

ShoresteinSays.com 2020 - NFL Week 11

"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 600 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.

2020 Week 11					
Away	Home	Calculated Spread	Actual Spread	Calculated vs Actual	Projected Winner ATS
New England	Houston	(6.60)	2.00	8.60	Houston
NY Jets	LA Chargers	(15.07)	(8.50)	6.57	LA Chargers
Philadelphia	Cleveland	(9.10)	(3.50)	5.60	Cleveland
Tennessee	Baltimore	(0.90)	(6.50)	5.60	Tennessee
Miami	Denver	8.53	3.00	5.53	Miami
Kansas City	Las Vegas	2.27	7.00	4.73	Las Vegas
Atlanta	New Orleans	(8.60)	(5.00)	3.60	New Orleans
Detroit	Carolina	(4.33)	(1.00)	3.33	Carolina
LA Rams	Tampa Bay	(1.37)	(4.00)	2.63	LA Rams
Cincinnati	Washington	(2.93)	(2.00)	0.93	Washington
Dallas	Minnesota	(8.00)	(7.50)	0.50	Minnesota
Pittsburgh	Jacksonville	10.50	10.00	0.50	Pittsburgh
Arizona	Seattle	(3.20)	(3.00)	0.20	Seattle
Green Bay	Indianapolis	(2.47)	(2.50)	0.03	Green Bay

The Week 11 Money Zone picks are Cleveland, Tennessee, Miami, Las Vegas, New Orleans, Carolina, & LA Rams.

****2020 Money Zone Record is 36-29 ATS (55.38%)****

"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.

****"Shorestein Says" Picks of the Week are 19-19 ATS in 2020 (50.00%)****

Atlanta @ New Orleans -5: Much of the focus this week will be on Drew Brees' injured ribs and collapsed lung, but to me, I'm much more interested in how the Saints' defense has turned back into the aggressive, swarming unit that looks like one of the league's best again. The pass defense got off to a very slow start for the first month or so, but over the last 3 games I don't think there has been a better defense.

<i>Saints Defense Return to Dominance</i>				
<i>Last 3 Games defensive Ranks</i>				
Def. Passer Rating	Points Allowed	Yards / Play	Turnovers Forced	3rd Down %
67.30 (2nd)	13.0 (1st)	4.40 (1st)	2.70 (1st)	32.50% (4th)

I expect these trends to continue as they have feasted on this Falcons offense over the past few seasons. They have sacked Matt Ryan 16 times and picked him off 4 times in the last 3 meetings, and the Saints have beaten the Falcons 4 out of the last 5 games in the series. The Saints run defense has been top notch, and I don't see the Falcons having any success on the ground which should keep Matt Ryan in a compromised position.

Offensively, the Saints should be able to move the ball against one of the league's softest defenses regardless of who is taking snaps. The Falcons still give up a league worst 6.5 yards per play. I'm also encouraged by the return of Michael Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders and how they have looked since starting back up. But the key to this game should be Alvin Kamara and the running game; I don't think the Falcons have any answer for that. Winston has a much better offensive line than anything he was used to in his career in Tampa, and the Saints have shown that they can adapt to playing with a backup QB as they were 5-0 in that situation last year.

For the first time ever, I wouldn't mind seeing some Taysom Hill in this game. I normally think it's a complete waste of everyone's time, but in this matchup specifically, I think he will thrive. I don't think Atlanta can match his physicality.

Tennessee +6.5 @ Baltimore: I like the Titans again this week as pretty significant underdogs despite their disappointing loss last Thursday. They showed last year that they are capable of controlling the Ravens running attack which has actually been far less effective so far this season. Lamar Jackson has come back to Earth as defenses seem to have figured him out:

<i>Lamar Jackson back to Earth</i>			
<u>Season</u>	<u>TD / INT Ratio</u>	<u>Team Rushing Yards / Attempt</u>	<u>Points / Game</u>
2019	36/6	5.6 (1st)	31.90 (1st)
2020	14/5	5.0 (5th)	27.10 (12th)

I think the Titans deployed a perfect plan to slow him down in the playoffs last year, and I would expect them to use a similar strategy. They found a way to create turnovers, and they were aggressive offensively early in the game. Time and again, we see that when Jackson is forced to play from behind, the Ravens get rattled.

Defensively, I continue to have doubts about the Ravens ability to stop the run. Last week, the Patriots rushed very effectively with almost no complimentary passing game. Baltimore continues to battle key injuries on the defensive line with both Brandon Williams and Calais Campbell in and out of the lineup. I think this uncertainty will open up some holes for Derrick Henry, and no running back can hit home runs like he can.

I also like Vrabel with extra time to game plan given that they played the Thursday game, and the Ravens had to play the late Sunday Night window. The one time that the Titans had the rest advantage this year, they blew out the Bills and covered the spread by 29 points. Although that's just a tiny sample, I generally like to back good coaches when they have extra time to prepare.

I think there's still a decent chance the Ravens win this game, but I envision a much closer game than the spread implies. I'll take my chances with Tennessee and the points.

LA Rams +4 @ Tampa Bay: If you looked at the schedule and saw this game before the season started, you would probably think it would be an epic shootout. I think this will turn into a grind-it-out type game with two of the best defenses in the NFL. Both teams are evenly matched, but I think the Rams have a major coaching advantage. Time and again, I watch the Bucs and think that they don't tailor their game plan to their specific opponent. I wouldn't be surprised at all if the Bucs offense came out on Monday night and was completely unprepared and ripped to pieces by Aaron Donald and the Rams defensive line. In the games that Tampa struggled (both games against New Orleans, @ Chicago, and @ Giants) the offensive line was completely bullied and that led to devastating consequences:

Brady's Struggles vs. Pressure in 2020			
Opponent	Sack %	QB Rating	Points Scored
@ New Orleans	8.33%	78.40	23.00
@ Chicago	7.32%	86.70	19.00
New Orleans	7.69%	40.40	3.00
Rams Season Avg's	9.01% (4th)	81.0 (3rd)	18.70 (2nd)

The Rams offense will face major challenges going against the Tampa D, but I have much more faith in McVay to adjust to the flow of the game. I think LA is much more committed to the run than Tampa as they average over 31 attempts per game which ranks them 6th in the NFL. I think it's important that they stick with it even if they struggle to generate yardage early. They are also not shy about handing off to the wide receivers on jet sweeps, which I think you have to do against a stout front like Tampa's.

The Rams have been a very tough team on the road in the McVay era. As an away team since 2018, they are 18-12 ATS (60%) and this includes a record of 6-2 (75%) when they are road underdogs. I feel like the value is on LA on a FG+ spread with a decisive coaching advantage.

Miami -3 @ Denver: Call me crazy, but I'm riding this Dolphins train into the ground. They've been a league best 7-2 against the spread so far in 2020 and I don't see the run ending this week. I love what they continue to do on defense with their blitz-heavy approach as only Pittsburgh has forced more turnovers this season. On the other side, no team has turned the ball over more than the Broncos at 2.3 times per game. This is a classic situation to me to not over think anything and just play the team with the far better efficiency metrics on a small spread.

Efficiency Matchup: Miami vs. Denver			
Team	Passer Rating Differential	Yards / Point Margin	Turnover Margin
Miami	10.0 (10th)	7.0 (1st)	+6 (4th)
Denver	-24.60 (31st)	-3.4 (30th)	-1.3 (31st)

The Broncos quarterback situation remains a disaster. They cannot get this position figured out and appear to be back in the hunt for another QB as Drew Lock is clearly not the answer. Lock is injured again, and it appears that he will likely be out. I'd almost prefer if he played because there hasn't been anyone worse in 2020. Brett Rypien will likely not be much of an improvement as the alternative.

I think in this game, Tua just needs to take care of the ball, which he has done a good job of so far. He has just 1 turnover in the 3 games that he's started. I still have some respect for the Broncos defense, but they have to be feeling the burden of carrying the team as the offense continues to be one of the league's worst. I think you can sense the defense start to give up if they see early turnovers from the offense. I said it last week, but I think Tua should take more opportunities to run. He still has not

capitalized much on that part of his game, which I think should make him more valuable. He needs to pickup easy first downs by scrambling the way the best quarterbacks do (Mahomes, Wilson, Murray, & Rodgers).

Random Thoughts:

- As you can see, my calculations tend to get more accurate as the season progresses and the statistics become more reliable. 5 of my spread calculations were within 1 point of the actual spread. This time of year is generally when the Money Zone is most successful.
- It's been a rough couple weeks for the Picks of the Week, but the Money Zone remains very profitable. Road teams in the Money Zone have been especially hot, so take note.
- I was very close to adding Cleveland as my final pick of the week. A lot of what I said about Denver could equally be said about Philly. Almost in auto-fade territory.
- It's probably bold to go with the Raiders this week. They've been a huge surprise this year, but I think they are in a very tough spot having KC off of their bye and after they have already upset them. Wouldn't surprise me at all to see Mahomes put high 40's on the board.
- Carolina is an interesting play if Bridgewater's healthy. Last week's game got away from them, but aside from when they play Tampa, they've been competitive in every game. Detroit is an all over the map type team that you never know what to expect.
- I think the Patriots have found themselves again. It's clear that they want to play power run/turnover free football. They should take care of Houston and continue their momentum.
- I loved Jacksonville last week as they covered and almost beat Green Bay. I do not feel the same about them this week....
- Watching Chicago's offense the other night hurt my eyeballs. In today's high-flying NFL, it is almost impossible to produce 149 yards of total offense in a game. They made the weak Vikings defense look like the 85 Bears.

Good Luck Everyone!



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