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Betting on the NFL Preseason Football Games

By Ron Dyer of Dyer's Sportsline

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Many sports bettors don't take advantage and decide to pass on betting in the NFL Preseason. More than likely, they've done battle with NFL Preseason games in the past and have started their football seasons in the hole. The number one reason why they failed is because they used the same handicapping methods in exhibition games that they use during the regular season games.

As it turns out, the NFL Preseason is one of the best times to bet on football. Winning edges can be found in deciphering the available information heading into the game giving the edge to the astute handicapper over the books. Information is key in the NFL Preseason and it's the only time of the year when coaches are willing to reveal their game plans.

Among the items to look for when handicapping NFL Preseason games is to assess the intentions of the head coach. An established veteran head coach's primary objective is to prepare his team to win during the regular season. If the coach is a veteran, look at his exhibition record in past seasons to gather clues as to how he prepares his team for preseason games and how seriously he takes the games. If a veteran coach is secure in his job and with stable personnel, it can reasonably be expected that he will not be looking to win at all costs, will rest his starters and key reserves to avoid unnecessary injuries, especially in the first two exhibition games. However, as the preseason wears on and the regular season looms, look for this type of team to step it up in their third preseason game.

A veteran coach whose team is coming off an unsuccessful season whose job may be in jeopardy may go all out in preseason to win a few games and appease the ownership, media, and fans. This coach may play his starters longer in an attempt to get them ready for the regular season. Such a coach tends to be dangerous early in the preseason.

A rookie coach almost always tries to impress and win games in the preseason, in order to build their own confidence, the confidence of the team, and the confidence of the ownership, media and fans that the right man was hired for the job. A new coach is often in a "honeymoon period" with his new team and they may play harder for him.

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The major decision that any coach must make is who is going to play quarterback and for how long. When handicapping NFL Preseason games, you must pay attention to how deep the quarterback position is with each team and how many snaps each quarterback will see. This has a huge bearing on how well a team will perform. If a team is embroiled in a quarterback controversy, possibly a situation where two veterans are competing for the starting job, one could expect both quarterbacks to play well. This situation could have a seasoned NFL quarterback playing against opponents second or third string defense in early preseason games - Advantage veteran quarterback. When a team is not deep at quarterback, or is hurt by injuries or hold outs, it might find itself in trouble playing young and inexperienced signal callers that may have trouble moving the ball when facing complex, speedy NFL defenses while directing an offensive scheme in which they might not be familiar with.

Don't concern yourself too much with each team's starters. In most preseason games, the starters that

are secure in their jobs are resting on the bench by the second quarter as the coach's audition their back-ups. Preseason games are usually won or lost in the second half by the reserves and players who won't make the team's final cut. There is a definite difference in the quality of reserve players between teams. Weaker teams with more roster spots open will usually have stronger players in camp than last year's top teams with less roster spots open. Top free agent signees out of college are more likely to want to play for a losing team where a stronger opportunity to make the team exists than trying to catch on with an established winning team.

Handicapping the NFL Preseason requires the ability to recognize each team's needs and what the coach wants to accomplish during the Preseason as he prepares his team for the regular season. Try to back head coaches who care about the outcome of the Preseason games and bet against those that don't. Keep these factors in mind and you will be well on your way to building your bankroll for the 2004 Football Season.

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Article by Ron Dyer of Dyer's Sportsline at footballjunky.com - a leader in sports handicapping information supplying information to make your sports betting profitable.

Ron is the founder of Dyer's Sportsline. With his strong aptitude in statistics, analysis of team strengths and weaknesses, his knowledge of human psychology, coupled with years of experience, he has developed a system of delivering consistent winners with his solid game analysis and observations. His goal has always been to inform and educate his Members about the world of sports gambling and to supply information that will make their sports betting profitable.

College Football Betting And Nfl Betting Are Not The Same Thing

By Luken Karel

There are at least a half-dozen factors that separate college football betting from NFL betting. For

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starters, action on college football is much more likely to come from sophisticated bettors, known as "sharps" or "wiseguys", who often possess some insight or kernel of information that may provide them with an edge against the house. Experienced bet takers know not to treat heavy activity on an obscure game, such as East Carolina versus Wake Forest, as casually as they might deal with increased wagering interest on a marquee NFL game such as a Redskins–Cowboys confrontation. For that reason, bookmakers usually move college football betting lines quickly, often one full point at a time. In general, it takes more money to move an NFL betting line and, when it is moved, usually it is by only half a point.

Largely because of a lack of proficiency in the kicking game, key numbers such as 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 13 and 14 are not nearly as sacrosanct in college football betting as they are in the NFL. College football games just do not fall on those numbers as often as they do in NFL contests.

We may never again see a three–touchdown favorite in the NFL but lines of –30, –40, or even –50 are not that uncommon in the college gridiron game. Oddsmakers and bookmakers also find college totals more difficult to gauge because some coaches try to impress those who have a vote in the polls by running up the score. Others, such as Penn State's Joe Paterno, feel that a third–string player's reward for practicing all week is to get to play in a blowout. It's just these types of unique uncertainties that compel bookmakers to shift college "over/under" numbers more quickly than they move NFL totals.

It's also the nature of college football that personnel change every year. This makes early season evaluation more difficult and leads bet takers to move lines and totals more quickly, especially in September and early October when the season is still young. There is personnel movement in the NFL too, of course, but mostly it involves players of established ability moving from team to team. In college football, you're always dealing with fresh faces.

By collective bargaining agreement, each week, the NFL publishes a comprehensive list of injured players and their status. Sure, there are mistakes and abuses and players who have been listed as "doubtful" have played while those regarded as "probable" have not but overall, the list is accurate. On the other hand, colleges are under no obligation to announce the status of injured or disciplined football players. This vagueness over availability sometimes can create opportunities in college football betting. Consequently, bookmakers are wary if too much wagering attention is paid to one team.

When it comes to parlay card numbers, you are much more apt to see a slight gap between those prices printed on cards and those posted on the board in the NFL than you are in college football. The key element is that bookmakers can more accurately predict the public inclination for an NFL game than they can for a college football game. It's not unusual then for traditionally popular team such as Dallas or a "hot" team such as Cincinnati, to be listed as a 7 1/2–point favorite on a parlay card but just a 6 1/2 or 7–point choice on the board. Through experience, bookmakers know that "public" teams such as the Cowboys, as well as "now" teams such as the Bengals, will be more aggressively played on parlay cards than they are straight up.

Clearly, understanding the differences between college football betting and NFL betting is essential to winning.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COLLEGE AND PRO FOOTBALL

College Football: `Wiseguys' frequently supply the action College football betting lines often are moved by a full point at a time Key numbers are not as important Personnel changes can make early season analysis difficult Information on injuries is not always accessible There's usually not a disparity between parlay card and board numbers

NFL: Money from public is prevalent Betting lines are usually moved by a half–point at a time Key numbers are VERY important Personnel changes are less volatile and easier to evaluate Information on injuries usually is accessible Parlay card numbers sometimes are intentionally different than prices on the board.

By Luken Karel for

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