

Vegas **INSIDER.com**
**WEEKLY FOOTBALL
TIP SHEET**

ISSUE 21
**NFL CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP
PLAYOFFS**

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WELCOME TO THE VEGASINSIDER FOOTBALL WEEKLY

What a wild weekend of divisional round NFL playoff action we just witnessed, a set of four games that included two outright upsets and a third attempt that was foiled on the first ever playoff walk off touchdown. Oh, and there was the other game, somewhat of a surprise too if you've been reading the recent headlines, as the much-maligned Patriots rolled once again, silencing critics as they seemingly always do. New England, led of course by quarterback Tom Brady and

head coach Bill Belichick, has established itself as the team to beat, and is a prohibitive favorite in this weekend's conference championship game.

Lines were very active last week and bettors were pumping the money into their favorite establishments. That only figures to increase over the next few weeks as sportsbooks always offer a plethora of extra betting options for these last few high stakes games on the NFL calendar. Be sure to visit your favorite book and look what they have available before finalizing your action for the weekend. If you're in the market for a new place to play at, be sure to check out the highly rated list of sponsors we have supporting Vegas Insider.

At this point, we are now down to the "Final Four" of the NFL playoff proceedings, and this year's Super Bowl matchup will be decided this week on Championship Sunday. As such, this week's entire Vegas Insider Football Weekly is devoted to handicapping the two conference championship games. From picks, stat matchups, strength ratings, and complete editorial analysis, we have nearly every angle covered. In the AFC, defending Super Bowl Champion New England is expected to grab a second straight conference crown, as the Patriots opened as 8.5-point favorites against Jacksonville. In the NFC, the latter game on Sunday, the host Panthers opened as 3.5-point underdogs to Minnesota.

With the lines sitting where they are, you'll want to make sure to read this week's continued series on top historical playoff trends, as those line scenarios are addressed specifically in the article. This week's piece dives deeply into the recent history of conference championship action, and again includes a handy chart logging all of the AFC & NFC title game tilts for the last 20 years to help you get ready for a winning Sunday.

The Vegas Insider Football Weekly experts & Strength Ratings had a big week as a whole, going 7-1 ATS on Consensus Plays. Our Power Ratings and VI Jason were also 6-2 ATS. **Over the two weeks of the playoffs thus far, the CONSENSUS IS NOW 14-2, GOOD FOR 88%!!!** Turn to the NFL picks page to see which sides and totals they are backing this week.

We would like to once again thank you for your season-long support of the Vegas Insider Football Weekly. We will be having just one issue covering the big game, and that will be released in the week leading up to the game. That means we will be off next week, preparing material to cover many of the different wagering angles offered every year in the NFL's biggest game, including line & total, player & team matchup props, and exotics.

Good luck on the Championship Sunday action!

NFL CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS				
SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2018				
311	JACKSONVILLE	46.5	46.5	
P: 12:05PM C: 2:05PM E: 3:05PM CBS				
312	NEW ENGLAND	-8.5	-9	
313	MINNESOTA	-3	-3.5	
P: 3:40PM C: 5:40PM E: 6:40PM FOX				
314	PHILADELPHIA	38.5	38.5	

NFL VI PICKS

VI	VI	VI	VI	Power	Effective	Bettors	Consensus
Jim	Jason	Doug	Matt	Rating	Strength	Ratings	
90-89 (50%)	92-87 (51%)	84-95 (47%)	91-88 (51%)	103-76 (58%)	88-91 (49%)	102-77 (57%)	95-84 (53%)
29-24 (55%)*	27-26 (51%)*	25-28 (47%)*	29-26 (53%)*				

* - indicates Best Bet (BB)

Sunday, January 21, 2018 - (311) JACKSONVILLE at (312) NEW ENGLAND (-9)

Jacksonville	New	New	New	Jacksonville	Jacksonville	Jacksonville	Jacksonville
	England*	England*	England*				

Sunday, January 21, 2018 - (311) JACKSONVILLE at (312) NEW ENGLAND - TOTAL (46.5)

UNDER*	OVER*	UNDER	UNDER*	OVER	UNDER	OVER	UNDER
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Sunday, January 21, 2018 - (313) MINNESOTA at (314) PHILADELPHIA (+3.5)

Philadelphia*	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Minnesota	Philadelphia	Philadelphia
---------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	-----------	--------------	--------------

Sunday, January 21, 2018 - (313) MINNESOTA at (314) PHILADELPHIA - TOTAL (38)

OVER	OVER	UNDER*	OVER	OVER	OVER	OVER	OVER
------	------	--------	------	------	------	------	------

VI Jim says...You have to wonder what the psyche of the Eagles will be this week after winning last week as home underdogs, embracing the role of "dog" to the fullest. They are an underdog once again, this time with a trip to the Super bowl on the line. Of course we all know that Philadelphia is down to its second string quarterback, and has been adjusted greatly by oddsmakers. What many people forget is that Minnesota QB Case Keenum is also a backup at heart, and played like it late in last week's game, managing to survive several questionable errant throws. So if you consider that logic, and work in home field advantage, is the difference between Foles and Keenum 6 points or more? I don't think so. Plus, in my experience, road favorites in the conference championship games fit a certain mold...offensively prolific, solid defensively. Minnesota is not one of those teams, quite the opposite in fact. I'll leave you with a nice system too, which says to back Home teams off an upset win as an underdog, in a game involving two top-level teams (>= 75%). This system is rare but boasts a 26-8 ATS record in its L34 tries. I give Philly a great shot at advancing and handing Minnesota its sixth straight conference title game loss.

VI Jason says...There are a vast number of people that believe New England is a lock to reach the Super Bowl with Pittsburgh out of the way. Considering the Patriots history tied to current head coach and quarterback, hard to argue with this logic. There are naysayers who look at Jacksonville's defensive potential and point to what Blake Bortles is capable of in a given game, if not week to week. However, unlike the Steelers last week, Bill Belichick and Tom Brady will not be looking towards next game, they will be fully focused on this one. If any coach and his defensive staff is likely to put together game plan to get Bortles out of his comfort zone, it will be the team in the blue jersey's. We will conclude with teams that have scored more than 40 points in the postseason, they are recently 3-11 and 3-10-1 ATS in next game. Let's go with New England.

VI Doug says...With Case Keenum and Nick Foles playing quarterback, Minnesota and Philadelphia have a lot of similarities. Both teams have strong defenses that can limit what the opposition prefers to do and generate a number of three and outs. Against either club, the opposing quarterback has to either be exceptional or have an outstanding game, to score a larger number of points. I'm not sure these two signal callers are capable of greatness throughout four quarters. In breaking this contest down, three scores come to mind 16-13, 17-13 or 20-17, all three which would qualify as Under's. Of course a sloppy turnover or two could adjust scoring, but to assume that happens for quick points is not always wise. I'll back the UNDER in NFC title game.

NFL OBSERVATIONS

How Each Team Covers or Fails to Cover Championship Contests

Let's get right to the action and break it down.

New England covers by just playing its typical game. Best guess, the Patriots come out with quick short passing game and might even use two tight ends for starters. This forces Jacksonville's hand about guarding Rob Gronkowski and they can run wide receivers on crossing routes underneath if the Jags try and double Gronk. This makes Jacksonville more aggressive in wanting to reach Tom Brady, who then in turn hands to RB Dion Lewis for quick hitters inside the tackles for five/six yards a carry. All of this combined leaves the Jags guessing on defense.

Patriots do not cover because the Jacksonville defensive line is in Brady's face from the start. As noted by various keen observers, Brady was more anxious the previous six games before Tennessee, wanting to get rid the ball quicker than what he had done in the first half of the season. Brady had more interceptions and was more visibly irritated with himself and teammates. If the Jags accomplish this, they are halfway home. On offense, HC Doug Marrone's offense needs RB Leonard Fournette to get off to a hot start, enabling Blake Bortles to find more open receivers on play-action. If he's on target, this could frustrate Pats players as Jacksonville stays in game and builds confidence.

Jacksonville covers by having the offensive line control the action and feeding Fournette. If the rookie tailback can reach 100 yards on the ground, that make Bortles' job simpler as the Jaguars can run more underneath passing route and screens to help move the chains. On defense, the front four has to be at Brady's legs or crawling all over him.

Jaguars do not cover because in this game they get the 'Bad Blake', like the one we saw in three prior contests to the Pittsburgh encounter. If Bortles is tossing errant throws and nearly having a pass picked off every third release, Jacksonville is in trouble. New England will do what Buffalo did with eight men in the

box and dare the Jags' quarterback to beat them throwing.

Minnesota covers by establishing the run first and going to outside playmakers after the offense settles in. The Vikings were seventh in rushing during the regular season and were second in attempts. When Carson Wentz was playing, Philadelphia would build leads and opponents would abandon the run. With Nick Foles at quarterback and the Eagles in closer contests, Oakland and Dallas both had over 30 rushing attempts and covered the spread. The Vikings are a fantastic tackling team and can prevent Philly from generating unexpected big plays.

Vikings do not cover because they get over-aggressive on defense and take themselves out of position. They did this at times in the fourth quarter against the Saints last week, allowing QB Drew Brees and his offense to make plays. Case Keenum made a number of risky throws in second half last Sunday as well, but got away with most of them. Even still, it was a miracle that saved them. If Keenum reverts to his days with the Rams, the Eagles will be the ones moving on.

Philadelphia covers by designing an offense that creates defensive movement by Minnesota. Foles has played in the league long enough to understand most situations in pre-snap reads. If he finds things he likes and can make speedy decisions, he plays better. The Eagles have to run well enough to stay ahead of the chains against the Vikes. Defensively, Philadelphia likes to attack, even without much blitzing, and will look to force Keenum into poor decisions.

Eagles do not cover because their No.3 running offense cannot get a push against Minnesota's run defense. This places them at more of disadvantage as if Foles is forced to being a pocket passer. When this happens, his percentage drops and thought-process is curtailed having to make decisions with more activity around him. Atlanta's game plan left a lot to be desired and Minnesota has three excellent pass catchers that can hurt Philly down the field if Keenum has time.



JIM MACK CONTINUES HIS HOT STREAK INTO NFL DIVISIONAL PLAYOFF WEEKEND!

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RECENT NFL CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP PLAYOFF TRENDS

Over the last two weeks, I have compiled trends from the wildcard and divisional rounds of the NFL playoffs. The conference title games are next up, and the first and foremost thing that is noticeable when analyzing the recent conference championship games is the inflation of posted totals. Over the L5 seasons, the totals for the conference title games have averaged 49.3. That is lofty by NFL standards, which have averaged about 44.5 overall in that span. Even still, half of the games have managed to go OVER, including both of last year's games. For the most part, offense rules the day in these games, not surprising since most of the league's best quarterbacks and offenses typically reach this point.

The other thing that stands out is that home teams have won eight straight conference championship games while going 7-1 ATS. They have done so in quite decisive fashion, outscoring their road opponents 33.9-16.6 on average.

The matchups are certainly intriguing for this weekend, with three ho-hum quarterbacks on display along with the recognized G.O.A.T. We all know of the rich playoff history of Tom Brady, but don't try to tell Blake Bortles, Case Keenum, and Nick Foles that they can't get the job done too. They did so this past weekend with all three playing relative well.

Using similar methodologies to that of the past two weeks, here are some of the notable trends and systems that have developed in recent conference championship game action. I will be applying this year's matchups (Jacksonville vs. New England & Minnesota vs. Philadelphia) to the key info when needed.

General Conference Championship Playoff ATS Trends

- The OUTRIGHT winner has covered the pointspread in all but four of the L32 conference championship playoff games. The most recent team to not do that was Seattle, three years ago, when it came from behind to beat Green Bay 28-22 in overtime as 8.5-point favorites.
- Hosts are on an 8-0 SU & 7-1 ATS run in conference championship play, reversing a trend that saw visitors go 4-2 SU & 5-1 ATS in the prior three seasons. It certainly seems that the teams that have earned home field

advantage are again making best use of it.

- There have been nine road favorites in the L22 years of the conference championship playoffs, and those teams are 6-3 SU & 5-3-1 ATS. Most recently, New England lost in 2016 in Denver, 20-18, as a 3-point favorite. Minnesota is favored at Philadelphia on Sunday.
- Beware of large home favorites in the conference championship round, at least in terms of laying the points, as those closing as 7-point favorites or more are 9-5 SU but just 4-10 ATS since '99. New England is approaching the double-digit point spread mark for its game versus Jacksonville.
- Alternatively, home favorites in the -3 to -6.5 range have been highly successful at both winning and covering their respective point spreads, with a record of 12-1 SU & 11-2 ATS since '05. Those games have also gone OVER the total at a 10-2-1 rate in that span.
- The last 14 times that a home team has won & covered the pointspread in the conference title games, that game has also gone OVER the total at a 10-4 rate.
- In inter-divisional conference championship games of this playoff round, the favorites are on a 3-1 SU & ATS surge. Neither of this year's games are between divisional opponents.
- Road teams are 5-3 ATS (3-5 SU) in the L8 NFC title games. Home teams are 8-1 SU & 7-2 ATS in the L9 AFC clashes.
- Of the teams in the AFC & NFC Championship contests this year, New England is making its seventh straight appearance and is 9-4 SU all-time in this round. The Patriots are just 2-6 ATS in their L8 tries though. Jacksonville is 0-2 SU & ATS in AFC title tilts, including a loss at New England following the '96 season. The Eagles are 2-4 SU & 3-3 ATS in NFC title games, and haven't played in one since '09. Finally, Minnesota is 4-5 in nine prior conference championship games, but has lost five straight, both outright & ATS.

Conference Championship Trends by Seed Number

- #1-seeds have been the host teams in 36 of the L50 conference championship games, and have gone 25-11 SU & 19-17 ATS in those games. #1 seeds have won their last seven games while going 6-1 ATS.
- Only two teams that were not #1 or #2 seeds have hosted conference championship games in the L20 years, and both won outright and ATS. Indianapolis did so in the AFC in 2007 and Arizona followed that up two years later for the NFC.
- #2 seeds hosting conference championship games are just 3-6 SU & 3-5-1 ATS since '97, however Atlanta did win a year ago over Green Bay.
- Wildcard teams, or those seeded #5 or #6, have gone just 3-8 SU & 4-7 ATS dating back to '96 in the conference title games, including just 1-5 SU & ATS the L8 seasons. There is actually a misconception of how successful these teams have been of late, when only Green Bay of 2011 was able to

advance past this round to the Super Bowl. Recall that San Francisco last fit this bill in 2014 and lost at Seattle.

- #4 seeds are on a run of 6-3 SU & 5-3-1 ATS in conference title game play since '98, but most recently, Green Bay was whipped by Atlanta in 2017, 44-21.

Conference Championship Trends regarding Totals

- Overall, since '93, OVER the total is 29-20-1 in the conference championship playoff games. However, there has been a stark difference when you consider conference breakdown lately, as the last six AFC games are 5-1 UNDER while NFC contests are on an 11-4-1 OVER surge.
- Breaking down the totals for this weekend's games based upon ranges, the seven of the L8 conference title tilts since '03 with totals more than 42 but less than 48 have gone OVER. The AFC title game falls in that range as of presstime. Totals less than 42 are rare nowadays, and the only two games that fit that bill over the last six seasons have gone UNDER. The NFC game shows a miniscule 38 as last check.

FOLLOWING THE LINE/TOTAL MOVES

For the last two weeks we have shown that sharp bettors have been in fact "sharp" when it comes to postseason games. For the conference championship round, that pattern continues. Following the line moves throughout the week heading up to the big games would have netted you a record of 12-5 ATS since '05. Last year, bettors split, winning with Atlanta but losing on Pittsburgh. Be sure to follow the moves throughout the rest of the week up until kickoff.

Bettors have done fairly well with totals recently as well, going 8-5 when moving the totals in the L13 conference championship games. Early action finds bettors looking for an UNDER in the NFC game with no early movement on the AFC game for Sunday.

Stats generated in Conference championship Playoff Games

- The conference championship playoff round has demonstrated similar benchmarks to the wildcard round when it comes to the relationship between scoring points and winning. Like the wildcard round's 20-point magic mark, the figure for the conference championships has been 21. Home teams that have scored 21 points or less are just 5-15 SU & 2-17-1 ATS since '93.
- Alternatively, those home teams that topped the 21-point mark are 27-3 SU & 23-7 ATS. If you recall, the benchmark for the divisional round was a little higher at 27 points.
- The magic point total for road teams in conference championship playoff action has proven to be 20 points, as they are 13-8 SU & 16-4-1 ATS when they reach that mark since '98. However, Green Bay lost last year

despite scoring exactly 21 points. When scoring less than 20 points, the record of the road teams dropped dramatically to 2-21 SU & 5-18 ATS since '95.

- Teams that gained more first downs in their respective conference championship games are 11-4 SU & 9-6 ATS over the L8 years in those games but just 15-16 ATS since '02.
- Teams that controlled the time of possession are on a 21-7 SU & 23-5 ATS run in the conference championship playoffs since '03.
- Conference championship playoff teams that gained more yards rushing in those games are 21-7 SU & ATS over the L14 seasons. Strangely, at the same time, teams that rush for more yards per attempt in a conference championship playoff game are just 13-15 SU & ATS in that same span.
- Putting up big passing numbers in conference championship playoff games has also proven a key ingredient to success, since those teams are 19-11 SU & 21-9 ATS since '02. Even more importantly, teams that gained more yards per pass attempt in a conference championship playoff game are 21-9 SU & ATS during that same stretch.
- Going back to '03, teams that turn the ball over fewer times in a conference championship are on an impressive 25-2 ATS run. The current win streak stands at 12 games against the spread, including last year's games when neither Atlanta nor New England turned the ball over.

Teams' Regular Season Won-Lost Record Trends

- Unlike the last two weeks, there has proven to be only minimal differences when it comes to the success rates of conference championship teams based upon their regular season records, or the comparison between their record and their opponent's. For instance, here are the records of home teams based broken up by regular season wins: Home teams that won 14 or more games in the regular season were 6-1 SU & 4-3 ATS, home teams with 12 or 13 regular season wins were 13-8 SU & 10-11 ATS, and hosts that won 11 or fewer games were 3-1 SU & ATS.
- Road teams that won 12 or more games in the regular season are 2-9 SU & 5-6 ATS in their L11 conference title games, road teams with 11 regular season wins were slightly better at 4-9 SU & 6-7 ATS in that same span, and ironically, those visitors that won the fewest games, 10 or less, have the best outright mark at 4-4 SU & ATS.
- Home teams that won at least two more games during the regular season than their conference championship playoff opponent are only 8-5 SU & 6-7 ATS since '02.
- When just one regular season win separated two conference championship playoff opponents, or the records were equal, the home teams are 11-2 SU & 9-4 ATS over the L9 seasons.

Teams' Regular Season Offensive Statistics Trends

- Teams that scored more points per game during the regular season are on a 14-6 SU & 12-8 ATS run over the L10 conference championship playoff seasons. New England & Philadelphia hold these edges in 2018.
- The ability to run the football has been much-overrated when it comes to conference championship success. Teams who averaged more rushing yards per game are 12-20 SU & ATS since '02. Similarly, those that averaged more yards per rush are just 6-12 SU & 7-11 ATS over the L9 seasons. This year's regular season edge holders were Jacksonville & Philadelphia.
- Passing yardage has meant much more than rushing yardage in terms of conference championship playoff success, with teams owning an edge in total offensive passing yardage going 20-10 SU & 18-12 ATS over the L15 seasons in this playoff round. More efficient passing yards per attempt teams were a bit worse at 19-11 SU & 17-13 ATS. That said, all of the L4 four road teams that held edges here have lost outright. New England & Minnesota own edges in both categories.
- Teams that generated more yardage overall offensively in the regular season own a slight edge when it comes to conference championship playoff success, going 17-11 SU & 15-13 ATS over the L14 seasons. The Patriots & Eagles will try to extend this trend in 2018.
- The offensive yards per play statistic has also proven important, as teams with an edge in that offensive category are 18-8 SU & 16-10 ATS over the L13 years on championship Sunday. Again, count the Patriots & Eagles as the beneficiaries of this statistical trend.
- Like the divisional round and unlike the wildcard round, offensive yards per point has not proven to be an effective statistical indicator, as teams who have averaged fewer yards per point are just 13-11 SU & 11-13 ATS in the conference championship playoff round since '05.
- The offensive turnovers statistic provides the handicapper zero edge, since teams that turned the ball over fewer times in the regular season than their opponent are only 13-12 SU & 12-13 ATS since '04 in conference championship games.
- Teams that converted 3rd downs opportunities more efficiently in the regular season are on a hot streak of 11-7 SU & 12-6 ATS in the L18 conference championship games. Count New England & Minnesota as the teams hoping to continue this pattern this weekend.

Teams' Regular Season Defensive Statistics Trends

- Teams that allowed fewer points per game during the regular season are 10-5 SU & ATS dating back to '10 in conference championship games, providing a nice

edge to handicappers. Jacksonville (#2) and Minnesota (#1) were the league's top two defensive units in 2017.

- Defensive rushing yards has been somewhat significant when it comes to handicapping conference championship action, as has yards PER rush defense, as teams with an edge in that stat are 16-14 SU & 18-12 ATS since '03. For 2017, New England & Philadelphia allow fewer yards overall, but Jacksonville & Minnesota allowed fewer yards per attempt.
- Conference championship playoff teams with an edge in defensive passing yardage allowed over their opponent are 18-12 SU & ATS over the L15 seasons in this round. Teams with the edge in defensive pass efficiency are also 18-12 SU & ATS. Jacksonville & Minnesota are the edge holders in pass defense numbers for this weekend, and they were the league's top two defenses in both categories.
- Teams that allowed less yardage overall defensively are 18-12 SU & ATS in the AFC & NFC title games since '03 while those that held an edge in yards allowed per play are a game better at 19-11 SU & ATS. Advantages: Jacksonville & Minnesota.
- Defensive yards per point should be given at least some consideration for conference championship Sunday, since teams with an edge there are 5-7 SU & 4-8 ATS in the last five seasons of this round, and 6-12 ATS over the L18 games. Fading these teams has been a sound strategy and thus fading the Patriots & Vikings would come into play here.
- If you recall, the divisional round trend concerning teams forcing turnovers was very distinctive. Not the same for this weekend, as teams that had more takeaways in the regular season than their opponent are just 13-17 SU & ATS since '02 in conference championship play.
- Teams that stopped 3rd downs opportunities more efficiently in the regular season are on a mediocre 14-16 SU & ATS run in the L28 conference championship games.

TEAMS' REGULAR SEASON STATISTICS COMBINED TRENDS

With a good base of singular trends to choose from, we did some combining the more successful statistical angles to come up with these even more successful combination angles concerning the teams in the conference championships and their regular season stats.

- Teams reaching the conference championship games with statistical edges in both offensive yards per play AND defensive total yardage have gone 10-2 SU & 9-3 ATS in their L12 tries. This would be a Patriots play for 2018.

SUMMARY

It takes an ideal set of circumstances, strengths, and momentum to reach the conference championship games, and picking out the two teams that will win and/or cover

their games is certainly not a perfect science. However, analyzing the teams' entire season's body of work has gained merit over the last handful of years, and playing the statistical advantages of teams has paid off for bettors as well. Lately it seems as if offense and the ability to throw the football mean more than defense. In any case, hopefully some of what we've shown you this week helps get you ready for the big games.

nugget that is going to deliver big profits. In speaking with some of our experts about their own personal strategies, I heard some pretty simplistic but possibly successful theories... "Follow the money" or "Just take the better quarterback", or "which team is playing better right now".

Sometimes we tend to overcomplicate things at this time of year as we look for that golden

Whatever method you use to eventually decide your plays for this weekend, good luck, and we'll see you back in a couple of weeks as we take on Super Bowl LIII!

RECENT NFL CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME LOG

Date	Seed# - Home	Score	Seed# - Road	Score	OL	FL	OT	FT	SU	ATS	O/U	SU	ATS	Conf
1997 Season														
1/11/98	#1 - SAN FRANCISCO	10	#2 - GREEN BAY	23	1.5	2.5	43.5	44	ROAD	ROAD	UNDER	FAV	FAV	NFC
1/11/98	#2 - PITTSBURGH	21	#4 - DENVER	24	-1	3	41	42	ROAD	PUSH	OVER	FAV	-	AFC
1998 Season														
1/17/99	#1 - DENVER	23	#2 - NY JETS	10	-8	-8.5	51	51.5	HOME	HOME	UNDER	FAV	FAV	AFC
1/17/99	#1 - MINNESOTA	27	#2 - ATLANTA	30	-10.5	-10	55	54.5	ROAD	ROAD	OVER	DOG	DOG	NFC
1999 Season														
1/23/00	#1 - ST LOUIS	11	#2 - TAMPA BAY	6	-14	-14.5	46	44	HOME	ROAD	UNDER	FAV	DOG	NFC
1/23/00	#1 - JACKSONVILLE	14	#4 - TENNESSEE	33	-7	-7	39	41	ROAD	ROAD	OVER	DOG	DOG	AFC
2000 Season														
1/14/01	#1 - NY GIANTS	41	#2 - MINNESOTA	0	1	2.5	41.5	43.5	HOME	HOME	UNDER	DOG	DOG	NFC
1/14/01	#2 - OAKLAND	3	#4 - BALTIMORE	16	-6	-6	39	36	ROAD	ROAD	UNDER	DOG	DOG	AFC
2001 Season														
1/27/02	#1 - PITTSBURGH	17	#2 - NEW ENGLAND	24	-7	-10	35.5	38	ROAD	ROAD	OVER	DOG	DOG	AFC
1/27/02	#1 - ST LOUIS	29	#3 - PHILADELPHIA	24	-10	-10	49	47.5	HOME	ROAD	OVER	FAV	DOG	NFC
2002 Season														
1/19/03	#1 - OAKLAND	41	#2 - TENNESSEE	24	-7	-9	47	46	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	AFC
1/19/03	#1 - PHILADELPHIA	10	#2 - TAMPA BAY	27	-4	-4.5	35.5	33.5	ROAD	ROAD	OVER	DOG	DOG	NFC
2003 Season														
1/18/04	#1 - PHILADELPHIA	3	#3 - CAROLINA	14	-5	-4	39	36.5	ROAD	ROAD	UNDER	DOG	DOG	NFC
1/18/04	#1 - NEW ENGLAND	24	#3 - INDIANAPOLIS	14	-4	-3.5	41	42	HOME	HOME	UNDER	FAV	FAV	AFC
2004 Season														
1/23/05	#1 - PITTSBURGH	27	#2 - NEW ENGLAND	41	2	3	38	36.5	ROAD	ROAD	OVER	FAV	FAV	AFC
1/23/05	#1 - PHILADELPHIA	27	#2 - ATLANTA	10	-4.5	-6	42	37	HOME	HOME	Push	FAV	FAV	NFC
2005 Season														
1/22/06	#1 - SEATTLE	34	#5 - CAROLINA	14	-5.5	-4	43	43.5	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	NFC
1/22/06	#2 - DENVER	17	#6 - PITTSBURGH	34	-3.5	-3	42.5	40.5	ROAD	ROAD	OVER	DOG	DOG	AFC
2006 Season														
1/21/07	#3 - INDIANAPOLIS	38	#4 - NEW ENGLAND	34	-3	-3	49.5	47	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	AFC
1/21/07	#1 - CHICAGO	39	#2 - NEW ORLEANS	14	-3	-3	44	42.5	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	NFC
2007 Season														
1/20/08	#2 - GREEN BAY	20	#5 - NY GIANTS	23	-6.5	-7.5	43.5	41	ROAD	ROAD	OVER	DOG	DOG	NFC
1/20/08	#1 - NEW ENGLAND	21	#3 - SAN DIEGO	12	-15	-14	51	47.5	HOME	ROAD	UNDER	FAV	DOG	AFC
2008 Season														
1/18/09	#4 - ARIZONA	32	#6 - PHILADELPHIA	25	3	3	49.5	47	HOME	HOME	OVER	DOG	DOG	NFC
1/18/09	#2 - PITTSBURGH	23	#6 - BALTIMORE	14	-4.5	-6	33	35.5	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	AFC
2009 Season														
1/24/10	#1 - NEW ORLEANS	31	#2 - MINNESOTA	28	-4	-4	53	53.5	HOME	ROAD	OVER	FAV	DOG	NFC
1/24/10	#1 - INDIANAPOLIS	30	#5 - NY JETS	17	-7.5	-7.5	41	40	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	AFC
2010 Season														
1/23/11	#2 - CHICAGO	14	#6 - GREEN BAY	21	3	3	43	42	ROAD	ROAD	UNDER	FAV	FAV	NFC
1/23/11	#2 - PITTSBURGH	24	#6 - NY JETS	19	-3	-4.5	38.5	38	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	AFC
2011 Season														
1/22/12	#1 - NEW ENGLAND	23	#2 - BALTIMORE	20	-7.5	-7	50	48.5	HOME	ROAD	UNDER	FAV	DOG	AFC
1/22/12	#2 - SAN FRANCISCO	17	#4 - NY GIANTS	20	-3	-2	44	41	ROAD	ROAD	UNDER	DOG	DOG	NFC
2012 Season														
1/20/13	#1 - ATLANTA	24	#2 - SAN FRANCISCO	28	3	3.5	47	48	ROAD	ROAD	OVER	FAV	FAV	NFC
1/20/13	#1 - NEW ENGLAND	13	#4 - BALTIMORE	28	-9	-8	51	49	ROAD	ROAD	UNDER	DOG	DOG	AFC
2013 Season														
1/19/14	#1 - DENVER	26	#2 - NEW ENGLAND	16	-6.5	-5	54.5	57	HOME	HOME	UNDER	FAV	FAV	AFC
1/19/14	#1 - SEATTLE	23	#5 - SAN FRANCISCO	17	-3.5	-4	41	40.5	HOME	HOME	UNDER	FAV	FAV	NFC
2014 Season														
1/18/15	#1 - NEW ENGLAND	45	#4 - INDIANAPOLIS	7	-7	-7	53.5	52.5	HOME	HOME	UNDER	FAV	FAV	AFC
1/18/15	#1 - SEATTLE	28	#2 - GREEN BAY	22	-7.5	-8.5	46.5	44.5	HOME	ROAD	OVER	FAV	DOG	NFC
2015 Season														
1/24/16	#1 - CAROLINA	49	#2 - ARIZONA	15	-3	-3	47	47	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	NFC
1/24/16	#1 - DENVER	20	#2 - NEW ENGLAND	18	3	3	44	45	HOME	HOME	UNDER	DOG	DOG	AFC
2016 Season														
1/22/17	#2 - ATLANTA	44	#4 - GREEN BAY	21	-4.5	-6	59.5	59.5	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	NFC
1/22/17	#1 - NEW ENGLAND	36	#3 - PITTSBURGH	17	-6	-5.5	50	49.5	HOME	HOME	OVER	FAV	FAV	AFC

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP

(311) JACKSONVILLE [SU:12-6 | ATS:10-8] AT (312) NEW ENGLAND (-9 | 46.5) [SU:14-3 | ATS:12-5]
JANUARY 21, 2018 3:05 PM on CBS - GILLETTE STADIUM (FOXBORO, MA)

Offensive Statistics

2017 Season	PPG	FD	RUSHING	PASSING	YPPT	PPG	FD	RUSHING	PASSING	YPPT	TOD	PDF
JACKSONVILLE	26.2	20	33-143 [4.3]	32-19-216 [6.7]	13.7	17.4	17	27-115 [4.3]	34-19-184 [5.5]	17.2	+14	+8.8
NEW ENGLAND	29.0	25	28-117 [4.2]	38-25-280 [7.4]	13.7	18.2	20	24-112 [4.7]	37-23-248 [6.7]	19.8	+6	+10.8

Defensive Statistics

Say what you will about Blake Bortles, at least he's unpredictable. One week after barely being able to throw more than five yards with any accuracy, he made several big completions and played with extreme confidence at Pittsburgh in a huge upset. For Jacksonville to have a chance at New England, THAT quarterback will have to be under center and the offensive line will have to protect him and expertly run block. As good as the Jacksonville defense is, they still allowed 42 points last week. Granted, the Patriots do not have an Antonio Brown on their team, yet Pittsburgh TE Vance Donald was like an interstate highway gas station (Open 24 hours), having 10 catches. Some guy named Gronkowski is pretty good for the Patriots and plays the same position. Rest assured, the Jaguars will not face a team that is looking ahead.

Seeing New England has Tom Brady and none of the other remaining teams have anything remotely close, the Patriots really do control their own destiny. All the rhetoric about the Patriots not being focused with off the field distractions against Tennessee was put to rest. New England HC Bill Belichick will break down that Jacksonville tape and Brady and coaches will find a lot of open receivers. Given Brady's accuracy, if he receives the same kind of pass protection, he could have another large game. On defense, the Patriots have to hurry Bortles, because once he starts playing with those big eyes, they do not go away. With New England's style of defense, they will probably do a better job of spying Bortles when he looks to run.

GAME TRENDS

- NEW ENGLAND is 9-1 ATS(L10G) - As favorite
- JACKSONVILLE is 5-19-1 ATS(L25G) - Against poor rushing defenses yielding more than 4.5 yards per carry(CS)
- NEW ENGLAND is 10-0 OVER(L10G) at HOME - Against dominant teams outscoring opponents by more than 8.0 points per game(CS)

STRENGTH RATINGS

#'s	Teams	Power Ratings				Effective Strg		Bettors' Rtngr	
		Actual	Rtg	Line	Edge?	Proj	Edge?	Proj	Edge?
311	JACKSONVILLE	46.5	27.5			21.5	JAC	21	
312	NEW ENGLAND	-9	33	-8.6		24.6		28.4	

SEASON GAME LOGS

JACKSONVILLE						NEW ENGLAND					
DATE	OPPONENT	LINE	OU	SCORE	RESULTS	DATE	OPPONENT	LINE	OU	SCORE	RESULTS
01-14	at PITTSBURGH	+7	41	45-42	W W O	01-13	VS TENNESSEE	-13.5	48	35-14	W W O
01-07	VS BUFFALO	-9	39.5	10-3	W L U	12-31	VS NY JETS	-16.5	43.5	26-6	W W U
12-31	at TENNESSEE	+2.5	40.5	10-15	L L U	12-24	VS BUFFALO	-11	47.5	37-16	W W O
12-24	at SAN FRANCISCO	-3.5	43.5	33-44	L L O	12-17	at PITTSBURGH	-2.5	53	27-24	W W U
12-17	VS HOUSTON	-10.5	39.5	45-7	W W O	12-11	at MIAMI	-10	48	20-27	L L U
12-10	VS SEATTLE	-3	41	30-24	W W O	12-03	at BUFFALO	-7.5	49	23-3	W W U
12-03	VS INDIANAPOLIS	-10	41	30-10	W W U	11-26	VS MIAMI	-16.5	48.5	35-17	W W O
11-26	at ARIZONA	-6	37	24-27	L L O	11-19	** OAKLAND	-7	54.5	33-8	W W U
11-19	at CLEVELAND	-7	37	19-7	W W U	11-12	at DENVER	-7	44.5	41-16	W W O
11-12	VS LA CHARGERS	-5	40.5	20-17	W L U	10-29	VS LA CHARGERS	-6.5	49	21-13	W W U
11-05	VS CINCINNATI	-6	38	23-7	W W U	10-22	VS ATLANTA	-2.5	56.5	23-7	W W U
10-22	at INDIANAPOLIS	-3	41	27-0	W W U	10-15	at NY JETS	-9	48.5	24-17	W L U
10-15	VS LA RAMS	-1	42	17-27	L L O	10-05	at TAMPA BAY	-3.5	55	19-14	W W U
10-08	at PITTSBURGH	+7	41	30-9	W W U	10-01	VS CAROLINA	-8.5	48	30-33	L L O
10-01	at NY JETS	-4	38.5	20-23	L L O	09-24	VS HOUSTON	-13	44.5	36-33	W L O
09-24	** BALTIMORE	+3	38	44-7	W W O	09-17	at NEW ORLEANS	-5.5	55	36-20	W W O
09-17	VS TENNESSEE	+1	41.5	16-37	L L O	09-07	VS KANSAS CITY	-8	47.5	27-42	L L O
09-10	at HOUSTON	+6	38	29-7	W W U						

HEAD-TO-HEAD OBSERVATIONS

The Eagles will be hosting a playoff game for the first time in four years on Saturday and will be squaring off with the Falcons for the first time in the playoffs since the 2005 NFC Championship game. Philadelphia won that game 27-10 but went on to lose the Super Bowl to New England. Since that contest, the teams have met nine times, with the Eagles holding a 5-4 edge outright and Atlanta leading 5-4 ATS. The most profitable wagers in that span are the host teams (6-3 ATS) and UNDER the total (also 6-3). Going back a little further, since 2000, the Eagles boast a 7-1 SU & 6-2 ATS record when hosting Atlanta. With the Falcons being favored in this week's game, it should be noted that they haven't been favored in Philadelphia in any of the 13 lined games they have played there since '79.

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP

(313) MINNESOTA (-3.5 | 38.5) [SU:14-3 | ATS:11-5-1] AT (314) PHILADELPHIA [SU:14-3 | ATS:11-6]
JANUARY 21, 2018 6:40 PM on FOX - LINCOLN FINANCIAL FIELD (PHILADELPHIA, PA)

Offensive Statistics

2017 Season

MINNESOTA
PHILADELPHIA

PPG FD RUSHING PASSING YPPT
24.221 31-121 [3.9] 33-22-239 [7.2] 14.9
27.821 30-130 [4.4] 35-21-234 [6.7] 13.1

Defensive Statistics

PPG FD RUSHING PASSING YPPT TOD PDFI
16.2 17 23-83 [3.7] 35-21-197 [5.6] 17.3 +6 +8.0
17.9 17 21-80 [3.8] 37-23-225 [6.0] 17.0 +9 +9.9

For all the euphoria about the 'Minneapolis Miracle', that is still two steps shy of winning a Super Bowl for the Vikings. Next is taking their act on the road in likely what will be a chilly evening setting and extremely hostile environment in Philadelphia. The Vikings failed to put New Orleans away when leading 17-0 and if they make anywhere close to the same mistake here, they will get beat. Nick Foles is not Drew Brees, but if he gets in a comfort zone like he did last week, the Minnesota defense will be test. They will have to do a much better job after permitting 24 points in the last 18 minutes on Sunday. Case Keenum will face more pressure this week and has to keep his wits about him. It will be imperative that Minnesota runs the ball against the Eagles. The Vikings are favored and the biggest takeaway from last week has to be the Minnesota offense winning the game.

The City of Brotherly Love breathed a sigh of relief that Foles came through when needed. Add this with a championship-style defense and playing at home and Philadelphia has a good chance to win the NFC. Coach Doug Pederson and his offensive coaches did superior work in placing Foles in the best positions to succeed last week versus the Falcons. They will again have to be creative and patient to make that happen. That will require Foles again making quick reads, as well as wide decisions, and getting the ball out fast. The Eagles will also have to run the ball efficiently, since they do not want their quarterback in third and long for four quarters. On defense, pressure, pressure, pressure. That means stuffing the run and taking away Keenum's first read on passing downs, while heating up the pass rush.

GAME TRENDS

- MINNESOTA is 9-1 ATS(L10G) - Against decent passing defenses yielding less than 6.15 yards per attempt(CS)
- PHILADELPHIA is 2-8 ATS(L10G) - Against shutdown passing defenses yielding less than 5.75 yards per attempt(CS)
- MINNESOTA is 8-1 UNDER(L9G) on ROAD - In January

STRENGTH RATINGS

BRD		Power Ratings			Effective Strg		Bettors' RtnG		
#''s	Teams	Actual	Rtg	Line	Edge?	Proj	Edge?	Proj	Edge?
313	MINNESOTA	-3.5	31			21.7		21.2	
314	PHILADELPHIA	38.5	31	3.3		17.7		18.3	

SEASON GAME LOGS

MINNESOTA

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE	OU	SCORE	SU	ATS	OU	RESULTS
01-14	VS NEW ORLEANS	-5.5	46.5	29-24	W	L	O	
12-31	VS CHICAGO	-13	38	23-10	W	P	U	
12-23	at GREEN BAY	-9	41	16-0	W	W	U	
12-17	VS CINCINNATI	-13	43	34-7	W	W	U	
12-10	at CAROLINA	-2.5	40.5	24-31	L	L	O	
12-03	at ATLANTA	+2	48	14-9	W	W	U	
11-23	at DETROIT	-2.5	46	30-23	W	W	O	
11-19	VS LA RAMS	-2	46	24-7	W	W	U	
11-12	at WASHINGTON	PK	42	38-30	W	W	O	
10-29	** CLEVELAND	-11	38	33-16	W	W	O	
10-22	VS BALTIMORE	-5.5	37.5	24-16	W	W	O	
10-15	VS GREEN BAY	+3	46.5	23-10	W	W	U	
10-09	at CHICAGO	-3.5	41	20-17	W	L	U	
10-01	VS DETROIT	-3	43.5	7-14	L	L	U	
09-24	VS TAMPA BAY	-1	41	34-17	W	W	O	
09-17	at PITTSBURGH	+8	43.5	9-26	L	L	U	
09-11	VS NEW ORLEANS	-3	47.5	29-19	W	W	O	

PHILADELPHIA

DATE	OPPONENT	LINE	OU	SCORE	SU	ATS	OU	RESULTS
01-13	VS ATLANTA	+2.5	40.5	15-10	W	W	U	
12-31	VS DALLAS	+4	41	0-6	L	L	U	
12-25	VS OAKLAND	-10	46	19-10	W	L	U	
12-17	at NY GIANTS	-7	41	34-29	W	L	O	
12-10	at LA RAMS	-1	47	43-35	W	W	O	
12-03	at SEATTLE	-3.5	46.5	10-24	L	L	U	
11-26	VS CHICAGO	-14	43.5	31-3	W	W	U	
11-19	at DALLAS	-6	48	37-9	W	W	U	
11-05	VS DENVER	-7	41	51-23	W	W	O	
10-29	VS SAN FRANCISCO	-13	45	33-10	W	W	U	
10-23	VS WASHINGTON	-5	48.5	34-24	W	W	O	
10-12	at CAROLINA	+3	44	28-23	W	W	O	
10-08	VS ARIZONA	-6	44.5	34-7	W	W	U	
10-01	at LA CHARGERS	+2	47.5	26-24	W	W	O	
09-24	VS NY GIANTS	-5	42	27-24	W	L	O	
09-17	at KANSAS CITY	+4	46.5	20-27	L	L	O	
09-10	at WASHINGTON	-1	49.5	30-17	W	W	U	

HEAD-TO-HEAD OBSERVATIONS

The last time the Titans and Patriots matched up in the playoffs was in the 2004 divisional round, a game won by host New England 17-14. Obviously a lot has changed since then, but two things that have remained constant are that Tom Brady is still the quarterback for the Patriots and Bill Belichick is still the head coach. The Titans, led by HC Jeff Fisher and QB Steve McNair in that game, covered the 6.5-point spread but haven't been close to the patriots since in head-to-head play. In fact, Belichick & Brady are 4-0 SU & ATS against the Titans in that span and have outscored them by an average margin of 166-52, including 92-16 in two games at Foxboro. Dating back to '91, seven of ten games between these franchises have gone OVER the total.

FOOTBALL LINE MOVES

Welcome back to another edition of Line Moves, looking at all the biggest betting moves in the NFL Playoffs. Besides this we will offer free picks on these contests. With so few options, we will cover even the smaller moves at this point, as part of the discussion.

(311) JACKSONVILLE AT (312) NEW ENGLAND 3:05 ET CBS

New England was sent out as an 8-point home favorite and quicker than a missed Markus Williams tackle last Sunday night, football bettors were digging the Patriots and moved them to -9. From a betting perspective, this is no-man's land between 7 and 10.

This is not to say the number is not justified, quite the contrary. Most oddsmakers are going to make New England an automatic four-point home favorite for starters, just playing at home in a non-division contest. Next, you add in Bill Belichick, the Tom Brady vs. Blake Bortles quarterback matchup, and New England's postseason experience and the betting public's adjustment makes all the sense in the world.

Though we can uncover a myriad of reasons to back the Patriots for this line movement, Bortles is the great unknown. Without going over every quarterback playoff performance, nothing comes close off the top of the mind for how the former Central Florida signal caller played from one week to the next. While it is easy to say a - Belichick defense will confuse Bortles - nobody would have imagined he would lead his team to six touchdowns in Pittsburgh. The Jaguars are 15-6 ATS on the AFC road the past three years.

The total opened at 47, immediately slipped to 46 and at last look rebounded to 46.5 at most sportsbooks. Both offenses average more than 26 PPG and the defenses concede under 19 points. Bortles' play will also have direct impact on total. Let's say he has normal game (whatever that is), you have to consider the Pats are 10-2 OVER at

home when the total is between 45.5 and 49 points since 2015.

Our View- Leans New England and Over

(313) MINNESOTA AT (314) PHILADELPHIA 6:40 ET FOX

While the AFC title game is vexing, the NFC version is thoroughly perplexing. Philadelphia and the current Cleveland Cavaliers were thought to be in same stratosphere, incapable of winning. However, a superlative Eagles defense shutdown Matt Ryan and Atlanta and Nick Foles played far more efficiently than anyone might have guessed.

Though Minnesota needed a miracle to reach this encounter, oddsmakers do not make numbers based on unforeseen events, they base them on the numbers and public perception. That is why the Vikings were made a three-point road favorite. By Tuesday morning, most sportsbooks had moved Minnesota to -3.5. With nearly 65 percent of bets placed on Philadelphia, the belief is sharper bettors were backing the Vikings.

The opening total of 38 is also a curious figure, not because it is wrong, rather, with the rules designed to promote offense, games in the 30's are as common as Beta VCR's. Not sure if this total made people feel uncomfortable even if we have a Case Keenum vs. Foles QB matchup, but the total has been elevated to 38.5. Unless, we have a Pick 6, scoop and score or another miraculous ending, expect a low scoring affair.

Our View- Play Under, lean Philadelphia covers

RECORDS

NFL Playoffs - 3-5

NFL Regular Season -46-32-2

JIM MACK CONTINUES HIS HOT STREAK INTO NFL DIVISIONAL PLAYOFF WEEKEND!

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