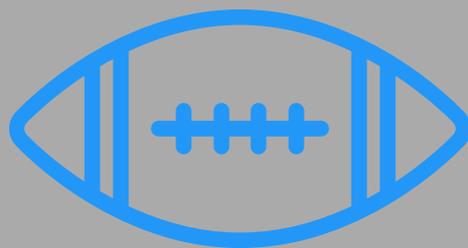


The
2018
Preseason Football
Market Report



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As the smart football fan, you look to analytics for an edge this football season.

In this report, you'll find a unique approach to preseason football analytics based on market win totals. It turns the usual paradigm on its head.

Usually, preseason analytics start with power rankings and go to win totals. For example, my preseason college football rankings use a regression model based on past team strength and other factors.

Teams get ranked based on a rating. The difference in the rating between two teams gives a predicted point spread, which implies a win probability for each team.

For each team, the sum of win probabilities gives an expected win total. These numbers provide a tool to find value in the markets.

Here, I take a different approach to the preseason. Instead of going from team ratings to win totals, I start with the market value for win totals and find the corresponding rating.

This starts by guessing a rating for each team. Then based on the schedule of each team, I calculate a predicted win total as detailed

above. If the win total doesn't match the market value, the ratings get adjusted until the two values converge.

This method gives a powerful market based predictor for how teams will perform. In addition, these preseason market rankings provide a way to evaluate early season spreads.

College Football

Based on market win totals from Bookmaker on August 24th, 2018, here are the top 25 college football teams. The rating comes after the team name, with the market win total in parentheses.

- 1. Clemson, 27.05 (11)**
- 2. Alabama, 26.37 (11)**
- 3. Ohio State, 24.12 (10.5)**
- 4. Georgia, 22.30 (10.5)**
- 5. Washington, 21.53 (10.5)**
- 6. Oklahoma, 21.19 (10)**
- 7. Michigan, 21.11 (9)**
- 8. Wisconsin, 21.02 (10)**
- 9. Auburn, 19.57 (9)**
- 10. Penn State, 19.52 (9.5)**
- 11. Notre Dame, 18.92 (9.5)**

12. Michigan State, 16.96 (9)
13. Texas, 16.07 (8.5)
14. Miami (FL), 16.06 (9.5)
15. Florida State, 15.91 (8)
16. Stanford, 15.29 (8.5)
17. Mississippi State, 14.88 (8.5)
18. USC, 14.55 (8.5)
19. TCU, 13.02 (7.5)
20. Oklahoma State, 13.01 (8)
21. LSU, 12.59 (7)
22. Texas A&M, 12.16 (7.5)
23. Oregon, 11.78 (8.5)
24. Florida, 11.66 (8)
25. Virginia Tech, 11.38 (8.5)

These numbers consider strength of schedule, crucial in college football.

For example, Michigan has a market win total of 9. However, they get ranked 7th ahead of many teams the market predicts to win more games. Michigan plays 5 of the top 12 teams by these rankings.

In contrast, Boise State has a win total of 10 but gets ranked 33rd. They travel to Oklahoma State in a terrific week 3 match up but otherwise face a rather mediocre Mountain West schedule.

In addition, these analytics let us evaluate a key preseason story.

Ohio State

In early August, news broke that Urban Meyer had ignored years of domestic abuse by assistant coach Zach Smith. After an investigation, Ohio State suspended Meyer for the first 3 games of the season.

How much does Meyer's absence affect Ohio State? We can use the market rankings based on win totals to get an idea.

Ohio State remained at 10.5 wins both before and after the Meyer situation. However, the odds have changed.

When the Southpoint released initial win totals, they had -120 odds to go over 10.5 wins. For those that don't speak betting, -120 means you wager \$120 to win \$100 if Ohio State goes over 10.5 wins. Including the house commission, this implies a 52.4% chance that Ohio State goes over.

With these opening values, Ohio State landed at 2nd in the market preseason rankings. They had a rating of 26.0, which implies they would beat an average FBS by 26 points at a neutral site.

Before Ohio State announced the suspension, the markets went to -162 for the under. This implies a 58.8% chance to go under 10.5 wins, a significant change from favoring the over.

Now that Ohio State has suspended Meyer for 3 games, the odds have moved to 54.7% to go under 10.5 wins (-134). This gives the 24.11 rating the rankings above.

The market thinks Ohio State is two points worse now than before the Meyer scandal. I think the market will bump up Ohio State before the start of the season.

I will update the Ohio State number in my free email newsletter. If you haven't signed up for this service, click [here](#).

College football predictions for week 1

The market rankings based on win totals give spread predictions for week 1. It's a way to check the consistency of one part of the markets with another.

Let's dig into one prediction in depth.

Notre Dame (11) will beat Michigan (7) by 0.8 at home.

Michigan has a 48% chance to beat Notre Dame.

The markets favor Michigan by 1 point in this game, which implies a discrepancy.

Both defenses ranked in the top 10 last season by my adjusted yards per play. Both units bring back a load of talent and should perform at an elite level.

The offenses will decide the outcome of this game, which gives two scenarios.

First, you might like Michigan, as they bring in transfer QB Shea Patterson. The offensive line figures out how to pass protect, and Michigan deserves to be a 1 point favorite.

In addition, you think Notre Dame's offense will struggle because QB Brandon Wimbush can't throw the ball. The offensive line also lost two players to the first round of the NFL.

If you agree with this line of thinking, there's value in Notre Dame under 9.5 wins. (There could also be value in Michigan over 9 wins, but this seems implausible given their difficult schedule.)

As a second scenario, you might like Notre Dame's chance to replace two NFL offensive linemen, as the Fighting Irish always have highly rated recruits. With work during the off season, Wimbush improves his passing.

In contrast, Michigan's offensive line continues to struggle with pass protection. Patterson has to run for his life all game. As predicted by the market based rankings, you think Michigan is slightly better than Notre Dame. However, Notre Dame has the edge due to home field.

Then Notre Dame +1 has value in week 1.

Alabama (2) will beat Louisville (35) by 18.1 at a neutral site. Louisville has a 10% chance of beating Alabama.

With Alabama as a 25 point favorite, this is another discrepancy between different parts of the market.

Auburn (9) will beat Washington (5) by 1.0 in Atlanta. Washington has a 47% chance of beating Auburn.

Miami (FL) (14) will beat LSU (21) by 3.5 at a neutral site. LSU has a 40% chance of beating Miami (FL).

Florida State (15) will beat Virginia Tech (25) by 7.5 at home. Virginia Tech has a 29% chance of beating Florida State.

Purdue (43) will beat Northwestern (39) by 2.1 at home. Northwestern has a 44% chance of beating Purdue.

Texas Tech (41) will beat Mississippi (49) by 2.8 at a neutral site. Mississippi has a 42% chance of beating Texas Tech.

California (48) will beat North Carolina (61) by 6.0 at home. North Carolina has a 33% chance of beating California.

West Virginia (26) will beat Tennessee (56) by 9.0 at a neutral site. Tennessee has a 25% chance of beating West Virginia.

NFL

Here are the market ranking based on win totals from Bookmaker on August 24th, 2018. There were no values for Philadelphia and Cleveland, so their win totals were taken from August 20th.

The number after each team is a rating, or margin of victory against an average NFL team at a neutral site. The number in the parentheses is the market win total.

1. New England, 5.07 (11)
2. Philadelphia, 4.91 (10.5)
3. Minnesota, 4.70 (10.5)
4. Los Angeles Rams, 4.38 (10)
5. New Orleans, 4.15 (9.5)
6. Pittsburgh, 4.04 (10.5)
7. Green Bay, 3.44 (10)
8. Atlanta, 2.93 (9.5)
9. Los Angeles Chargers, 2.03 (9.5)
10. Jacksonville, 2.01 (9)
11. Dallas, 0.62 (8.5)
12. Carolina, 0.55 (8.5)
13. Baltimore, 0.28 (8.5)
14. Kansas City, 0.16 (8.5)
15. Houston, 0.05 (8.5)
16. San Francisco, -0.19 (8.5)
17. Tennessee, -0.49 (8)
18. Seattle, -0.67 (7.5)
19. Detroit, -0.88 (7.5)
20. Oakland, -0.98 (8)
21. New York Giants, -1.04 (7)
22. Washington, -1.55 (7)
23. Indianapolis, -1.89 (7)
24. Cincinnati, -1.95 (7)
25. Denver, -2.08 (7)

26. Chicago, -2.65 (6.5)
27. Tampa Bay, -2.97 (6.5)
28. Arizona, -3.56 (6)
29. Miami, -3.58 (6.5)
30. Cleveland, -4.46 (5.5)
31. Buffalo, -5.02 (6)
32. New York Jets, -5.40 (6)

The market odds to go over or under can impact a team's rank.

For example, New Orleans is -145 to go over 9.5 wins, which works out to a 56.6% chance after accounting for the house commission.

New Orleans at 5th gets ranked ahead of Pittsburgh despite the win total of 10.5 for the Steelers. The markets imply a 57.0% chance to Pittsburgh to go under.

Predictions for week 1

Philadelphia (2) will beat Atlanta (8) by 4.4 at home. Atlanta has a 36% chance of beating Philadelphia.

Carolina (12) will beat Dallas (11) by 2.4 at home. Dallas has a 42% chance of beating Carolina.

Los Angeles Chargers (9) will beat Kansas City (14) by 4.3 at home. Kansas City has a 36% chance of beating Los Angeles Chargers.

Indianapolis (23) will beat Cincinnati (24) by 2.5 at home. Cincinnati has a 42% chance of beating Indianapolis.

New England (1) will beat Houston (15) by 7.5 at home. Houston has a 28% chance of beating New England.

Minnesota (3) will beat San Francisco (16) by 7.3 at home. San Francisco has a 28% chance of beating Minnesota.

Jacksonville (10) will beat New York Giants (21) by 0.6 on the road. New York Giants has a 48% chance of beating Jacksonville.

Denver (25) will beat Seattle (18) by 1.0 at home. Seattle has a 47% chance of beating Denver.

Los Angeles Rams (4) will beat Oakland (20) by 2.9 on the road. Oakland has a 41% chance of beating Los Angeles Rams.

**Arizona (28) will beat Washington (22) by 0.4 at home.
Washington has a 49% chance of beating Arizona.**

**Tennessee (17) will beat Miami (29) by 0.7 on the road.
Miami has a 48% chance of beating Tennessee.**

**Green Bay (7) will beat Chicago (26) by 8.5 at home.
Chicago has a 25% chance of beating Green Bay.**

**New Orleans (5) will beat Tampa Bay (27) by 9.6 at home.
Tampa Bay has a 23% chance of beating New Orleans.**

**Baltimore (13) will beat Buffalo (31) by 7.7 at home. Buffalo
has a 27% chance of beating Baltimore.**

**Detroit (19) will beat New York Jets (32) by 7.0 at home.
New York Jets has a 29% chance of beating Detroit.**

**Pittsburgh (6) will beat Cleveland (30) by 6.1 on the road.
Cleveland has a 31% chance of beating Pittsburgh.**

Again, we can compare these predictions to the market spreads for week 1 to check consistency in different aspects of the markets.

In the markets, Jacksonville is a 3 point road favorite at the New York Giants. However, the market rankings based on win totals only favor Jacksonville by 0.6.

While Jacksonville had an outstanding 2017 season, their defense fell off towards the end of the season. In addition, they still have Blake Bortles and his 59% career completion percentage at quarterback.

In addition, DE Dante Fowler Jr., who had 8 sacks last season, is suspended for this game.

Become a member of The Power Rank

The markets for win totals will change with new information before the season starts. Members of The Power Rank will have access to updated rankings.

In addition, members get access to my best football predictions, which combine these market based numbers with other analytics.

To learn more about a membership to The Power Rank, click [here](#).

You can also go to this web address:

<https://thepowerrank.com/become-a-member/>

Appendix

In a previous version of this market report, I had made a mistake.

To explain, consider New England, who has the NFL's highest win total at 11. The previous calculation didn't rank them first.

I found out later that I had flipped the market odds for over and under. The code thought New England should be favored to go under instead of the over, which dragged down their rating

This mistake has been fixed in this current report.

Thanks for reading.