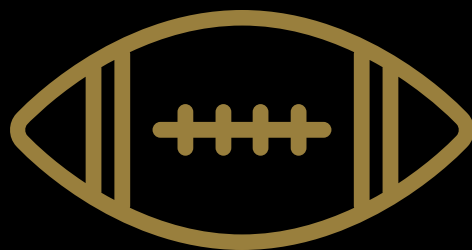


The
2017
NFL Win Totals
Report



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You want insight into the 2017 NFL season. Any analytics that will help you pinpoint a win total for a team will help.

However, the salary cap levels the playing field for all 32 teams, making regression to the mean a harsh reality in the NFL. This makes last year's numbers not so useful in projecting 2017.

Instead, The Power Rank takes a market based approach. The market are well developed for week 1, and CG Technologies in Nevada have spreads for each game from week 2 through 16 (the remainder of the season except for the last week).

I input this market data into my ranking algorithm to calculate NFL preseason rankings.

NFL Preseason Market Rankings

In these rankings, the rating for each team gives an expected margin of victory against an average NFL team.

1. New England, 8.03
2. Pittsburgh, 4.67
3. Seattle, 4.50
4. Green Bay, 4.47
5. Atlanta, 3.92
6. Oakland, 3.15
7. Dallas, 2.74
8. Kansas City, 2.22
9. Baltimore, 2.01
10. New York Giants, 1.84
11. Carolina, 1.37
12. Tennessee, 0.73
13. Arizona, 0.52
14. Tampa Bay, 0.46
15. Philadelphia, 0.22

16. Minnesota, 0.02
17. Denver, -0.22
18. Cincinnati, -0.30
19. Indianapolis, -0.57
20. New Orleans, -0.59
21. Houston, -0.66
22. Los Angeles Chargers, -0.88
23. Detroit, -0.94
24. Washington, -0.98
25. Miami, -1.42
26. Buffalo, -1.94
27. Jacksonville, -2.65
28. Chicago, -4.67
29. Los Angeles Rams, -5.47
30. San Francisco, -6.35
31. New York Jets, -6.62
32. Cleveland, -6.62

NFL Projected Win Totals

These are expected wins based on the market preseason rankings above and schedule for each team.

1. New England, 11.4
2. Seattle, 10.2
3. Pittsburgh, 10.0
4. Green Bay, 9.8
5. Atlanta, 9.5
6. Baltimore, 9.1
7. Oakland, 9.1
8. Dallas, 8.9
9. New York Giants, 8.8
10. Kansas City, 8.7
11. Arizona, 8.7
12. Tennessee, 8.7
13. Carolina, 8.7
14. Minnesota, 8.2
15. Indianapolis, 8.1

16. Philadelphia, 8.0
17. Cincinnati, 8.0
18. Tampa Bay, 7.9
19. Houston, 7.8
20. New Orleans, 7.8
21. Denver, 7.6
22. Los Angeles Chargers, 7.6
23. Washington, 7.4
24. Detroit, 7.4
25. Jacksonville, 7.2
26. Miami, 7.1
27. Buffalo, 7.0
28. Chicago, 5.9
29. Los Angeles Rams, 5.7
30. San Francisco, 5.4
31. Cleveland, 5.2
32. New York Jets, 5.1

Let's look at 3 win totals that stand out to me.

New England

The expected win total for the Patriots is interesting, as the rankings imply a win total 11.4. This is quite a bit lower than the market total of 12.5 (-117 as of Tuesday, September 5th).

Not many will dispute New England's status as the top NFL team heading into the 2017 season. Quarterback Tom Brady leads a potent offense that should thrive even without injured receiver Julian Edelman, especially with the return of Rob Gronkowski.

In addition, Coach Bill Belichick gives the Patriots every conceivable edge to win each game.

However, 12.5 wins is a big total which only allows for 3 losses during the regular season. Even the Patriots aren't immune from bad luck like turnovers and unexpected poor play, especially with a 40 year old quarterback.

Denver

The market model projects a win total of 7.6 for the Broncos, much less than the 8.5 (-150) posted in the markets. But does a more detailed look at Denver support the under?

The offense will most likely struggle this season. Trevor Siemian will take over at quarterback again after leading Denver to the 23rd ranked pass offense by my adjusted yards per attempt last season.

It wasn't all Siemian's fault, as his line struggled in pass protection. The Broncos ranked 28th in my adjusted sack rate allowed.

Denver drafted tackle Garrett Bolles to bolster the line, but it remains to be seen whether the rookie can thrive in the NFL.

If Denver makes it to 9 wins, it will be on the shoulders of the defense. With elite cornerbacks and pass rush, the Broncos have led the NFL in pass defense the past two seasons by my adjusted yards per attempt.

However, Denver lost coordinator Wade Phillips, the one coach that Aaron Schatz of Football Outsiders has found to make a positive impact on the defense. With some typical regression, Denver might not lead the NFL in pass defense again.

Oakland

The markets are based on human opinions, which will not always be accurate. While Oakland's projected win total of 9.1 roughly corresponds to the market total of 9.5 because of the -139 odds for the under, this seems off to me.

Oakland went 8-2 in one score games last season, and regression to the mean suggests they'll find it difficult to repeat the record again in 2017.

The Raiders had worst pass defense in the NFL last season. The secondary was terrible, and the pass rush didn't help, as they ranked 31st in adjusted sack rate even with Khalil Mack.

Oakland's pass defense most likely improves by regression to the mean. Cornerback Sean Smith, a prized free agent signing before last season, can't perform any worse than he did in 2016. They also drafted cornerback Gareon Conley in the first round.

Oakland's hopes of winning 10 games rely on the offense, a unit that ranked 15th by my adjusted yards per attempt last season. Derek Carr will have to elevate this unit to the top 5 for Oakland to have a meaningful chance at winning 10 games.

Wisdom of Crowds for NFL preseason rankings

To get another set of preseason NFL rankings, we can learn a trick from the preseason polls in college football. The preseason AP and Coaches Polls are remarkable predictors of team strength.

In the preseason AP poll, the higher ranked team has won 60.2% of bowl games that season since 2005 (189-125 with no prediction in 107 games). The preseason Coaches poll also performs well at a 61.7% rate (206-128 with no prediction in 87 games).

The combined wisdom of sports writers or coaches lead to remarkable rankings. No one sports writer or coach submits a perfect poll, but the aggregation of many polls cancels out the errors in individual polls.

The accuracy of these polls decrease once the season starts. The writers or coaches tend to react too strongly to wins and losses. By the end of the season, the higher ranked team in the AP polls wins 55.3% of bowl games.

However, the AP poll is a remarkable tool before the season starts. Over the past 4 years, I've create a similar poll for the NFL by aggregating the preseason power rankings from sports sites.

To make predictions, each teams also needs a rating, or an expected margin of victory against an average NFL team. I use historical results from the last 10 years of my NFL team rankings, which take margin of victory and adjust for strength of schedule.

From 2013 through 2016, this wisdom of crowds model has predicted the winner in 63.4% of games (675-389 which doesn't count four tie games). According to Advanced Football Analytics, the opening Vegas line gets 66% of games correct.

Members of The Power Rank have access to these rankings as well as their corresponding win totals. To become a member, click [here](#).