

## Free Picks – April 21<sup>st</sup> Weekend

Straight wagers went just 1-2 last week, with Tampa Bay NARROWLY missing the win as an underdog, losing to Carolina in a shootout. However, Aaron Smith of TopBaseballPicks.com wrote a fantastic justification for his play, breaking down history and trend, and picked his first of many baseball winners this season. Also Tim and the gang at ParlayPick.com got in on the action, cashing a two-teamer for the big win.

**Playoff action begins** as we hand you the first of our NBA and NHL playoff plays. We're taking the Miami Heat in Game 1 against the Chicago Bulls. The Bulls did well making the playoffs, but they're just overmatched now against a better Bulls team. The Bulls used to pride themselves on "Baby Shaq," Eddy Curry. Well, guess what, now they're up against REAL Shaq, Shaquille O'Neal, and his sidekick Dwyane Wade. The Heat have the edge in every category here, including coaching. Any one of the Heat starters are capable of going for 20 or 25 points on a given night, and as O'Neal has been saying all season, it's the playoffs that really matter. We're predicting Shaq, Wade, and crew look to send a message to the rest of the Eastern Conference that the regular season doesn't matter, and that they are a force to be reckoned with. **Play Miami.**

On the ice, we're going to take the Under in Game 1 of the Ottawa / Tampa Bay series. This season, these teams played four times, each one with a posted total of 6.5; in three of those games, the game went Under, and in the fourth, the total hit seven, with Ottawa winning 4-3. Defenses tend to buckle down in the playoffs, and Tampa Bay has been a perfect example of this, with the Under going 7-1-0 in the Lightning's last 8 Conference Quarterfinal games, and a whopping 25-9-3 in the Senators' last 37 Conference Quarterfinal games. In the last four Senators games when they play on two days rest, as they do in this situation, the Under is 4-0-0. There is a wealth of data to suggest that in this situation, **Playing the Under** is the correct decision.

This week in baseball action, we're going to recommend an "under" play on the Nationals / Braves game. John Patterson is a major talent, and has posted 24 strikeouts versus just 18 hits allowed – a dominating statistic. He has given up a walk just five times, and that's a statistic you should be paying attention to. Patterson has been throwing well and getting people out by himself, as opposed to relying on his defense to make plays. John Smoltz, on the other hand, we shouldn't have to tell you about. He was on his game in a 2-0 win against San Diego, and he's reminded us of his mid-1990s self this season. The Nationals lack serious punch in their batting order, and Smoltz should have a solid outing. With Marcus Giles and Chipper Jones out, the Braves similarly lack punch. We should be looking at a low scoring affair, so **Play the Under.**

We're going to hand you a three-team ParlayPlay served up on a platter this week, with three plays from the baseball diamond.

There are going to be a ton of runs tonight in the Mets – Padres game. Mets starter Brian Bannister has gotten himself into a ton of jams, and so far has made it out ok, but we're not confident that will continue forever. He's also been facing Washington and Milwaukee – lineups that can't compare to San Diego's strength. Woody Williams faces a Mets team hitting .324 against RH pitching, and we expect they'll get to him early and often as this one goes well over the total.

The Boston Red Sox come off an embarrassing home loss to the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and will bounce back strong as MLB ERA leader Josh Beckett takes the hill; a prospect that Red Sox fans have come to be excited about so far this season. Beckett has given up just 3 ER in 21 innings, and beat the Blue Jays in the season opener, allowing just one run. We think that Blue Jays starter A.J. Burnett, coming off surgery, will still be rusty, may not have the strength to go deep (we expect six innings at most out of him) and he will be on a strict pitch count. Look for the Red Sox to get back to their winning ways.

Finally, the Atlanta Braves are hurting, but they still have great talent, not the least of which is John Smoltz. Smoltz has had prolonged success against the Nationals, at 15-7 with a 2.50 against them in his career (mostly against Montreal). The Braves were 5-0 against the Nats in his five starts last year. The Nats have yet to win at home, and Smoltz won't help them there. Nationals starter Patterson has never defeated the Braves in six career starts, putting up a 4.28 ERA and 1.35 WHIP.

**Parlay the Under in the Mets / Padres game, the Boston Red Sox, and the Atlanta Braves.**

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