALES, DAVE	CAROLINA	2024	?	?	?	?	?	?	2-15	13.9	24.5	-10.6	?-?	N/A
MAYO, JEROD	NEW ENGLAND	2024	?	?	?	?	?	?	4-13	13.9	21.5	-7.6	?-?	N/A
MACDONALD, MIKE	SEATTLE	2024	?	?	?	?	?	?	9-8	21.4	23.6	-2.2	?-?	N/A
CALLAHAN, BRIAN	TENNESSEE	2024	?	?	?	?	?	?	6-11	17.9	21.6	-3.7	?-?	N/A



Of the 35 rookie head coaches who inherited teams that finished under .500 the prior season, 26 led their teams to better records the next season, and 16 finished over .500 in that first year. Three of the four coaches in this current rookie crop (Carolina, New England, Tennessee) finished well under .500 in 2023-24, so that would mean that chances are at least two would figure to improve. If the number is two, my guesses would be Carolina and New England, if for no other reason than they have the most room to do so.

NEW “RETREAD” HEAD COACHES FOR 2024

The records for the Retread NFL head coaches over the last decade in their first full regular seasons are a paltry 153-243 SU and 168-212-16ATS (44.2%). As favorites since 2013, they’ve gone 75-63 SU, but just 41-86-11 ATS (32.3%)! This immediately gives us a lot of fade potential for 2024.

RAHEEM MORRIS, ATLANTA

Two of the “retread” coaches bring plus-.500 career records to their new teams for 2024. The one who doesn’t is Raheem Morris of Atlanta. The hiring of Morris was controversial to everyone outside of the Falcons’ organization, for as they saw him as their top candidate, most others were hoping for a more splashy hire like Bill Belichick.

According to team sources, Belichick ranked behind at least Morris and one other candidate on their preferred hire list. What does Morris bring to the table? Well, he was 21-38 for the Buccaneers from 2009-11. Obviously, a lot has changed in the league since then, but he has served as a defensive assistant at two different stops and as assistant head coach for the Falcons since.

Clearly, he has made a favorable impression on owner Arthur Blank and the team’s upper management. However, he may have inherited an early

QB controversy, as after he was able to lure QB Kirk Cousins over from the Vikings, the franchise made a peculiar move by drafting Michael Penix with the #8 draft pick.

The offense scored just 18.9 PPG last season but has tremendous talent at the skill positions to support Cousins or Penix so there is reason for optimism, especially in the NFC South. How much optimism is there? The win total is set at 9.5, which would make Atlanta a likely playoff team.

JIM HARBAUGH, LA CHARGERS

The hiring of Jim Harbaugh by the Chargers for their open head coaching position was undoubtedly the biggest coaching story of the offseason. After leading Michigan to the national title this past January in college football, Harbaugh opted to make the jump back to the pros.

There are many speculating that he was leaving trouble behind at Ann Arbor. Nonetheless, the Wolverines’ loss is the Chargers’ gain, as Harbaugh has been successful at every level he has coached.

For San Francisco, he built a 44-19-1 record in the regular season and reached a Super Bowl. It could be argued that he has as much talent to work with for the Chargers as any other newcomer to the NFL coaching ranks, although the franchise is in the uncomfortable position of having to rebuild some of their go-to offensive weapons around QB Justin Herbert.

DraftKings posts the Chargers’ win total at 8.5, which would be a major improvement over last year’s 5-12 performance. This should be a fun story to watch this season, and it wouldn’t be a shock if Harbaugh and the Chargers made a big splash in 2024.

DAN QUINN, WASHINGTON

The last coaching hire that the Commanders executed was also a “retread” and that didn’t work out as hoped, as the team was just 26-40-1 under Ron Rivera. This past season, they bottomed out, going 4-13 while yielding 30.5 PPG.

With defensive improvement clearly needed, Washington turns to Dan Quinn, who led the electric defensive attack at Dallas the last three seasons. While not exactly known for their shutdown abilities, the Cowboys thrived under Quinn in forcing turnovers, recording sacks, and getting defensive scores. Any of this added to the Commanders’ defense would be an improvement.

The other side of the ball is also a question mark for 2024. While QB Sam Howell showed some positive signs in his first season as a starter, the team’s poor finish allowed them to secure the #2 spot in the draft. They used that pick on Heisman Trophy winner Jayden Daniels out of LSU. The offense hit the 20-point mark or more 10 times in 17 games and averaged 19.4, above the standards of a typical 4-13 team.

Quinn made an intriguing hire in bringing Kliff Kingsbury on as offensive coordinator, and he brought new defensive coordinator Joe Whitt Jr. over

with him from Dallas. Expectations are mixed, with a modest 6.5 season win total. Quinn has the most head coaching experience of any of the new hires, having gone 43-42 in six regular seasons with the Falcons from 2015-20.

Below is a chart showing the retread results over the last 10 seasons. There have been 24 different coaches who have re-started their careers at new teams over the last decade and lasted at least one season. For each coach you’ll find their record that season, the next season, and the franchise’s record in the season prior to that coach taking over.

Of the 18 retread head coaches who inherited teams that finished under .500 the prior season, 11 of them led their teams to better records the next season. The average improvement for this team was 3.5 wins per season. Atlanta, LA Chargers, and Washington all finished below .500 this past year. A 3.5-win improvement would put the Falcons over .500 in 2024.

I tout these trends and systems every week in the VSiN NFL Analytics Reports, so even if these angles don’t find a permanent place in your memory bank, I will recall them for you every time they pop up this season. Hopefully what you’ve read here gives you a better feel of what to expect from our seven new NFL head coaches for 2024.

“RE-TREAD” COACH CHART

			FIRST SEASON STATS						FRANCHISE PRIOR SEASON				NEXT SEASON	
COACH	TEAM	SEASON	SU	ATS	PF	PA	DIFF	WIN+/-	SU	PF	PA	DIFF	NEXT	CHG-
CALDWELL JIM	DETROIT	2014	11-5	7-9	20.1	17.6	2.5	4	7-9	24.7	23.5	1.2	7-9	-4
SMITH LOVIE	TAMPA BAY	2014	2-14	7-9	17.3	25.6	-8.3	-2	4-12	18.0	24.3	-6.3	6-10	4
WHISENHUNT KEN	TENNESSEE	2014	2-14	3-12	15.9	27.4	-11.5	-5	7-9	22.6	23.8	-1.2	3-13	1
RYAN REX	BUFFALO	2015	8-8	8-7	23.7	22.4	1.3	-1	9-7	21.4	18.1	3.3	7-9	-1
FOX JOHN	CHICAGO	2015	6-10	8-8	20.9	24.8	-3.9	1	5-11	19.9	27.6	-7.7	3-13	-3
KUBIAK GARY	DENVER	2015	12-4	8-7	22.2	18.5	3.7	0	12-4	30.1	22.1	8.0	9-7	-3
BOWLES TODD	NY JETS	2015	10-6	7-6	24.2	19.6	4.6	6	4-12	17.7	25.1	-7.4	5-11	-5
DEL RIO JACK	OAKLAND	2015	7-9	8-8	22.4	24.9	-2.5	4	3-13	15.8	28.3	-12.5	12-4	5
JACKSON HUE	CLEVELAND	2016	1-15	3-12	16.5	28.3	-11.8	-2	3-13	17.4	27.0	-9.6	0-16	-1
KELLY CHIP	SAN FRANCISCO	2016	2-14	4-11	19.3	30.0	-10.7	-3	5-11	14.9	24.2	-9.3	---	N/A
LYNN ANTHONY	LA CHARGERS	2017	9-7	8-6	22.2	17.0	5.2	4	5-11	25.6	26.4	-0.8	12-4	3
GRUDEN JON	LAS VEGAS	2018	4-12	5-10	18.1	29.2	-11.1	-2	6-10	18.8	23.3	-4.5	7-9	3
SHURMUR PAT	NY GIANTS	2018	5-11	8-7	23.1	25.8	-2.7	2	3-13	15.4	24.3	-8.9	4-12	-1
GASE ADAM	NY JETS	2019	7-9	7-9	17.3	22.4	-5.1	3	4-12	20.8	27.6	-6.8	2-14	-5
ARIANS BRUCE	TAMPA BAY	2019	7-9	6-9	28.6	28.1	0.5	2	5-11	24.8	29.0	-4.2	11-5	4
MCCARTHY MIKE	DALLAS	2020	6-10	5-11	24.7	29.6	-4.9	-2	8-8	27.1	20.1	7.0	12-5	6
RIVERA RON	WASHINGTON	2020	7-9	8-6	20.9	20.6	0.3	4	3-13	16.6	27.2	-10.6	7-10	0
CAMPBELL DAN	DETROIT	2021	3-13	11-6	19.1	27.5	-8.4	-2	5-11	23.6	32.4	-8.8	9-8	6
SMITH LOVIE	HOUSTON	2022	3-13	9-8	17.0	24.7	-7.7	-1	4-13	16.5	26.6	-10.1	---	N/A
PEDERSON DOUG	JACKSONVILLE	2022	9-8	8-9	23.8	20.6	3.2	6	3-14	14.9	26.9	-12.0	9-8	0
MCDANIELS JOSH	LAS VEGAS	2022	6-11	8-9	23.2	24.6	-1.4	-4	10-7	22.0	25.8	-3.8	5-6	-1
ALLEN DENNIS	NEW ORLEANS	2022	7-10	7-10	19.4	20.3	-0.9	-2	9-8	21.4	19.7	1.7	9-8	2
BOWLES TODD	TAMPA BAY	2022	8-9	4-12	18.4	21.1	-2.7	-5	13-4	30.1	20.8	9.3	9-8	1
PAYTON, SEAN	DENVER	2023	8-9	6-10	21	24.3	-3.3	3	5-12	16.9	21.1	-4.2	?	?
MORRIS, RAHEEM	ATLANTA	2024	?	?	?	?	?	?	7-10	18.9	21.9	-3	?-?	N/A
HARBUAGH, JIM	LA CHARGERS	2024	?	?	?	?	?	?	5-12	20.4	23.4	-3	?-?	N/A
QUINN, DAN	WASHINGTON	2024	?	?	?	?	?	?	4-13	19.4	30.5	-11.1	?-?	N/A

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATINGS

TEAM	POWER RATING	TEAM	POWER RATING
KANSAS CITY	30.0	LA CHARGERS	23.5
BALTIMORE	29.0	CHICAGO	23.0
SAN FRANCISCO	29.0	INDIANAPOLIS	23.0
BUFFALO	27.5	PITTSBURGH	23.0
DETROIT	27.5	TAMPA BAY	23.0
PHILADELPHIA	27.5	ARIZONA	22.0
CINCINNATI	26.5	LAS VEGAS	22.0
GREEN BAY	26.5	NEW ORLEANS	22.0
HOUSTON	26.5	SEATTLE	22.0
DALLAS	26.0	MINNESOTA	21.5
LA RAMS	25.5	NY GIANTS	20.5
NY JETS	25.5	TENNESSEE	20.5
MIAMI	25.0	WASHINGTON	20.5
ATLANTA	24.0	DENVER	20.0
CLEVELAND	24.0	NEW ENGLAND	19.5
JACKSONVILLE	24.0	CAROLINA	18.0



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AFC EAST

BETTING PREVIEW

The AFC East is arguably the best division in football due to the level of talent at the top. Buffalo, New York and Miami all have win totals of 9.5 or higher and all three expect to compete for a Super Bowl title. In fact, all three teams are +1100 or better to win the AFC at DraftKings, and each of them are favored to make the postseason.

The strength of this division lies in its quarterbacks.

Josh Allen is a perennial MVP candidate who is coming off one of his strongest seasons. Tua Tagovailoa is off a career year and runs an offense that has the best wide receiver duo in the league in Tyreek Hill and Jaylen Waddle. Aaron Rodgers is a future Hall of Fame quarterback. Questions linger about how productive he can be as a 40-year-old coming off an Achilles injury, but his top level of production is among the best we have seen at the position.

At the bottom of the division are the lowly Patriots, but even New England offers a challenge on Sundays. Over the last two seasons, the Patriots are the fourth-best defensive team by EPA standards. The unit has made both Allen and Tagovailoa look average at times over that span. But, they enter a new era at both head coach and quarterback, and they have one of the hardest schedules in the league.

Regardless of where you rank this division, it figures to be one of the most competitive in football. The three best teams have implied probabilities of 4.3% or higher of winning the Super Bowl. Three of the four starting quarterbacks in the division are among the contenders for MVP. Much like last season, this is a division that won't be decided until the last week. We could also very well see the Super Bowl winner come from the AFC East. – Jonathan Von Tobel

OF TIMES SELECTED BY VSIN EXPERTS TO WIN DIVISION



2024 PROJECTED STANDINGS (BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)

TEAM	2024	HOME	ROAD	SCHEDULE STRENGTH		DRAFTKINGS	
	SM PR	FIELD ADV.	FIELD ADV.	(RANK)	PRJW'S	PRJL'S	O/U
BUFFALO	27.5	2.6	0.4	24.27 (12)	10.0	7.0	10.5
NY JETS	25.5	1.4	-0.4	24.12 (13)	9.2	7.8	9.5
MIAMI	25	2.6	0	23.95 (17)	9.0	8.0	9.5
NEW ENGLAND	19.5	2	0.2	24.69 (4)	6.0	11.0	4.5

BUFFALO BILLS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 12-7 SU & 8-11 ATS
Head Coach: Sean McDermott (8th)

The 2023 season was a wild one for the Buffalo Bills. The team was 5-5 SU/3-7 ATS through the first 10 games of the season, but finished 6-1 SU/4-3 ATS to finish second in the AFC. The Bills were a sexy pick to make it out of the AFC, but they were eliminated by the Chiefs for the second time in three years. Buffalo enters the 2024 season with the same championship aspirations, but massive changes with the roster and a strong division will present a challenge.

OFFENSE

Josh Allen remains in place at the most important position in football, and as long as he is healthy Buffalo will have a chance to compete. Allen had the highest offensive grade among quarterbacks according to PFF (92.1) in 2023, and he was third at the position in EPA per play (0.193).

Buffalo's wide receiver depth chart looks questionable on paper after the losses of Stefon Diggs and Gabe Davis (241 combined targets). Khalil Shakir – who caught 39 balls for 611 yards and two touchdowns last season – is the most productive returning receiver. Curtis Samuel, Marquez Valdes-Scantling, Chase Claypool and Mack Hollins all join the team to form the main core. Rookie Keon Coleman – a second-round pick – is going to be expected to develop quickly.

Dion Dawkins and Spencer Brown played over 1,200 snaps at tackle in 2023. In 310 true pass set snaps Dawkins allowed just 29 pressures and Brown gave up just 26 in 313 snaps. Connor McGovern looks to be a decent replacement at center for Mitch Morse, who was released. At guard, David Edwards and O'Cyrus Torrence are penciled in as the starters. Edwards posted extremely good numbers, but in less than 200 snaps. Torrence, on the other hand, owned a 54.9 offensive grade and allowed 46 pressures for the season while posting a 48.2 pass blocking grade.

DEFENSE

Safety is the biggest concern for Buffalo. None of the currently rostered defensive backs posted a PFF defensive grade higher than 65.3 (Cam Lewis). Projected starters are Taylor Rapp and Mike Edwards. Edwards in particular allowed 23 receptions on 38 targets last season.

Cornerback is the Bills' strongest defensive position and might be the second-best group on the team outside of quarterback. Christian Benford is a legit corner who finished eighth at the position in PFF defensive grade in 2023. He allowed just two touchdowns all season, broke up seven passes and grabbed two interceptions. Rasul Douglas and Taron Johnson ranked 11th and 17th respectively in PFF grading at the position.

The Bills are somewhat bland at linebacker, but there are no big weaknesses at the position group. Along the defensive line, Greg Rousseau anchors the group after a career year in which he posted seven sacks, 62 pressures and 32 tackles. A.J. Epenesa has yet to really show out, but is coming off the best season of his career.

OUTLOOK

Buffalo has one of the best quarterbacks in the league, but the skill position group around him lacks explosive talent. How much better can Allen make them? It is safe to assume the Bills will be a good team competing for its division and a playoff spot, but the roster does not look like an elite group. Considering market expectations – win total of 10.5 and favored to win the division – this is a team that could have a disappointing season by those standards. – Jonathan Von Tobel

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	ARIZONA	-8.2	BUFFALO is 5-1 ATS versus Arizona since '99
9/12	at Miami	-0.7	UNDER the total is 10-4-1 in BUF-MIA series at Miami since '10
9/23	JACKSONVILLE	-7	UNDERDOGS have won L6 ATS in JAC-BUF h2h series
9/29	at Baltimore	+3.7	UNDER the total is 9-2 in L11 of BUF-Bal h2h series
10/6	at Houston	+0.3	UNDER the total is 8-2 in L10 of BUF-HOU h2h series
10/14	at NY Jets	-1.4	UNDERDOGS are 9-1 ATS in L10 of BUF-NYJ series at New York
10/20	TENNESSEE	-9.7	UNDERDOGS are on 9-2-1 ATS run in TEN-BUF h2h series
10/27	at Seattle	-3.3	All 10 games in BUF-SEA series since '95 went OVER the total
11/3	MIAMI	-4.7	OVER the total is 8-1-1 in L10 MIA-BUF matchups at Buffalo
11/10	at Indianapolis	-3.1	INDIANAPOLIS in on 5-1 ATS run hosting Buffalo
11/17	KANSAS CITY	+0	ROAD TEAMS are 12-4 ATS in L16 of BUF-KC rivalry
BYE WEEK			
12/1	SAN FRANCISCO	-1.1	FAVORITES are 5-1 ATS in L6 of SF-BUF h2h series
12/8	at LA Rams	-0.5	BUFFALO is on 4-0 ATS road run at Rams
12/15	at Detroit	+2.2	The L7 games of BUF-DET h2h series went UNDER the total
12/22	NEW ENGLAND	-10	NEW ENGLAND is on 16-5 ATS extended run at Buffalo
12/29	NY JETS	-4.6	UNDER the total is 11-5 in NYJ-BUF series at Buffalo since '07
1/5	at New England	-6.8	UNDERDOGS are 6-3 ATS in L9 of BUF-NE h2h series at Foxboro

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.27
(#12 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2.6/0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	26.5	6	18.3	4
YARDS PER POINT	14.1	6	16.8	7
PLAYS PER GAME	65.6	5		
TIME OF POSSESSION	32:05	2		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	49.8%	1	38.6%	19
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	374.5	4	307.2	9
YARDS PER PLAY	5.7	5	5.1	11
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	30.1	5		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	130.1	7	110.6	15
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.3	8	4.6	28
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	34.1	16		
COMPLETION %	66.5%	8	65.8%	20
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	244.4	8	196.6	7
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.4	8	6.1	6
TURNOVERS	1.6	23	1.8	3

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
12-1

AFC
+700

AFC EAST
+170

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 10.5



STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING

25.5
(#11 of 32)

NEW YORK JETS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 7-10 SU & 6-10-1 ATS
Head Coach: Robert Saleh (4th)

It's hard to find a season more disappointing than New York's in 2023. Everything was derailed four snaps in when Aaron Rodgers injured his Achilles on Monday Night Football. Rodgers returns from the injury, but a year older. Still, the expectations remain for a team with a lot of talent on the roster.

OFFENSE

Everything obviously hinges on Rodgers' health and level of play. In 2022, Rodgers had posted his lowest PFF passing grade since 2017 (75.9). His turnover-worthy play rate (2.9%) was the highest since that year and he posted the lowest yards per attempt (6.8) since 2015. Rodgers was dealing with an injury at the tailend of the 2022 season, so perhaps that explains it away. Still, he is 40 years old, meaning the decline in production could be real.

Regardless, Rodgers has a great weapon to throw to in Garrett Wilson. The third-year receiver has had the worst group of signal-callers tossing him the ball the last two seasons and still posted consecutive 1,000-yard campaigns. Mike Williams comes in from Los Angeles to be the second option. He has played in just 16 games the last two seasons, but is a rock-solid receiver who has not posted a PFF receiving grade of under 72.3 in his last six seasons.

The biggest question for New York is its offensive line. Tyron Smith is in the building, but the former Cowboy has played 30 games over the last four seasons. Morgan Moses at right tackle is by far their steadiest presence at tackle. No other rostered offensive lineman has a PFF pass-blocking grade from last season over 60 (Wes Schweitzer). Rookie first rounder Olu Fashanu will need to progress quickly and fill a massive role for this team in 2024.

DEFENSE

Defense is obviously the strength of this team. New York finished third in defensive EPA per play (-0.14) and it has talent at each position.

Cornerback is their glamor group. Sauce Gardner, Michael Carter II and D.J. Reed form arguably the best trio of corners in the league. Gardner was third among all corners in PFF defensive grade (88.6). He broke up 10 passes and allowed just one touchdown all season. He is capable of matching up with any receiver in the league.

Quinnen Williams was one of the best interior linemen in the league last season, and is balanced in his ability to both defend the run and pressure quarterbacks along the interior. He was fifth among interior linemen in pressures (70). Behind him is one of the best linebackers in the league in C.J. Mosley, who is fantastic in coverage. Quincy Williams had a breakout campaign in 2023. Along the edge, Jermaine Johnson and Haason Reddick form a strong tandem. Johnson had 56 pressures in a strong sophomore season, and Reddick joins the team after posting 155 pressures over the last two seasons in Philadelphia.

OUTLOOK

New York has the fourth-easiest strength of schedule in the league based on 2024 win totals. Their defense is going to be among the best in the league yet again, and this season they should have competent quarterback play. Even if Rodgers plays at an average level similar to that of his last full season this team has enough. The Jets won 14 games the last two seasons despite some of the worst quarterback performances in the league over that span. It's easy to see this team taking advantage of a soft schedule to make the postseason for the first time since 2010. – Jonathan Von Tobel

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/9	at San Francisco	+6.8	ROAD TEAMS are on 7-1 ATS run in L8 of NYJ-SF series
9/15	at Tennessee	-1.9	TENNESSEE is 10-2 ATS in L12 games versus NY Jets
9/19	NEW ENGLAND	-6.8	NEW ENGLAND is on 5-1 ATS run at NY Jets
9/29	DENVER	-7.9	OVER the total is 7-1 in L8 of DEN-NYJ series in New York
10/6	vs. Minnesota	-3.5	FAVORITES are on 4-0 ATS streak in NYJ-MIN h2h series
10/14	BUFFALO	+1.4	UNDERDOGS are 9-1 ATS in L10 of BUF-NYJ series at New York
10/20	at Pittsburgh	+0.3	UNDER the total is 5-1 in L6 of NYJ-PIT series but lost LT
10/27	at New England	-4	NEW ENGLAND is 8-1 SU & 6-2-1 ATS in L9 hosting NY Jets
10/31	HOUSTON	-1.1	UNDERDOGS are on 6-0-1 ATS run in HOU-NYJ h2h series
11/10	at Arizona	-1.5	UNDER the total is 5-1 in L6 of NYJ-ARI h2h series
11/17	INDIANAPOLIS	-4.3	HOME FAVORITES are on 3-0 SU & ATS streak in IND-NYJ set
BYE WEEK			
12/1	SEATTLE	-5	SEATTLE has won L5 ATS versus NY Jets
12/8	at Miami	+2.1	MIAMI is 5-1-2 ATS in L8 hosting NY Jets
12/15	at Jacksonville	+0.6	JACKSONVILLE is 4-1 ATS in L5 hosting NY Jets
12/22	LA RAMS	-1.8	ROAD TEAMS have won L3 ATS in LAR-NYJ h2h series
12/29	at Buffalo	+4.6	UNDER the total is 11-5 in NYJ-BUF series at Buffalo since '07
1/5	MIAMI	-1.5	MIAMI is on 5-1 ATS run at NY Jets

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.12
(#13 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.4/-0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	15.8	29	20.9	12
YARDS PER POINT	17	27	14	27
PLAYS PER GAME	61.9	21		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:02	25		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	26.0%	32	37.2%	13
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	268.6	31	292.3	3
YARDS PER PLAY	4.3	31	4.6	1
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	22.8	29		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	96.9	22	124	25
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.2	14	4.1	11
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	35.4	11		
COMPLETION %	59.2%	31	60.0%	3
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	171.7	30	168.3	2
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	5.6	31	5.5	4
TURNOVERS	1.9	30	1.6	8

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
20-1

AFC
11-1

AFC EAST
+190

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 9.5

MIAMI DOLPHINS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 11-7 SU & 10-8 ATS
Head Coach: Mike McDaniel (3rd)

The end to Miami's 2023 campaign was extremely disappointing. After a win over the Commanders to improve to 9-3, the Dolphins finished the season 2-4 SU and ATS. That included a loss to the Chiefs on Wild Card Weekend in a brutally cold playoff game. Despite that finish, Miami enters 2024 with expectations of being one of the best offensive teams in the league, and by extension, one of the best teams in the league overall.

OFFENSE

The Dolphins finished seventh in offensive EPA (0.054) and third in dropback EPA per play (0.167). Their success on offense is driven by pure speed. Tyreek Hill and Jaylen Waddle are two of the fastest pass-catchers in the league. The duo posted PFF offensive grades of 93.4 and 90.3 respectively. They combined to rack up 1,112 yards after the catch and 18 touchdowns in 2023. Miami bolstered their depth by adding Odell Beckham Jr. in the offseason.

Mike McDaniel's offensive scheme – which is derived from the Shanahan scheme – maximizes almost any running back, and the Dolphins have two great ones in De'Von Achane and Raheem Mostert. Achane ran for 813 yards last season and averaged 4.94 yards per carry after contact. Mostert was tied for fifth in runs of 10 or more yards (30). This group is likely going to be productive once again.

Even the team's biggest perceived weakness – quarterback – is a strength. Tua Tagovailoa has thrived in McDaniel's system. Tagovailoa was the highest-graded passer by PFF in 2023 (88.6). He posted career highs in completion percentage (68.2%), passing yards (4,878) and touchdowns (30). Despite throwing the most interceptions of his career (15) he actually posted his best turnover worthy play rate (3.4%). There is little reason to believe that he and this offense cannot be among the best once again this season.

DEFENSE

On defense this team looks average on paper. But with an offense like this, average is perfectly acceptable.

Miami does have some injury concerns heading into the season, specifically at edge. Bradley Chubb and Jaelan Phillips are both on the mend after serious injuries near the end of last season. Chubb is recovering from a torn ACL in his right knee. Phillips tore his Achilles. Their status to start the season is in serious doubt, which is why the team added Calais Campbell to the roster in June. Shaquill Barrett remains as well, but this is a thin position heading into training camp.

Kendall Fuller was brought in this offseason to shore up the cornerback position. He will play alongside Jalen Ramsey, giving Miami some competent play at the position. Still, Ramsey is not the player he once was, and the depth behind him and Fuller seems very weak. Kader Kohou is an extremely average cornerback and the other rostered corners are statistically poor.

Statistically, this was one of the best rush defenses by EPA standards, as they finished 10th in that category in 2023. However, much of that was due to opposing teams abandoning their running games in order to keep up with their explosive offense. They were 18th in adjusted line yards allowed per carry (3.99).

OUTLOOK

The outlook for 2024 is extremely positive for Miami. McDaniel's offensive scheme gives them a floor of 10th-best offense in the NFL. They have the best wide receiver duo in the league, a stable of strong runners and an extremely competent quarterback. Add into that mix the league's eighth-easiest schedule by opponent win totals and you get a team that could compete for not only its division, but the top seed in the AFC. – Jonathan Von Tobel

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT LINE* SERIES TREND

9/8 JACKSONVILLE -4.5 UNDER the total is 8-1 in L9 of JAC-MIA in-state rivalry

9/12 BUFFALO +0.7 UNDER the total is 10-4-1 in BUF-MIA series at Miami since '10

9/22 at Seattle -0.4 MIAMI is on 4-0 ATS streak at Seattle

9/30 TENNESSEE -7.2 UNDERDOGS are 6-3-1 ATS in L10 of TEN-MIA h2h series

10/6 at New England -3.9 MIAMI has won L7 ATS vs. New England

BYE WEEK

10/20 at Indianapolis -0.2 UNDERDOGS are 14-2-1 ATS in MIA-IND h2h series since '99

10/27 ARIZONA -5.7 The L5 games of ARI-MIA h2h series went OVER the total

11/3 at Buffalo +4.7 OVER the total is 8-1-1 in L10 MIA-BUF matchups at Buffalo

11/11 at LA Rams +2.4 UNDERDOGS have won L5 ATS in MIA-LAR h2h series

11/17 LAS VEGAS -6 OVER the total is 8-1 in L9 of LVR-MIA h2h series but lost LY

11/24 NEW ENGLAND -7.5 MIAMI is on 9-2-1 ATS run hosting New England

11/28 at Green Bay +4.4 GREEN BAY is on 5-1 SU & ATS surge versus Miami

12/8 NY JETS -2.1 MIAMI is 5-1-2 ATS in L8 hosting NY Jets

12/15 at Houston +3.2 FAVORITES have won L6 SU & ATS in MIA-HOU h2h series

12/22 SAN FRANCISCO +1.4 The L4 games of SF-MIA h2h series went OVER the total

12/29 at Cleveland +1.3 CLEVELAND is 4-1 ATS in L5 hosting Miami

1/5 at NY Jets +1.5 MIAMI is on 5-1 ATS run at NY Jets

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH 23.95
(#17 toughest of 32)

FIELD
RATINGS 2.6/0
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	29.2	2	23	22
YARDS PER POINT	13.8	3	13.8	28
PLAYS PER GAME	61.9	21		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:56	15		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	42.1%	7	38.9%	20
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	401.3	1	318.3	10
YARDS PER PLAY	6.5	2	5.1	10
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	26.8	15		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	135.8	6	97.1	7
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	5.1	1	3.8	6
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	33.3	20		
COMPLETION %	69.4%	2	66.9%	28
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	265.5	1	221.2	15
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	8.3	2	6.6	18
TURNOVERS	1.5	21	1.6	8

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL

22-1

AFC

11-1

AFC EAST

+200

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 9.5

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 4-13 SU & 5-11-1 ATS
Head Coach: Jerod Mayo (1st)

New England begins another era at quarterback this season after selecting Drake Maye with the third overall pick in the 2024 draft. How much he plays remains to be seen, but what is not in question is how much this team will struggle. Jerod Mayo is now the head coach and the roster is devoid of talent. This has all the makings of a rough season for the once proud franchise.

OFFENSE

Last season New England finished 31st in offensive EPA (-0.189) and scoring (13.9) and 29th in yards per play (4.6). There is little reason to believe this team will improve greatly in those categories in 2024. Alex Van Pelt comes in from Cleveland to fill the role of offensive coordinator. If he brings a similar offense to that of the Browns, the Patriots could certainly take a step forward. But realistically that step will be a small one.

The biggest issue for the Patriots is a roster devoid of talent at the skill positions. Demario Douglas – 49 receptions, 561 yards – is the team's leading returner at receiver. Douglas was a sixth-round rookie out of Liberty last season. New England might have a productive pass-catcher in Douglas, but he cannot be your most talented wideout. Kendrick Bourne and JuJu Smith-Schuster return, but both had less than 500 yards last season.

Rhamondre Stevenson is the Patriots' best offensive player. He has totaled 2,318 yards from scrimmage over the last two seasons and averaged 4.9 yards per touch for his career. In Van Pelt's new system, Stevenson could thrive. The offensive linemen in front of him are sturdy as well, with four on the roster ranking 27th or higher in PFF offensive grade.

Quarterback is going to be fascinating. Does Maye start right away or does Jacoby Brissett take New England through the regular season while the rookie develops? Either way, average quarterback play, at best, can be expected for a team lacking offensive firepower.

DEFENSE

The biggest misconception about Bill Belichick is that he cannot coach any longer. Belichick schemed New England to top 10 finishes in defensive EPA each of the last two seasons. Jerod Mayo is a former defensive player, but can he have the same effect on this unit?

Defensive line should be a strength for the Patriots due to the talent inside. Christian Barmore was the eighth-ranked interior defender by PFF last season. He totaled 49 pressures last season, tied for 17th among interior linemen. But, Barmore is the lone top-tier player up front. The others at the position that played over 300 snaps last season – Keion White, Anfernee Jennings, among others – graded out as below average linemen.

Defensive back should be a position of strength if Christian Gonzalez returns from injury and progresses the way New England hopes. He is playing alongside Jonathan Jones, who has been a solid corner throughout his tenure with the Patriots. Behind them is Jabrill Peppers, who has thrived since joining New England in 2022. But it is fair to ask how much of his production was a byproduct of the coach who is no longer there.

Regardless, there is enough on this side of the ball that the Patriots should be an above average defensive team. What remains to be seen is whether they can achieve the same way they did under Belichick in his time at the helm.

OVERLOOK

Outside of a solid defense, there isn't much to be positive about for New England. The quarterback position is a question, and a rookie will likely be playing at some point this season. The Patriots' schedule is also one of the hardest in the league. They rank 31st in strength of schedule using projected win totals. The team projects to be an underdog in every game this season. Unless Maye is a reincarnation of Andrew Luck it's hard seeing this team not finishing in the bottom five once again this season. – Jonathan Von Tobel

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Cincinnati	+9.6	FAVORITES have won L3 SU & ATS in NE-CIN h2h set
9/15	SEATTLE	+0.4	The L6 games of SEA-NE h2h series went OVER the total
9/19	at NY Jets	+6.8	NEW ENGLAND is on 5-1 ATS run at NY Jets
9/29	at San Francisco	+12.2	ROAD TEAMS are on 4-0 ATS streak in NE-SF h2h series
10/6	MIAMI	+3.9	MIAMI has won L7 ATS vs. New England
10/13	HOUSTON	+4.3	HOME TEAMS are on 11-3 ATS run in HOU-NE h2h series
10/20	vs. Jacksonville	+3.8	JACKSONVILLE is just 2-6 ATS in L8 games away from home vs. NE
10/27	NY JETS	+4	NEW ENGLAND is 8-1 SU & 6-2-1 ATS in L9 hosting NY Jets
11/3	at Tennessee	+3.5	FAVORITES are 8-4-1 ATS in L13 of NE-TEN h2h series
11/10	at Chicago	+5	OVER the total is 6-1 in L7 of NE-CHI h2h series
11/17	LA RAMS	+3.6	FAVORITES are on 4-0 SU & ATS streak in LAR-NE h2h series
11/24	at Miami	+7.5	MIAMI is on 9-2-1 ATS run hosting New England
12/1	INDIANAPOLIS	+1.1	NEW ENGLAND has won L5 ATS hosting Indianapolis
BYE WEEK			
12/15	at Arizona	+3.9	NEW ENGLAND is 5-0 SU & ATS at Arizona since '93
12/22	at Buffalo	+10	NEW ENGLAND is on 16-5 ATS extended run at Buffalo
12/29	LA CHARGERS	+1.8	NEW ENGLAND is on 7-1 ATS run vs. Chargers but lost LT
1/5	BUFFALO	+6.8	UNDERDOGS are 6-3 ATS in L9 of BUF-NE h2h series at Foxboro

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.69
(#4 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2/0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	13.9	31	21.5	15
YARDS PER POINT	19.9	32	14	26
PLAYS PER GAME	60	28		
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:02	31		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	30.2%	31	36.3%	6
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	276.2	30	301.6	7
YARDS PER PLAY	4.6	29	4.7	4
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	24.4	26		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	95.7	26	93.2	4
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	3.9	25	3.3	1
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	32.8	22		
COMPLETION %	63.0%	22	64.4%	13
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	180.5	28	208.4	11
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.1	30	6.2	8
TURNOVERS	1.7	27	1.1	23

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
150-1

AFC
90-1

AFC EAST
25-1

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 4.5

AFC NORTH

BETTING PREVIEW

OF TIMES SELECTED BY
VSIN EXPERTS TO WIN DIVISION

The AFC North featured the team with the best record in the NFL and also finished as the only one with four teams that had winning records. The 9-7 Bengals finished last and could potentially reap the benefits of a last-place schedule. The 13-4 Ravens finished two wins clear of any other AFC team, but lost to the Chiefs in the AFC Championship Game.

That pushed the streak out to 12 seasons without a Super Bowl appearance for the Ravens, who actually won the division for the first time since 2019. In fact, as solid as this division seems to be on an annual basis, the Super Bowl XLVII triumph for Baltimore remains the last Super Bowl victory. The Bengals have the only other Super Bowl appearance.

It would seem that the Ravens and Bengals are legitimate contenders for the Lombardi Trophy this season, but the Browns, Ravens, and Steelers rank first, second, and third in strength of schedule by opponents' win percentage last season. The Steelers and Browns also rank among the five hardest schedules based on opponents' season win total odds.

That would seem to leave the Bengals in the best position to represent the division come February, but the health of Joe Burrow is at the top of the list of questions for AFC North teams and maybe for the NFL as a whole. Lingering questions about Deshaun Watson cannot be ignored, nor can the fits of Russell Wilson and Justin Fields in the Steel City, where Mike Tomlin has never had a losing season.

Is it as simple as defaulting to the Ravens and the relative lack of uncertainty regarding perennial MVP candidate Lamar Jackson? It might be, but all four teams feature talented rosters and tremendous upside as the 2024 season looms. – Adam Burke



2024 PROJECTED STANDINGS (BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)

TEAM	2024	HOME	ROAD	SCHEDULE STRENGTH			DRAFTKINGS	
	SM PR	FIELD ADV.	FIELD ADV.	(RANK)	PRJW'S	PRJL'S	O/U	
BALTIMORE	29	2.2	0.4	24.08 (14)	10.8	6.2	11.5	
CINCINNATI	26.5	2.4	-0.1	23.47 (26)	9.9	7.1	10.5	
CLEVELAND	24	1.9	-0.2	24.62 (7)	8.2	8.8	8.5	
PITTSBURGH	23	2	-0.2	24.76 (3)	7.6	9.4	8.5	



STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING

29.0
(#2 of 32)

BALTIMORE RAVENS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 14-5 SU & 12-7 ATS
Head Coach: John Harbaugh (17th)

Lamar Jackson started every important game for the Ravens last season. Make no mistake, Baltimore was a really good team and there is nothing fluky about going 13-4, but that was a luxury not afforded to any other AFC North team with regards to the starting quarterback.

Kenny Pickett, Joe Burrow, and Deshaun Watson all missed varying amounts of time, and while Pickett and Watson are nowhere near Jackson's level, the Ravens ran really strong on the health front aside from the Mark Andrews absence in 2023. If they do the same in 2024, they may very well navigate the AFC North gauntlet once again and head into the postseason hoping to end a 12-year title drought.

OFFENSE

This was about as solid and balanced of an offense as there was in the NFL last season. The Ravens were third in Rush EPA, one of three teams on the plus side of 0 per rbsdm.com, and they ranked sixth in Dropback EPA. That was quite a feat given Andrews missed seven regular season games. What the Andrews injury did was showcase Isaiah Likely as a legitimate threat and forced Jackson to spread it around to the team's many veteran WRs.

Nelson Agholor is the only one who stuck around and the running back room looks a lot different without Gus Edwards and J.K. Dobbins, but Derrick Henry will step in to share carries with Justice Hill. Year 2 of Zay Flowers has a lot of upside and fourth-rounder Tez Walker would have been a Day 1 or Day 2 pick if the NCAA hadn't screwed around with his eligibility.

The one area of concern is the offensive line, where the starters and the depth took hits with the losses of Kevin Zeitler, Sam Mustipher, John Simpson, and Morgan Moses.

DEFENSE

The Ravens will turn to 32-year-old Zach Orr as the defensive coordinator this season. Orr has been with the Ravens every year but one since 2017 when he retired from the league. He was the inside linebackers coach the last two years. Baltimore found tremendous success with another young up-and-comer in Mike Macdonald, who also joined the Ravens at 27 and worked his way up to DC.

This was an elite unit last season that ranked second in EPA/play and trailed only the Browns in Dropback EPA. This was a league-average run defense, but their game state featured a lot of leads and it was way more important to defend the aerial assault than the ground game. There are more losses than additions on defense, including Jadeveon Clowney, Geno Stone, and Patrick Queen, but few orgs reload like the Ravens.

OUTLOOK

The depth for the Ravens looks a little iffy this season with so many losses in free agency, but the starters on both sides of the ball look very solid. They'll need to be against a brutal schedule that features all six division games, plus the AFC West, NFC East, Houston, Buffalo, and Tampa Bay.

Tough schedule or not, I don't see myself in a hurry to pick against the Ravens. I wouldn't bet this, but if I had to pick for a pool or contest, it would still be an Over 10.5. – Adam Burke

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/5	at Kansas City	+3.2	UNDERDOGS have won L3 SU & ATS in BAL-KC h2h series
9/15	LAS VEGAS	-9.6	The L6 games of LVR-BAL h2h series went OVER the total
9/22	at Dallas	-0.2	OVER the total is 4-0-1 in L5 of BAL-DAL h2h series
9/29	BUFFALO	-3.7	UNDER the total is 9-2 in L11 of BUF-Bal h2h series
10/6	at Cincinnati	-0.9	BALTIMORE is on 5-1 ATS run at Cincinnati
10/13	WASHINGTON	-11.3	UNDER the total is 5-2 in WAS-BAL series since '97
10/21	at Tampa Bay	-4.4	ROAD TEAMS are on 6-game ATS winning streak in BAL-TB set
10/27	at Cleveland	-3.9	BALTIMORE is on 13-3 ATS run at Cleveland
11/3	DENVER	-12.2	The L4 games of DEN-BAL h2h series went UNDER the total
11/7	CINCINNATI	-4.4	UNDERDOGS are 7-3 ATS in L10 of CIN-BAL series at Baltimore
11/17	at Pittsburgh	-4.8	The L7 games of the BAL-PIT rivalry went UNDER the total
11/25	at LA Chargers	-3.9	ROAD TEAMS are 6-1 ATS in L6 of BAL-LAC series
12/1	PHILADELPHIA	-4.2	UNDERDOGS are 5-1 ATS in L6 of PHI-BAL h2h series
BYE WEEK			
12/15	at NY Giants	-7.2	HOME TEAMS are on 5-0-1 ATS run in BAL-NYG h2h series
12/21	PITTSBURGH	-8	PITTSBURGH is 6-1 ATS in L7 at Baltimore
12/25	at Houston	-1.2	BALTIMORE has won L4 ATS versus Houston
1/5	CLEVELAND	-7	CLEVELAND is 9-5 ATS in L14 at Baltimore

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **24.08**
(#14 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS **2.2/0.4**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	28.4	4	16.5	1
YARDS PER POINT	13	2	18.3	1
PLAYS PER GAME	63.3	16		
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:55	9		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	42.0%	9	36.4%	7
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	370.4	6	301.4	6
YARDS PER PLAY	5.9	4	4.6	3
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	31.8	1		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	156.5	1	109.4	14
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.9	3	4.5	25
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	29.1	30		
COMPLETION %	66.4%	10	60.6%	5
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	213.8	21	191.9	6
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.9	3	5.1	1
TURNOVERS	1.1	12	1.8	1

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
+950

AFC
+500

AFC NORTH
+130

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 10.5

CINCINNATI

BENGALS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 9-8 SU & 7-8-2 ATS
Head Coach: Zac Taylor (6th)

The right hand of Joe Burrow is arguably the biggest story in the NFL going into the 2024 season. The Bengals project to be favored in at least 14 of their 17 games and have the easiest schedule of the AFC North members. This division will be among the best in the league, but Cincinnati's upside is undeniable, even with those six tough head-to-head matchups.

The last-place schedule could be a difference maker with the Patriots, Titans, and Broncos on the slate.

OFFENSE

The torn wrist ligament Burrow suffered in late November officially put an end to his season, but the strained calf from training camp made things difficult early in the campaign as well. Cincy started 1-3 as Burrow only completed 57.6% of his passes for 728 yards and a 2/2 TD/INT ratio over the first four games of the season.

Over the next seven games, he completed 72.5% of his tosses and had a 13/4 TD/INT ratio. While the Bengals only went 4-3 in that span, it sure felt like they had the opportunity to turn the corner. Unfortunately, Burrow went out in that seventh game and Jake Browning finished out the season.

The Burrow that finished fourth in MVP voting in 2022 would be a welcomed sight, but it is fair to wonder about not only the wrist, but also some of the lower-body injuries that have plagued him. Every team comes into the season with injury risk, but the Bengals go as Burrow goes.

With a rebuilt backfield now featuring Zack Moss instead of Joe Mixon and the 1-2 punch of Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins at WR, the Bengals are set up well. They also put a ton of money into the offensive line prior to Burrow's injury in hopes of assisting there. Burrow's former QB coach, Dan Pitcher, was promoted to OC after Brian Callahan took the Titans HC job.

DEFENSE

On the defensive side, the Bengals will look similar. We'll see if that is a good thing or a bad thing after a huge step back from Lou Anarumo's crew in 2023. Cincinnati badly regressed against the run and struggled with the pass as well. They were 25th in Rush EPA against and 24th in Dropback EPA after finishing 14th and 7th, respectively, in those categories in 2022.

D.J. Reader, Chidobe Awuzie, and Nick Scott are the only notable losses, as the team reunited with Vonn Bell and brought in Geno Stone from the rival Ravens. The Bengals inked Sheldon Rankins to help against the run. Typically we'd look for some negative regression from a team that was +10 in turnover differential, but the defense actually seemed to underperform last year, ranking 31st in yards allowed and surrendering six yards per play.

OUTLOOK

Investing in Bengals futures carries a high degree of risk because of the nature of Burrow's injury. In a perfect world, the defense bounces back, Burrow stays healthy, and Cincinnati takes advantage of a weak schedule, at least relative to everybody else in the division.

The floor is still pretty high, as evidenced by last season, as Browning admirably filled in and the Bengals still went 9-8 despite having a full-strength Burrow for just a handful of games. I'd lean Under 10.5 just because 11 wins is a big ask if Burrow misses more time or can't come back from a pretty serious surgery given the position he plays. — Adam Burke

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT LINE* SERIES TREND

9/8 NEW ENGLAND -9.6 FAVORITES have won L3 SU & ATS in NE-CIN h2h set

9/15 at Kansas City +6.2 UNDER the total is 8-1 in L8 of CIN-KC series in Kansas City

9/23 WASHINGTON -9 UNDERDOGS are 4-1 ATS in L5 of WAS-CIN h2h series

9/29 at Carolina -6.7 FAVORITES are on 5-1-1 ATS run in CIN-CAR h2h series

10/6 BALTIMORE +0.9 BALTIMORE is on 5-1 ATS run at Cincinnati

10/13 at NY Giants -4.2 UNDERDOGS are on 5-0-1 ATS run in CIN-NYG h2h series

10/20 at Cleveland -0.9 HOME TEAMS have won L4 ATS in CIN-CLE h2h series

10/27 PHILADELPHIA -1.9 CINCINNATI is a perfect 8-0 ATS vs. Philadelphia since '94

11/3 LAS VEGAS -7.3 CINCINNATI is on 6-1 SU & 7-0 ATS run hosting Raiders

11/7 at Baltimore +4.4 UNDERDOGS are 7-3 ATS in L10 of CIN-BAL series at Baltimore

11/17 at LA Chargers -0.9 CINCINNATI is on 5-0 ATS winning streak on road vs. Chargers

BYE WEEK

12/1 PITTSBURGH -5.7 UNDER the total is 6-2-1 in L9 of PIT-CIN series at Cincinnati

12/9 at Dallas +2.8 DALLAS has won L4 ATS versus Cincinnati

12/15 at Tennessee -3.2 CINCINNATI is on 8-2 ATS run vs. Tennessee

12/19 CLEVELAND -4.7 CINCINNATI is 7-2 ATS in L9 hosting Cleveland

12/29 DENVER -9.9 ROAD TEAMS are on 9-1 ATS surge in DEN-CIN h2h series

1/5 at Pittsburgh -1.8 OVER the total is 3-1 in L4 of CIN-PIT series at Pittsburgh

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **23.47**
(#26 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS **2.4/-0.1**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	21.5	16	22.6	21
YARDS PER POINT	14.8	12	16.6	9
PLAYS PER GAME	61.6	24		
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:28	12		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	37.6%	20	40.9%	22
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	318.9	22	374.6	31
YARDS PER PLAY	5.2	17	6	32
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	22.5	30		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	89.8	31	126.2	26
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4	22	4.7	30
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	36.2	7		
COMPLETION %	68.3%	4	65.6%	19
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	229.1	15	248.4	28
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.9	19	7.6	32
TURNOVERS	0.9	2	1.5	12

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
13-1

AFC
+700

AFC NORTH
+145

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 10.5

CLEVELAND BROWNS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 11-7 SU & 9-7-2 ATS
Head Coach: Kevin Stefanski (5th)

For just the third time since 1994, the Browns ended a season with double digits in the win column. The 11-6 record doesn't even begin to explain the odyssey that was Cleveland's season, as Kevin Stefanski won Coach of the Year for the second time and the Browns used five different starting quarterbacks. Deshaun Watson had the most QB wins with five, but Joe Flacco was right there with four, as he came off the street to propel the Browns to their second postseason appearance in four seasons.

With one of the best rosters top to bottom, and one of the biggest QB questions in the league, a wide range of outcomes seem possible for the Browns.

OFFENSE

The Browns went 5-1 in Watson's six starts, but he didn't have much to do with it. He was sacked 17 times in those six games and posted a 7/4 TD/INT ratio while throwing for just 186 yards per game. Cleveland even lost Nick Chubb in Week 2 to a horrific knee injury, so it was the Jerome Ford and Kareem Hunt show throughout the season.

Ultimately, the Browns finished with one more TD pass (24) than interceptions (23) and still went 11-6. This was the 28th-ranked offense by EPA/play. Among QBs with at least 150 plays, Watson ranked 29th out of 45 QBs in EPA/play. Chubb should be back and Cleveland added Jerry Jeudy to play opposite Amari Cooper, not to mention David Njoku remains a matchup nightmare, but it still feels like Watson has an uphill road to climb.

This was the 29th-ranked offense on third down and a group that went 6-2 in games decided by four or fewer points. One big loss that isn't on the roster is OL coach Bill Callahan, who joined his son, Brian, in Tennessee.

DEFENSE

The defensive resurgence from the Browns under Jim Schwartz was unquestionably the key to the season. The Browns topped the league in yards per play and total yards allowed. They finished tied for fifth in takeaways and led the league in EPA/play, including the top mark in Dropback EPA.

The second level of the defense has been rebuilt with Sione Takitaki and Anthony Walker heading out and Devin Bush and Jordan Hicks heading in. One of the secrets to Cleveland's recent success has been some excellent player evaluation from one of the sharpest front offices in the NFL, spearheaded by GM Andrew Berry.

This should be one of the league's top defenses once again, but it will be tested by a stronger schedule filled with better passing offenses.

OUTLOOK

The story is the same for the Browns as it was heading into last season. They exceeded expectations, even with some pedestrian early efforts from Watson. This is one of the best rosters in the NFL outside of the most important position in the sport. The schedule is stiffer, but this remains a terrific roster and average or better play from Watson will give the Browns a chance at achieving some special things.

The vig on the Over 8.5 seems correct here, as this is a team with a high floor and a high ceiling. – Adam Burke

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	DALLAS	-0.4	ROAD TEAMS have won L4 ATS in DAL-CLE h2h series
9/15	at Jacksonville	+1.9	HOME TEAMS are 6-2 ATS in L8 of CLE-JAC h2h series
9/22	NY GIANTS	-6	FAVORITES are 5-1 ATS in L6 of NYG-CLE h2h series
9/29	at Las Vegas	+0	UNDERDOGS are on 3-0-1 ATS run in CLE-LVR h2h series
10/6	at Washington	-1.6	CLEVELAND is 4-2 ATS vs. Washington since '04
10/13	at Philadelphia	+4	HOME TEAMS have won L6 ATS in CLE-PHI h2h series
10/20	CINCINNATI	+0.9	HOME TEAMS have won L4 ATS in CIN-CLE h2h series
10/27	BALTIMORE	+3.9	BALTIMORE is on 13-3 ATS run at Cleveland
11/3	LA CHARGERS	-2.6	UNDERDOGS are 9-2-1 ATS in L12 of LAC-CLE series
BYE WEEK			
11/17	at New Orleans	-0.1	UNDERDOGS are a perfect 8-0 ATS in L8 of CLE-NO set
11/21	PITTSBURGH	-2.7	UNDER the total is 8-3 in L11 of PIT-CLE series at Cleveland
12/2	at Denver	-2.1	DENVER is on 10-2-2 ATS run vs. Cleveland
12/8	at Pittsburgh	+0.8	PITTSBURGH is 9-3-1 ATS in L13 hosting Cleveland
12/15	KANSAS CITY	+4.2	ROAD TEAMS are on 7-1 ATS surge in KC-CLE h2h series
12/19	at Cincinnati	+4.7	CINCINNATI is 7-2 ATS in L9 hosting Cleveland
12/29	MIAMI	-1.3	CLEVELAND is 4-1 ATS in L5 hosting Miami
1/5	at Baltimore	+7	CLEVELAND is 9-5 ATS in L14 at Baltimore

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.62
(#7 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.9/-0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	23.3	10	21.3	13
YARDS PER POINT	14.4	9	12.7	31
PLAYS PER GAME	69.8	1		
TIME OF POSSESSION	32:29	1		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	31.6%	29	29.1%	1
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	335.9	16	270.2	1
YARDS PER PLAY	4.8	28	4.6	2
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	30.5	4		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	118.6	12	105.5	11
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	3.9	26	4.3	19
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	36.7	5		
COMPLETION %	56.9%	32	57.4%	1
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	217.2	19	164.7	1
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.4	28	5.2	2
TURNOVERS	2.2	32	1.6	5

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
40-1

AFC
22-1

AFC NORTH
+600

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 8.5



PITTSBURGH STEELERS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 10-8 SU & ATS
Head Coach: Mike Tomlin (17th)

Is the world-famous Mike Tomlin streak in jeopardy? The Steelers have never had a losing season under the 52-year-old, longest-tenured head coach in the NFL. A brutal schedule is just one of many challenges facing Pittsburgh this season, as Tomlin will try to turn back the clock with Russell Wilson. Or maybe they'll go with Justin Fields. Who knows, but the Steelers look a lot different on offense than we've seen in recent seasons.

The defense should be solid like always, but the ceiling will be determined by the offense under new OC Arthur Smith.

OFFENSE

That Smith-led offense is one of the most interesting storylines in the division and the AFC as a whole. The Steelers were 28th in points and 25th in yardage last season, even though they only committed 16 turnovers and went +11 in turnover margin. The offense was given the ability to succeed, but fell short in so many key areas. Pittsburgh only had 13 passing touchdowns. Mike Evans and Tyreek Hill had 13 receiving touchdowns on their own.

Smith's run-heavy approach would seem more conducive to starting Fields, but Wilson is in the driver's seat for now. Najee Harris and Jaylen Warren will share the backfield again, but with Cordarrelle Patterson sprinkled in. Roman Wilson will attempt to be the WR2 that the passing game desperately needs next to George Pickens.

As much as Smith failed as a head coach, he's still a good OC and the Steelers were 23rd in EPA/play and 25th in Dropback EPA, so the passing game has tons of room for improvement.

DEFENSE

The back seven has been completely retooled for the Steelers, including new LB Patrick Queen, who had his "one of us" moment by praising the Pittsburgh food scene during OTAs. DeShon Elliott and Miles Killebrew were brought in at safety and Anthony Averett, Dontae Jackson, and Cameron Sutton were all brought in at cornerback.

Pittsburgh was seventh in EPA/play, eighth in Dropback EPA, and 11th in Rush EPA, so this truly was a solid defensive unit. Having T.J. Watt certainly doesn't hurt. With more depth behind second-year corner Joey Porter Jr. and more bodies around Minkah Fitzpatrick and Damontae Kazee, the Pittsburgh defense looks stout once again and better equipped to withstand injuries.

OUTLOOK

If Russ isn't cooked, or the Steelers don't wait too long to hand the keys to Fields, this really looks like an improved roster in a ton of areas. But, the schedule is a bear. After the Week 9 bye, the Steelers play all six AFC North games, plus games against Washington, Philadelphia, and Kansas City.

Tomlin might very well be the best in the business at getting the most out of his players, but the Steelers schedule is too much to overlook. So is the vig on the Under 8.5 at -165, but that would be my pick in a pool or contest. – Adam Burke

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Atlanta	+2.9	PITTSBURGH is on 4-0 ATS streak versus Atlanta
9/15	at Denver	-1.1	UNDERDOGS are 9-2-1 ATS in L12 of PIT-DEN series
9/22	LA CHARGERS	-1.7	ROAD UNDERDOGS are on 5-0 ATS streak in LAC-PIT h2h series
9/29	at Indianapolis	+2	HOME TEAMS are on 7-2 ATS surge in PIT-IND h2h series
10/6	DALLAS	+0.5	DALLAS has won L3 ATS versus Pittsburgh
10/13	at Las Vegas	+1	The L4 games of PIT-LVR h2h series went UNDER the total
10/20	NY JETS	-0.3	UNDER the total is 5-1 in L6 of NYJ-PIT series but lost LT
10/28	NY GIANTS	-5.1	The L4 games of NYG-PIT h2h series went UNDER the total
BYE WEEK			
11/10	at Washington	-0.6	UNDER the total is 6-1 in L7 of PIT-WAS h2h series
11/17	BALTIMORE	+4.8	The L7 games of the BAL-PIT rivalry went UNDER the total
11/21	at Cleveland	+2.7	UNDER the total is 8-3 in L11 of PIT-CLE series at Cleveland
12/1	at Cincinnati	+5.7	UNDER the total is 6-2-1 in L9 of PIT-CIN series at Cincinnati
12/8	CLEVELAND	-0.8	PITTSBURGH is 9-3-1 ATS in L13 hosting Cleveland
12/15	at Philadelphia	+5	PHILADELPHIA is on 4-0 SU & ATS streak hosting Pittsburgh
12/21	at Baltimore	+8	PITTSBURGH is 6-1 ATS in L7 at Baltimore
12/25	KANSAS CITY	+5.1	KANSAS CITY has won L3 ATS versus Pittsburgh
1/5	CINCINNATI	+1.8	OVER the total is 3-1 in L4 of CIN-PIT series at Pittsburgh

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.76
(#3 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2/-0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	17.9	28	19.1	6
YARDS PER POINT	17	26	18	3
PLAYS PER GAME	60.5	26		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:28	20		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	36.6%	22	39.1%	21
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	304.3	25	342.1	21
YARDS PER PLAY	5	22	5.4	23
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	28.6	9		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	118.2	13	115.1	19
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.1	19	4.3	21
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	29.8	29		
COMPLETION %	63.8%	21	60.7%	6
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	186.1	25	227.1	17
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.8	23	6.7	21
TURNOVERS	0.9	2	1.6	8

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
50-1

AFC
28-1

AFC NORTH
+850

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 8.5

AFC SOUTH

BETTING PREVIEW

OF TIMES SELECTED BY
VSIN EXPERTS TO WIN DIVISION

From 2020 to 2022, the Houston Texans went 11-38-1 overall and went through four different head coaches. Last year, the Texans turned to their past and hired 2022 NFL Assistant Coach of the Year in 49ers defensive coordinator DeMeco Ryans, who started his playing career with the franchise in 2006. Next, they drafted C.J. Stroud, Offensive Rookie of the Year, and Will Anderson, Defensive Rookie of the Year, back-to-back with the second and third overall picks. The Texans went 10-7 and won their first playoff game since 2019. Things can change quickly in the AFC South and now all of a sudden the Texans have gone from 'hunter' to 'hunted' as the +105 division favorite.

The Jacksonville Jaguars (+275) looked as if they were going to live up to expectations in 2023 with an 8-3 start to the season, but they could not hold up as last year's AFC South favorite mainly due to a laundry list of injuries to Trevor Lawrence and an offensive line that ranked 27th out of 32 teams per PFF. The Jaguars ended up losing five of their last six games and missing the playoffs. Lawrence signed a five-year, \$275 million deal earlier this summer, so expectations are high once again in Jacksonville.

The Indianapolis Colts (3/1) still managed to go 9-8 despite losing Anthony Richardson five weeks into the season due to an AC joint sprain. Indianapolis lost a winner-take-all game at home in Week 18 to Houston, yet did not make many changes within the roster in terms of free agency.

Brian Callahan, former offensive coordinator with the Bengals, comes to Nashville replacing Mike Vrabel as head coach of the Tennessee Titans (10/1). He brings his father and former NFL head coach Bill Callahan in with him to retool a porous offensive line in front of Will Levis. It is a new era in Tennessee as Vrabel, Ryan Tannehill, and Derrick Henry have all departed Music City. – Wes Reynolds



2024 PROJECTED STANDINGS (BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)

TEAM	2024	HOME	ROAD	SCHEDULE STRENGTH		DRAFTKINGS	
	SM PR	FIELD ADV.	FIELD ADV.	(RANK)	PRJW'S	PRJL'S	O/U
HOUSTON	26.5	1.3	-0.3	25.08 (1)	9.2	7.8	9.5
JACKSONVILLE	24	1.3	-0.5	24.66 (5)	8.2	8.8	8.5
INDIANAPOLIS	23	1.4	0	23.82 (19)	8.1	8.9	8.5
TENNESSEE	20.5	2.3	0.3	23.98 (15)	6.8	10.2	6.5

HOUSTON TEXANS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 11-8 SU & ATS
Head Coach: DeMeco Ryans (2nd)

The Texans went from worst to first in the AFC South with a rookie head coach (DeMeco Ryans) and a rookie quarterback (C.J. Stroud), so things can change fast in this division. One of many changes is Houston being the favorite to repeat as division champions. However, with the favorite's role, the Texans get the division's first-place schedule. While it is manageable early, the schedule gets more daunting as the season progresses as they play five division champions (Bills, Lions, Cowboys, Chiefs, and Ravens) plus two other playoff teams (Dolphins, Packers). Expectations are certainly high for the Texans considering they played 16 games last year in the 1:00 pm EST window and this season have four primetime games. Will the lights be too bright for the Texans?

OFFENSE

C.J. Stroud settled the debate of who was the best quarterback in the 2023 NFL Draft class by winning the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year. Stroud joined Joe Montana and Tom Brady as the only quarterbacks over the last 50 years to lead the league in both average passing yards per game (273.9) and TD-to-INT ratio (23/5).

He will also have some additional potential weapons this year as general manager Nick Caserio traded for both Joe Mixon, to improve a running game that has struggled for the last five years and was 22nd in the league last season, and Stefon Diggs, who posted his sixth consecutive 100-reception season but had reached an impasse with Buffalo. Both Diggs, on a restructured deal, and Nico Collins (80 catches, 1297 yards, 8 TD) are in their contract years.

One of the main culprits for the lack of a running game was an oft-injured offensive line as right guard Shaq Mason was the only player to start all 17 games. Laremy Tunsil is back to anchor the left side and assuming better health, this unit should be improved in the second year of offensive coordinator Bobby Slowik's zone scheme.

DEFENSE

Caserio was nothing if not active in the free agent market, especially on defense, where 14 free agents were brought in and five draft picks have also entered the fold to reinforce a unit that faces a murderer's row of quarterbacks in 2024.

The Texans set a franchise record with 46 sacks and have the NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year with Will Anderson (seven sacks), but a lot of new faces up front to join him. Danielle Hunter comes in after a 16.5-sack season with the Vikings along with Denico Autry, who had a career-high 11.5 sacks last season in Tennessee.

Houston plays a 4-2-5 with just two linebackers. One of them will be Azeez Al-Shaair (Tennessee) who reunites with Ryans from their time in San Francisco. He will team up with leading returning tackler Christian Harris.

Derek Stingley Jr. mans the left corner position and rookie second-rounder Kamari Lassiter out of Georgia will get the first crack on the right side. Former first-rounders C.J. Henderson (Carolina) and Jeff Okudah (Atlanta) were brought in for depth. Jimmie Ward is Ryans' defensive leader from their time in San Francisco. He, Jalen Pitre, and rookie Calen Bullock out of USC are all quick, physical safeties.

OUTLOOK

The Texans are in an unfamiliar role of being the division favorite and Jacksonville found out last season that the favorite's role in a topsy-turvy division like the AFC South was not an easy position in which to be.

Houston also has to face Mahomes, Jackson, Allen, Prescott, Rodgers, Tua, Love, Goff, Lawrence, plus three other first-round quarterback picks in the last two years with Anthony Richardson, Caleb Williams, and J.J. McCarthy.

Nevertheless, this is the most talented team in the division and its AFC South competitors do not look improved enough to overtake them. – Wes Reynolds

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Indianapolis	-2.2	FAVORITES are 6-1 ATS in L7 of HOU-IND series in Indianapolis
9/15	CHICAGO	-5.4	HOUSTON is 5-1 ATS in L6 versus Houston
9/22	at Minnesota	-2.9	MINNESOTA is 5-0 SU & ATS all-time versus Texans
9/29	JACKSONVILLE	-3.9	UNDER the total is 6-1 in L7 of JAC-HOU rivalry in Houston
10/6	BUFFALO	-0.3	UNDER the total is 8-2 in L10 of BUF-HOU h2h series
10/13	at New England	-4.3	HOME TEAMS are on 11-3 ATS run in HOU-NE h2h series
10/20	at Green Bay	+3.2	GREEN BAY has won L3 ATS vs. Houston
10/27	INDIANAPOLIS	-4.4	INDIANAPOLIS is 10-1-1 ATS at Houston since '13
10/31	at NY Jets	+1.1	UNDERDOGS are on 6-0-1 ATS run in HOU-NYJ h2h series
11/10	DETROIT	-0.8	OVER the total is 4-1 in L5 of DET-HOU h2h series
11/18	at Dallas	+3	UNDERDOGS are 3-0-1 ATS in L4 of HOU-DAL h2h series
11/24	TENNESSEE	-6.6	HOUSTON is on 11-3 ATS run hosting Tennessee since 2010
12/1	at Jacksonville	-1.3	HOUSTON is on 9-3 ATS run at Jacksonville

BYE WEEK

12/15	MIAMI	-3.2	FAVORITES have won L6 SU & ATS in MIA-HOU h2h series
12/21	at Kansas City	+6.4	The L5 games of HOU-KC h2h series went OVER the total
12/25	BALTIMORE	+1.2	BALTIMORE has won L4 ATS versus Houston
1/5	at Tennessee	-3.8	UNDER the total is 7-1 in L8 of HOU-TEN series at Tennessee

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 25.08
(#1 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.3/-0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	22.2	13	20.8	11
YARDS PER POINT	15.4	20	15.9	12
PLAYS PER GAME	63.7	14		
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:53	29		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	37.9%	19	35.7%	5
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	342.4	12	330.7	14
YARDS PER PLAY	5.4	13	5.2	15
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	26.1	20		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	96.9	22	96.6	6
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	3.7	29	3.5	2
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	34.8	12		
COMPLETION %	62.8%	23	67.6%	29
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	245.5	7	234.1	23
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.7	4	7	27
TURNOVERS	0.8	1	1.4	16

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
16-1

AFC
+850

AFC SOUTH
+105

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 9.5



JACKSONVILLE

JAGUARS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 9-8 SU & ATS
Head Coach: Doug Pederson (3rd)

Jacksonville looked poised to repeat as AFC South Champions last season as the Jaguars were 8-3 after Thanksgiving. Then, as Counting Crows would sing, they were in for "A Long December" as losses in five of the last six games caused them to miss the playoffs. Trevor Lawrence was playing through a variety of injuries but turned the ball over too much, plus the Jaguars could not run the ball effectively. It was not much better defensively as they gave up the big play all too frequently. Doug Pederson and general manager Trent Baalke believe they have made the necessary upgrades at wide receiver and offensive line, plus an almost entirely new defensive coaching staff.

OFFENSE

Trevor Lawrence signed a five-year, \$275 million extension that ties him with Joe Burrow as the highest-paid player in the league. Now he has to play up to that standard. Better health would be a good start considering he dealt with injuries to his knee, ankle, and shoulder, plus had a concussion and was forced to leave three games last season. He also led the NFL with 21 turnovers (14 INT, seven lost fumbles) in 2023.

The line up front did not do him many favors last season, especially with poor run-blocking. Ezra Cleveland was acquired via late-season trade from Minnesota and Mitch Morse comes in from Buffalo. Despite the poor blocking, Travis Etienne was still able to eclipse 1,000 yards on the ground.

The Jaguars still lack a true No. 1 receiver, but they have made some additions to help tight end Evan Engram and Christian Kirk, who had his own health issues missing five games. Gabe Davis (Buffalo) replaces Calvin Ridley, and Brian Thomas was drafted in the first round out of LSU.

DEFENSE

While there were some offensive changes, it is this unit that had the most turnover mainly on the coaching staff. Ryan Nielsen, Atlanta's defensive coordinator in 2023, comes in to take over the same position. In Nielsen's lone year in Atlanta, the overall rankings improved from 23rd to 18th in points allowed per game and from 27th to 11th in yards allowed per game. The Falcons also doubled their sack total from 21 to 42.

Nielsen employs press coverage in the secondary and a four-man rush. Josh Allen, re-signed to a five-year, \$141 million deal, and 2022 first overall draft pick Travon Walker combined for 27.5 sacks in 2023. The interior could also get a boost from Arik Armstead (San Francisco).

The Jaguars defense, especially the secondary, was excellent in forcing turnovers, but not so much at limiting big plays. Tyson Campbell and Ronald Darby are likely to be under fire at corner this season and will be tested early with this new press coverage scheme.

OUTLOOK

Jacksonville had a two-game lead in the division at the end of November, but could not hold on. Are the 2024 Jaguars the team that started 8-3 or the team that ended 1-5? Lawrence has a good group of receivers to get the ball but the offensive line is still a major question mark.

The biggest improvement on this team should be the defensive line with Nielsen now at the helm of the defense. It will need to be elite to mask this highly questionable secondary.

There is potential for a shaky start considering the first four games are against playoff teams. The Jaguars went 2-0 in the back-to-back over in London and got that same scenario this year in Weeks 6 and 7. The 8.5-win total is the right number for this club. – Wes Reynolds

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Miami	+4.5	UNDER the total is 8-1 in L9 of JAC-MIA in-state rivalry
9/15	CLEVELAND	-1.9	HOME TEAMS are 6-2 ATS in L8 of CLE-JAC h2h series
9/23	at Buffalo	+7	UNDERDOGS have won L6 ATS in JAC-BUF h2h series
9/29	at Houston	+3.9	UNDER the total is 6-1 in L7 of JAC-HOU rivalry in Houston
10/6	INDIANAPOLIS	-1.9	JACKSONVILLE has won L8 ATS hosting Indianapolis
10/13	vs. Chicago	-0.7	FAVORITES are on 5-1 ATS run in JAC-CHI h2h series
10/20	vs. New England	-3.8	JACKSONVILLE is just 2-6 ATS in L8 games away from home vs. NE
10/27	GREEN BAY	+1.1	ROAD TEAMS are on 5-1 ATS surge in GB-JAC h2h series
11/3	at Philadelphia	+4.3	PHILADELPHIA has won L4 ATS vs. Jacksonville
11/10	MINNESOTA	-4.1	OVER the total is 3-0-1 in L4 of MIN-JAC h2h series
11/17	at Detroit	+6.6	FAVORITES are a perfect 8-0 SU & ATS in the JAC-DET h2h series
BYE WEEK			
12/1	HOUSTON	+1.3	HOUSTON is on 9-3 ATS run at Jacksonville
12/8	at Tennessee	-1.1	OVER the total is 10-3 in L13 of JAC-TEN series in Tennessee
12/15	NY JETS	-0.6	JACKSONVILLE is 4-1 ATS in L5 hosting NY Jets
12/22	at Las Vegas	+0.3	JACKSONVILLE is on 7-2 ATS run vs. Raiders
12/29	TENNESSEE	-4.1	UNDER the total is 9-4 in L13 of TEN-JAC series at Jacksonville
1/5	at Indianapolis	+0.5	JACKSONVILLE is on 6-2 ATS surge at Indianapolis

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.66
(#5 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.3/-0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	22.2	13	21.8	17
YARDS PER POINT	15.3	18	15.7	13
PLAYS PER GAME	65.5	6		
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:37	10		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	38.2%	17	36.5%	8
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	339.5	13	342.8	22
YARDS PER PLAY	5.2	16	5.4	21
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	26.6	17		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	96.8	24	103.1	9
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	3.6	30	4.2	16
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	36.5	6		
COMPLETION %	66.5%	9	65.5%	18
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	242.7	9	239.8	26
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.1	16	6.6	17
TURNOVERS	1.8	28	1.6	8

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
45-1

AFC
22-1

AFC SOUTH
+275

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 8.5

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 9-8 SU & ATS
Head Coach: Shane Steichen (2nd)

The Colts were one play away from winning the AFC South in Shane Steichen's first season. Then, they elected to throw a pass on 4th-and-1 at the Texans 15-yard line to little used rookie back Tyler Goodson and it was dropped. Indianapolis has won one playoff game during general manager Chris Ballard's tenure, which began in 2014. Ballard did not elect to go outside the organization in free agency and instead extended core players like receiver Michael Pittman and linebacker Zaire Franklin. This team is only going to go as far as Anthony Richardson, whose season ended after four starts in his rookie campaign, can take it.

OFFENSE

Richardson lasted four games before needing season-ending shoulder surgery. He has the size, speed, and athleticism that dazzles, but needs to stop taking unnecessary hits when running the ball. The arm strength is clearly there but the accuracy (59.5% completions) was not last year.

Jonathan Taylor won his standoff with owner Jim Irsay and Ballard and ended his hold out after seven games signing a three-year, \$42 million extension. His presence should help with Richardson's continued development.

The offensive line, anchored by Quenton Nelson, remains intact, but center Ryan Kelly has seen his better days and right tackle Braden Smith has missed 16 starts in four years.

Pittman (109 receptions, 1152 yards) returns to lead the receiving corps, but there was a big gap between him and No. 2 Josh Downs (68 receptions, 771 yards). Alec Pierce needs to show more consistency and second-round pick Adonai Mitchell (Texas) is the potential speedster that this group has lacked.

DEFENSE

Aside from Franklin (107 solo tackles - 2nd in NFL), Grover Stewart and DeForest Buckner, one of the better interior duos in the league, were both re-signed and/or extended. Nickel Kenny Moore and safety Julian Blackmon were brought back as well.

This group should be good against the run and the pass rush could be improved by adding edge first-rounder Laiatu Latu (UCLA) to Samson Ebukam (9.5 sacks) and Kwity Paye (8.5 sacks). E.J. Speed provides his name at linebacker along with Franklin.

The young secondary is the weak link in Gus Bradley's unit partially because they rarely disguise coverage and blitz at one of the league's lowest rates. This group led the defense to rank 28th in the league for points allowed including giving up 32 or more points in five home losses.

OUTLOOK

The Colts overachieved last year winning nine games considering they were in so many high-scoring affairs. They are by and large running it back with the same personnel that was not good enough to win the division last year.

Having Richardson and Taylor together for the first time is certainly exciting, but questions will remain about both players being able to stay healthy throughout the season. If Richardson is injured again, Joe Flacco showed he still had something left in the tank by getting off his couch and helping lead Cleveland into the playoffs last year, but he is 39.

Indianapolis also has to play three teams off bye weeks and two other teams with extra prep time off playing in Thursday night games. Aside from Richardson and Taylor's health and a defense that needs to improve, these schedule disadvantages could be the most important difference between being a playoff team or not. - Wes Reynolds

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	HOUSTON	+2.2	FAVORITES are 6-1 ATS in L7 of HOU-IND series in Indianapolis
9/15	at Green Bay	+6.4	The L7 games of the IND-GB h2h series went OVER the total
9/22	CHICAGO	-2	FAVORITES are on 5-1 ATS run in CHI-IND h2h series
9/29	PITTSBURGH	-2	HOME TEAMS are on 7-2 ATS surge in PIT-IND h2h series
10/6	at Jacksonville	+1.9	JACKSONVILLE has won L8 ATS hosting Indianapolis
10/13	at Tennessee	-0.6	FAVORITES are 6-1 ATS in L7 of IND-TEN series at Tennessee
10/20	MIAMI	+0.2	UNDERDOGS are 14-2-1 ATS in MIA-IND h2h series since '99
10/27	at Houston	+4.4	INDIANAPOLIS is 10-1-1 ATS at Houston since '13
11/3	at Minnesota	+0.3	INDIANAPOLIS has won L5 ATS vs. Minnesota
11/10	BUFFALO	+3.1	INDIANAPOLIS in on 5-1 ATS run hosting Buffalo
11/17	at NY Jets	+4.3	HOME FAVORITES are on 3-0 SU & ATS streak in IND-NYJ set
11/24	DETROIT	+2.6	ROAD TEAMS are 5-0 ATS in DET-IND h2h series since '08
12/1	at New England	-1.1	NEW ENGLAND has won L5 ATS hosting Indianapolis
BYE WEEK			
12/15	at Denver	-1.3	INDIANAPOLIS is 5-1 ATS in L6 visits to Denver
12/22	TENNESSEE	-3.2	UNDERDOGS have won L4 ATS of TEN-IND series in Indianapolis
12/29	at NY Giants	-0.8	OVER the total is 6-1 in L7 of IND-NYG h2h series
1/5	JACKSONVILLE	-0.5	JACKSONVILLE is on 6-2 ATS surge at Indianapolis

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.82
(#19 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.4/0
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	23.3	10	24.4	28
YARDS PER POINT	14.5	10	14.3	24
PLAYS PER GAME	64.4	11		
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:58	26		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	35.3%	26	37.1%	11
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	336.8	15	349.8	24
YARDS PER PLAY	5.2	14	5.2	16
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	28.2	11		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	121.1	10	123.8	24
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.3	10	4.1	10
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	33.8	18		
COMPLETION %	61.9%	27	65.1%	15
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	215.6	20	226	16
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.8	22	6.8	22
TURNOVERS	1.3	17	1.4	16

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
60-1

AFC
35-1

AFC SOUTH
+310

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 8.5

TENNESSEE TITANS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 6-11 SU & 7-9-1 ATS
Head Coach: Brian Callahan (1st)

There is a new regime in Nashville as Brian Callahan replaces Mike Vrabel as head coach. Callahan will also be the offensive play-caller for the first time, as will his defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson, who was the defensive backs coach for the Baltimore Ravens last season. Callahan will turn to his father Bill as the offensive line coach. That offensive line will be in front of second-year quarterback Will Levis as the Titans look to find out if he is the guy going forward. With Vrabel now no longer in the fold, executive vice president/general manager Ran Carthon is now officially in charge of the reset in Tennessee.

OFFENSE

The Titans offense has been anemic for the last couple years but nearly bottomed out last year as it ranked 28th in total offense, 29th in passing offense, 28th in scoring offense, and 28th in third down conversions. Callahan wants more explosive plays from this group and brought in one of his former players Tyler Boyd from Cincinnati to go along with new signee Calvin Ridley (Jacksonville) and the steady DeAndre Hopkins. Treyton Burks, the 2022 first-rounder who came back in return in the terrible trade that sent A.J. Brown to Philadelphia, has missed 12 games in two seasons and could be the odd man out.

While Levis gets some receiving help, the offensive line, which ranked dead last per PFF, has to get better in a hurry after allowing an NFL-worst 49 sacks last year. Alabama's J.C. Latham was drafted seventh overall to go along with last year's first-rounder Peter Skoronski. Lloyd Cushenberry (Denver) should be an immediate upgrade at center.

Derrick Henry is now in Baltimore and the Titans will go with a 1-2 punch at running back with Tony Pollard (Dallas) and second-year man Tyjae Spears.

DEFENSE

One problem that Wilson's defense should not have is physicality starting in the secondary. Tennessee traded for L'Jarius Sneed from the Super Bowl champion Chiefs and signed Chidobe Awuzie from Cincinnati.

Jeffery Simmons is one of the best and most versatile defensive tackles in the game. He and the defensive front will miss Denico Autry (Houston), but drafted a talented player in Outland Trophy winner T'Vondre Sweat (Texas) who can be a difference maker but had some 'red flags' that dropped him into the second round. Harold Landry is still productive and had 10.5 sacks last year, but Arden Key will have to provide more consistent play.

Most of the scheme will remain the same but with a higher rate of blitzing.

OUTLOOK

Tennessee has failed far too often on recent draft picks, so that is why they had to be bigger players in free agency this past offseason. They should be better on both sides of the ball but they do have two first-time play-callers and there are always some growing pains in that situation.

Levis has a strong arm and a good release, but did struggle with accuracy and decision-making in his nine starts (3-6) as a rookie and was behind a porous offensive line.

While the Titans do play a last-place schedule this season, keep in mind that three of the last place teams that they play are the Bengals, the Jets, and the Chargers who are all expected to be substantially better this year. This could be a team that starts slow but improves late in the season. – Wes Reynolds

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Chicago	+3.9	OVER the total is 5-2 in L7 of TEN-CHI h2h series
9/15	NY JETS	+1.9	TENNESSEE is 10-2 ATS in L12 games versus NY Jets
9/22	GREEN BAY	+3.6	OVER the total is 7-1 in L8 of GB-TEN h2h series
9/30	at Miami	+7.2	UNDERDOGS are 6-3-1 ATS in L10 of TEN-MIA h2h series
BYE WEEK			
10/13	INDIANAPOLIS	+0.6	FAVORITES are 6-1 ATS in L7 of IND-TEN series at Tennessee
10/20	at Buffalo	+9.7	UNDERDOGS are on 9-2-1 ATS run in TEN-BUF h2h series
10/27	at Detroit	+9.3	TENNESSEE has won L5 ATS vs. Detroit
11/3	NEW ENGLAND	-3.5	FAVORITES are 8-4-1 ATS in L13 of NE-TEN h2h series
11/10	at LA Chargers	+4.7	HOME TEAMS are on 6-0-1 ATS run in LAC-TEN h2h series
11/17	MINNESOTA	-1.6	MINNESOTA is on 6-1 ATS surge versus Tennessee
11/24	at Houston	+6.6	HOUSTON is on 11-3 ATS run hosting Tennessee since 2010
12/1	at Washington	+1.4	ROAD UNDERDOGS are on 7-0 ATS streak in TEN-WAS h2h series
12/8	JACKSONVILLE	+1.1	OVER the total is 10-3 in L13 of JAC-TEN series in Tennessee
12/15	CINCINNATI	+3.2	CINCINNATI is on 8-2 ATS run vs. Tennessee
12/22	at Indianapolis	+3.2	UNDERDOGS have won L4 ATS of TEN-IND series in Indianapolis
12/29	at Jacksonville	+4.1	UNDER the total is 9-4 in L13 of TEN-JAC series at Jacksonville
1/5	HOUSTON	+3.8	UNDER the total is 7-1 in L8 of HOU-TEN series at Tennessee

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **23.98**
(#15 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS **2.3/0.3**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	17.9	27	21.6	16
YARDS PER POINT	16.1	22	15.5	16
PLAYS PER GAME	58.9	31		
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:54	28		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	33.5%	28	38.5%	17
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	289	28	335.1	18
YARDS PER PLAY	4.9	26	5.2	14
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	26.1	20		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	108.6	17	107.7	13
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.2	15	3.8	7
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	29.1	30		
COMPLETION %	61.5%	29	67.8%	30
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	180.4	29	227.4	18
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.1	15	6.8	23
TURNOVERS	1.2	14	0.8	31

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
150-1

AFC
70-1

AFC SOUTH
10-1

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 6.5

AFC WEST

BETTING PREVIEW

OF TIMES SELECTED BY
VSIN EXPERTS TO WIN DIVISION

It would be too bold to proclaim there's a new sheriff in town, but the AFC West is about to get wild. The Chiefs, who have owned the division for eight straight years, are shooting for the first three-peat in the Super Bowl era. Still, as Patrick Mahomes and Andy Reid continue to chase historic accomplishments in Kansas City, a powerful force of nature has arrived to challenge their neighborhood dominance and share the media spotlight. Jim Harbaugh, the Chargers' new coach, is not about to concede anything to the Chiefs. Harbaugh has a gunslinging quarterback, Justin Herbert, and a confident team that should be taken seriously.

Believe it or not, the Raiders actually shared the best record in division games (4-2) with the Chiefs a year ago. Las Vegas interim coach Antonio Pierce posted a 5-4 record, including an upset victory in Kansas City, and earned the full-time job. While the Raiders are searching for their franchise quarterback, they do have a set of wide receivers and tight ends that rank among the NFL's elite. The Broncos enter the second year of the Sean Payton era with quarterback questions of their own and what appears to be the worst roster in the division.

Since becoming the starting quarterback in Kansas City, Mahomes has a 30-5 record versus division opponents — 12-1 against the Broncos, 10-2 against the Raiders and 8-2 against the Chargers. The big gap between the Chiefs and the little three is closing, however.

Kansas City, the Super Bowl favorite at +550, remains the odds-on division favorite (-225) at DraftKings. The Chargers, set to shed their label as underachievers, are the second choice (+300). The Harbaugh hype is real, so consider buying in while the price is right. The Raiders (12-1) and Broncos (15-1) are long shots in the two-horse race. — Matt Youmans



2024 PROJECTED STANDINGS (BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)

TEAM	2024	HOME	ROAD	SCHEDULE STRENGTH		DRAFTKINGS	
	SM PR	FIELD ADV.	FIELD ADV.	(RANK)	PRJW'S	PRJL'S	O/U
KANSAS CITY	30	2.2	0.5	23.42 (27)	11.6	5.4	11.5
LA CHARGERS	23.5	1.6	0.2	23.37 (29)	8.6	8.4	8.5
LAS VEGAS	22	1.4	0	24.45 (8)	7.3	9.7	6.5
DENVER	20	1.3	-0.6	24.86 (2)	6.2	10.8	5.5



KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 15-6 SU & 13-7-1 ATS
Head Coach: Andy Reid (12th)

Three is the magic number for the Chiefs. The franchise has rewarded its three biggest stars — quarterback Patrick Mahomes, tight end Travis Kelce and defensive tackle Chris Jones — with fat contracts, removing the potential for offseason distractions as coach Andy Reid leads the pursuit of the first three-peat in the Super Bowl era. Kansas City has handled the target on its back, winning the AFC West by three games last year and by four games in 2022. The roster, and especially the wide receiver depth chart, is stronger on paper than it was last season. Everything starts at the top with Reid and general manager Brett Veach, who earns an “A” for his work in the draft and free agency. The Chiefs show no signs of slipping.

OFFENSE

Mahomes, the most dynamic player in the league, was able to make up for the Chiefs' offensive deficiencies last season. In 2022, Kansas City led the NFL in scoring at 29.2 ppg, a number that dropped to 21.8 and ranked 15th in 2023. There were not as many explosive plays, mainly because the receiver group was inexperienced and unreliable.

The Chiefs scored 31 points or more in only three of 21 games a year ago, but that will change. The vertical passing attack is coming back with the additions of free-agent veteran Marquise “Hollywood” Brown and rookie first-rounder Xavier Worthy, who possesses Tyreek Hill-type speed. Isiah Pacheco, who rushed for 935 yards and had 44 receptions, is a hard-charging and versatile running back.

The line looks solid with veterans Joe Thuney, Jawaan Taylor, Trey Smith and Creed Humphrey returning and rookie second-round pick Kingsley Suamataia ready to contribute. Rashee Rice, Justin Watson, Justyn Ross and Skyy Moore give Mahomes plenty of weapons in addition to Kelce, Brown and Worthy. Mahomes led the league in passing yards (5,250) and passing touchdowns (41) in 2022, but his production declined to 4,183 yards and 27 touchdowns last year. With a much-improved supporting cast, expect Mahomes' numbers to soar again.

DEFENSE

Steve Spagnuolo, arguably the best defensive coordinator in the business, painted a masterpiece in the playoffs. After Kansas City's defense ranked No. 2 in yards allowed (289.8 per game) and scoring (17.3 ppg) in the regular season, Spagnuolo's unit surrendered only 15.8 ppg in postseason victories over Miami, Buffalo, Baltimore and San Francisco. Chris Jones is a disruptive force in the middle of the line, and edge rusher George Karlaftis tied Jones with 10.5 sacks last season. Felix Anudike-Uzomah, a first-round pick in 2023, is expected to emerge as another tough edge rusher. There is impressive depth on the line and with a linebacker crew led by Nick Bolton, Drue Tranquill and Leo Chenal. The team's biggest offseason loss was cornerback L'Jarius Sneed, who was traded to Tennessee, but All-Pro corner Trent McDuffie can assume the responsibility of locking down No. 1 receivers. The defense will be tested in September by opposing QBs Lamar Jackson (Ravens), Joe Burrow (Bengals), Kirk Cousins (Falcons) and Justin Herbert (Chargers).

OUTLOOK

It's sharp and trendy to tout underdogs, but a focused favorite is sometimes the best bet on the board. The Chiefs, who have won eight straight AFC West titles and back-to-back Super Bowls, are focused on making NFL history. Mahomes became the full-time starter at the beginning of the 2018 season, and Kansas City has since cranked out regular-season records of 12-4, 12-4, 14-2, 12-5, 14-3 and 11-6. The 11-win low point arrived last season when the offense slumped, but this year's team is more talented and should reach at least 12 wins. — Matt Youmans

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT LINE* SERIES TREND

9/5 BALTIMORE -3.2 UNDERDOGS have won L3 SU & ATS in BAL-KC h2h series

9/15 CINCINNATI -6.2 UNDER the total is 8-1 in L8 of CIN-KC series in Kansas City

9/22 at Atlanta -4.8 ROAD TEAMS have won L3 ATS in KC-ATL h2h series

9/29 at LA Chargers -5.8 KANSAS CITY is on 8-2 ATS run when visiting Chargers

10/7 NEW ORLEANS -10.1 ROAD TEAMS are on 3-0-1 ATS run in NOP-KC h2h series

BYE WEEK

10/20 at San Francisco +1.4 KANSAS CITY is on 7-0-1 ATS surge vs. San Francisco

10/27 at Las Vegas -7.5 OVER the total is 8-3 in L11 of KC-LV series at Raiders

11/4 TAMPA BAY -9.2 UNDERDOGS are on 5-1-1 ATS run in TB-KC h2h series

11/10 DENVER -12.4 DENVER is on 4-1 ATS run vs. Kansas City

11/17 at Buffalo +0 ROAD TEAMS are 12-4 ATS in L16 of BUF-KC rivalry

11/24 at Carolina -10.8 UNDERDOGS are 6-1 ATS in L7 of KC-CAR h2h series

11/29 LAS VEGAS -9.8 UNDER the total is 11-5 in LVR-KC series in Kansas City since '08

12/8 LA CHARGERS -8.1 The L3 games of LAC-KC series in Kansas City went UNDER the total

12/15 at Cleveland -4.2 ROAD TEAMS are on 7-1 ATS surge in KC-CLE h2h series

12/21 HOUSTON -6.4 The L5 games of HOU-KC h2h series went OVER the total

12/25 at Pittsburgh -5.1 KANSAS CITY has won L3 ATS versus Pittsburgh

1/5 at Denver -9.6 DENVER has won L3 ATS hosting Kansas City

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.42
(#27 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2.2/0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	21.8	15	17.3	2
YARDS PER POINT	16.1	21	16.8	8
PLAYS PER GAME	63.5	15		
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:33	11		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	43.6%	6	37.1%	10
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	351.3	9	289.8	2
YARDS PER PLAY	5.5	9	4.7	5
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	24.5	25		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	104.9	19	113.2	18
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.3	13	4.5	24
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	37.4	2		
COMPLETION %	66.3%	11	61.2%	8
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	246.4	6	176.5	4
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.9	20	5.4	3
TURNOVERS	1.6	23	1	27

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
+550

AFC
+300

AFC WEST
-230

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 11.5

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 5-12 SU & 5-11-1 ATS
Head Coach: Jim Harbaugh (1st)

Love him or hate him, Jim Harbaugh is a hell of a football coach who knows how to build a winning team from the ground up. He did it at the University of San Diego, Stanford and Michigan, and he once took the San Francisco 49ers to the Super Bowl. He's also going to win big with the Chargers — but how soon? The skeptics will say he needs a year or two to rebuild, but it's not fantasy to envision it happening this season.

The Chargers have been talented underachievers for too many years, mostly because they were misled by a few clueless head coaches. Harbaugh has more than a clue and a proven plan to immediately turn around a 5-12 team that became a bad joke and slipped into the AFC West basement.

OFFENSE

Harbaugh has spent much of the summer praising the abilities of Justin Herbert, a 6-foot-6 quarterback who has done almost everything but win a playoff game. In four years, Herbert has passed for 17,223 yards and 114 touchdowns. He also owns a 30-32 record as a starter, and the Chargers blew 27-0 lead in a wild-card playoff loss at Jacksonville in his only postseason appearance. Herbert is highly unlikely to lead the league in passing yards this season, only because Harbaugh's plan is to build the offensive line and establish a power running attack.

The new backfield consists of tough runners Gus Edwards, JK Dobbins, rookie Kimani Vidal and fullback Ben Mason. Star receivers Keenan Allen and Mike Williams were shipped out, which is no big loss considering both were often injured. Herbert's new primary targets — Josh Palmer, Quentin Johnston, DJ Chark and rookie Ladd McConkey — show a lot of potential. A line led by stud tackles Rashawn Slater and rookie Joe Alt, guard Zion Johnson and center Bradley Bozeman can bulldoze running lanes and protect the passer. To top it off, kicker Cameron Dicker made all 35 extra-point attempts and 31 of 33 field goals last season. This offense will punish defenses on the ground, which will help make Herbert a more effective passer.

DEFENSE

The mission to win at the line of scrimmage also applies to the defense. But, as usual, a critical key will be keeping edge rushers Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack healthy and on the field. Mack, who had 17 sacks last season, and Bosa sound reenergized by Harbaugh's leadership.

While the Chargers' changes included the departure of inside linebacker Eric Kendricks, there is lots of talent on all three levels of the defense for new coordinator Jesse Minter, who Harbaugh brought from Michigan. Look for newcomers Denzel Perryman and Junior Colson, a third-round pick who starred for the Wolverines, to play major roles as linebackers. The secondary will be led by All-Pro safety Derwin James and corner Asante Samuel Jr.

Last year's statistics are irrelevant. A few veteran stars remain, but this is a new-look defense, and in no way is it the same clumsy unit that surrendered 63 points to the Raiders in a December debacle.

OUTLOOK

Most of the nerds who handicap solely by the numbers and don't understand situational football strategy probably still contend that Brandon Staley was a misunderstood genius. Staley made foolish decisions, was a weak leader and finally was fired a year too late. Harbaugh is conservative by nature, sometimes to a frustrating extent, but his teams are fundamentally sound and rarely lose by making dumb mistakes — in other words, the Chargers will become the opposite of what they were under Staley and previous coach Anthony Lynn. A last-place schedule that includes Carolina, Arizona, Tennessee, Tampa Bay and New England should help Harbaugh overachieve in LA. — Matt Youmans

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT LINE* SERIES TREND

9/8 LAS VEGAS -2.7 UNDER total is 19-4 in LVR-LAC series at Chargers since '01

9/15 at Carolina -4 CAROLINA is on 6-1 ATS run versus LA Chargers

9/22 at Pittsburgh +1.7 ROAD UNDERDOGS are on 5-0 ATS streak in LAC-PIT h2h series

9/29 KANSAS CITY +5.8 KANSAS CITY is on 8-2 ATS run when visiting Chargers

BYE WEEK

10/13 at Denver -2.8 DENVER is on 5-2-1 ATS run hosting LA Chargers

10/21 at Arizona -0.1 UNDER the total is 3-0-1 in L4 of LAC-ARI series at Arizona

10/27 NEW ORLEANS -3 The L6 games of NO-LAC h2h series went OVER the total

11/3 at Cleveland +2.6 UNDERDOGS are 9-2-1 ATS in L12 of LAC-CLE series

11/10 TENNESSEE -4.7 HOME TEAMS are on 6-0-1 ATS run in LAC-TEN h2h series

11/17 CINCINNATI +0.9 CINCINNATI is on 5-0 ATS wining streak on road vs. Chargers

11/25 BALTIMORE +3.9 ROAD TEAMS are 6-1 ATS in L6 of BAL-LAC series

12/1 at Atlanta +2 UNDER the total is 7-1 in L8 of LAC-ATL h2h series

12/8 at Kansas City +8.1 The L3 games of LAC-KC series in Kansas City went UNDER the total

12/15 TAMPA BAY -2.1 OVER the total is 7-1 in L8 of TB-LAC h2h series

12/22 DENVER -5.3 UNDER the total is 10-1 in L11 of DEN-LAC series at Chargers

12/29 at New England -1.8 NEW ENGLAND is on 7-1 ATS run vs. Chargers but lost LT

1/5 at Las Vegas -0.7 LAS VEGAS has won L3 ATS hosting LA Chargers

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH 23.37
(#29 toughest of 32)

FIELD
RATINGS 1.6/0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	20.4	21	23.4	24
YARDS PER POINT	16.2	24	15.5	17
PLAYS PER GAME	65.1	8		
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:55	27		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	38.4%	16	38.4%	16
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	329.4	18	362.9	28
YARDS PER PLAY	5.1	21	5.5	27
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	25.4	24		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	96.6	25	113.2	17
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	3.8	27	4.1	13
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	37.2	3		
COMPLETION %	64.7%	15	65.1%	14
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	232.8	13	249.8	30
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.8	21	7.1	28
TURNOVERS	1.2	16	1.2	21

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
35-1

AFC
20-1

AFC WEST
+320

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 8.5

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 8-9 SU & 10-5-2 ATS
Head Coach: Antonio Pierce (1st)

Around the league, Antonio Pierce is probably viewed as a head coach who's in over his head and undeserving of the job. Inside the Raiders' locker room, Pierce has a fan club that includes the team's biggest stars. It was Halloween night when Las Vegas owner Mark Davis pulled the mask off of Josh McDaniels, who went 9-16 before wearing out his welcome in less than two seasons. The firing of McDaniels fired up a team that went 5-4 with Pierce as the interim coach. Will the momentum carry over to this season?

The Raiders' roster looks good enough on paper, but the quarterback situation is a potential problem and will determine whether Pierce's honeymoon in Vegas continues for another year.

OFFENSE

With veteran wideout Davante Adams as the headliner, the Raiders' group of pass catchers could be the best in the division. In two years without Aaron Rodgers as his quarterback, Adams has totaled 203 receptions for 2,660 yards and 22 touchdowns. Aside from Adams, the Raiders are loaded with receivers Jakobi Meyers, Michael Gallup and Tre Tucker and tight ends Michael Mayer and Brock Bowers.

The quarterback targeting those weapons will be either veteran Gardner Minshew or Aidan O'Connell, who went 5-5 as a rookie and had eight touchdown passes with no interceptions in his final four starts. Minshew is the favorite to win the job in Week 1 due to his experience and the fact the Raiders open the season on the road against the Chargers and Ravens.

The line, anchored by Pro Bowl tackle Kolton Miller and center Andre James, should be better than average. Leading rusher Josh Jacobs, who left for Green Bay, will be replaced by Zamir White and Alexander Mattison. Two teams in the division have elite quarterbacks and two teams (Las Vegas and Denver) have question marks at the position. If things don't go well in September, don't be surprised if the Raiders start rotating QBs in search of the right answer, if there is one.

DEFENSE

Adams and Maxx Crosby are Pierce's most vocal supporters. Crosby, a fourth-round draft pick in 2019, represents one of the few wise moves made by former coach Jon Gruden and former general manager Mike Mayock, who often bungled the draft in historic fashion. Crosby, who totaled 27 sacks the past two seasons, embodies the Raider image. He needs help up front from Christian Wilkins, a run-stuffing tackle formerly with the Dolphins, Malcolm Koonce, Byron Young and Tyree Wilson, a first-round pick who was a non-factor as a rookie.

The Raiders boosted their sack total from 27 in 2022 to 40 last season. The middle and back end of the defense features linebackers Divine Deablo and Robert Spillane and corners Nate Hobbs and Jack Jones. After Pierce took over, the defense that was coordinated by Patrick Graham allowed only 16.0 points in the final nine games.

OUTLOOK

Since moving from Oakland to Las Vegas, the Raiders have parted ways with two head coaches, two general managers and starting quarterbacks Derek Carr and Jimmy Garoppolo. The Raiders went Over their win total of 7.5 last season by going 8-9 and finishing with their eighth straight victory over the Broncos. A Christmas Day upset of the Chiefs in Kansas City likely sealed the full-time job for Pierce. While a schedule with eight home games is not easy, an optimist could find seven or eight wins on it. This team will play hard for Pierce. The quarterbacks' ability to produce remains the biggest mystery and a reason for pessimism. A recommendation Over the win total is only a lean and likely to be a coin-flip decision. — Matt Youmans

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at LA Chargers	+2.7	UNDER total is 19-4 in LVR-LAC series at Chargers since '01
9/15	at Baltimore	+9.6	The L6 games of LVR-BAL h2h series went OVER the total
9/22	CAROLINA	-6.2	OVER the total is 5-2 in L7 of CAR-LVR h2h series
9/29	CLEVELAND	+0	UNDERDOGS are on 3-0-1 ATS run in CLE-LVR h2h series
10/6	at Denver	-1.1	LAS VEGAS has won L6 ATS vs. Denver
10/13	PITTSBURGH	-1	The L4 games of PIT-LVR h2h series went UNDER the total
10/20	at LA Rams	+5.4	LA RAMS are on 6-game ATS winning streak vs. Raiders
10/27	KANSAS CITY	+7.5	OVER the total is 8-3 in L11 of KC-LV series at Raiders
11/3	at Cincinnati	+7.3	CINCINNATI is on 6-1 SU & 7-0 ATS run hosting Raiders

BYE WEEK

11/17	at Miami	+6	OVER the total is 8-1 in L9 of LVR-MIA h2h series but lost LY
11/24	DENVER	-3.6	RAIDERS have won L8 ATS hosting Denver
11/29	at Kansas City	+9.8	UNDER the total is 11-5 in LVR-KC series in Kansas City since '08
12/8	at Tampa Bay	+3	OVER the total is 8-0-1 in L9 of LVR-TB h2h series
12/16	ATLANTA	+0.2	UNDERDOGS have swept L3 ATS in ATL-LVR h2h series
12/22	JACKSONVILLE	-0.3	JACKSONVILLE is on 7-2 ATS run vs. Raiders
12/29	at New Orleans	+1.7	UNDERDOGS have won L3 ATS in LVR-NO h2h series
1/5	LA CHARGERS	+0.7	LAS VEGAS has won L3 ATS hosting LA Chargers

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.45
(#8 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.4/0
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	19.5	23	19.5	9
YARDS PER POINT	14.8	13	17	6
PLAYS PER GAME	59.4	30		
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:34	30		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	35.7%	24	41.4%	27
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	289.5	27	330.9	15
YARDS PER PLAY	4.9	27	5.2	12
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	24.3	27		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	90.7	30	118.5	21
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	3.7	28	4.2	18
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	32.8	22		
COMPLETION %	62.5%	25	66.7%	25
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	198.8	23	212.4	12
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.6	25	6.4	12
TURNOVERS	1.4	20	1.3	19

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
100-1

AFC
60-1

AFC WEST
+900

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 6.5

DENVER BRONCOS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 8-9 SU & 6-10-1 ATS
Head Coach: Sean Payton (2nd)

The first year of the Sean Payton era was a costly dumpster fire. Not only is the coach getting paid a reported \$18 million per year, but Denver's former quarterback, Russell Wilson, wrecked the salary cap on his way out of town.

Last season was about tearing it down, and this offseason is when the rebuilding begins. Payton praised his young team after minicamp in early June, but he probably will be singing a sad tune by the end of September. The Broncos have missed the playoffs eight straight years, a streak that is headed for nine unless Payton works a miracle with his quarterback prospects.

OFFENSE

Payton has a track record and reputation for being an offensive genius, but last year was proof that even the top coaches need a top-end quarterback to make things work. The Broncos ranked 19th in scoring offense (21.0 ppg), which actually represented a major jump from a league-low 16.9 ppg in 2022. The time for making excuses has ended. Payton has three hand-picked quarterbacks — veteran Jarrett Stidham, rookie Bo Nix and Jets castoff Zach Wilson — and the coach must develop at least one of them into a quality starter.

Payton seemed to reach by making Nix the 12th overall pick of the draft, and the preseason battle for the starting job is probably between Stidham and Nix, who has drawn some comparisons to Drew Brees. Courtland Sutton leads a receiver group with potential. Who else will step up among Marvin Mims Jr., Tim Patrick, Josh Reynolds, rookie Tony Franklin and tight ends Greg Dulcich and Adam Trautman? Running backs Javonte Williams, Samaje Perine, Jaleel McLaughlin and rookie Audric Esteime need to execute Payton's plan for a power-rushing attack. The line should be in good shape with tackles Mike McGlinchey and Garrett Bolles as anchors. Payton certainly sees removing Russell Wilson from the QB room as a case of addition by subtraction.

DEFENSE

The most embarrassing moment of Payton's debut season was the Broncos' 70-20 loss at Miami in late September. A Denver defense that was a laughingstock eventually showed significant improvement for coordinator Vance Joseph. During an eight-game stretch from mid-October to mid-December, the Broncos allowed 16 ppg, including a 24-9 victory over Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs.

Two of last year's defensive leaders, safety Justin Simmons and linebacker Josey Jewell, must be replaced, however. The new leaders will be corner Pat Surtain II, linemen Zach Allen and Malcolm Roach, and linebackers Jonathon Cooper, Baron Browning and Alex Singleton. Don't overlook this under-the-radar move: Jim Leonhard, the former interim coach and defensive coordinator at Wisconsin, has been added as defensive pass-game coordinator.

OUTLOOK

The Broncos' season win totals at DraftKings have been in steep decline, from 10 in 2022 to 8.5 in 2023 to 5.5 this season. An argument can be made that this is the time to bet Over with the market number hitting rock bottom. Payton's 8-9 finish in his Denver debut — the exact record we predicted here a year ago — turned out to be respectable considering Denver was left for dead after starting 1-5.

The Broncos' turnaround did involve some close-game luck, with four of the wins coming by three points or fewer. The mess left by former coach Nathaniel Hackett is mostly in the rear-view mirror, although Wilson leaves behind \$85 million in dead salary-cap charges over the next two years.

This is Payton's roster and, while his credibility is undeniable, his quarterbacks are the big question mark. A schedule featuring non-division road games against the Seahawks, Jets, Ravens and Bengals is tough, so predicting six or more wins seems ambitious and this is a lean to a 5-12 finish. — Matt Youmans

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Seattle	+5.2	HOME TEAMS are on 3-0-1 ATS surge in DEN-SEA h2h series
9/15	PITTSBURGH	+1.1	UNDERDOGS are 9-2-1 ATS in L12 of PIT-DEN series
9/22	at Tampa Bay	+5.6	ROAD TEAMS are 5-1-2 ATS in L8 of DEN-TB h2h series
9/29	at NY Jets	+7.9	OVER the total is 7-1 in L8 of DEN-NYJ series in New York
10/6	LAS VEGAS	+1.1	LAS VEGAS has won L6 ATS vs. Denver
10/13	LA CHARGERS	+2.8	DENVER is on 5-2-1 ATS run hosting LA Chargers
10/17	at New Orleans	+4.3	ROAD TEAMS are on 6-1 ATS run in DEN-NO h2h series
10/27	CAROLINA	-4.1	UNDERDOGS have won L4 ATS in CAR-DEN h2h series
11/3	at Baltimore	+12.2	The L4 games of DEN-BAL h2h series went UNDER the total
11/10	at Kansas City	+12.4	DENVER is on 4-1 ATS run vs. Kansas City
11/17	ATLANTA	+2.3	ATLANTA has won L3 ATS vs. Denver
11/24	at Las Vegas	+3.6	RAIDERS have won L8 ATS hosting Denver
12/2	CLEVELAND	+2.1	DENVER is on 10-2-2 ATS run vs. Cleveland

BYE WEEK

12/15	INDIANAPOLIS	+1.3	INDIANAPOLIS is 5-1 ATS in L6 visits to Denver
12/22	at LA Chargers	+5.3	UNDER the total is 10-1 in L11 of DEN-LAC series at Chargers
12/29	at Cincinnati	+9.9	ROAD TEAMS are on 9-1 ATS surge in DEN-CIN h2h series
1/5	KANSAS CITY	+9.6	DENVER has won L3 ATS hosting Kansas City

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **24.86**
(#2 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS **1.3/-0.6**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	21	19	24.3	27
YARDS PER POINT	14.2	7	15.3	18
PLAYS PER GAME	59.8	29		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:30	19		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	36.8%	21	33.2%	2
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	298.4	26	370.8	29
YARDS PER PLAY	5	25	5.8	30
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	26.5	18		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	106.5	18	137.1	30
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4	21	5	32
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	30.2	27		
COMPLETION %	65.7%	12	66.8%	27
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	191.9	24	233.6	22
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7	18	6.9	26
TURNOVERS	1.3	17	1.5	12

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
150-1

AFC
90-1

AFC WEST
18-1

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 5.5

NFC EAST

BETTING PREVIEW

OF TIMES SELECTED BY
VSIN EXPERTS TO WIN DIVISION

The Eagles had trouble bouncing back from their 38-35 loss to the Chiefs in Super Bowl LVII. Despite being favored to win the division, Philadelphia went 11-6 and needed a wild-card spot to make the playoffs last season. The Eagles ultimately got romped by the Buccaneers in the postseason, losing 32-9 at Raymond James Stadium. Jalen Hurts and the Philadelphia offense couldn't get anything going, and the defense allowed Baker Mayfield to throw for 337 yards with three touchdowns.

In fairness, it seemed as though Hurts was playing through injuries all year long, so it's entirely possible that Philadelphia will bounce back in a big way. And, as always, Howie Roseman and the aggressive Eagles front office reloaded in the offseason. That is why Philadelphia is a small favorite to reclaim its spot atop the NFC East.

The Cowboys are second on the odds board to win the division, and doing so would mean being the first team to win the NFC East in back-to-back years since the Eagles won four in a row from 2001 to 2004. Last season, Dallas rode a career year from Dak Prescott to a 12-5 record, and the Cowboys will again feel good about their chances in the division — and the conference. Of course, Dan Quinn left his job as Dallas' defensive coordinator to be the head man in Washington. But the Cowboys were able to replace him with Mike Zimmer, one of the most respected defensive minds in the game.

Speaking of Quinn, his Commanders are third on the board to win this division. Washington will be a fun team to watch this year, as Quinn should be able to get more out of a defense that has talent in place. The Commanders also drafted LSU quarterback Jayden Daniels, last year's Heisman Trophy winner, with the second pick in the 2024 NFL Draft. Daniels has a big arm and can dazzle with his legs, and he could take this offense to another level. But how soon will he do it?

The Giants sit at the bottom of the division on the odds board, as they're coming off a season in which they went 6-11. New York lost starter Daniel Jones to a torn ACL last year. Jones is expected to be back at the start of the season, but what does that mean for the Giants? A lot of people wanted New York to draft a quarterback. Instead, the Giants went with LSU wide receiver Malik Nabers. But the team is still relatively weak as an overall offensive unit. And the Giants were lousy on the defensive side of the ball last year. Brian Daboll has worked magic with this New York team before. But this year's group is facing an uphill climb. — Zachary Cohen



2024 PROJECTED STANDINGS (BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)

TEAM	2024	HOME	ROAD	SCHEDULE STRENGTH		DRAFTKINGS	
	SM PR	FIELD ADV.	FIELD ADV.	(RANK)	PRJW'S	PRJL'S	O/U
PHILADELPHIA	27.5	-0.1	-0.1	24.36 (10)	10.0	7.0	10.5
DALLAS	26	2.8	-0.1	23.32 (30)	9.8	7.2	10.5
NY GIANTS	20.5	1.3	-0.2	23.82 (21)	6.9	10.1	6.5
WASHINGTON	20.5	1.3	-0.2	23.77 (22)	6.9	10.1	6.5



PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 11-7 SU & 7-9-2 ATS
Head Coach: Nick Sirianni (4th)

It says a lot about the current state of the Eagles that an 11-6 season and a wild-card loss in the postseason is disappointing. But this is a team with the talent required to win Super Bowls, and that will be the expectation this season.

In 2023, Philadelphia finished the season in second in Overall Team DVOA. Well, the Eagles slipped to 14th in that regard in 2024. That resulted in Philadelphia shaking up the coaching staff. Brian Johnson, the team's offensive coordinator last year, was replaced with Kellen Moore. Philadelphia also brought in Vic Fangio, one of the most well-respected coaches in football, to fix the defense.

On top of all of that, the Eagles added star running back Saquon Barkley and a talented edge rusher in Bryce Huff. They also drafted two talented corners in the 2024 NFL Draft.

OFFENSE

D'Andre Swift rushed for 1,049 yards with five touchdowns for the Eagles last season, and he also caught 39 passes for 214 yards and a score. Swift was not a problem for Philadelphia. This team was fourth in the league in Rush EPA per play last year. But replacing Swift with Saquon Barkley is undoubtedly going to make this offense more dangerous.

Barkley only rushed for 962 yards and six touchdowns in 14 games last season, but he did so in an anemic offense. Defenses were able to solely focus on slowing him down, which won't be an option with Philadelphia. Barkley also caught 41 passes for 280 yards and four scores last season. All in all, he's as good as any back in the league, and he's going to open up this offense.

The passing game is what needs to be figured out in 2024. Last season, Philadelphia was just ninth in the league in Dropback EPA per play. That's not good enough for a team with Jalen Hurts throwing to A.J. Brown, DeVonta Smith and Dallas Goedert. But Hurts should be healthier. And there shouldn't be as many head-scratching play calls. It really felt like Johnson's decisions stalled a lot of drives.

DEFENSE

Huff was a very impactful pass rusher for the Jets, and he should have a lot of room to work with. Opposing offenses won't be able to pay him too much attention, as Philadelphia also has Jalen Carter, Josh Sweat and Brandon Graham. The Eagles are also taking fliers on Zack Baun and Devin White in the linebacking corps. Both players have talent and could resurrect their careers under the tutelage of Fangio.

All of that should amount to a strong presence up front, whether that means getting after the quarterback or doing a better job of stopping the run. Philadelphia struggled against the run last year.

Fangio's presence should also help out the passing defense quite a bit. The Eagles were just 28th in the league in Dropback EPA per play allowed last year. But this team has talent at corner. The Eagles still have Darius Slay and also added Quinyon Mitchell and Cooper DeJean in the draft. Both rookies should make immediate impacts. And Fangio's defenses are usually good at preventing big plays.

Fangio's defenses can lean a bit more conservative. But considering how good the Eagles are offensively, a conservative defense might be exactly what they need.

OUTLOOK

Fangio has doubters around the league, but he has proven that he can stabilize defenses. If he can do that here, Philadelphia should be a Super Bowl contender. This defense just needs to perform at a league-average level in order to give the offense a shot at winning games. I tend to think that they will. That said, at plus-money odds, Philadelphia's Over is a bet I'm making. – Zachary Cohen

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/6	vs. Green Bay	-0.6	FAVORITES are on 8-4 ATS run in GB-PHI h2h series
9/16	ATLANTA	-3.8	PHILADELPHIA is on 8-2 ATS surge hosting Atlanta
9/22	at New Orleans	-3.7	UNDERDOGS are 7-2 ATS in L9 of PHI-NO series at New Orleans
9/29	at Tampa Bay	-2.4	The L4 games in PHI-TB h2h series went UNDER the total
BYE WEEK			
10/13	CLEVELAND	-4	HOME TEAMS have won L6 ATS in CLE-PHI h2h series
10/20	at NY Giants	-6	UNDERDOGS are 10-5 ATS in PHI-NYG h2h series since '17
10/27	at Cincinnati	+1.9	CINCINNATI is a perfect 8-0 ATS vs. Philadelphia since '94
11/3	JACKSONVILLE	-4.3	PHILADELPHIA has won L4 ATS vs. Jacksonville
11/10	at Dallas	+1	DALLAS is on 6-game SU & ATS win streak hosting Philadelphia
11/14	WASHINGTON	-6.7	WASHINGTON is 10-4-2 ATS in L16 trips to Philadelphia
11/24	at LA Rams	+0	PHILADELPHIA has won L5 ATS at LA Rams
12/1	at Baltimore	+4.2	UNDERDOGS are 5-1 ATS in L6 of PHI-BAL h2h series
12/8	CAROLINA	-10.2	ROAD UNDERDOGS have won L3 ATS in CAR-PHI h2h series
12/15	PITTSBURGH	-5	PHILADELPHIA is on 4-0 SU & ATS streak hosting Pittsburgh
12/22	at Washington	-6	WASHINGTON is on 5-3-1 ATS run hosting Philadelphia
12/29	DALLAS	-1.1	FAVORITES have won L4 SU & ATS of DAL-PHI series at Philadelphia
1/5	NY GIANTS	-6.7	NY GIANTS are on 6-2 ATS run at Philadelphia

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.36
(#10 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS -0.1/-0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	25.5	7	25.2	30
YARDS PER POINT	13.9	5	14.1	25
PLAYS PER GAME	65.4	7		
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:24	14		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	48.0%	3	46.4%	31
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	354.4	8	356.1	26
YARDS PER PLAY	5.4	12	5.5	24
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	30	6		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	128.8	8	103.4	10
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.3	11	4.3	20
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	33.1	21		
COMPLETION %	65.5%	13	65.2%	16
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	225.5	16	252.7	31
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.2	12	6.6	16
TURNOVERS	1.6	23	1.1	23

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
17-1

NFC
+700

NFC EAST
+105

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 10.5

DALLAS COWBOYS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 12-6 SU & 10-8 ATS
Head Coach: Mike McCarthy (5th)

The Cowboys were 9-3 heading into December last season, but a lot of people saw right through that. Dallas was beating up on weaker competition, and Dak Prescott looked the part of an MVP candidate against lousy defenses. Dallas then earned a 33-13 win over the Eagles to start the month, but it was downhill from there. The team lost two of its final four regular-season games and got blown out at home by the Packers in the playoffs.

Dallas didn't make any splashy moves in the offseason. The team brought in linebacker Eric Kendricks, who had 79 solo tackles and 3.5 sacks for the Chargers last year. The Cowboys also reunited with running back Ezekiel Elliott. Dallas also kept most of its roster in place, which was the main priority.

The question now is whether the Cowboys can find another gear on either side of the ball. And defensively, they'll need to do so without Dan Quinn, who is off to Washington after guiding Dallas to back-to-back seasons as a top-five scoring defense.

OFFENSE

Last season, the Cowboys were second in the NFL in both EPA per play and Dropback EPA per play. Dak Prescott also threw for 4,516 yards with 36 touchdowns and nine interceptions, and he had the second-highest QBR (72.7) and Passer Rating (105.9) in football.

The offense clicked with Mike McCarthy calling plays, and another year for Prescott to play with the talented pass-catching group of CeeDee Lamb, Brandin Cooks and Jake Ferguson should mean good things.

The problem is that Prescott hasn't played his best football in the biggest games. The team got blown out in meetings with the 49ers and Bills, and those are the types of games in which they need to prove they can show up. Dallas has a tough mid-season schedule, so there will be plenty of those.

Dallas' running game also isn't as effective as it used to be. After finishing fourth in the league in Rush EPA in 2019, the Cowboys have been outside the Top 10 the last four seasons. And losing Tyron Smith won't make things any easier there. Of course, Dallas drafted tackle Tyler Guyton in the first round. But will he hit the ground running?

DEFENSE

The Cowboys finished fifth in the NFL in Defensive DVOA last season, and they did that while dealing with significant injuries. The biggest one was linebacker Leighton Vander Esch going down with a neck injury in Week 5. Vander Esch ultimately decided to walk away from football after that. But Kendricks should do a nice job of stabilizing the linebacking corps, and this is a team with talent in the secondary and the ability to get after the quarterback.

Mike Zimmer, one of the most well-respected coaches in football, should do a good job with this group. It's no secret that this is a passing league, and the Cowboys can be trusted to show up and adequately defend the pass. But Dallas will also defend the run in 2024. Zimmer's teams always do.

OUTLOOK

I don't think Dallas will do any serious damage in the postseason, but I think the Cowboys will get there. And I lean towards Dallas winning at least 11 games in doing so. I know the schedule is rather daunting, but this team has won at least 12 games in each of the past three seasons. So, the fact you can get the Cowboys to win 11 at plus-money odds is hard to pass up. McCarthy is a proven regular-season coach. — Zachary Cohen

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Cleveland	+0.4	ROAD TEAMS have won L4 ATS in DAL-CLE h2h series
9/15	NEW ORLEANS	-6.7	UNDERDOGS are 6-0 ATS in L6 of NO-DAL series at Dallas
9/22	BALTIMORE	+0.2	OVER the total is 4-0-1 in L5 of BAL-DAL h2h series
9/26	at NY Giants	-4.5	DALLAS is on 6-1 ATS run at NY Giants
10/6	at Pittsburgh	-0.5	DALLAS has won L3 ATS versus Pittsburgh
10/13	DETROIT	-1.8	ROAD TEAMS are 6-2 ATS in L8 of DET-DAL h2h series
BYE WEEK			
10/27	at San Francisco	+6	SAN FRANCISCO is on 3-game SU & ATS winning streak vs. Dallas
11/3	at Atlanta	-0.2	UNDER the total is 6-1 in L7 of DAL-ATL series in Atlanta
11/10	PHILADELPHIA	-1	DALLAS is on 6-game SU & ATS win streak hosting Philadelphia
11/18	HOUSTON	-3	UNDERDOGS are 3-0-1 ATS in L4 of HOU-DAL h2h series
11/24	at Washington	-4.5	DALLAS is on 5-1 ATS surge versus Washington
11/28	NY GIANTS	-8.1	L5 games of NYG-DAL series in Dallas went OVER total, avg 60.2 PPG
12/9	CINCINNATI	-2.8	DALLAS has won L4 ATS versus Cincinnati
12/15	at Carolina	-6.2	FAVORITES are on 6-0 SU & ATS streak in DAL-CAR h2h series
12/22	TAMPA BAY	-5.8	The L5 games of TB-DAL series in Dallas went UNDER the total
12/29	at Philadelphia	+1.1	FAVORITES have won L4 SU & ATS of DAL-PHI series at Philadelphia
1/5	WASHINGTON	-8.1	OVER the total is 8-1 in L9 of WAS-DAL series in Dallas

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.32
(#30 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2.8/-0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	29.9	1	18.5	5
YARDS PER POINT	12.4	1	16.2	11
PLAYS PER GAME	66	3		
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:45	4		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	48.3%	2	37.4%	14
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	371.6	5	299.7	5
YARDS PER PLAY	5.6	6	5	9
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	27.5	14		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	112.9	14	112.4	16
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.1	20	4.2	15
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	36.1	8		
COMPLETION %	69.7%	1	60.5%	4
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	258.6	3	187.4	5
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.6	6	6.3	9
TURNOVERS	0.9	2	1.5	12

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
17-1

NFC
+700

NFC EAST
+145

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 10.5

NEW YORK GIANTS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 6-11 SU & 8-8-1 ATS
Head Coach: Brian Daboll (3rd)

After going 9-7-1 and winning a playoff game in Brian Daboll's first year at the helm, the Giants went 6-11 last season. A lot of that had to do with what happened at the quarterback position. Daniel Jones earned himself a big contract after throwing for 3,205 yards with 15 touchdowns and only five picks in 2023. But last season, Jones threw for 909 yards with two touchdowns and six picks in six games and then tore his ACL.

If Jones struggles or goes down again, the Giants will be a little more prepared this season. The team brought in the serviceable Drew Lock as a backup. But this team will need more than just serviceable to make it back to the postseason. So, Jones will need to be healthy and ready to build on what he did two years ago. The defense is ready to go, so the offense will make or break the season.

OFFENSE

New York didn't bring in any big free agents to address an offense that was 30th in the NFL in DVOA last year. In fact, the Giants allowed Saquon Barkley to sign with Philadelphia. New York is replacing Barkley with Devin Singletary, who is a solid backfield option. And the good news is that improved offensive line play could make up for the drop in talent at running back, and New York's play in the trenches should be better.

The Giants also did some decent work to upgrade the receiving corps. Sure, Darren Waller is gone, but he barely played. And New York brought in a very talented wideout in Malik Nabers, who they took with the sixth overall pick. Nabers has big play ability and should lead the team in targets.

As previously mentioned, the overall strength of this group will come down to the play of Jones. The 27-year-old was driving his coaching staff nuts before last season's injury. If he can play a little more like he did in 2022, New York will exceed expectations.

DEFENSE

The Giants were just 21st in the league in Defensive DVOA last season, and they were also just 22nd in EPA per play allowed. However, the offense didn't do the defense any favors, forcing the group to play a lot of football. New York also made a noteworthy addition in trading for Panthers star Brian Burns.

Burns will make for an elite pass-rushing duo with Kayvon Thibodeaux, and New York also has Dexter Lawrence wreaking havoc along the line. He was a monster against the run and did a lot of damage as a pass rusher last year. On top of that, Bobby Okereke is a flat-out stud at linebacker, and corner Deonte Banks, a 2023 first-round pick, had some nice flashes last year.

If new defensive coordinator Shane Bowen can prevent this group from getting torched in the passing game, there's something there with this group. A more conservative defense — as opposed to Wink Martindale's blitz-heavy approach — should do wonders.

OUTLOOK

If Daniel Jones is out there in Week 1, I find it hard to believe the Giants won't win at least seven games. The fact that it's available at plus-money odds is just gravy. Looking through New York's schedule, it isn't hard to pick out some winnable games. And the Giants should sneak away with an extra road win or two. On paper, this looks more like an 8-9 team than a 6-11 team. I'm high on the defense, making this an actual play for me. — Zachary Cohen

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	MINNESOTA	-0.6	ROAD TEAMS are on 3-0 ATS surge in MIN-NYG h2h series
9/15	at Washington	+1.1	NY GIANTS are 5-1 SU & 6-0 ATS in L6 trips to Washington
9/22	at Cleveland	+6	FAVORITES are 5-1 ATS in L6 of NYG-CLE h2h series
9/26	DALLAS	+4.5	DALLAS is on 6-1 ATS run at NY Giants
10/6	at Seattle	+4.3	SEATTLE is on 6-1 ATS run vs. NY Giants
10/13	CINCINNATI	+4.2	UNDERDOGS are on 5-0-1 ATS run in CIN-NYG h2h series
10/20	PHILADELPHIA	+6	UNDERDOGS are 10-5 ATS in PHI-NYG h2h series since '17
10/28	at Pittsburgh	+5.1	The L4 games of NYG-PIT h2h series went UNDER the total
11/3	WASHINGTON	-1.1	UNDER the total is 6-0-1 in L7 of WAS-NYG series at New York
11/10	vs. Carolina	-2.7	UNDERDOGS have won L6 ATS in NYG-CAR h2h series
BYE WEEK			
11/24	TAMPA BAY	+1.2	The L3 games of TB-NYG series in New York went OVER the total
11/28	at Dallas	+8.1	L5 games of NYG-DAL series in Dallas went OVER total, avg 60.2 PPG
12/8	NEW ORLEANS	+0.3	UNDER the total is 7-1-1 in L9 of NO-NYG series in New York
12/15	BALTIMORE	+7.2	HOME TEAMS are on 5-0-1 ATS run in BAL-NYG h2h series
12/22	at Atlanta	+5.4	UNDER the total is 11-1-1 in NYG-ATL series since 2000
12/29	INDIANAPOLIS	+0.8	OVER the total is 6-1 in L7 of IND-NYG h2h series
1/5	at Philadelphia	+6.7	NY GIANTS are on 6-2 ATS run at Philadelphia

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.82
(#21 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.3/-0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	15.6	30	23.9	26
YARDS PER POINT	17.9	30	15.1	20
PLAYS PER GAME	62.2	20		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:26	21		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	30.2%	30	37.0%	9
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	280	29	361.7	27
YARDS PER PLAY	4.5	30	5.6	28
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	26.7	16		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	110.2	16	132.4	29
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.1	18	4.7	31
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	30.5	26		
COMPLETION %	65.3%	14	63.8%	11
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	169.8	31	229.3	19
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.5	27	6.7	19
TURNOVERS	1.1	12	1.8	1

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
100-1

NFC
60-1

NFC EAST
12-1

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 6.5

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 4-13 SU & 6-10-1 ATS
Head Coach: Dan Quinn (1st)

The Commanders sold off some pieces last season, but they still have talented young players on their defense. And Dan Quinn should be able to help those players maximize their potential. If he can do that quicker than expected, the Commanders should be a competitive team.

Turning an offense over to a rookie quarterback is always scary, but Jayden Daniels should instantly be one of the most talented players in the league. Sure, there will be a huge learning curve as he enters the NFL, and he won't have receivers streaking wide open down the field like he did in Baton Rouge. But Daniels is a one-of-a-kind playmaker and should make things happen right off the bat.

Overall, this should be a better football team than it was in 2023, even if it does finish at the bottom of the NFC East standings.

OFFENSE

Washington was just 25th in the league in EPA per play last year, and the team was in the bottom half of the NFL in both Dropback EPA per play and Rush EPA per play. With that in mind, the team made the decision to trade Sam Howell, who turned the ball over way too often. The Commanders also used the second pick in the draft on Daniels.

Last season, Daniels threw for 3,812 yards with 40 touchdowns and only four picks for LSU, and he also rushed for 1,134 yards and 10 scores. Daniels throws a gorgeous deep ball, and he's also capable of picking up chunk yardage with his legs. And Daniels will have a decent group of pass catchers to work with, as Terry McLaurin and Jahan Dotson have both showed out with worse quarterbacks. Washington also added Austin Ekeler, who is a superb pass-catching back.

The Commanders just need better offensive line play this year. Daniels' ability to extend plays should help, but Howell never had time to throw. And the last thing Washington wants is Daniels taking a beating and losing confidence.

It's also going to be interesting to see what Kliff Kingsbury does as offensive coordinator. Daniels' ability to throw deep should be utilized, but Kingsbury's offense with the Cardinals featured a lot of short passes and screens. Is he the right fit here?

DEFENSE

Washington was tied with Arizona for the worst EPA per play allowed in 2023. The team was especially miserable against the pass, as nobody in the league had a higher Dropback EPA per play allowed. Unfortunately, it's hard to see that changing very much. Perhaps Washington will make some minor improvements, but the team didn't make big enough moves to address the secondary. Instead, the Commanders will be hoping for a leap from 2023 first-round pick Emmanuel Forbes. They'll also be looking to 2024 second-round pick Mike Sainristil to make an instant impact.

Luckily for the Commanders, Quinn is one of the best defensive coaches in the league. He should do a decent job of scheming things up in a way that prevents Washington from being torched over the top. And the Commanders have some talent along the defensive line.

Washington also added Bobby Wagner in the middle of the defense. PFF gave him a grade of 82.4 last year. He's still playing at a very high level and is a good leader for this young team.

OUTLOOK

Four NFC East teams, four Overs for me. I know that's hard to believe, but just look back to 2022. Philadelphia went 14-3, Dallas went 12-5, New York went 9-7-1 and Washington went 8-8-1. I can see something similar happening here. I'm not personally playing this, but it's certainly the way I'm leaning. I'm high on this division and low on the overall NFC. – Zachary Cohen

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Tampa Bay	+4.7	UNDERDOGS have gone 9-1-2 ATS in L12 of WAS-TB h2h series
9/15	NY GIANTS	-1.1	NY GIANTS are 5-1 SU & 6-0 ATS in L6 trips to Washington
9/23	at Cincinnati	+9	UNDERDOGS are 4-1 ATS in L5 of WAS-CIN h2h series
9/29	at Arizona	+3.3	The L4 games of WAS-ARI h2h series went UNDER the total
10/6	CLEVELAND	+1.6	CLEVELAND is 4-2 ATS vs. Washington since '04
10/13	at Baltimore	+11.3	UNDER the total is 5-2 in WAS-BAL series since '97
10/20	CAROLINA	-4.6	UNDERDOGS are 14-2 ATS in CAR-WAS h2h series since '95
10/27	CHICAGO	+0.6	ROAD TEAMS are on 10-2 ATS surge in CHI-WAS h2h series
11/3	at NY Giants	+1.1	UNDER the total is 6-0-1 in L7 of WAS-NYG series at New York
11/10	PITTSBURGH	+0.6	UNDER the total is 6-1 in L7 of PIT-WAS h2h series
11/14	at Philadelphia	+6.7	WASHINGTON is 10-4-2 ATS in L16 trips to Philadelphia
11/24	DALLAS	+4.5	DALLAS is on 5-1 ATS surge versus Washington
12/1	TENNESSEE	-1.4	ROAD UNDERDOGS are on 7-0 ATS streak in TEN-WAS h2h series
BYE WEEK			
12/15	at New Orleans	+3.4	OVER the total is 11-1 in L12 of WAS-NO h2h series
12/22	PHILADELPHIA	+6	WASHINGTON is on 5-3-1 ATS run hosting Philadelphia
12/29	ATLANTA	+1.8	ROAD TEAMS are on 9-2 ATS surge in L11 of ATL-WAS h2h series
1/5	at Dallas	+8.1	OVER the total is 8-1 in L9 of WAS-DAL series in Dallas

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.77
(#22 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.3/-0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	19.4	25	30.5	32
YARDS PER POINT	16.2	23	12.8	30
PLAYS PER GAME	62.4	19		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:32	18		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	35.7%	24	41.6%	28
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	312.8	24	388.9	32
YARDS PER PLAY	5	23	5.9	31
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	21.1	32		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	93.6	27	126.8	27
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.4	7	4.5	26
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	37.4	1		
COMPLETION %	64.0%	19	66.2%	23
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	219.1	18	262.2	32
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.6	26	7.5	31
TURNOVERS	1.9	29	1.1	23

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
100-1

NFC
60-1

NFC EAST
+800

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 6.5

NFC NORTH

BETTING PREVIEW

OF TIMES SELECTED BY
VSIN EXPERTS TO WIN DIVISION

After winning a division title for the first time since 1993, the Lions are favored to repeat as division champs - a feat that they have not achieved since winning three straight from 1952-54. Standing in their way are an improved Packers team, a much improved Bears bunch, and a rebuilding Vikings crew that may only be favored in one game this season if the summer betting lines are to be trusted.

In some respects, it is easy to see the Lions winning 12 or more games like they did last season and removing most of the doubt and drama from the division. On the other hand, the Packers are in the second year of the Jordan Love era and Caleb Williams will inject some life into a Bears offense that should be better equipped to stand up alongside a very solid defense.

Based on opponents' win percentage from last season, the Bears do get a kind schedule for Williams' first season at the helm and the degree of difficulty is higher late in the year. The same is true if we use current Super Bowl odds and season win total odds, leaving Chicago with a bottom-five schedule. The Lions, with that first-place schedule, have a schedule that is tougher than average and the Packers grade somewhere in the middle with some lofty expectations.

The Lions went 4-2 against division foes last year, but they had some issues with the Vikings and lost as a big Thanksgiving favorite to the Packers, so nothing is guaranteed. While it looks like Dan Campbell's division to lose, the Lions, Packers, and Bears are all under +300 to win the NFC North and this trio serves as yet another example of the parity that we seem to have around the league heading into the 2024 season.

Up until last season, the Packers had won the NFC North in eight of the last 12 seasons. Will the changing of the guard be fully cemented in Motown or will the upstart Bears pull a Houston Texans and be a surprise division champ? – Adam Burke



2024 PROJECTED STANDINGS (BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)

TEAM	2024	HOME	ROAD	SCHEDULE STRENGTH		DRAFTKINGS	
	SM PR	FIELD ADV.	FIELD ADV.	(RANK)	PRJW'S	PRJL'S	O/U
DETROIT	27.5	2.2	-0.1	23.95 (16)	10.2	6.8	10.5
GREEN BAY	26.5	2.5	0.3	23.42 (28)	10.0	7.0	9.5
CHICAGO	23	1.3	-0.2	23.94 (18)	8.0	9.0	8.5
MINNESOTA	21.5	1.4	0.1	24.65 (6)	7.0	10.0	6.5



DETROIT LIONS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 14-6 SU & ATS
Head Coach: Dan Campbell (4th)

Life as a Lions fan has been rough, but Ford Field hosted its first playoff game ever last season and Detroit was one win away from going to the Super Bowl. After not winning a playoff game from 1991 until 2024, something special is finally happening in the Motor City and the momentum of last year is expected to carry over.

The Lions are favored to win the NFC North, some MVP money on Jared Goff is flying around thanks to our VSiN staff, and a strong coaching staff and competent front office remained intact to give it another run.

OFFENSE

After outgaining opponents by nearly 1,000 yards last season, the Lions offense is ready to run it back with a tremendously favorable schedule. We all know the concerns about Goff in cold weather, but he'll only play three games outside this season and only one looks ripe for bad weather with a December 22 visit to Soldier Field in Chicago. The other road games are November 3 at Green Bay and December 30 at San Francisco.

Goff was terrific last season with a 30/12 TD/INT ratio and a 67.3% completion rate. The Lions finished eighth in EPA/play and seventh in Dropback EPA. They also found success running the ball with David Montgomery and rookie Jahmyr Gibbs to the tune of the sixth-best Rush EPA.

The loss of OG Jonah Jackson should be mitigated with the addition of veteran OG Kevin Zeitler, meaning this team looks nearly identical to last season's squad.

DEFENSE

There will be pressure on Goff and the offense to carry the defense once again, but this was arguably the league's worst defense three years ago and has made strides each year since. The 2023 version still finished 21st in EPA/play and struggled terribly against the pass, but the hope would be that a rebuilt secondary led by Carlton Davis and first-round pick Terrion Arnold would do the trick.

The Lions should also have a better pass rush with Marcus Davenport and D.J. Reader. Aaron Glenn's defense actually led the league in Pressure% per Pro-Football-Reference, but tied for 23rd in sacks. It seems like Glenn will try to remain aggressive, as three of the top four 2024 draftees were defensive backs and Davis was targeted via trade. It also makes sense in a division with Jordan Love and two first-round QBs, including the No. 1 overall pick in Caleb Williams.

OUTLOOK

I really like this Lions team. I also like Goff at 40/1 to win MVP. While I do think the Packers and Bears should be improved, the game locations really help the Lions this season. Furthermore, the fact that nobody took OC Ben Johnson to be a head coach should also provide a big boost.

Nothing struck me as a fluke about last season and Brad Holmes is doing an outstanding job as the GM. I don't see why this team would drop by 2+ wins. The schedule is obviously tougher, but the team is also better. – Adam Burke

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	LA RAMS	-4.6	ROAD TEAMS are on 3-0 ATS surge in LAR-DET h2h series
9/15	TAMPA BAY	-6.7	FAVORITES are on 5-0-1 ATS surge in TB-DET h2h series
9/22	at Arizona	-3.8	UNDERDOGS are 8-2 ATS in L10 of DET-ARI h2h series
9/30	SEATTLE	-7.8	SEATTLE is on 5-0 ATS streak vs. Detroit

BYE WEEK

10/13	at Dallas	+1.8	ROAD TEAMS are 6-2 ATS in L8 of DET-DAL h2h series
10/20	at Minnesota	-4.9	DETROIT has won L7 ATS vs. Minnesota
10/27	TENNESSEE	-9.3	TENNESSEE has won L5 ATS vs. Detroit
11/3	at Green Bay	+1.2	ROAD TEAMS have won L3 SU & ATS in DET-GB rivalry
11/10	at Houston	+0.8	OVER the total is 4-1 in L5 of DET-HOU h2h series
11/17	JACKSONVILLE	-6.6	FAVORITES are a perfect 8-0 SU & ATS in the JAC-DET h2h series
11/24	at Indianapolis	-2.6	ROAD TEAMS are 5-0 ATS in DET-IND h2h series since '08
11/28	CHICAGO	-6.5	UNDERDOGS are 7-2 ATS in L9 of CHI-DET h2h series
12/5	GREEN BAY	-2.5	UNDERDOGS have won SU & ATS in L3 of GB-DET series at Detroit
12/15	BUFFALO	-2.2	The L7 games of BUF-DET h2h series went UNDER the total
12/22	at Chicago	-3.5	CHICAGO is 5-2-1 ATS in L8 hosting Detroit
12/30	at San Francisco	+4.5	DETROIT has won L4 ATS versus San Francisco
1/5	MINNESOTA	-7.7	L5 games of MIN-DET rivalry in Detroit went OVER the total

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.95
(#16 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2.2/-0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	27.1	5	23.2	23
YARDS PER POINT	14.6	11	14.5	23
PLAYS PER GAME	66.9	2		
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:08	6		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	41.5%	11	37.1%	12
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	394.8	3	336.1	19
YARDS PER PLAY	5.9	3	5.5	26
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	29.4	7		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	135.9	5	88.8	2
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.6	5	3.7	3
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	35.6	9		
COMPLETION %	67.3%	5	63.1%	10
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	258.9	2	247.4	27
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.6	5	7.2	30
TURNOVERS	1.4	19	1.4	18

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
12-1

NFC
+550

NFC NORTH
+150

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 10.5

GREEN BAY PACKERS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 10-9 SU & 11-8 ATS
Head Coach: Matt LaFleur (6th)

The demise of the Packers sans Aaron Rodgers was wildly overblown. Okay, so maybe nobody expected a "demise", but Jordan Love stepped in and played really well, including a masterful performance in the Wild Card Round to knock out the Cowboys in Arlington. It was the first playoff appearance without a QB named Rodgers or Favre since the Packers went 5-3-1 in the strike-shortened 1982 season with Lynn Dickey at the helm. He had a 12/14 TD/INT ratio, by the way.

Love's 32 TD tosses ranked second in the NFL and he helped the team overcome a 2-5 start to make the postseason. Of the NFC North teams, the Packers have had the quietest offseason and opinions seem split on what the 2024 season has in store.

OFFENSE

The one area where the Packers will look different is at running back. Most of the rest of the roster looks pretty similar, which oftentimes leads to a little bit of a negative sentiment going into the season among bettors and pundits. This was a top-five offense by EPA/play and a top-five passing attack.

Josh Jacobs comes in looking to infuse a little life into the ground game, as Aaron Jones went to the rival Vikings. The Packers still had a top-10 running game by EPA (expected points added), so it was hardly a weakness.

All the receivers are a year older. Love is a year older. The offensive line has been retooled and we'll never have to wonder if David Bakhtiari will play with his "questionable" designation or not. This was objectively a good offense that ranked fifth in third down conversion rate and only turned the ball over 18 times. Unless Love has some sort of unforeseen drop in production, this will be a good group again.

DEFENSE

The Packers only forced 18 takeaways last season, which led to finishing 22nd in points allowed per drive. This was a good, but not great, unit and the advanced metrics were a little more damning than the traditional numbers, as the Packers ranked 23rd in EPA/play against. They were equally below average against the pass and the run by EPA.

In other words, they more or less profiled as a 9-8 team, which is precisely what they were. New DC Jeff Hafley is a fascinating hire. He coached defensive backs in the NFL for seven years before going the college route to be the co-DC at Ohio State. Then he was the Boston College head coach for four years. He'll run a much different style from Joe Barry, who is now with the Dolphins.

Out of 11 draft picks, the Packers took six defenders in the back seven, so that's the area they'll look to improve under Hafley.

OUTLOOK

There is nothing flashy about the Packers, who have a high floor and probably have a capped ceiling. It would be a bit surprising to see Love play better than he did last season. The defense might be a bit better. But, it feels like a team with a very limited range of outcomes, so the win total line of 9.5 feels dead on. The schedule is tougher, though, so I lean Under as opposed to Over. – Adam Burke

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/6	vs. Philadelphia	+0.6	FAVORITES are on 8-4 ATS run in GB-PHI h2h series
9/15	INDIANAPOLIS	-6.4	The L7 games of the IND-GB h2h series went OVER the total
9/22	at Tennessee	-3.6	OVER the total is 7-1 in L8 of GB-TEN h2h series
9/29	MINNESOTA	-7	FAVORITES have won L5 SU & ATS in MIN-GB h2h series
10/6	at LA Rams	+0.6	GREEN BAY is 9-1 SU & 10-0 ATS in L10 vs. Rams
10/13	ARIZONA	-7.1	The L4 games of ARI-GB h2h series went UNDER the total
10/20	HOUSTON	-3.2	GREEN BAY has won L3 ATS vs. Houston
10/27	at Jacksonville	-1.1	ROAD TEAMS are on 5-1 ATS surge in GB-JAC h2h series
11/3	DETROIT	-1.2	ROAD TEAMS have won L3 SU & ATS in DET-GB rivalry
BYE WEEK			
11/17	at Chicago	-2.9	GREEN BAY has won L10 SU & ATS vs. Chicago
11/24	SAN FRANCISCO	+0	ROAD TEAMS have won L4 ATS in SF-GB h2h series
11/28	MIAMI	-4.4	GREEN BAY is on 5-1 SU & ATS surge versus Miami
12/5	at Detroit	+2.5	UNDERDOGS have won SU & ATS in L3 of GB-DET series at Detroit
12/15	at Seattle	-2.2	GREEN BAY is on 6-0-1 ATS run versus Seattle
12/23	NEW ORLEANS	-6.9	UNDERDOGS have won L3 ATS in NO-GB h2h series
12/29	at Minnesota	-4.3	OVER the total is 3-1 in L4 of GB-MIN series at Minnesota after 0-6 skid
1/5	CHICAGO	-5.8	GREEN BAY has won L5 ATS hosting Chicago

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.42
(#28 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2.5/0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	22.5	12	20.6	10
YARDS PER POINT	15.3	19	16.3	10
PLAYS PER GAME	61.9	23		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:42	16		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	47.1%	5	41.1%	25
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	345.5	11	335.1	17
YARDS PER PLAY	5.6	8	5.4	20
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	25.9	22		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	112.1	15	128.3	28
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.3	9	4.4	23
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	34.2	15		
COMPLETION %	64.4%	17	65.4%	17
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	233.4	12	206.8	9
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.2	11	6.7	20
TURNOVERS	1.1	6	1.1	23

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
19-1

NFC
+800

NFC NORTH
+210

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 9.5



CHICAGO BEARS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 7-10 SU & 8-7-2 ATS
Head Coach: Matt Eberflus (3rd)

Most No. 1 picks walk into a really difficult situation. As far as quarterbacks go, Caleb Williams is actually set up pretty well. The Bears have a well-established offensive line, quality skill-position weapons, and a really good defense, at least after the acquisition of Montez Sweat last season.

After going 7-10 last season, the Bears are lined at 8.5, but the juice is very heavy on the Over since the order of the schedule appears to give Williams an opportunity to get his legs under him with some lesser foes early in the year.

That being said, we've seen preseason hype fall short before.

OFFENSE

The upside and potential of the USC product are undeniable, and the Bears have really set him up for some quick success. Rome Odunze was viewed as the 1b to 1a Marvin Harrison Jr. in the minds of some talent evaluators and he made it down to No. 9 when the Bears picked again. Add in proven veterans DJ Moore and Keenan Allen at WR, plus a solid TE in Cole Kmet, and Williams has weapons.

Mix in a 1,000-yard rusher in D'Andre Swift and this doesn't look like a team that would have picked first. But, that's precisely what happened because the Bears played the long game and traded the No. 1 pick in 2023 for a pick swap with the Panthers, who drafted Bryce Young and then finished 32nd this past season. That trade could not have worked out better for the Bears.

The Bears gave up nearly 1,000 more passing yards than they gained. They ran the ball effectively with their stable of backs and QB Justin Fields, but this will now be a much more balanced offense and Swift's addition in the backfield should mean that they continue to run the rock well, just in a more traditional way.

DEFENSE

You can basically grade the Bears defense as "BM" and "AM" from last season. The Bears acquired Montez Sweat on Halloween and it was more treats than tricks from that point forward. From Week 1 through Week 8, the Bears defense ranked 30th in EPA/play. They were very successful against the run and actually ranked third in Rush EPA against and Rushing Success Rate against. But, they were 31st in Dropback EPA.

From Week 9 through Week 18, the Bears defense was fifth in EPA/play. They continued to play well against the run, but ranked fourth in Dropback EPA against and sixth in Dropback Success Rate against. From Week 9 through Week 18, the Bears had 16 interceptions against 14 TD passes and had 20 sacks in nine games. Prior to Sweat's arrival, they had a 17/6 TD/INT ratio against with 10 sacks in eight games.

Sweat was the missing piece and DC Alan Williams made the right adjustments, so this is a group with high hopes for 2024.

OUTLOOK

Opinions turned quickly on Matt Eberflus and the coaching staff last season. Now there are some expectations to meet. If the Bears meet them and remain status quo or better on defense, the hype is beyond warranted. This looks like a potentially robust offense, but it will be up to Williams to steer the ship. I'll buy the hype because of the supporting cast, but I don't think Williams is in for a Stroud-esque year. I'd lean Over 8.5, but wouldn't bet it because of the extreme vig. – Adam Burke

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	TENNESSEE	-3.9	OVER the total is 5-2 in L7 of TEN-CHI h2h series
9/15	at Houston	+5.4	HOUSTON is 5-1 ATS in L6 versus Houston
9/22	at Indianapolis	+2	FAVORITES are on 5-1 ATS run in CHI-IND h2h series
9/29	LA RAMS	+0.8	HOME TEAMS are on 6-1 ATS run in LAR-CHI h2h series
10/6	CAROLINA	-7.1	UNDERDOGS are 6-0 ATS in L6 of CAR-CHI series in Chicago
10/13	vs. Jacksonville	+0.7	FAVORITES are on 5-1 ATS run in JAC-CHI h2h series
BYE WEEK			
10/27	at Washington	-0.6	ROAD TEAMS are on 10-2 ATS surge in CHI-WAS h2h series
11/3	at Arizona	+0.8	OVER the total is 6-1 ATS in L7 of CHI-ARI h2h series
11/10	NEW ENGLAND	-5	OVER the total is 6-1 in L7 of NE-CHI h2h series
11/17	GREEN BAY	+2.9	GREEN BAY has won L10 SU & ATS vs. Chicago
11/24	MINNESOTA	-2.3	UNDER the total is 9-1 in L10 of MIN-CHI series at Chicago
11/28	at Detroit	+6.5	UNDERDOGS are 7-2 ATS in L9 of CHI-DET h2h series
12/8	at San Francisco	+9.1	ROAD TEAMS & DOGS are on 5-2 ATS runs in CHI-SF h2h set
12/16	at Minnesota	-0.3	UNDERDOGS are 5-1-1 in L7 of CHI-MIN series at Minnesota
12/22	DETROIT	+3.5	CHICAGO is 5-2-1 ATS in L8 hosting Detroit
12/26	SEATTLE	-2.4	OVER the total is 9-2 in L11 of SEA-CHI h2h series
1/5	at Green Bay	+5.8	GREEN BAY has won L5 ATS hosting Chicago

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.94
(#18 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.3/-0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	21.2	18	22.3	20
YARDS PER POINT	15.3	16	14.5	22
PLAYS PER GAME	64.5	9		
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:57	3		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	41.2%	12	44.1%	29
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	323.2	20	324.2	12
YARDS PER PLAY	5	24	5.3	18
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	31.4	2		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	141.1	2	86.4	1
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.5	6	3.8	5
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	30.2	27		
COMPLETION %	62.6%	24	66.5%	24
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	182.1	27	237.8	25
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.7	24	6.6	14
TURNOVERS	1.5	21	1.6	5

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
30-1

NFC
14-1

NFC NORTH
+265

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 8.5

MINNESOTA

VIKINGS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 7-10 SU & 7-7-3 ATS
Head Coach: Kevin O'Connell (3rd)

It will be a transitional year for the Vikings, but head coach Kevin O'Connell has gotten a lot out of this team in his two years at the helm. The Vikings went 13-4 in 2022 and were the most popular regression candidate in the league coming into 2023. It came to fruition, as the Vikes went 7-10. The irony is that they had a -18 point differential in 2023 and a -3 point differential in 2022, but had a difference of six wins.

The defense was markedly better under Brian Flores in 2023, as he blitzed, blitzed, and blitzed some more. The offense was far worse, but the Kirk Cousins and Justin Jefferson injuries obviously played a huge role. Could we be sleeping too much on the Vikings in 2024?

OFFENSE

It seems likely that Sam Darnold will start until O'Connell feels like first-round pick J.J. McCarthy is ready to take over. Maybe that doesn't happen at any point this season and McCarthy learns the job from the sideline. This was a 6-4 team through 10 games last season that bottomed out. Injuries will do that, even if this was a team ticketed for some tough times.

Cousins is off to the Falcons and Jefferson is off to the bank with a massive four-year, \$140 million extension. The backfield will look different with Aaron Jones instead of Alexander Mattison and that could help a running game that ranked 25th in Rush EPA. Losing Cousins and Jefferson obviously skewed the numbers for the passing game, but negatively impacted the running game as well.

Darnold has a 63/56 TD/INT ratio in his career across 66 games with three different teams. O'Connell is a great offensive mind and something of a QB whisperer, but the keys to the car could quickly go to McCarthy, who had a 44/9 TD/INT ratio as a two-year starter at Michigan.

DEFENSE

Minnesota graded as an average defense in a lot of areas, as Flores' uber-aggressive style was both a blessing and a curse. The Vikings blitzed over 51% of the time per Pro-Football-Reference, but only recorded a 21.9% Pressure% and 43 sacks, which both ranked around league average. They allowed the fifth-most yards after catch, while allowing the eighth-fewest air yards.

To remedy those issues, they signed or re-signed a bunch of guys up front, headlined by Jonathan Greenard (12.5 sacks) and Andrew Van Ginkel (6 sacks). They also signed a terrific linebacker in Blake Cashman (106 tackles). With former Browns exec Kwesi Adofo-Mensah pulling the personnel strings, I can't help but feel like this group will take a step forward.

OUTLOOK

In a loaded division, the Vikings are understandably viewed in a pessimistic light with their win total of 6.5, but bettors are bullish on that number with a heavy vig on the Over. As mentioned, this is a sharp front office that seemed to love McCarthy and the fit with O'Connell, but I remain skeptical. I'm also curious how impatient they become with Darnold. I do really like this defense, though, and O'Connell gets a lot out of his teams. I wouldn't bet this, but I like it for contests or pools. — Adam Burke

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at NY Giants	+0.6	ROAD TEAMS are on 3-0 ATS surge in MIN-NYG h2h series
9/15	SAN FRANCISCO	+6.1	HOME TEAMS have won L6 ATS in SF-MIN h2h series
9/22	HOUSTON	+2.9	MINNESOTA is 5-0 SU & ATS all-time versus Texans
9/29	at Green Bay	+7	FAVORITES have won L5 SU & ATS in MIN-GB h2h series
10/6	vs. NY Jets	+3.5	FAVORITES are on 4-0 ATS streak in NYJ-MIN h2h series

BYE WEEK

10/20	DETROIT	+4.9	DETROIT has won L7 ATS vs. Minnesota
10/24	at LA Rams	+5.8	FAVORITES are on 9-2-1 ATS run in MIN-LAR h2h series
11/3	INDIANAPOLIS	-0.3	INDIANAPOLIS has won L5 ATS vs. Minnesota
11/10	at Jacksonville	+4.1	OVER the total is 3-0-1 in L4 of MIN-JAC h2h series
11/17	at Tennessee	+1.6	MINNESOTA is on 6-1 ATS surge versus Tennessee
11/24	at Chicago	+2.3	UNDER the total is 9-1 in L10 of MIN-CHI series at Chicago
12/1	ARIZONA	-1	MINNESOTA is on a 6-0-1 ATS run versus Arizona
12/8	ATLANTA	+0.7	UNDERDOGS are on 5-1 ATS run in ATL-MIN h2h series
12/16	CHICAGO	+0.3	UNDERDOGS are 5-1-1 in L7 of CHI-MIN series at Minnesota
12/22	at Seattle	+3	HOME TEAMS are 7-2 ATS in MIN-SEA h2h series since '09
12/29	GREEN BAY	+4.3	OVER the total is 3-1 in L4 of GB-MIN series at Minnesota after 0-6 skid
1/5	at Detroit	+7.7	L5 games of MIN-DET rivalry in Detroit went OVER the total

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.65
(#6 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.4/0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	20.2	22	21.3	13
YARDS PER POINT	17.2	28	15.6	15
PLAYS PER GAME	63	17		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:08	24		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	38.1%	18	41.4%	26
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	347.8	10	333.2	16
YARDS PER PLAY	5.5	10	5.2	13
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	23.1	28		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	91.4	29	98.7	8
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4	24	3.8	4
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	37.1	4		
COMPLETION %	67.2%	6	70.3%	32
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	256.4	5	234.5	24
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.4	7	6.6	15
TURNOVERS	2	31	1.3	19

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
80-1

NFC
35-1

NFC NORTH
10-1

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 6.5

NFC SOUTH

BETTING PREVIEW

OF TIMES SELECTED BY
VSIN EXPERTS TO WIN DIVISION

The NFL South is undoubtedly one of the weaker divisions in the NFL virtually every year. Using my proprietary ratings system, the T Shoe Index, as a reference, this year shouldn't be as bottom-dwelling as some years have been for this division because, aside from the Carolina Panthers, the other three teams are projected more in the middle of the pack than the casual fan would probably expect. Even Carolina, whom the TSI has projected as the worst team in the league, should conceivably start to show a pulse by year's end with Bryce Young in Year 2 under center.

The Falcons added Kirk Cousins and then also drafted Michael Penix Jr. in the first round, plus return Bijan Robinson at running back, so they project to take a step up this year.

New Orleans drafted Derek Carr some help on the offensive line with its first-round pick and will return a pretty veteran-laden roster so they should be a competent team in 2024 despite losing WR Michael Thomas.

The defending division champs, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, were able to hold onto Mike Evans and Baker Mayfield and gave star safety Antoine Winfield Jr. the franchise tag to retain him in 2024, so they should be right back in championship contention for a fifth year in a row this year. – Tyler Shoemaker



2024 PROJECTED STANDINGS (BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)

TEAM	2024	HOME	ROAD	SCHEDULE STRENGTH		DRAFTKINGS	
	SM PR	FIELD ADV.	FIELD ADV.	(RANK)	PRJW'S	PRJL'S	O/U
ATLANTA	24	1.3	0	22.41 (32)	9.3	7.7	9.5
TAMPA BAY	23	1.6	0.4	23.5 (25)	8.2	8.8	8.5
NEW ORLEANS	22	1.3	0.5	23.14 (31)	8.0	9.0	7.5
CAROLINA	18	1.3	-0.4	23.74 (24)	5.8	11.2	5.5

ATLANTA FALCONS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 7-10 SU & 5-12 ATS
Head Coach: Raheem Morris (1st)

Atlanta has improved its power rating in each of the last two seasons, and the T Shoe Index is projecting another step forward for the Falcons in 2024. Obviously, there was a lot of drama surrounding the NFL Draft and Atlanta's questionable (dumb?) decision to draft a QB in the first round after committing hundreds of millions of dollars to Kirk Cousins as a free agent.

Nonetheless, the team's ceiling is as high as it's been in several years and, if Cousins is fully recovered from his torn Achilles, this offense could be spectacular with some of the weapons around him.

OFFENSE

Atlanta was just 27th in EPA/play and 20th in success rate largely due to the fact they had virtually no passing game outside of Drake London. Ask any Ohio State fan what kind of impact Rondale Moore can have on a game and they'll probably curl into the fetal position as they recall his masterclass in 2018 when Purdue upset the Buckeyes after Moore asserted himself as the best player on the field. Adding Moore and Darnell Mooney provides two key weapons on the outside for Cousins to throw to, and they bring back TE Kyle Pitts and stud running back Bijan Robinson, who had almost 1,500 total yards of offense last year.

Additionally, coach Raheem Morris and offensive coordinator Zac Robinson both worked under Sean McVay so there's hope they can create some of that McVay magic on the offensive side of the ball in 2024.

The losses are minimal, but include RB Cordarrelle Patterson, QB Desmond Ridder, TE Jonnu Smith.

DEFENSE

The calling card for Atlanta last year was its defense, which ranked 12th in Defensive EPA/play and fifth in Defensive Success Rate, and didn't lose any key pieces off of that defense for 2024, while adding Ruke Orhoro and Bralen Trice to the mix.

An area they need to improve this year is in pass defense, as they ranked just 21st in opponent EPA per Dropback, although they were fifth in Dropback Success Rate, so they were fine down-to-down but gave up explosives that drove up that EPA number.

OUTLOOK

Even if the defense maintains its play from 2023, the Falcons have to be the most likely NFC South winner, as TSI has them rated 0.6 points better than the next closest team (New Orleans) in the division. Again, the offensive success is largely going to hinge on Cousins' health and/or the locker room dynamic between Cousins and Penix in what is undoubtedly an awkward situation to be in.

TSI projects 9.6 wins for Atlanta, which does have the easiest schedule in the league by my numbers. The Over/Under is currently 9.5 with the Over juiced to -135 so there's really no play to be made here, but the numbers very slightly favor the Over if you had to pick it. - Tyler Shoemaker

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
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9/8	PITTSBURGH	-2.9	PITTSBURGH is on 4-0 ATS streak versus Atlanta
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9/16	at Philadelphia	+3.8	PHILADELPHIA is on 8-2 ATS surge hosting Atlanta
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9/22	KANSAS CITY	+4.8	ROAD TEAMS have won L3 ATS in KC-ATL h2h series
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9/29	NEW ORLEANS	-2.4	UNDER the total is 15-8 in NO-ATL series since '12
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10/3	TAMPA BAY	-1.5	OVER the total is 7-1 in L8 of TB-ATL series at Atlanta
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10/13	at Carolina	-5.1	UNDERDOGS are on 7-1 ATS run in ATL-CAR series
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10/20	SEATTLE	-3.4	UNDERDOGS are on 11-4-1 ATS run in SEA-ATL h2h series
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10/27	at Tampa Bay	+0.2	UNDER the total is on 2-0 run in ATL-TB series in Tampa after 0-5 skid
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11/3	DALLAS	+0.2	UNDER the total is 6-1 in L7 of DAL-ATL series in Atlanta
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11/10	at New Orleans	-1.1	UNDER the total is 8-3 in L11 of ATL-NO series at New Orleans
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11/17	at Denver	-2.3	ATLANTA has won L3 ATS vs. Denver
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BYE WEEK

12/1	LA CHARGERS	-2	UNDER the total is 7-1 in L8 of LAC-ATL h2h series
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12/8	at Minnesota	-0.7	UNDERDOGS are on 5-1 ATS run in ATL-MIN h2h series
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12/16	at Las Vegas	-0.2	UNDERDOGS have swept L3 ATS in ATL-LVR h2h series
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12/22	NY GIANTS	-5.4	UNDER the total is 11-1-1 in NYG-ATL series since 2000
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12/29	at Washington	-1.8	ROAD TEAMS are on 9-2 ATS surge in L11 of ATL-WAS h2h series
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1/5	CAROLINA	-7.3	ATLANTA is on 6-3 ATS run hosting Carolina
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**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH** 22.41
(#32 toughest of 32)

**FIELD
RATINGS** 1.3/0
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	18.9	26	21.9	18
YARDS PER POINT	17.7	29	14.6	21
PLAYS PER GAME	64.2	13		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:09	23		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	40.0%	13	33.8%	3
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	334.3	17	321.1	11
YARDS PER PLAY	5.2	15	5	8
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	30.7	3		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	127	9	118.2	20
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.1	17	4	9
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	31.2	25		
COMPLETION %	61.7%	28	61.9%	9
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	207.3	22	202.9	8
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.1	13	6.3	10
TURNOVERS	1.6	23	0.9	29

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL

25-1

NFC

12-1

NFC SOUTH

-115

**WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 9.5**



TAMPA BAY

BUCCANEERS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 10-9 SU & 11-8 ATS
Head Coach: Todd Bowles (3rd)

The Buccaneers are four-time defending NFC South champions heading into the 2024 season. After surprising a lot of people in 2023 by winning the division and winning a playoff game with Cleveland cast-off Baker Mayfield leading the way under center, the Bucs have reloaded the clip for 2024 by signing Mayfield and WR Mike Evans to extensions.

OFFENSE

The Bucs were kind of boom or bust in 2023, ranking 12th in EPA/play but just 27th in Offensive Success Rate (if that isn't Baker Mayfield summed up in a stat, I don't know what is). Mayfield threw for over 4,000 yards a year ago and had two 1,000-yard receivers in Evans and Chris Godwin – both of whom return in 2024. How much the passing game will be affected by the loss of OC Dave Canales is a key question.

They didn't have a 1,000 yard rusher, which probably explains the poor success rate stat, so that will need to improve if they want to take another step forward. The additions of OL Ben Bredeson and Graham Barton may help.

DEFENSE

Defensively, Tampa was decent last year in the advanced metrics, ranking 18th and 19th in opponent EPA per play and success rate, respectively, but TSI rated them seventh in the NFL in defensive rating – how many points a team is expected to allow versus the average team – due to their ability to still prevent teams from putting points on the board despite the mediocre down-to-down stats.

The back seven took a hit with the losses of CB Carlton Davis III and LB Devin White, but the pass rush may be upgraded with Edges Chris Braswell and Randy Gregory.

OUTLOOK

A veteran-led team, not dissimilar to New Orleans, Tampa Bay is a high-floor football team whose play on both lines is good, which should allow them to stay in playoff contention in 2024. I personally question whether a three-year extension for Mayfield was the smartest thing in the world for them to do, as he hasn't consistently demonstrated the ability to lead a successful football team, but maybe the change of scenery in Tampa and some maturing on his part will continue to serve him well.

The Bucs face the 12th-most difficult schedule, per TSI, and have a win total Over/Under of 8.5. TSI projects 8.2 wins so this is another stay-away, but if I had to choose I would lean Under 8.5 because I would expect some regression offensively and I'm not sure the defense is going to be as fortunate as it was last year in allowing success down-to-down but ultimately keeping teams out of the endzone. – Tyler Shoemaker

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	WASHINGTON	-4.7	UNDERDOGS have gone 9-1-2 ATS in L12 of WAS-TB h2h series
9/15	at Detroit	+6.7	FAVORITES are on 5-0-1 ATS surge in TB-DET h2h series
9/22	DENVER	-5.6	ROAD TEAMS are 5-1-2 ATS in L8 of DEN-TB h2h series
9/29	PHILADELPHIA	+2.4	The L4 games in PHI-TB h2h series went UNDER the total
10/3	at Atlanta	+1.5	OVER the total is 7-1 in L8 of TB-ATL series at Atlanta
10/13	at New Orleans	-0.5	ROAD TEAMS are on 7-1 ATS run in TB-NO h2h series
10/21	BALTIMORE	+4.4	ROAD TEAMS are on 6-game ATS winning streak in BAL-TB set
10/27	ATLANTA	-0.2	UNDER the total is on 2-0 run in ATL-TB series in Tampa after 0-5 skid
11/4	at Kansas City	+9.2	UNDERDOGS are on 5-1-1 ATS run in TB-KC h2h series
11/10	SAN FRANCISCO	+4.4	ROAD TEAMS are on 4-2 ATS run in SF-TB h2h series

BYE WEEK

11/24	at NY Giants	-1.2	The L3 games of TB-NYG series in New York went OVER the total
12/1	at Carolina	-4.5	UNDER the total is 8-3 in L11 of TB-CAR rivalry in Carolina
12/8	LAS VEGAS	-3	OVER the total is 8-0-1 in L9 of LVR-TB h2h series
12/15	at LA Chargers	+2.1	OVER the total is 7-1 in L8 of TB-LAC h2h series
12/22	at Dallas	+5.8	The L5 games of TB-DAL series in Dallas went UNDER the total
12/29	CAROLINA	-6.6	TAMPA BAY is on 5-0 SU & 4-1 ATS surge hosting Carolina
1/5	NEW ORLEANS	-1.7	NEW ORLEANS has won L6 ATS at Tampa Bay

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.50
(#25 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.6/0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	20.5	20	19.1	7
YARDS PER POINT	15.3	17	18	2
PLAYS PER GAME	61.6	25		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:35	17		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	41.5%	10	40.9%	23
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	313	23	344.2	23
YARDS PER PLAY	5.1	20	5.4	22
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	25.8	23		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	88.8	32	95.3	5
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	3.4	32	3.8	8
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	33.4	19		
COMPLETION %	64.1%	18	66.1%	22
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	224.2	17	248.9	29
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.1	14	6.9	25
TURNOVERS	1.1	6	1.5	12

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
75-1

NFC
35-1

NFC SOUTH
+300

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 8.5

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 9-8 SU & 6-10-1 ATS
Head Coach: Dennis Allen (3rd)

New Orleans parted ways with a few key pieces this year, but otherwise should return the majority of production from 2023 and added a couple impact pieces along the way. Despite going 9-8 last year, I feel like this is a team that most casual fans might perceive as "down". I don't think that's the case and neither does the TSI, which has them solidly in the middle of the pack at 17th in the NFL from a power rating standpoint.

This isn't the Drew Brees era, but this team is capable of putting some Ws on the schedule.

OFFENSE

New Orleans was 14th in EPA/play and 17th in offensive success rate a year ago. The offensive line has been shaky at times, which has obviously hindered the ability to fully maximize downfield weapon Chris Olave, but adding swingman lineman Taliese Fuaga to the mix should help solidify the line, particularly on the interior, so then it's just a matter of whether the tackles can hold up week-to-week for Derek Carr. A task made tougher by the loss of Andrus Peat.

Alvin Kamara is still a good running back who's capable of running and catching out of the backfield, amassing roughly 1,200 yards of total offense last season. I think this offense has a high floor and a high ceiling, the question is whether or not Carr will have time to really get the downfield passing game clicking in 2024 under new OC Klint Kubiak.

DEFENSE

The Saints' defense was outstanding last year, ranking fifth and third in opponent EPA/play and success rate, respectively, and will now add in some potential difference-makers with Willie Gay, Kool-Aid McKinstry and Chase Young. I think this group could be very good in 2024 and will keep the overall floor of the team relatively high, especially in a weak division.

The lone big loss is S Marcus Maye, as second-year DC Joe Woods looks to build off of last year's strong performance.

OUTLOOK

This team is certainly not one of the most talented in the league, but I do think they have enough veteran presence and reliability down-to-down and week-to-week that their floor is definitely a middle-tier team. I would be surprised if this team only won like five games; however, I also don't exactly know how high the ceiling is overall, so I think they're probably in the 7-9 win range, which should be good enough to contend for the division and a playoff spot.

The Over/Under being 7.5 seems about right, as TSI projects around 8.5 wins for the Saints and they also have the second-easiest schedule in the league. The Over is juiced to -120, but I think that's probably worth a look. – Tyler Shoemaker

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	CAROLINA	-5.3	The L7 games of CAR-NO rivalry went UNDER the total
9/15	at Dallas	+6.7	UNDERDOGS are 6-0 ATS in L6 of NO-DAL series at Dallas
9/22	PHILADELPHIA	+3.7	UNDERDOGS are 7-2 ATS in L9 of PHI-NO series at New Orleans
9/29	at Atlanta	+2.4	UNDER the total is 15-8 in NO-ATL series since '12
10/7	at Kansas City	+10.1	ROAD TEAMS are on 3-0-1 ATS run in NOP-KC h2h series
10/13	TAMPA BAY	+0.5	ROAD TEAMS are on 7-1 ATS run in TB-NO h2h series
10/17	DENVER	-4.3	ROAD TEAMS are on 6-1 ATS run in DEN-NO h2h series
10/27	at LA Chargers	+3	The L6 games of NO-LAC h2h series went OVER the total
11/3	at Carolina	-3.6	The L4 games of the NO-CAR rivalry in Carolina went UNDER the total
11/10	ATLANTA	+1.1	UNDER the total is 8-3 in L11 of ATL-NO series at New Orleans
11/17	CLEVELAND	+0.1	UNDERDOGS are a perfect 8-0 ATS in L8 of CLE-NO set

BYE WEEK

12/1	LA RAMS	+1.8	HOME TEAMS are 10-1 ATS in L11 of LAR-NO h2h series
12/8	at NY Giants	-0.3	UNDER the total is 7-1-1 in L9 of NO-NYG series in New York
12/15	WASHINGTON	-3.4	OVER the total is 11-1 in L12 of WAS-NO h2h series
12/23	at Green Bay	+6.9	UNDERDOGS have won L3 ATS in NO-GB h2h series
12/29	LAS VEGAS	-1.7	UNDERDOGS have won L3 ATS in LVR-NO h2h series
1/5	at Tampa Bay	+1.7	NEW ORLEANS has won L6 ATS at Tampa Bay

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.14
(#31 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.3/0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	23.6	9	19.2	8
YARDS PER POINT	14.3	8	17	5
PLAYS PER GAME	65.9	4		
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:10	5		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	38.7%	15	34.5%	4
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	337.2	14	327.2	13
YARDS PER PLAY	5.1	19	5.3	17
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	28.2	10		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	102.5	21	119.9	22
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	3.6	31	4.4	22
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	35.6	9		
COMPLETION %	67.0%	7	59.7%	2
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	234.7	11	207.3	10
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7	17	6.3	11
TURNOVERS	1.1	6	1.7	4

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
80-1

NFC
40-1

NFC SOUTH
+340

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 7.5

CAROLINA PANTHERS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 2-15 SU & 5-11-1 ATS
Head Coach: Dave Canales (1st)

The Panthers are clearly the worst team in the division again, but hiring acclaimed quarterback guru Dave Canales as head coach should really help with the progression of second-year QB Bryce Young, as Canales greatly impacted the careers of both Geno Smith and Baker Mayfield. There was quite a bit of roster turnover for the Panthers this offseason, with both helpful additions and key losses to a team in full-blown rebuild mode.

OFFENSE

Last season, Carolina ranked 29th in EPA/play and 30th in offensive success rate. These numbers indicate the Panthers were neither efficient nor explosive. This season, using the T Shoe Index as our reference point, Carolina is only expected to put up a 16.8 offensive rating – meaning they would only be expected to score ~17 points against a league-average team.

The additions of Diontae Johnson and Xavier Legette will be nice additions to this offense and give Bryce Young two more competent receivers to target, although I don't think either one is necessarily a star. Thankfully, veteran Adam Thielen is back, although he's certainly not a young pup anymore and has a pretty extensive injury history, so his reliability is in question over the course of a 17-game season. Don't expect a ton of consistency out of this bunch, but there is potential for some occasional fireworks.

Other notable additions include second-round pick RB Jonathon Brooks and help on the offensive line with guards Robert Hunt and Damien Lewis.

DEFENSE

The defense was slightly better than the offense last year, ranking 26th in defensive EPA/play and 20th in defensive success rate. These numbers aren't very good, but it's a starting point for a team that made the aforementioned impactful roster additions to this side of the ball. This season, TSI expects the Panthers' D to allow about 24 points per game, which is just a tick worse than league average.

Key additions include Edge K'Lavon Chaisson, Edge Jadeveon Clowney, S Jordan Fuller, LB Josey Jewell, Edge D.J. Wonnum, while some key losses include S Vonn Bell, Edge Brian Burns, S Jeremy Chinn, Edge Yetur Gross-Matos, CB Donte Jackson, LB Frankie Luvu.

OUTLOOK

Again, this team is in rebuild mode so I think their internal assessment is going to be based on progress and evaluating which pieces are long-term Panthers and which spots they need to bring in reinforcements more so than wins and losses. I think they have the potential to be a fun offense to watch and I'm anxious to see what Canales can do with Bryce Young, who's just two years removed from a magical Heisman season at Alabama. Even if the offense improves to where the defense was last year, which is bad-not-awful, this team will at least be a fun, capable team on any given Sunday.

TSI ranks the Panthers' schedule as just 29th in the league and projects them to have 5.9 wins, so with a win total Over/Under of 4.5, I think I would lean Over although I don't know how you'd feel great about betting an Over on a team with this low of a floor. – Tyler Shoemaker

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at New Orleans	+5.3	The L7 games of CAR-NO rivalry went UNDER the total
9/15	LA CHARGERS	+4	CAROLINA is on 6-1 ATS run versus LA Chargers
9/22	at Las Vegas	+6.2	OVER the total is 5-2 in L7 of CAR-LVR h2h series
9/29	CINCINNATI	+6.7	FAVORITES are on 5-1-1 ATS run in CIN-CAR h2h series
10/6	at Chicago	+7.1	UNDERDOGS are 6-0 ATS in L6 of CAR-CHI series in Chicago
10/13	ATLANTA	+5.1	UNDERDOGS are on 7-1 ATS run in ATL-CAR series
10/20	at Washington	+4.6	UNDERDOGS are 14-2 ATS in CAR-WAS h2h series since '95
10/27	at Denver	+4.1	UNDERDOGS have won L4 ATS in CAR-DEN h2h series
11/3	NEW ORLEANS	+3.6	The L4 games of the NO-CAR rivalry in Carolina went UNDER the total
11/10	vs. NY Giants	+2.7	UNDERDOGS have won L6 ATS in NYG-CAR h2h series
BYE WEEK			
11/24	KANSAS CITY	+10.8	UNDERDOGS are 6-1 ATS in L7 of KC-CAR h2h series
12/1	TAMPA BAY	+4.5	UNDER the total is 8-3 in L11 of TB-CAR rivalry in Carolina
12/8	at Philadelphia	+10.2	ROAD UNDERDOGS have won L3 ATS in CAR-PHI h2h series
12/15	DALLAS	+6.2	FAVORITES are on 6-0 SU & ATS streak in DAL-CAR h2h series
12/22	ARIZONA	+2.6	UNDERDOGS have won L4 ATS in ARI-CAR h2h series
12/29	at Tampa Bay	+6.6	TAMPA BAY is on 5-0 SU & 4-1 ATS surge hosting Carolina
1/5	at Atlanta	+7.3	ATLANTA is on 6-3 ATS run hosting Carolina

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.74
(#24 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.3/-0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	13.9	31	24.5	29
YARDS PER POINT	19.1	31	12	32
PLAYS PER GAME	64.5	10		
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:06	7		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	34.1%	27	38.0%	15
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	265.3	32	293.9	4
YARDS PER PLAY	4.1	32	4.9	6
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	26.2	19		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	104.1	20	122.4	23
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4	23	4.1	12
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	34.5	13		
COMPLETION %	59.7%	30	64.2%	12
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	161.2	32	171.5	3
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	5.5	32	6.1	7
TURNOVERS	1.2	14	0.6	32

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
250-1

NFC
120-1

NFC SOUTH
11-1

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 4.5

NFC WEST

BETTING PREVIEW

OF TIMES SELECTED BY
VSIN EXPERTS TO WIN DIVISION

The AFC East is arguably the best division in football due to the level of talent at the top. Buffalo, New York and Miami all have win totals of 9.5 or higher and all three expect to compete for a Super Bowl title. In fact, all three teams are +1100 or better to win the AFC at DraftKings, and each of them are favored to make the postseason.

The strength of this division lies in its quarterbacks.

Josh Allen is a perennial MVP candidate who is coming off one of his strongest seasons. Tua Tagovailoa is off a career year and runs an offense that has the best wide receiver duo in the league in Tyreek Hill and Jaylen Waddle. Aaron Rodgers is a future Hall of Fame quarterback. Questions linger about how productive he can be as a 40-year-old coming off an Achilles injury, but his top level of production is among the best we have seen at the position.

At the bottom of the division are the lowly Patriots, but even New England offers a challenge on Sundays. Over the last two seasons, the Patriots are the fourth-best defensive team by EPA standards. The unit has made both Allen and Tagovailoa look average at times over that span. But, they enter a new era at both head coach and quarterback, and they have one of the hardest schedules in the league.

Regardless of where you rank this division, it figures to be one of the most competitive in football. The three best teams have implied probabilities of 4.3% or higher of winning the Super Bowl. Three of the four starting quarterbacks in the division are among the contenders for MVP. Much like last season, this is a division that won't be decided until the last week. We could also very well see the Super Bowl winner come from the AFC East. – Jonathan Von Tobel



2024 PROJECTED STANDINGS (BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)

TEAM	2024	HOME	ROAD	SCHEDULE STRENGTH		DRAFTKINGS	
	SM PR	FIELD ADV.	FIELD ADV.	(RANK)	PRJW'S	PRJL'S	O/U
SAN FRANCISCO	29	2.5	0.4	23.76 (23)	11.0	6.0	11.5
LA RAMS	25.5	1.5	0	24.44 (9)	9.0	8.0	8.5
SEATTLE	22	2.2	0.3	23.82 (20)	7.6	9.4	7.5
ARIZONA	22	1.2	0.3	24.36 (11)	7.4	9.6	6.5



STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING

29.0
(#2 of 32)

SAN FRANCISCO

49ERS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 14-6 SU & 9-11 ATS
Head Coach: Kyle Shanahan (8th)

After a Super Bowl loss in 2023, it's another season that will be judged on the playoff performance. All the pieces are in place to make another run, but they will have to deal with an improved NFC West. The schedule also features a fair amount of land mines facing four teams; Buffalo, Kansas City, Dallas and Seattle, who all will be coming off their bye week.

OFFENSE

The 49ers are ready to fire on the offensive side of the ball again this season. It's hard to knock Brock Purdy in his third year as the starting quarterback after a wonderful sophomore campaign that saw him as the sub-even money favorite to win the MVP with less than three weeks left in the season. While it looked unlikely at multiple points during the offseason, all the weapons are back in place for a dynamic offense.

Christian McCaffrey, the reigning Offensive Player of the Year, will again be a jack of all trades out of the backfield. His ability to catch the ball and run a full route tree gives the offense a Swiss Army Knife every team would love. He will again be one of, if not the shortest, price to score a touchdown week and week out.

While rumors about either Brandon Aiyuk or Deebo Samuel being on the move in the offseason were prominent, both head into camp in the Red and Gold. They offer a dynamic pair of playmakers for Purdy complimented by tight end George Kittle and 2024 draftee Ricky Pearsall.

The lone offensive question mark is depth on the line. There was a noticeable difference in play when Trent Williams went down last year, and those issues remain unaddressed heading into training camp.

DEFENSE

Last year's 49ers defense was as potent as the offense, ranking top 10 in yards allowed per game and third in scoring defense. Led by a defensive line that bolstered the seventh-most sacks and a pair of veteran linebackers, Fred Warner and Dre Greenlaw, the San Francisco front was able to speed up and frustrate opposing offenses.

The defensive line returns top sack artists Nick Bosa and Javon Hargrave but replaced the left side of the line with free agents Leonard Floyd and Maliek Collins. The depth that also allowed the 49ers to rotate top pass rushers was one of the cap casualties of the offseason. To generate consistent pressure, they will need to run on the proper side of injury luck up front.

Newly minted defensive coordinator Nick Sorensen will have Greenlaw and Warner back at linebacker, and the middle of the field will again be locked down for the 49ers. All eyes will be on Talanoa Hufanga's ACL as he returns from a season-ending injury last year.

OUTLOOK

Over at DraftKings, the 49ers' 11.5 win total is the second-highest in the NFL. While there is some juice to the Under (-125), they are expected to be the class of the NFC. Considering the schedule, increased divisional talent, and lack of depth on both lines, this is one of the easier Under plays on the board. - Mike Somich

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/9	NY JETS	-6.8	ROAD TEAMS are on 7-1 ATS run in L8 of NYJ-SF series
9/15	at Minnesota	-6.1	HOME TEAMS have won L6 ATS in SF-MIN h2h series
9/22	at LA Rams	-2.8	SAN FRANCISCO is on 9-3 ATS surge at LA Rams
9/29	NEW ENGLAND	-12.2	ROAD TEAMS are on 4-0 ATS streak in NE-SF h2h series
10/6	ARIZONA	-8.8	The L5 games in ARI-SF rivalry went OVER the total
10/10	at Seattle	-5.6	FAVORITES are 11-2 ATS in L13 of SF-SEA series in Seattle
10/20	KANSAS CITY	-1.4	KANSAS CITY is on 7-0-1 ATS surge vs. San Francisco
10/27	DALLAS	-6	SAN FRANCISCO is on 3-game SU & ATS winning streak vs. Dallas

BYE WEEK

11/10	at Tampa Bay	-4.4	ROAD TEAMS are on 4-2 ATS run in SF-TB h2h series
11/17	SEATTLE	-8.8	UNDER the total is 8-4 in SEA-SF series at SF since 2012
11/24	at Green Bay	+0	ROAD TEAMS have won L4 ATS in SF-GB h2h series
12/1	at Buffalo	+1.1	FAVORITES are 5-1 ATS in L6 of SF-BUF h2h series
12/8	CHICAGO	-9.1	ROAD TEAMS & DOGS are on 5-2 ATS runs in CHI-SF h2h set
12/12	LA RAMS	-5.6	UNDER the total is 8-3 in L11 of LAR-SF series in San Francisco
12/22	at Miami	-1.4	The L4 games of SF-MIA h2h series went OVER the total
12/30	DETROIT	-4.5	DETROIT has won L4 ATS versus San Francisco
1/5	at Arizona	-6.6	UNDER the total is 5-2 in L7 of SF-ARI series in Arizona

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.76
(#23 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2.5/0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	28.9	3	17.5	3
YARDS PER POINT	13.8	4	17.3	4
PLAYS PER GAME	60.2	27		
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:06	8		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	47.5%	4	40.9%	24
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	398.4	2	303.9	8
YARDS PER PLAY	6.6	1	5	7
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	29.4	8		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	140.5	3	89.7	3
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.8	4	4.1	14
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	28.9	32		
COMPLETION %	68.4%	3	66.0%	21
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	257.9	4	214.2	14
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	9.3	1	5.9	5
TURNOVERS	1.1	6	1.6	5

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
+600

NFC
+250

NFC WEST
-195

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 11.5



SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 9-8 SU & 8-7-2 ATS
Head Coach: Mike Macdonald (1st)

The Seahawks have a ton of talent, but they underperformed last year for Pete Carroll. Now he's out the door with the jewel of the coaching carousel, Mike Macdonald, taking over the reins. His ability to revamp the defense will be key. Ryan Grubb, former University of Washington OC, takes command of the offense that needs a resurgent year from QB Geno Smith.

OFFENSE

It was a tale of two years for Smith in 2022 and 2023. After breaking out in the former, he regressed last year, and the Seahawks struggled to be the explosive offense they were expected to be.

The talent is in place with a triumvirate of wide receivers in DK Metcalf, Tyler Lockett, and Jaxon Smith-Njigba, as well as Kenneth Walker at running back. Stability with the offensive line will be the key to affording Smith time to get the ball to those playmakers.

The Seahawks struggled with injuries to second-year tackles Abraham Lucas and Charles Cross last year, stunting their development. For Seattle to be successful, both need to take a step forward, and the additions of Laken Tomlinson and Nick Harris must fortify the offensive front.

With protection, Smith can return to a top-12 NFL quarterback and lead this offense to be one of the more explosive in the NFC. Without it, the Seahawks will be in for a long season.

DEFENSE

After masterminding the Ravens defense last season, new head coach Mike Macdonald will try to sharpen the defensive unit for Seattle. When he got to town, he found the cupboard was quite stocked. Despite ranking bottom five in the NFL in yards allowed, there is quite a bit of talent on this roster.

The secondary is bolstered by the young cornerback duo of Riq Woolen and Devon Witherspoon, both of whom have the chance to be top cornerbacks this season. Add to that young pass rusher Boye Mafe, who led the team in sacks in his second year in the league, and first-round pick Byron Murphy Jr., who led college football in interior pressure rate last season, and you have the pieces to form a good young defense.

Stopping the run will again be the focus. After struggling in 2022 against the ground game, Seattle ranked 31st in yards allowed on the ground in 2023.

OUTLOOK

Seattle has the talent to be a very good football team, and the change in head coach and OC should benefit this young team. With a win total of 7.5 games and an opening slate that includes Denver, New England, and the Giants in the first five weeks, this is one of the easier Overs on the board. – Mike Somich

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	DENVER	-5.2	HOME TEAMS are on 3-0-1 ATS surge in DEN-SEA h2h series
9/15	at New England	-0.4	The L6 games of SEA-NE h2h series went OVER the total
9/22	MIAMI	+0.4	MIAMI is on 4-0 ATS streak at Seattle
9/30	at Detroit	+7.8	SEATTLE is on 5-0 ATS streak vs. Detroit
10/6	NY GIANTS	-4.3	SEATTLE is on 6-1 ATS run vs. NY Giants
10/10	SAN FRANCISCO	+5.6	FAVORITES are 11-2 ATS in L13 of SF-SEA series in Seattle
10/20	at Atlanta	+3.4	UNDERDOGS are on 11-4-1 ATS run in SEA-ATL h2h series
10/27	BUFFALO	+3.3	All 10 games in BUF-SEA series since '95 went OVER the total
11/3	LA RAMS	+1.7	LA RAMS have won L4 ATS at Seattle

BYE WEEK

11/17	at San Francisco	+8.8	UNDER the total is 8-4 in SEA-SF series at SF since 2012
11/24	ARIZONA	-1.5	The L5 games of ARI-SEA series in Seattle went UNDER the total
12/1	at NY Jets	+5	SEATTLE has won L5 ATS versus NY Jets
12/8	at Arizona	+0.5	UNDERDOGS are 7-1-1 ATS in L9 of SEA-ARI series at Arizona
12/15	GREEN BAY	+2.2	GREEN BAY is on 6-0-1 ATS run versus Seattle
12/22	MINNESOTA	-3	HOME TEAMS are 7-2 ATS in MIN-SEA h2h series since '09
12/26	at Chicago	+2.4	OVER the total is 9-2 in L11 of SEA-CHI h2h series
1/5	at LA Rams	+4.3	UNDER the total is 6-2 in L8 of SEA-LAR series in Los Angeles

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 23.82
(#20 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 2.2/0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	21.4	17	23.6	25
YARDS PER POINT	15.1	14	15.7	14
PLAYS PER GAME	58.5	32		
TIME OF POSSESSION	26:38	32		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	36.2%	23	46.3%	30
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	322.9	21	371.4	30
YARDS PER PLAY	5.5	11	5.5	25
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	22.5	31		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	92.9	28	138.4	31
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.1	16	4.6	27
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	33.8	17		
COMPLETION %	64.5%	16	66.7%	25
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	230	14	233	21
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.2	10	6.8	24
TURNOVERS	1	5	1.1	22

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
65-1

NFC
28-1

NFC WEST
+700

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
OVER 7.5

LOS ANGELES RAMS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 10-8 SU & 11-6-1 ATS
Head Coach: Sean McVay (8th)

One of the surprises of last season, the Rams overachieved and found multiple diamonds in the rough to launch themselves into NFC contention by December. A tough loss in Detroit in the playoffs ended their season but made the future look bright. Some of that optimism was dampened by the retirement of All-Pro and future Hall of Famer Aaron Donald who was easily the best player for the Rams on defense.

OFFENSE

Led by offensive mastermind Sean McVay and veteran quarterback Matthew Stafford, there are very few holes on this side of the ball. The emergence of Puka Nacua, who smashed multiple rookie WR records with a 105-catch, 1,486-yard season, produced a dynamic 1-2 punch when teamed up with Cooper Kupp. The aforementioned Kupp's health will be a key to the Rams' success this year. He played just 12 games in 2023 after putting up massive numbers in 2022. Add in tight end Tyler Higbee, and you've got a passing offense that should be humming in 2024.

As important as Nacua was to the Rams attack, Kyren Williams bursting onto the scene may have been more impactful. The second-year pro averaged over 100 yards per game once he took over the lead back role, propelling the Rams to a 7-2 record over those nine games.

If the Rams run on the correct side of injury variance, this offense is capable of being top five in the NFL.

DEFENSE

The loss of Aaron Donald is the key storyline heading into the season on the defensive side of the ball. Kobie Turner was a nice surprise on the interior of the defensive line last year, but he will now have to replicate the production without Donald drawing double-teams.

The defense as a whole simply lacks talent. While they do have a CB1 in Darious Williams, he does not have much support at other positions. The loss of Raheem Morris at the DC position is another in the long line of question marks for a defense that will need to use smoke and mirrors to keep the opposing offense off the board.

OUTLOOK

Any way you slice it, the Rams will be a fun watch in 2024, relying on the offense to win games. At the current win total of 8.5, with -140 juice to the Over, expectations are high. The first five weeks could be a challenge with Detroit, San Francisco and Green Bay all on the schedule, but after that, they have a fairly manageable run that should allow them to get to nine wins. – Mike Somich

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Detroit	+4.6	ROAD TEAMS are on 3-0 ATS surge in LAR-DET h2h series
9/15	at Arizona	-2.7	RAMS have won L9 ATS at Arizona
9/22	SAN FRANCISCO	+2.8	SAN FRANCISCO is on 9-3 ATS surge at LA Rams
9/29	at Chicago	-0.8	HOME TEAMS are on 6-1 ATS run in LAR-CHI h2h series
10/6	GREEN BAY	-0.6	GREEN BAY is 9-1 SU & 10-0 ATS in L10 vs. Rams

BYE WEEK

10/20	LAS VEGAS	-5.4	LA RAMS are on 6-game ATS winning streak vs. Raiders
10/24	MINNESOTA	-5.8	FAVORITES are on 9-2-1 ATS run in MIN-LAR h2h series
11/3	at Seattle	-1.7	LA RAMS have won L4 ATS at Seattle
11/11	MIAMI	-2.4	UNDERDOGS have won L5 ATS in MIA-LAR h2h series
11/17	at New England	-3.6	FAVORITES are on 4-0 SU & ATS streak in LAR-NE h2h series
11/24	PHILADELPHIA	+0	PHILADELPHIA has won L5 ATS at LA Rams
12/1	at New Orleans	-1.8	HOME TEAMS are 10-1 ATS in L11 of LAR-NO h2h series
12/8	BUFFALO	+0.5	BUFFALO is on 4-0 ATS road run at Rams
12/12	at San Francisco	+5.6	UNDER the total is 8-3 in L11 of LAR-SF series in San Francisco
12/22	at NY Jets	+1.8	ROAD TEAMS have won L3 ATS in LAR-NYJ h2h series
12/29	ARIZONA	-4.3	LA RAMS are on 5-2 ATS surge at Arizona
1/5	SEATTLE	-4.3	UNDER the total is 6-2 in L8 of SEA-LAR series in Los Angeles

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 24.44
(#9 toughest of 32)

FIELD RATINGS 1.5/0
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	23.8	8	22.2	19
YARDS PER POINT	15.1	15	15.2	19
PLAYS PER GAME	64.4	11		
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:27	13		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	42.0%	8	38.6%	18
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	359.3	7	337.9	20
YARDS PER PLAY	5.6	7	5.3	19
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	28.1	12		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	120.3	11	106.8	12
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.3	12	4.2	17
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	34.3	14		
COMPLETION %	61.9%	26	60.8%	7
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	239	10	231.1	20
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.4	9	6.5	13
TURNOVERS	1.1	6	0.9	30

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL

30-1

NFC

16-1

NFC WEST

+330

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 6.5

ARIZONA CARDINALS

2023 Record (incl. playoffs): 4-13 SU & 9-8 ATS
Head Coach: Jonathan Gannon (2nd)

Jonathan Gannon's first season in the desert was not a pretty one, leading the team to a 4-13 record, but it is hard not to call it a success. The Cardinals started the year without quarterback Kyler Murray and had little on the defensive side of the ball while facing a difficult schedule. The team consistently played hard and added talent this offseason setting themselves up well in the near term.

OFFENSE

The 2023 season for the offense was divided into two halves, with and without starter Kyler Murray. Once he returned, the Cardinals went 3-5, with three losses to playoff teams and a fourth to a Seahawks team with a winning record. The emergence of Trey McBride at tight end and Paris Johnson Jr. at left tackle helped bolster an offense that looked fairly bland.

Fast forward to the offseason including the additions of Marvin Harrison Jr. via the draft and Zay Jones via free agency along with James Conner in the backfield and rookie Trey Benson backing him up. Now you have multiple playmakers at Murray's disposal.

This will not be a top-10 offense overnight, but they should be much better than last year's bottom-10 offense. The Cardinals ranked fourth in rushing yards per game last year and now have a legitimate passing attack to go with it.

DEFENSE

And then there is the defense. There is no way to sugarcoat how bad this defense was last year, allowing the second-most points in the NFL. While they were mid-pack in passing yards allowed, the Cardinals were the worst team in football against the run and did little in the offseason to address that glaring hole.

Arizona did add veteran CB Sean Murphy-Bunting in free agency as well as Max Melton in the draft to bolster the secondary. They upgraded their edge rushing in the draft as well with first-round pick Darius Robinson, but there is still an overall lack of talent on this side of the ball to expect Arizona to win any defensive battles.

For this defense to take a step forward, interior adds Justin Jones and Bilal Nichols will have to plug the middle and younger players like Garrett Williams and BJ Ojulari will have to make leaps early in their careers.

OUTLOOK

Arizona has one of the lowest win totals on the board sitting at just 6.5 wins, but it's been aggressively bet out to -150 on the Over. While the defense still stinks, the offense now has enough pieces to win games. I like the Under before the season, but will bet them Over in-season in Week 7. They should start 0-3 with matchups versus Buffalo, the Rams, and Detroit before taking on San Francisco and Green Bay in Week 5 and 6. After that, the schedule gets much easier, and the Cardinals should be able to rack up wins. – Mike Somich

2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE*	SERIES TREND
9/8	at Buffalo	+8.2	BUFFALO is 5-1 ATS versus Arizona since '99
9/15	LA RAMS	+2.7	RAMS have won L9 ATS at Arizona
9/22	DETROIT	+3.8	UNDERDOGS are 8-2 ATS in L10 of DET-ARI h2h series
9/29	WASHINGTON	-3.3	The L4 games of WAS-ARI h2h series went UNDER the total
10/6	at San Francisco	+8.8	The L5 games in ARI-SF rivalry went OVER the total
10/13	at Green Bay	+7.1	The L4 games of ARI-GB h2h series went UNDER the total
10/21	LA CHARGERS	+0.1	UNDER the total is 3-0-1 in L4 of LAC-ARI series at Arizona
10/27	at Miami	+5.7	The L5 games of ARI-MIA h2h series went OVER the total
11/3	CHICAGO	-0.8	OVER the total is 6-1 ATS in L7 of CHI-ARI h2h series
11/10	NY JETS	+1.5	UNDER the total is 5-1 in L6 of NYJ-ARI h2h series

BYE WEEK

11/24	at Seattle	+1.5	The L5 games of ARI-SEA series in Seattle went UNDER the total
12/1	at Minnesota	+1	MINNESOTA is on a 6-0-1 ATS run versus Arizona
12/8	SEATTLE	-0.5	UNDERDOGS are 7-1-1 ATS in L9 of SEA-ARI series at Arizona
12/15	NEW ENGLAND	-3.9	NEW ENGLAND is 5-0 SU & ATS at Arizona since '93
12/22	at Carolina	-2.6	UNDERDOGS have won L4 ATS in ARI-CAR h2h series
12/29	at LA Rams	+4.3	LA RAMS are on 5-2 ATS surge at Arizona
1/5	SAN FRANCISCO	+6.6	UNDER the total is 5-2 in L7 of SF-ARI series in Arizona

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH** 24.36
(#11 toughest of 32)

**FIELD
RATINGS** 1.2/0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	19.4	24	26.8	31
YARDS PER POINT	16.7	25	13.3	29
PLAYS PER GAME	62.8	18		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:17	22		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	39.1%	14	47.3%	32
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	324.1	19	355.7	25
YARDS PER PLAY	5.2	18	5.7	29
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	27.7	13		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	139.1	4	143.2	32
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	5	2	4.7	29
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	32.6	24		
COMPLETION %	64.0%	20	68.6%	31
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	184.9	26	212.5	13
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	6.2	29	7.1	29
TURNOVERS	1.1	6	1	27

2024 ODDS

SUPER BOWL
100-1

NFC
50-1

NFC WEST
13-1

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION
UNDER 6.5