



After about 6 months of largely ignoring the sporting universe, I'm back on the gambling horse in a big way now that football has returned. Fantasy football, picks against the spread, elimination leagues... I'm ready and eager to lose money in multiple ways.

The characters from last season are back, along with a new addition. For those of you new to this game, here are their backgrounds:

BT - former executive for one of the local professional sports franchises, has just moved to Houston due to his current employment situation. And all around swell guy.

DJC - Vegas "Insider" that hails from Northeast Ohio, well-versed in many different levels of legalized sports gambling. And all around swell guy.

MO - current GM of a semi-professional football team, hails from Miami, and, incidentally, my brother-in-law. And all around swell guy, even when he's mocking my doctor-ordered shunning of delicious red meat.

The format will be a bit different this year. Each week I will select 10 games - both college and pro - and the contestants will submit their picks for 5 of their choosing. The 10 options for this week are:

Florida at The U - Florida by 2

Texas at BYU - Texas by 3.5

Notre Dame at Michigan - Mich by 3

So Carolina at Georgia - GA by 6

MIA at CLE - MIA by 1

ATL at NO - NO by 3

CIN at CHI - CHI by 3.5

GB at SF - SF by 4.5

NYG at DAL - DAL by 3

TB at NYJ - TB by 2.5

Along with these picks, there will be a "bonus" pick each week that will involve football stats, but not involve teams against the spread.

BT:

Texas -3.5 (at BYU): UT - I see so much burnt orange now - gag.

Michigan -3 (ND): I hate the maize and blue so much. But it is the Big House... Michigan will cover.

MIA -1 (at CLE): I can't remember the last time the Brown's won a home opener. This year is no different. Phins.

GB +4.5 (at SF): Everyone is in love with the 9ers. I'm not. Take the Pack and the points.

DAL -3 (NYG): With Romo and Murray on my fantasy team, I suddenly feel like a Cowboys fan. Dallas to cover.

BONUS: Over/Under 45 yards rushing for RG3 - OVER

DJC:

Florida -2 (at The U): I really can't stand The U, so I have to go with Florida. Whatever happened to Miami? They dominated college football for so many years, until that Fiesta Bowl. Who cares! Wasn't that game awesome!?!?

Texas -3.5 (at BYU): 3.5? Are you kidding? Texas in a BIG way. Do you remember what Jim McMahon said the best thing about BYU was? Answer - leaving.

Michigan -3 (ND): Michigan is legit. Way over.

So Carolina +6 (at Georgia): I like Georgia to win, but SC to cover the six. If Georgia does lose their season is over before the leaves turn. That's rough.

CLE +1 (MIA): Browns! I like Jordan Cameron's girlfriend. And Jordan Cameron to go for 10 yards.

BONUS: Over/Under 45 yards rushing for RG3 - UNDER

MO:

TB -2.5 (at NYJ): The Revenge of Revis – I've also heard that the Jets reached out to a guy named Leaf...

Texas -3.5 (at BYU): Only because my brother-in-law isn't allowed to eat Bevo.

Michigan -3 (ND): It's never too early to hate on Notre Dame

Florida -2 (at The U): The U is back! Intimidating, fast, explosive, oh wait, no they aren't.

GB +4.5 (at SF): No Ted Ginn Jr., too big of a loss for San Francisco to overcome (yes, I'm kidding), just hedging in case Colin shows up in a Packers hat.

BONUS: Over/Under 45 yards rushing for RG3 - UNDER. This makes the number of Shanahan scowls an UNDER (38) for the game.

Yours Truly:

Florida -2 (at The U): Poor, poor Miami. They sink into mediocrity and have the wrath of the NCAA still to look forward to, which should rule on their infraction-fest sometime before 2016.

Texas -3.5 (at BYU): I don't think Texas is all that good, but they're good enough to win and cover on this one.

Michigan -3 (ND): This is the easiest pick of the week. I know it shows no respect for Notre Dame, but, well, I have none. The Wolverines... I'm not sure how much respect to give them yet, but I know it's more than the Slighted Irish.

MIA -1 (at CLE): The season opener is right around the corner, and instead of excitement I feel dread of the impending "more of the same". I wish I didn't feel this, but I do, and I'm too old to manufacture emotion that doesn't exist. A close game, but Miami's D will win it in the end.

TB -2.5 (at NYJ): Tampa was my survivor pool selection, so I'll stick with that theory. The Bucs are just an OK team, but the Jets might be the worst in the NFL - especially starting a rookie who isn't ready to start and probably isn't ever going to be very good regardless. Plus, you've got a coach who's a dead man walking and has stopped really caring... long season for the J-E-S-T.

BONUS: Over/Under 45 yards rushing for RG3 - UNDER. They're going to instruct him to slide whenever a defender even gets in the same zip code. He won't listen 100%, but he'll try to adhere to their rule for at least the first week.