

### NFL 2009, Week 4

by Joe Mulder

Last week: 10-6

Overall: 27-21

The Smartest Thing I Said Last Week:

Redskins @ LIONS +6.5

I even said that the Lions, on a 19-game losing streak dating back to 2007, would win the game outright, and they did.

The Dumbest Thing I Said Last Week:

FALCONS @ Patriots -4.5

The Patriots don't lose two in a row. I should know better.

Lions @ BEARS -10

Ten points is an awful lot of points to be giving away to an improved (if only slightly so) Lions team, but the weather should still be decent and Bears quarterback Jay Cutler should have a big day. Even if the Bears can't run the ball (and as any frustrated fantasy football owner who drafted Matt Forte near the top of the first round would be happy to tell you, they can't).

BENGALS @ Browns +7

I bet it's been a while since the Bengals were favored by a touchdown on the road, huh?

Also, it appears that new Browns coach (and former Jets coach) Eric Mangini is following in his mentor Bill Belichick's footsteps, only backwards. The Belichick blueprint is to stink as a coach in Cleveland, *then* lead a perennial AFC East doormat to the playoffs and be hailed as a genius.

RAIDERS @ Texans -9

I know the Raiders are terrible, but who could possibly trust this Houston team anymore? Expectations were lofty going into the season, but they've mostly been a bland disappointment so far. I swear, it's like they're the Houston Texans or something.

Seahawks @ COLTS -10.5

Before I make a pick, let me step in and defend the alternate jerseys that the Seahawks wore last week. Yes, the ones that were the same bright neon green color as the radioactive waste at the Springfield nuclear power plant.

Normally the Seahawks, when playing at home, are decked

out helmet-to-pants in an off-putting metallic grey-blue, with accents of neon green here and there. And, as any sensible person knows, football uniforms wherein the helmet, jersey and pants are all the same color are automatically bad (unless, of course, that color is white).

So, even though the Seahawks' green jerseys looked terrible, they still broke up the unacceptable monochrome color scheme that Seattle usually wears and were therefore, by definition, an improvement.

Look, I'm not happy to have to defend those glowing green aesthetic nightmares. I'm really not. So don't get mad at me; get mad at the regular Seahawks uniforms, which are so bad as to cause the greenies to be a step up. They *were* an improvement; that's just hard science.

In any case, they Seahawks stink and the Colts are really good, so even with a 10.5-point spread this is an easy pick. It could certainly end up being wrong, but it's an easy one to make.

TITANS @ Jaguars +3

The Titans desperately need to win, and luckily this week they get to go to Jacksonville. The Jags have played two tough road games, barely losing to the undefeated Colts in Week 1 and beating the supposedly good Texans (see above) last week in Houston. In between, though, they lost decisively in Jacksonville to a Cardinals team that has otherwise looked quite underwhelming.

I say take the Titans, and take any opponent that Jacksonville hosts until the team proves it can get up for a game in that sad, half-empty mausoleum they call a home field.

GIANTS @ Chiefs +8.5

Last Monday on "House," Dr. Foreman, who had just taken over House's job, complained that he "felt like Tom Brady's backup." His girlfriend responded by saying that "Tom Brady's backup is now making ten million a year," or something in that vein.

True, but Matt Cassel has proved no more able to lead the Chiefs to victory than Foreman was to diagnose that poor videogame designer's Fabry disease (uh... spoiler alert!).

The Giants, by contrast, have done little to disabuse anyone of the notion that they are the class of the NFC.

RAVENS @ Patriots -2

Generally a home-field advantage is thought to be worth three points (except in Jacksonville), so does this line indicate that the oddsmakers actually think that the Ravens are better than the Patriots?

## POOP READING

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If that's the case, then I have to say that I agree.

Buccaneers @ Redskins -7

How can you pick one horrible team to beat another horrible team by more than a touchdown?

Simple. Like this:

Buccaneers @ REDSKINS -7

BILLS @ Dolphins +2

What's the opposite of "supremacy?" Because this is the battle for AFC East that. The battle for AFC East opposite-of-supremacy. It's really a shame to be forced to pick between these two teams in anything other than a "which team won't Sam Bradford pan out for after they draft him too high next year" contest.

Jets @ SAINTS -7

I smell a letdown... how could the Jets possibly not be believing their own hype right now? I say they don't keep it up, and I say the Saints roar back after scoring what for them qualifies as a measly 27 points last week against Buffalo.

Cowboys @ BRONCOS +3

This is madness. There's no way that the Cowboys should be favored over an undefeated team on the road. Absolute madness.

I don't care what their record, or their statistics, or the results of the games that they've played so far this year would seem to indicate; I just don't think that the Cowboys are any good.

Rams @ 49ERS -9.5

Come back out here to Los Angeles, Rams. Just come on out; we'll figure out where you're going to play later. Just come on.

CHARGERS @ Steelers -6

Could the champs lose three in a row and drop to 1-3? Well, last time they won the Super Bowl they missed the playoffs the next year. I know that doesn't really have anything to do with what's going on now, but at least it goes to show that the Super Bowl champions missing the playoffs isn't necessarily unprecedented.

PACKERS @ Vikings -3.5

Only because the games between these two teams inevitably come down to a field goal.

Also, word has it that the Vikings will be wearing their

throwback uniforms for Monday's game. This may be our only chance to see Brett Favre in an "actual" Vikings uniform instead of those ridiculous getups they wear nowadays, so please, if you're at the game, be sure to take plenty of pictures for me.

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