

Free Picks – August 25th Weekend

The NFLTopPicks experts have recorded two **back-to-back blow-out wins** in the last two weeks, picking the Detroit Lions to beat the favored Denver Broncos two weeks ago, and then predicting that the Oakland Raiders would make mincemeat out of the San Francisco 49ers. Hop on this hot streak TODAY! With last week's MLB play hitting, it was a profitable 2-1 weekend for straight wagers, with much more ahead.

This week's NFL pick is all about value – absolutely worth it in the preseason, but a play we'd think twice about in the regular season. Minnesota is favored by less than a field goal at home against the Baltimore Ravens, and we think that emotional factors combined with fear of injuring starters will seal the deal for the Vikings Friday night. Baltimore arrives with a starting core that is not getting any younger, and on the thinly-carpeted concrete in Minneapolis, they won't want to take any chances. Why risk Steve McNair's season in a game that means nothing? We're expecting the Ravens to play a reserved game and put up minimal fight in this one. The Vikings, on the other hand, are coming off a tough season, and will want to show the fans that this season will be different. RB Chester Taylor will want to have a big night for Minnesota against his former team, and with nothing to gain, Baltimore shouldn't provide much resistance. **Play Minnesota, ATS.**

In baseball this week, we're siding with the Florida Marlins, at home against the Milwaukee Brewers on Friday night. The Fish are on a roll lately, having won four in a row to move their record back above .500. They come into this one off a sweep of the Washington Nationals, and tonight they send Ricky Nolasco to the mound. Nolasco has been pitching very well lately, and if you throw out two starts against the Mets over his last eight outings, he's been throwing unbelievably well. In those other six games, Ricky is 5-1 with a 1.96 ERA and a 0.97 WHIP. He's been a reliable starter at home, with a 3.90 ERA, allowing 3 runs or less in six of his eight starts at home. The Brewers have not played well as visitors, and are just 23-39—dropping 16 of their last 24—away from Miller Park. The Brew Crew has put up an ugly 5.16 ERA on the road; good enough for second-to-last in the NL and 26th in all of baseball. Starter Dave Bush is just 3-5 with a 5.78 ERA away from home, and in his 13 road starts, his team has gone 4-9. Lay the short number Friday night and **Play Florida Marlins.**

For this week's parlay, Tim Spears and the ParlayPick team recommend a two-team, cross-sport parlay on the Chicago Bears and the Seattle Mariners. After losing 30-3 against New England last week, the Arizona Cardinals have made a big deal about the need for improvement on offense. We don't disagree—the Cardinals are terrible offensively—but we don't think this is the week to do it, either. They'll travel to Chicago to take on the famous Bears defense at Soldier Field. Chicago has had offensive worries of their own lately. Although they came away with a 27-3 victory last week, the offense was not running at anywhere close to full steam, and as a result, the Bears' starting unit, including QB Rex Grossman, are expected to see a minimum of one full half, possibly more. RB Thomas Jones returns, and we expect to see him take some of the pressure off Grossman and give his team a boost. We think that the Cardinals may well show

improvement by the time the regular season comes around, but this week, against a motivated Bears team, the task will be a little too steep. **Play Chicago Bears, ATS.**

After winning two in a row against the Angels, the Red Sox seem to have put their series against the Yankees behind them. However, let's take a look at the wins in question: they did almost nothing offensively (13 H and 4 BB), and arguably should have lost Thursday's game, after the Angels couldn't execute a routine double play. Clean-up hitter Manny Ramirez is listed as day-to-day, and if he is forced to sit out, Seattle has no reason to ever pitch to David Ortiz. Curt Schilling is going to need offensive support if he's going to win this one. He comes into tonight's game sporting a 5.16 ERA over his last seven starts, and is just 6-4 on the road this season, including 21 HRs given up in 98.2 IP. Mike Timlin and Jonathan Papelbon pitched in each of the last two nights, making it unlikely that either will be used tonight. With the likes of Rudy Seanez and Julian Tavaréz pitching in the late innings, we're not confident that even if the Red Sox do get a lead, they'll be able to hold it. After having won two games against the Yankees, the Mariners look to be confident and will not be intimidated in their own ballpark by the Red Sox. Mariners starter Jake Woods left his last start with a 2-1 lead in the sixth, which should give him some confidence, and the Seattle bullpen comes into this one much fresher. We can't resist this kind of value – **Play Seattle Mariners**

→ Parlay the Chicago Bears and the Seattle Mariners, ½ Unit.

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