

ShoresteinSays.com 2019 - NFL Week 14

"The Money Zone": Games that have a "Calculated vs. Actual" difference of between 2 and 6 points are considered The Money Zone. Since 2015, games that fall within this tier have hit ~55% on a sample of over 500 games. I consider games in this tier to have a statistical advantage in the long run. This is a completely objective calculation that does not account for injuries, roster changes, weather etc. However, I believe the smartest investment is to make small bets on each one of these games and slowly increase them over time if you are successful.

2019 Week 14					
Away	Home	Calculated Spread	Actual Spread	Calculated vs Actual	Projected Winner ATS
LA Chargers	Jacksonville	(5.47)	3.00	8.47	Jacksonville
Seattle	LA Rams	6.97	1.00	5.97	Seattle
Washington	Green Bay	(18.20)	(13.00)	5.20	Green Bay
Detroit	Minnesota	(17.20)	(13.00)	4.20	Minnesota
San Francisco	New Orleans	1.07	(2.50)	3.57	San Francisco
Miami	NY Jets	(9.00)	(5.50)	3.50	NY Jets
Dallas	Chicago	(0.13)	3.00	3.13	Chicago
Pittsburgh	Arizona	4.50	2.50	2.00	Pittsburgh
Baltimore	Buffalo	3.57	5.50	1.93	Buffalo
Denver	Houston	(7.87)	(9.50)	1.63	Denver
Indianapolis	Tampa Bay	(1.60)	(3.00)	1.40	Indianapolis
Carolina	Atlanta	(1.10)	(2.50)	1.40	Carolina
Tennessee	Oakland	3.47	2.50	0.97	Tennessee
Kansas City	New England	(3.77)	(3.00)	0.77	New England
Cincinnati	Cleveland	(7.77)	(8.50)	0.73	Cincinnati
NY Giants	Philadelphia	(8.20)	(8.50)	0.30	NY Giants

The Week 14 Money Zone Picks are Seattle, Green Bay, Minnesota, San Francisco, NY Jets, Chicago, & Pittsburgh.

****2019 Money Zone picks are 32-50 ATS. All Time they are 304-267 (53.24%)****

"Shorestein Says" Picks of the Week: Each week I select between 3-5 of my favorite games and do additional analysis on them. I've highlighted the "Shorestein Says" picks of the week in yellow. Read below for my in-depth analysis. ****2019 "Shorestein Says" Picks of the Week are 24-28 ATS. 65-53 since last season (55.08%)****

Detroit @ Minnesota -13: This is a perfect time to buy back on the Vikings in my opinion. Kirk Cousins has a well-established history against bad competition indoors compared to how he fares against elite defenses. I also think it's a great opportunity to fade an inexperienced quarterback in his second start that was able to surprise a lot of people in a nationally televised game in the previous week. I am not convinced that David Blough will be able to replicate his solid performance on Thanksgiving against a defense that has a dangerous pass rush at home where it has been noticeably better. Minnesota has been one of the best home teams on both sides of the ball over the past several years, and 2019 has been no different. Defensively, there has been a noticeable difference in their home/road splits:

<i>Vikings Defense Doesn't Travel</i>		
<u>Defensive Category</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Away</u>
Points Allowed	15.6 (2nd)	23.40 (20th)
Turnovers Forced	2.0 (4th)	1.1 (25th)
Def. Passer Rating	83.0 (8th)	97.30 (22nd)
Sack %	8.08% (10th)	6.07% (21st)
3rd Down Defense	28.57% (3rd)	43.56% (26th)

The saying that “Defense Travels!” does not apply here, and I don’t think that is an anomaly for a dome team. Luckily, this week, the Vikings should feast on an inferior opponent with a coach who is halfway out the door and a quarterback that doesn’t appear to be ready.

I don’t think Minnesota will have any issues moving the ball against a very soft Detroit defense. The Vikings offense is built around a strong running game regardless if Dalvin Cook is healthy enough to play. The backup running back Alexander Mattison has shown flashes of speed and power any time that I have seen him spell Cook. The Vikings should have a significant advantage running the ball against a Detroit defense that ranks in the bottom half in yards per carry and is slightly worse on the road. The offense has had great success with screen passes that eventually lead to long down field passes by Cousins. I’ve been impressed with their new offensive coordinator.

I’ve always been a huge proponent of Cousins against weak teams, despite being skeptical when facing elite competition. The Vikings have pounded weak opponents at home all year, and I expect that to continue this weekend. Cousins has posted an astonishing 129 QB rating at home and has led the Vikings to the 3rd best home point differential in the league at 13.6. Only the Niners and Patriots have posted better numbers there.

Kansas City +3 @ New England: It’s always dangerous to fade the Patriots at Gillette stadium but I think this is 1 of only 2 teams in the NFL that doesn’t seem afraid to play there. The Chiefs have had great success offensively in New England, and I will continue to play them as an underdog in these situations. Here is how the offense produced the last three meetings:

<i>Chiefs @ New England</i>				
<u>Year</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Points Scored</u>	<u>Yards / Pass Att</u>	<u>QB Rating</u>
2017	Gillette	42.00	10.51	148.60
2018	Gillette	40.00	9.78	110.00
2018	Arrowhead	31.00	9.52	117.00

In Kansas City, I see a team that is getting healthier each week as they’ve returned key players on the offensive and defensive lines. Mahomes is getting better protection and they are running the ball more effectively. They remain defensively challenged against the run, as they rank near the bottom of the league in yards per rush and total yardage, but the Patriots haven’t had any success running the ball this year. In the AFC Championship, the Patriots offensive line devastated the Chiefs run defense and mixed in passes to Edelman and Gronkowski to take over the game. I just don’t see the same team this year, with a beatup offensive line, and no play makers on the outside to compliment Edelman. While the Chiefs have given up a ton of yardage as usual, they still have an effective pass rush, and they force turnovers at a high rate. This is generally the type of opportunistic defense that gets paired with a high

flying passing game. If Kansas City's offense is hitting at all cylinders, the most relevant statistics to watch are these:

Chiefs Key Defensive Statistics	
Turnover Forced	1.60 (7th)
Def. Passer Rating	86.10 (7th)
Sack %	7.41% (13th)
3rd Down %	36.91% (14th)

When you're scoring in the mid 30's it's hard for the opposing team to stay committed to the run.

The Patriots strength is obviously on defense. I expect Belichick will make adjustments to what worked for the Chiefs in last year's title game. I definitely think the Patriots have a top 3 defense, but I'm beginning to think their dominance in the first half of the year was primarily due to their weak schedule. I think they've faced 5 legitimate quarterbacks this season.

Quality QB's the Patriots have Faced				
Quarterback	Points Allowed	QB Rating	Yards / Attempt	Playing Conditions
Ben Roethlisberger	3.00	65.60	5.87	Ideal
Lamar Jackson	37.00	107.70	7.09	Ideal
Carson Wentz	10.00	74.40	5.35	Significant Wind
Dak Prescott	9.00	64.20	6.42	Rainstorm / Wind
Deshaun Watson	28.00	140.70	9.36	Dome

They shut down 3 of the 5, but in two of those games the weather was a major factor so I'm not sure they'd have the same result in ideal conditions (weather appears fine for Sunday). I would not be surprised to see Mahomes have a big day against this defense. If that happens, I don't think the Patriots offense is strong enough to win and cover.

San Francisco +2.5 @ New Orleans: I was impressed with San Francisco last Sunday even in a loss. They played Baltimore about as tough as you can at this point. However, I think this week's matchup with the Saints fits the 49ers style of play much better.

The key to this game is the 49ers all world defensive line vs. the Saints injured offensive line. I shamefully thought the Falcons would generate pressure on Brees on Thanksgiving night, but I was dreadfully wrong. This 49ers defensive line is light years ahead of what the Falcons put on the field. I've thrown the stats at you a million teams this year about how disruptive this pass rush can be, and the loss of all pro Terron Armstead will come at a huge cost for New Orleans this week. Last week, Sean Payton game planned around the offensive line depth by throwing the ball incredibly quick against corners that left way too much cushion against the likes of Michael Thomas and company. I promise you Robert Saleh will come out with a far more aggressive game plan with his physical corners. I think the Saints offense is primarily slants to Michael Thomas, option routes to Kamara, and gadget plays with Taysum Hill. Brees is going to see pressure like he hasn't seen all year, and I think this ends up being a low scoring, grind out game for the 49ers.

When San Francisco has the ball, the 49ers need to be careful and conscious about the Saints elite pass rush. I highly doubt that Kyle Shanahan will leave Garoppolo vulnerable in the pocket the way Atlanta did to Matt Ryan last week. The 49ers have a much more balanced attack, and have run the ball effectively on a high volume of opponents. At 33.33 attempts per game, only the Ravens run the ball more than the 49ers. I think that's important for San Francisco to stick with that agenda and mix in play action to George Kittle and Emmanuel Sanders.

This is a fantastic game between 2 of the 3 best teams in the NFL. I'm rolling with the underdog.

Baltimore -5.5 @ Buffalo: Buffalo is built to stop the pass, and they are doing it an elite level for the second straight year. The problem is the Ravens pass game is nothing like any other team in the NFL right now. The Bills have been vulnerable against the run. In two of their 3 losses, they were exposed in the run game:

<i>Bills Exposed By Rushing Teams</i>			
<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Rushing Yards</u>	<u>Yards / Attempt</u>	<u>Result</u>
Browns	147.00	5.88	Loss
Eagles	218.00	5.32	Loss

This Ravens rushing attack is far more advanced and multiple than the Browns or the Eagles. The two headed monster of Jackson and Ingram is devastating defenses, and I think this week will be no different. The elite players that the Bills have in the secondary are built to stop outside wide receivers. Baltimore hits you with several different tight ends, full backs, and shifty wide receivers across the middle. I simply believe that this is just a poor matchup for a Buffalo defense that might be feeling a little too confident after they beat up on an overrated Dallas team.

I've been impressed with Josh Allen's play as of late, but the risk takers in the Baltimore secondary should come up with a few interceptions. Dallas plays a very basic scheme and simple defense that Allen took advantage of last week. Baltimore blitzes as much as any team in the NFL, and they come from all directions. When I watched New England expose Allen early on in the season, it was when they flashed cover 0 blitzes with everyone standing up at the line. In these situations, I think he can still be confused and I'm hoping that Harbaugh and the Ravens use a similar approach.

I like the Ravens in this matchup.

Denver +9.5 @ Houston: The Broncos have been a tough out for almost everyone this season. This defense is still playing well as they figure out what they are doing at quarterback. I think the Texans will be vulnerable to a setback after their huge win against New England. The Houston defense was great last week, but don't be fooled, as they have been a liability for much of the year:

<i>Texans Defensive Issues</i>			
<u>Yards / Rush</u>	<u>Red Zone Defense</u>	<u>Def. Passer Rating</u>	<u>Yards / Play</u>
4.60 (24th)	65.71% (31st)	99.50 (25th)	5.90 (25th)

I think the Texans are the Packers of the AFC. They both have quarterbacks that are immensely talented, but they have limitations on defense and with coaching....

I think the real key for Denver is their ability to run here. They haven't been as effective on the ground as they were last year, but I've always liked Philip Lindsey. The Colts took control of the Thursday night game vs. Houston by consistently running. Drew Lock showed some promise in his touchdown connections with Courtland Sutton, and I think he should have some opportunities against this defense much like Gardner Minshew and Kyle Allen did when they were making early starts in their careers as well.

Random Thoughts:

- I had to throw in a 5th game, as I really like the board this week...
- Seattle's in the Money Zone once again, but this one feels like a trap. The Line opened at 2.5, and has come down to a pick em. The Rams have historically been a pretty tough matchup for Seattle.
- I still believe that any bet against Dwayne Haskins is a good bet. I was shocked to see Carolina unravel after they raced out to a 14-0 lead. I can't believe how bad that run defense is...
- Indy feels like a strong play as underdogs vs. Tampa. Tampa has had a few good performances in a row these last few weeks, but that's typically when they turn back into Tampa....
- Since I started writing these about 5 years ago, I've roasted Mike Tomlin on a yearly basis.... This year, I think he's done a phenomenal job. He's got nothing at quarterback and offense, yet they continue to win.

Good Luck Everyone!



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