

Free Picks – March 17th Weekend

Tim, Marcus, and Leo over at ParlayPick.com very nearly picked up their THIRD cashed free play parlay in as many weeks, narrowly missing one cover. However, they bounce back this week with another stellar suggestion. For the purposes of those keeping track, we will be now keeping two tallies: one record of how the parlay picks do, and another record of how all other picks do. Last week, our straight wager picks went **2-1**, hitting **66% and giving you another winning weekend.**

We've got an NCAA upset, our weekly **PUCKLINE POUNDING**, an NBA straight wager, and as usual, our featured **PARLAYPlay** for you this week.

Check out Kent State. These guys are 25-8 SU, and 19-9-1 ATS. Why are they getting no respect against Pittsburgh here? Sure, Pittsburgh plays in a tough conference, but the Big East isn't the NBA folks! The MAC is weak but still legit, and we're not prepared to let this many points on a good team pass us by. Kent State rocked the MAC tourney, going 3-0 SU *and* ATS. Their only recent loss came at Akron. Pittsburgh might win the game, but they're not going to embarrass Kent. Pitt is coming off a Big East tournament loss in the finals to Syracuse, and their defense has been a real strength all season, and even better recently, allowing only 59.4 PPG in their last five. But guess what? The Golden Flashes are holding opponents to just 65 PPG all season. This one just comes down to value, folks. Pittsburgh = overvalued. Kent State = undervalued. We're not impressed by big name schools. Look at Syracuse. Exactly. We're not saying Kent will pull off the huge upset (although they might), but we'd be shocked if they didn't pick up a cover here. **Play Kent State.**

Hard to see why anyone's betting on the Sixers these days, seeing as they don't really play defense any more, and just hope that Iverson (when healthy) can keep them in the games through his utter dominance. Whoops – Iverson's still injured, and will be for at least three more. The Sixers aren't helped by the fact that they're playing their third game in four nights in LA tonight against the Clippers, a legitimately solid club (these aren't the Clippers of five years ago, people). Tonight, the Clippers will look to come out and avenge their beatdown on national TV at the hands of the Phoenix Suns by 31 points. Elton Brand laid down the law after that one, calling out his teammates and saying that the team needs to bring its "A" game for the rest of the season. We're not sure if that will happen, but we ARE sure that it'll happen for at least one night. **Play the Los Angeles Clippers.**

We're going to buck the trend here, but we've done this in the past and it's been profitable in the past for us. The Vancouver Canucks seem to be a team on the ropes: they've lost five in a row, and they've dropped in the standings to the point where their playoff status has come into question. That's a long drop for a team that at one point was leading the NHL in points. There's a lot to consider here though: Vancouver is 21-10-1 on Fridays this season, and they've come away with the win in 12 of the last 19 meetings with Columbus. This one comes down to emotion though for the Canucks: they know

that if they're going to save their season, it needs to happen now. Not next week, not later, NOW. In addition, the Blue Jackets have had a few big injuries, and key players Sergei Federov and Bryan Berard, along with Jan Hrdina, will likely not be in the line-up tonight. With only four games on the schedule tonight, we're going to go with the team who needs this win the most. **Take Vancouver on the Puckline.**

The weekly PARLAYPlay missed last week, but we're still 2 for 3, and the picks themselves have hit 5 out of 6. This week we're going to go out on a limb and offer a three-team NCAA Basketball Parlay, with some lines in first round action that are just begging to be abused. We're suggesting parlaying **California, Kentucky, and North Carolina.** Here's why:

1) The Golden Bears are heading into the Big Dance on a huge roll. They lost to UCLA in the Pac-10 Championship, but this was when they'd played three games in three days and the game before didn't end until after midnight. They lost the game, but they learned a ton – this is a team that's going to be tough to beat, at least mentally. NC State, on the other hand, came into the tourney on a four-game skid, making just 26 percent of their threes over that time. The Bears have lost just two games in regulation since January 21st, and will use that momentum to their advantage. Finally, Cal comes into this game extremely prepared: Coach Braun said that his staff has been taping games all over the US this season, to ensure that they would have some footage of whoever they ended up playing. They'll know what NC State will throw at them, and that will be the difference. **Play California.**

2) Two years ago, UAB shocked the world by taking it to Kentucky in a huge upset. Tubby Smith is not going to forget that humiliation, and he's going to do everything in his power to return the embarrassment today. Kentucky will not be surprised again – they know UAB is legit, and they'll be prepared. However, UAB did well in a vastly weakened Conference USA this year – competition that just doesn't match up to the SEC competition that Kentucky's used to. The Wildcats are bigger and stronger, and will win the battle of the boards with ease. **Play Kentucky.**

3) North Carolina starts their title defense tonight, and they are out to lay down the law after losing in the ACC tourney semis against BC. They play Murray State, and frankly speaking, Murray State has no chance here. That team went just 11-17 ATS overall and finished the year on a four game ATS losing streak. Yes, Murray State had a 20-3 record in the Ohio Valley Conference, but think about those last three words: not going to cut it against North Carolina, people. North Carolina is going to jet to an early lead and it's not going to be pretty. **Play North Carolina.**

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