

ShoresteinSays.com 2020 - NFL Week 3

"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 3					
Away	Home	Calculated Spread	Actual Spread	Calculated vs Actual	Projected Winner ATS
NY Jets	Indianapolis	(3.21)	(10.00)	6.79	NY Jets
Miami	Jacksonville	(9.67)	(3.00)	6.67	Jacksonville
Houston	Pittsburgh	(10.12)	(3.50)	6.62	Pittsburgh
Dallas	Seattle	(11.11)	(4.50)	6.61	Seattle
San Francisco	NY Giants	10.09	4.00	6.09	San Francisco
Washington	Cleveland	(1.92)	(7.00)	5.08	Washington
Tampa Bay	Denver	1.30	6.00	4.70	Denver
Kansas City	Baltimore	(8.17)	(3.50)	4.67	Baltimore
Carolina	LA Chargers	(2.94)	(6.50)	3.56	Carolina
Tennessee	Minnesota	(1.01)	2.50	3.51	Minnesota
Chicago	Atlanta	(0.61)	(3.50)	2.89	Chicago
Las Vegas	New England	(8.70)	(6.00)	2.70	New England
Detroit	Arizona	(3.53)	(5.50)	1.97	Detroit
Green Bay	New Orleans	(3.03)	(3.50)	0.47	Green Bay
Cincinnati	Philadelphia	(6.11)	(6.50)	0.39	Cincinnati
LA Rams	Buffalo	(2.57)	(2.50)	0.07	Buffalo

The Week 3 Money Zone picks are Washington, Denver, Baltimore, Carolina, Minnesota, Chicago, & New England.

****2020 Money Zone Record is 10-5 ATS (66.66%)****

"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 4-4 ATS in 2020 (50.00%)****

Vegas @ New England -6: I absolutely LOVE the Patriots in this spot. The Raiders are on a short week, coming from the west coast and playing in the early slot on Sunday. This is after a grueling game with New Orleans and is the second game in a back to back against 2 of the better teams in the NFL. The fact that the Raiders have already won 1 of the 2, almost always puts them in a different state of mind and not nearly as desperate of a situation. On top of all of this, the Raiders are significantly banged up in the most important part of their team; the offensive line. Trent Brown, their best tackle was out last week, and will likely be out or less than 100%. Their second best lineman, Richie Incognito, left Monday night's game and I assume will also not be healthy. In addition, their game-breaking running back in Josh Jacobs is also battling injury.

With the running game of the Raiders at a disadvantage, look for Belichick and the Patriots to completely shut down Darren Waller. He is the key to the Raiders offense, and I think it is likely that he

will see a lot of double teams or even get matched up with Stephon Gilmore. Gilmore, the defending defensive player of the year, is coming off a game in which he was embarrassed by DK Metcalf, and I'd be shocked if he didn't come back motivated and angry to redeem his performance. Aside from Waller, I think New England has the secondary to match up against the inexperienced Raiders receivers and should be able to shut them down.

I still whole heartedly believe that the Raiders have a bottom five pass defense. Drew Brees had teammates running wide open throughout the game, but he failed to deliver easy completions. They play a simple zone scheme most often that Josh McDaniels has destroyed in the past. Max Crosby has really been their only legitimate pass rusher, and the Patriots have always been able to stop a one-man line. Cam Newton was nothing short of spectacular throwing the ball for nearly 400 yards, and a lot of it came from the pocket on Sunday night. I think he'll have an easier time finding receivers against this porous secondary and meek pass rush. Look for Newton to attempt a ton of passes as the Patriots always attack the opponents' biggest weakness. I don't anticipate they will waste much time running the ball.

I like the Patriots to win this game by double digits, going away. Since 2016, the Patriots are 9-5 (64.3%) ATS after a loss. I think that's more of a Belichick stat, than a Brady stat.

Tennessee @ Minnesota +2.5: Minnesota has done nothing right so far this season. I honestly don't even recognize them as they are playing so poorly. However, in a must win type game, I think they will finally turn it around this week. They are constantly a viable threat in the NFC that largely plays smart, efficient football as evidenced below:

Vikings Crash					
Season	Turnover Margin	Passer Rating	Yards / Point Margin	Scoring Defense	Sack %
2019	+ .7 (3rd)	102.40 (6th)	3.5 (4th)	19.40 (6th)	7.50% (10th)
2020	-1.5 (31st)	61.90 (32nd)	0.0 (18th)	35.50 (31st)	2.82% (27th)

I refuse to believe that a team that performed in the top 10 of five of the most important efficiency statistics in football fell apart over night. The roster is largely intact, so I expect the law of averages to even out and think this week is a perfect opportunity to start.

Tennessee is a tough opponent that has continued the momentum that was built at the end of last season, but I think Minnesota has the personnel to slow them down. Tannehill has been excellent in the play action game and has gotten great protection so far as he's been sacked on only 2.90% of throws. I don't think this is sustainable as they ranked near the bottom at over 10% in the 2019 season. I think Yannick Ngakoue has his breakout game for Minnesota and will get the pass rush back on track. While Tannehill has continued his stellar play, Derrick Henry has been held in check for the most part in 2020. Minnesota has remained relatively stout in the running game, and I'm relying on that to continue.

Lastly, Minnesota has a great recent track record as home underdogs, going 4-1 ATS since 2016. I don't think Tennessee has earned the right to be favored in a venue like Minnesota. I think the Vikings get back on track and save the early part of the season as the more desperate team.

Chicago +3.5 @ Atlanta: There's just nothing left to say about the pathetic Falcons at this point. Two of the biggest collapses in the modern day history of the NFL have come against the same coach and the

same core of players. I don't know how Dan Quinn can walk in the locker room and have anyone take him seriously at this point. I'm going out on a limb and saying there is no chance that this type of loss doesn't linger into the following week and for the rest of the season for that matter. I think it's crazy to see the Falcons as favorites against a tough Chicago team, and I am playing it as such.

The Bears, on the other hand, look like they have regained their elite defensive form that they showcased in 2018. The pass rush has certainly heated up, and it appears to be getting to opposing quarterbacks. Here is how they stand so far in 2020 and how it compares to the performance relative to 2018.

Bears Return to Dominant Defense					
Season	Passer Rating Def	Yards / Pass	Points Allowed	TO's forced per Game	3rd Down %
2018	73.20 (1st)	5.8 (1st)	17.6 (1st)	2.2 (1st)	34.91 (4th)
2020	73.10 (1st)	6.2 (8th)	18.0 (4th)	1.5 (14th)	31.03% (3rd)

Offensively, Trubisky is still shaky, but I think it should be encouraging as he is going up against a team that has yielded the 2nd worst defensive passer rating in the NFL, allowed the 2nd most yards, and has given up the most points in the NFL at 39 per game. I don't think Atlanta can be trusted as a favorite, never mind a FG+ favorite.

Kansas City @ Baltimore -3.5: Not sure I have ever faded the Chiefs as an underdog in the Mahomes era, but I'm taking a shot this week. Baltimore has been hands down the most consistent regular season team in the NFL for over a year now. I think the Baltimore offense under Lamar Jackson is a nightmare matchup for the undersized Chiefs defense that has consistently struggled in defending the run. Lamar Jackson wows everyone with his flashy plays, but where I am really impressed is how efficient he is and how few mistakes he makes. In 9 of his last 10 regular season games, he has finished with a 100+ QB rating. The only game that he didn't finish over 100 was against the vaunted 49ers defense. During that same span of games, the Ravens have outscored their opponents 360 to 138. His TD to interception ratio during that frame is 29 to 1. Truly just a remarkable stretch of play, that I think he has a great chance to continue.

Defensively, the Ravens have been just as impressive. Their 2020 numbers for pass defense have mirrored what they were able to do last season, and that is shut teams down. I've said it a million times but I love their ability to cover and get aggressive with the blitz. It's an elite unit.

Ravens Pass Defense				
Season	Passer Rating Def	Takeaways	Points Allowed	Yards / Pass
2019	79.10 (2nd)	1.5 (8th)	18.2 (3rd)	6.1 (5th)
2020	76.80 (3rd)	2.5 (1st)	11.0 (1st)	5.6 (4th)

The Chiefs are an elite, worthy opponent, but this Ravens team is a very deserving favorite in my opinion.

Random Thoughts:

- It's hard to see the Washington Football team continue to appear in the Money Zone after I've spent countless hours ripping Dwayne Haskins and their offense. But I do my best to trust the system....
- 10 Points feels like another gigantic number for the Colts, especially given the Jets one and only strength in stopping the run. That one is interesting, but backing Adam Gase is always a worrisome experience.
- I was dead wrong on the Cardinals hype last week. I'd still like to see more consistency from the defense before I start to buy in.
- I've had a terrible history when picking Carolina, so I couldn't bring myself to do it again, but I think they have value as significant underdogs to an unproven, unreliable favorite in the Chargers.
- Seattle/Dallas should be another exciting game. Not much defense in that one
- I think the Rams are officially back. That offense looks like it's in full Mcvay mode, and I'd expect them to take care of the Bills. I'm stunned at how well Josh Allen is playing. I do not expect it to continue.
- I've officially become a huge Joe Burrow fan for coming through with that phenomenal backdoor cover last Thursday.

Good Luck Everyone!



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