



DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

[NEW ORLEANS -8 Philadelphia 51.5](#)

The Eagles survived at Chicago and won 16-15. They were out gained by the Bears 4.7yppl to 3.7yppl, out rushed 3.6ypr to 1.8ypr and out passed 6.5yps to 6.3ypr. Philadelphia was minus two in turnover margin. Philadelphia scored seven points on a drive that went 83 yards but 52 yards came on Bears penalties.

The Saints come off their bye week and a week seventeen game against Carolina where they rested their starters.

Philadelphia's season can be broken down into quite a few sub seasons. They started the first two games with Nick Foles at quarterback but Foles didn't have WR Alshon Jefferey. Philadelphia then went to Carson Wentz until week fifteen when Foles then took over for the injured Wentz. Since week 15 when Foles was the quarterback and had WR Alshon Jefferey (taking out the week 17 game against Washington who was decimated by injuries), Philadelphia has averaged 26 points per game against teams allowing 20 points per game, just 2.8ypr against teams allowing 4.1ypr, 8.0ypr against teams allowing 6.1ypr and 6.1yppl against teams allowing 5.4yppl. The defense has allowed 23 points per game against teams averaging 27 points per game, 3.8ypr against teams averaging 4.4ypr, 6.4ypr against teams averaging 6.8ypr and 5.7yppl against teams averaging 5.8yppl. Those games all came against playoff teams in the Rams, Texans and Bears.

The Saints have averaged 33 points per game against teams allowing 24 points per game, 4.1ypr against teams allowing 4.5ypr, 7.6ypr against teams allowing 6.5ypr and 6.0yppl against teams allowing 5.7yppl. The defense allowed 21 points per game against teams averaging 24 points per game, 3.7ypr against teams averaging 4.4ypr, 6.8ypr against teams averaging 6.7ypr and 5.7yppl against teams averaging 5.8yppl. Those stats do not count the week 17 game when they rested starters.

QB Carson Wentz is out for this game. LB D.J. Alexander, DE Michael Bennett, CB Sidney Jones, LT Jason Peters and WR Mike Wallace are questionable.

The Saints do not list anyone noteworthy on the injury list.

The Saints haven't covered their last two games but that works in their favor in this game. Teams laying eight or less points and coming off two games in a row where they haven't covered are 51-22-3 ats in the playoffs. This is also Philadelphia's third straight road game and that sets up them in a negative 23-3-3 playoff situation playing against the Eagles. My numbers favor the Saints by 9.7 points and project about 51.2 points.

The Saints are fourth best in the league in generating big passing plays. Philadelphia is middle of the road but since Nick Foles coming back they are third best in the league in generating big passing plays. The Saints are also fourth best in the league in allowing the fewest sacks in the league and

Philly in Foles three games against playoff teams since coming back is at the top of the league in allowing the fewest sacks. Both teams are middle of the road in allowing big passing plays. The Saints are in the top ten in generating sacks while Philadelphia is near the bottom of the league. The Eagles are 8-3-2 to the over as a road dog under Doug Pederson. The Saints are just 2-10 ats as a home favorite of more than seven since the middle of 2014. The situations are in the Saints favor and the line value is in their favor as well. But, NO has not performed well in this role as a large favorite. If this line were to drop to seven or less I would probably look the Saints direction. When the Saints have faced an offensive team that is doing what the Eagles are now they have been involved in high scoring games this year. They have totaled 80 points at Atlanta and 48 points at home versus Atlanta (Atlanta had multiple turnovers in the red zone in that game), 80 points versus the Rams and 59 points versus the Steelers. The Eagles haven't really faced a lot of good offenses this year but total 55 points at the Saints earlier this year allowing 48 points (Philly's offense was not as efficient then as now) and they totaled 53 points at the Rams a few weeks ago with Foles. They played the Colts earlier in the year but that was not the same Colts team at that point. The over has a chance to hit in this game. In their last meeting with Atlanta NO totaled 48 points (31-17) but Atlanta turned the ball over multiple times in the red zone. NO also slow played that game because they were in control the whole game. If they had been pressed in that game they could have scored a lot more points. As long as Philly stays somewhat close in this game they will press the Saints to stay at a decent pace in this game.

PREDICTION: NEW ORLEANS 33 PHILADELPHIA 23

[NEW ENGLAND -4 LA Chargers 47](#)

The Chargers jumped out to a 23-3 lead over Baltimore and held on for a 23-17 victory. Baltimore out gained the Chargers 3.9yppl to 3.7yppl. They out rushed LA 3.9ypr to 2.7ypr but out passed Baltimore 4.7yps to 3.9yps. The Chargers were plus two in turnover margin. The Chargers scored nine points on drives that started at the Ravens 45, 42 and 15 yard lines. They also scored another 11 points on drives that started at their own 40 and 41 yard lines. In other words 20 of their 23 points were scored on very favorable field position.

The Pats come off their bye week and an easy mostly meaningless 38-3 romp over the NY Jets in week seventeen.

LA averages 27 points per game against teams allowing 24 points per game, 4.5ypr against teams allowing 4.5ypr, 7.3yps against teams allowing 6.4yps and 6.1yppl against teams allowing 5.6yppl. Their defense allows 20 points per game against teams averaging 23 points per game, 4.3ypr against teams averaging 4.5ypr, 6.1yps against teams averaging 6.4yps and 5.4yppl against teams averaging 5.6yppl.

The Pats average 27 points per game against teams allowing 23 points per game, 4.3ypr against teams allowing 4.3ypr, 7.2yps against teams allowing 6.2yps and 5.9yppl against teams allowing 5.4yppl. The defense allows 20 points per game against teams averaging 22 points per game, 4.9ypr against teams averaging 4.3ypr, 6.2yps against teams averaging 6.1yps and 5.8yppl against teams averaging 5.4yppl. It is important to note the Patriots without WR Josh Gordon were much closer to an average offense so it remains to be seen how efficient their offense will be.

For LA TE Hunter Henry is listed as questionable.

For NE they are healthy.

I don't have any situations on this game. My numbers favor NE by four points and projects about 46.3 points.

The Chargers are third in the league in generating big passing plays while NE is 11th. NE is third best in the league in allowing fewest sacks in the league while the Chargers are middle of the road. Both teams are middle of the road in defending big passing plays. The Chargers are bottom ten in the league in generating sacks on defense but NE is second worst in the league. This game puts Philip Rivers in his best role. As a road dog of four or more points the Chargers are 21-7 ats including 16-3 ats since 2012. Rivers is 1-2 ats versus the Patriots in this role. But, the Patriots are also great in this role. They are 45-17-7 ats as a home favorite of seven or less since 2003. The Chargers have the better talent in this game. But, talent alone doesn't win games. The Chargers special teams continue to be an issue. They have solved their kicking woes (fg's) over the last part of the season but punting is still an issue for them. The other weakness for the Chargers is an offensive line that is one of the weaker offensive lines in the league. The Patriots played a very weak offensive schedule this year. Twelve of their 16 games came against offenses in the bottom half of the league. Of the best offenses they faced they allowed Chicago 31 points, Pittsburgh 17 points, Indianapolis 24 points and Kansas City 40 points. The Colts weren't even a good offense when they played them. This could end up being a big problem for NE in this game. The Chargers are the more talented team but there is no value in this game. The line is fair. Both teams are in their best situations as well. This is a tough trip for the Chargers. They played in Denver two weeks ago, flew home and then flew across the country to Baltimore, played a tough game against that defense, flew home and will now fly back across the country to Boston. And, they will play in the early game on Sunday. That is really tough and now they have to go against a team off their bye week. Unfortunately I have no opinion on the side. If the total crept up to 50, which I highly doubt it will, I would consider the under. As much as I feel the Chargers are the side in this game I won't go against the Pats success at home laying seven or less. That was a role they were 4-1 ats again this year.

PREDICTION: NEW ENGLAND 24 LA CHARGERS 21

[KANSAS CITY -5 Indianapolis 57](#)

The Colts were very impressive in their dominating 21-7 victory over Houston last week. They out gained the Texans 6.3yppl to 4.7yppl, rushed for 200 yards at 5.7ypr but allowed 6.6ypr. They out passed Houston 6.9ypr to 4.2ypr. DeShaun Watson contributed 76 of the 105 yards rushing for 9.5ypr for Houston but the Colts shut down the running game for Houston running backs.

KC comes off a bye and an easy 35-3 dismantling of the Oakland Raiders who beat the Broncos the week before in likely their last home game in Oakland.

Indianapolis got healthy in week six of this season and started to take off at that point. From that point on they have averaged 28 points per game against teams allowing 22 points per game, rushed for 4.5ypr against teams allowing 4.2ypr, passed for 7.5ypr against teams allowing 6.4ypr and 6.2yppl against teams allowing 5.5yppl. The defense has been very good as well allowing just 18 points per game against teams averaging 20 points per game, 4.0ypr against teams averaging 4.3ypr, but they have allowed 6.2ypr against teams averaging just 5.9ypr and 5.3yppl against teams averaging 5.2yppl.

For the season KC averages 35 points per game against teams allowing 23 points per game, 4.8ypr against teams allowing 4.5ypr, 8.1ypr against teams allowing 6.4ypr and 6.8yppl against teams allowing 5.6yppl. The defense has allowed 26 points per game against teams averaging 23 points per game, 5.0ypr against teams averaging 4.5ypr, 6.4ypr against teams averaging 6.4ypr and 5.9yppl

against teams averaging 5.6yppl. Since Kareem Hunt was let go the Chiefs have averaged about four points worse on offense and 0.5yppl worse than average. Whether that continues to impact them remains to be seen.

The Colts have ruled out DE Tyquan Lewis. WR Ryan Grant is also out. S Malik Hooker and DT Denico Autry are questionable.

For KC LB Dorian O'Daniel is doubtful. S Eric Berry is questionable but did not practice. RB Spencer Ware and WR Sammie Watkins are also questionable.

Indianapolis qualifies in a negative playoff situation, which is 23-2-2 and plays against Indianapolis based on their back to back to back road games. That situation works against teams with win percentages of less than .666 which the Colts have. But, Indianapolis was extremely banged up at the beginning of the season, had a new head coach and plenty of rookies getting acclimated to the system. Once they got healthy they have now won 10 of 11 games. I don't consider them a team that carries a win percentage of less than .666. My numbers favor KC by five points and project about 52.3 points.

Both teams are in the top ten of the league in creating big pass plays with KC number one in the league. Both teams are also in the top ten of the league in allowing the fewest sacks in the league with the Colts number one. The Colts defense is in the top ten in allowing the fewest percentage of big passing plays while KC is in the bottom ten of the league. The Chiefs are in the top ten in generating sacks on defense while Indy is in the bottom third. Andrew Luck is in his best role as a road dog of less than seven points. He is 8-3 ats with one of those losses at Oakland in 2016 when he was hurt and didn't finish the game. KC is now 31-15 to the under with Andy Reid as head coach and the Chiefs as a home favorite. This is potentially a bad match up for the Chiefs. The Colts likely have the better defense, an offense that isn't quite as good as KC but is very close to the same potency of the Chiefs. Add in a very good head coach, a veteran quarterback and getting a bunch of points and this game sets up very well for Indianapolis. The Colts have been sacked a league low 18 times this year but just eight times since week six when they got their offensive line intact. And, six of those eight sacks came in weeks 12, 13 and 14 when center Ryan Kelly was out. So, they've basically given up almost no sacks with Kelly since week six. The fact Indianapolis can run and throw the ball makes it very hard for KC to defend them. And, if Indy gets their running game going like last week, they will control the clock and potentially the game. What could go wrong for Indianapolis? Well, they are on the road again this week which makes this three weeks in a row. That becomes a difficult assignment, especially when facing a team coming off their bye week. My defensive numbers account for the competition and they show the Colts defense to be about average, which is good enough for this game. However, the Colts really haven't faced any good offensive teams this year. They faced NE early in the year but Indy was extremely banged up on defense in that game. They also faced Philadelphia early in the year but Philadelphia was not very good on offense at that time. Other than those two teams every team they have faced are in the bottom half of the league on offense so they definitely haven't been tested yet this year. But, they also haven't lost to a playoff team by more than four points this year other than that Thursday night game in NE. But, again, that was a Thursday night game and they were literally missing players two deep at every level of their defense and lost more players during that game. The Chiefs, on the other hand, have played seven games against playoff teams this year. They have defeated only one of those teams by more than five points and that was back in week one against the Chargers on the road by ten points. They then lost at home to those same Chargers late in the season. They've allowed at least 28 points to each better than average offensive team they have faced this year. The Colts should get to at least 28-31 points in this game. KC could certainly get to 35 plus points but Indianapolis figures to ground and

pound enough to control the clock the best they can. In addition Andrew Luck is very capable to get a late score when his team is down by 11 or less points to get the back door cover as well. Too many factors favoring Indianapolis to not give them a shot in this game.

PREDICTION: INDIANAPOLIS 31 KANSAS CITY 27

LA RAMS -7 Dallas 49

Dallas comes in off their 24-22 victory over Seattle back in Dallas. Seattle out gained Dallas 5.8yppl to 5.6yppl, were out rushed 4.8ypr to 3.0ypr, but out passed Dallas 8.1yps to 6.4yps. Much of the Seahawks numbers came on two pass plays that went for a total of 93 yards. When you take away those two plays Seattle averaged just 4.0yppl and 5.1yps. Obviously the Rams are just as capable of creating those same big pass plays but Dallas dominated the game with the exception of those two plays.

The Rams come off their bye week and a mostly meaningless last game of the season against the 49ers, which they won 48-32.

Dallas traded for WR Amari Cooper prior to their week eight game against Tennessee. Since that game they are averaging 22 points per game against teams allowing 23 points per game, 4.2ypr against teams allowing 4.4ypr, 6.4yps against teams averaging 6.6yps and 5.5yppl against teams allowing 5.8yppl. So, they have been below average on offense but much improved compared to prior to the trade. The defense has been very good, allowing just 22 points per game against teams averaging 24 points per game, 3.9ypr against teams averaging 4.3ypr, 6.7yps against teams averaging 6.7yps and 5.6yppl against teams averaging 5.7yppl.

When the Rams have played without WR Cooper Kupp their offense has suffered. They've averaged 33 points per game against teams allowing 24 points per game, 4.6ypr against teams allowing 4.4ypr, but just 6.2yps against teams allowing 6.3yps and 5.5yppl against teams allowing 5.5yppl. The defense is allowing 24 points per game against teams averaging 23 points per game, 4.9ypr against teams averaging 4.3ypr, 6.4yps against teams averaging 6.4yps and 5.8yppl against teams averaging 5.6yppl.

DE David Irving is out again for Dallas. WR Cole Beasley is questionable as is TE Blake Jarwin. Both did not practice. DT Maliek Collins and G Xavier Su'a-Filo are questionable.

For the Rams they are healthy with only DT Ethan Westbrooks as questionable.

The Rams have scored 79 points over their last two games. That's usually a bad sign for playoff teams as those teams that have scored a lot of points in their last two games have gone just 23-47 ats in playoff games. The Cowboys also come off a spread loss and that qualifies them in a 30-11-2 playoff situation. This game also qualifies in an over situation, which is 29-11. My numbers favor the Rams by seven points and project about 47.8 points in this game.

The Rams are the second best team in the league in generating big pass plays. Dallas is second from the bottom in fewest big pass plays generated by their offense. The Rams are also in the top ten of the league in fewest sacks allowed on offense while Dallas is in the bottom ten of the league. On the other side Dallas is in the top ten of the league in defending big pass plays while the Rams are in the bottom ten of the league in defending big pass plays. Both teams are middle of the road in generating sacks on defense. Dallas is 5-2 ats and 5-2 to the under with Dak Prescott at quarterback as a road dog of 3.5 or more. The two ats losses were the last week of the season against Philadelphia in 2016 when they pulled their starters after the first quarter and last year in Atlanta when they were missing Ezekiel Elliott and LT Tyron Smith. Otherwise they are 5-0 ats as a road dog

of 3.5 or more with Prescott. Sean McVay as head coach of the Rams is just 3-9-1 ats against teams who made the playoffs that season. In those 13 games they've won only two games by more than seven points (10 vs Jax last year aided by their very capable special teams and 12 this year against the Chargers). McVay has made a short living of beating up on bad teams. But, to date, they haven't been able to separate themselves from the better teams in the league. The Cowboys have allowed more than 24 points just twice this year. At home following their bye week to Tennessee (28 points) but seven came on a short field following a turnover and 35 in week seventeen to the Giants but Dallas rested some starters in that game. The Rams could certainly score more than 24 points in this game but they've also allowed at least 23 points to any average to above average offenses they have faced this year. My numbers looking at just home/away games favors the Rams by 9.4 points but those games also include all the bad teams the Rams have beaten up on. Against just playoff teams I get the Rams by only 4.2 points. Dallas should be able to run the ball on the Rams and play some ball control. In addition, the Dallas defense stands a good chance to limit the Rams rushing success. They will likely give up some passing yards to the Rams but the Dallas defense is good enough to keep the Rams from running wild in this game. And, Dallas should be able to move the ball and get scores on their own as well. Until Sean McVay can show me his teams can separate themselves from the better teams I will take the points along with some good situations in their favor as well.

PREDICTION: LA RAMS 27 DALLAS 24