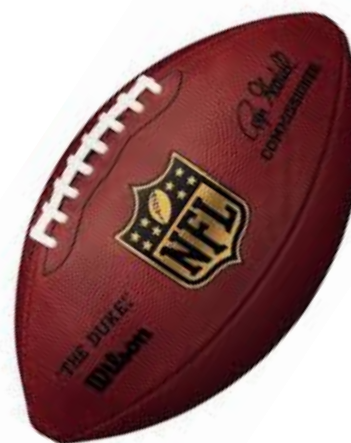


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# MTi Sports Forecasting's 2017 NFL Regular Season Win Report

- Last Six Years RSW Lines and Results
- Divisional Rankings
- Divisional Match-Ups
- Complete Difficulty of Schedule Analysis
- Sample RSW Selections from Past Seasons



# MTi's 2017 Regular Season Win Report

## 1. The Future Lines

Below are the consensus 2016 Regular Season Win (RSW) lines in the NFL on July 15th, 2017. These lines are what we used to perform the analysis in this report.

AFC East	
Patriots	12.5 under -115
Dolphins	7.5 under -120
Bills	6.5 over -115
Jets	4 under -120

NFC East	
Cowboys	9.5 over -130
Giants	9 under -125
Redskins	7.5 -110
Eagles	8 over -130

AFC North	
Steelers	10.5 over -130
Ravens	8.5 over -130
Bengals	8.5 under -115
Browns	4.5 under -115

NFC North	
Packers	10 over -130
Vikings	8.5 under -125
Lions	7.5 -110
Bears	5 over -120

AFC South	
Titans	9 under -130
Texans	8.5 over -135
Colts	8.5 under -120
Jaguars	6.5 over -125

NFC South	
Falcons	9.5 over -125
Panthers	9 over -135
Buccaneers	8.5 under -125
Saints	8 under -120

AFC West	
Raiders	9.5 over -130
Chiefs	9 over -135
Broncos	8.5 under -130
Chargers	7.5 -110

NFC West	
Seahawks	10.5 over -115
Cardinals	8.5 under -130
Rams	5.5 over -120
49ers	4.5 over -130

In the table to the right, we present the totals of each division. The AFC South, which has been ranked 8th out of eight divisions for five straight seasons has moved up to 4th this season and the NFC South, which was ranked 7th out of eight divisions last season, is the top ranked division this season. Finally, the NFC West plummeted to dead last this season at 29 wins after being ranked 4th last season.

Projected 2017 Wins by Division	
NFC South	35
AFC West	34.5
NFC East	34
AFC South	32.5
AFC North	32
NFC North	31
AFC East	30.5
NFC West	29
Total	258.5

Let's look at each's team's regular season win line for 2017 and compare it with their actual number of regular season wins in 2016. This will give us an indication of which teams are expected to improve their win total considerably in 2017 and which team are expected to regress. The table below shows these data, with the right-most column displaying the difference between the two. The table is ranked by the difference column.

Team	2016 RSW	2017 RSW Line	Diff
Browns	1	4.5	+3.5
Jaguars	3	6.5	+3.5
Panthers	6	9	+3
Bengals	6	8.5	+2.5
Chargers	5	7.5	+2.5
49ers	2	4.5	+2.5
Bears	3	5	+2.0
Cardinals	7	8.5	+1.5
Rams	4	5.5	+1.5
Eagles	7	8	+1
Saints	7	8	+1
Colts	8	8.5	+0.5
Ravens	8	8.5	+0.5
Seahawks	10	10.5	+0.5
Vikings	8	8.5	+0.5
Packers	10	10	0
Titans	9	9	0
Bills	7	6.5	-0.5
Broncos	9	8.5	-0.5
Buccaneers	9	8.5	-0.5
Redskins	8	7.5	-0.5
Steelers	11	10.5	-0.5
Texans	9	8.5	-0.5
Jets	5	4	-1
Falcons	11	9.5	-1.5
Lions	9	7.5	-1.5
Patriots	14	12.5	-1.5
Giants	11	9	-2
Dolphins	10	7.5	-2.5
Raiders	12	9.5	-2.5
Chiefs	12	9	-3
Cowboys	13	9.5	-3.5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>258.5</b>	<b>+4.5</b>

At the top we find the Browns and Jaguars, each of which are expected to win 3.5 games more than last season. The Panthers, who went 15-1 in 2015 but only 6-10 in 2016, are expected to win three more games than they did last season. Also expected to improve by at least a couple of games are the Bengals, Chargers, 49ers and Bears.

On the other end, we have the Cowboys who were 13-3 last season, but have an RSW line of 9.5 wins this season. Close behind them are the Chiefs, Raiders, Dolphins and Giants, each of which are expected to win at least two fewer games this season than in 2016.

Basically, there are three possible reasons for a team to have a significantly different win total from one season to the next.

The first is that the team itself has changed. This could be due to injured key players, personnel changes via trades or the draft or even coaching changes.

The second reason is simply randomness. For example, the Panthers 15-1 regular season in 2015 was a fluke. Their RSW line in 2016 was 10.5 wins and they went 6-10.

We suspect that the reason that the Browns RSW line is 3.5 wins higher than their wins last season is not that they are a lot better team than they were last season, but simply because they were unfortunate to win only one game last season.

The third reason is difficulty of schedule. Unlike professional baseball and basketball, NFL teams can have a wide range of schedule toughness over a 16-game season. This has to do with the divisional and wild card match-ups as well as the teams within their own division. When handicapping NFL futures is important to understand these three factors that contribute to a team's RSW line.

The regular season win lines are a combination of the three. The key to beating NFL Futures is to use information that is not already factored into the line.

## 2. 2017 Match-Up Analysis

In this section, we'll examine each team's schedule based on the level of their opponents. We'll look at both the divisional assignments and the wild card assignments.

There are eight divisions in the league, each with four teams. Each team's schedule consists of a home and away game with each of the three other teams in their division. That's six of each team's sixteen regular season games. Then there are the non-divisional match-ups that rotate from season to season. This season's divisional schedule assignments are given below with the total 2017 RSW lines for each division included for quick reference.

Division	Conf Opps	Non-Conf Opps	Wild Card Opps
AFC East	AFC West (34.5)	NFC South (35)	AFC North AFC South
AFC South	AFC North (32)	NFC West (29)	AFC East AFC West
AFC North	AFC South (32.5)	NFC North (31)	AFC East AFC West
AFC West	AFC East (30.5)	NFC East (34)	AFC North AFC South
NFC East	NFC West (29)	AFC West (34.5)	NFC North NFC South
NFC South	NFC South (35)	AFC East (30.5)	NFC East NFC West
NFC North	NFC North (31)	AFC North (32)	NFC East NFC West
NFC West	NFC East (34)	AFC South (32.5)	NFC North NFC South

The AFC East drew the top two divisions in the league this season - the AFC West and the NFC South. So, every team in the AFC East (Patriots, Dolphins, Bills and Jets) have to face every team in the AFC West (Raiders, Broncos, Chiefs and Chargers) and every team in the NFC South (Falcons, Panthers, Saints and Buccaneers).

The AFC South (Colts, Jaguars, Titans, and Texans) has the easiest divisional match-ups this season, as they face the AFC North (Bengals, Browns, Steelers and Ravens) and the

NFC West (Seahawks, Cardinals, Rams and 49ers).

To complete each team's schedule, there are two "wildcard" assignments. These opponents are from the two divisions in their conference that the team is not scheduled to face. The teams are matched by their position within the division from the previous season.

That is, the first place teams match up against each other; the second place teams match up with each other et cetera.

To see how this works, we present the order of finish of the four NFC divisions in the 2016 regular season.

Place	NFC East	NFC South	NFC North	NFC West
1st	Cowboys	Falcons	Packers	Seahawks
2nd	Giants	Bucs	Lions	Cardinals
3rd	Redskins	Saints	Vikings	Rams
4th	Eagles	Panthers	Bears	49ers

As we can see from the table in the opposite column, the NFC East plays ALL the teams in the NFC West. This means that their two wild card opponents are from the NFC South and NFC North. Therefore, the Cowboys' two wild card opponents this season are the Falcons and Packers. The Giants two wild card opponents are the Bucs and Lions. The Redskins' two wild card opponents are the Saints and Vikings. Finally, the Eagles get the Panthers and Bears as their two wild card opponents. The Panthers certainly are a tough draw as a last-place wild card team.

Finally, the Bucs, by virtue of their 2nd place finish in the AFC South, draw the Cardinals and Giants as their wild cards - A tough challenge for Tampa Bay, but if they want to be a contender, they have to expect match-ups like these.

Now let's look at the AFC.

The order of finish in the AFC last season was:

Place	AFC East	AFC South	AFC North	AFC West
1st	Patriots	Texans	Steelers	Chiefs
2nd	Dolphins	Titans	Ravens	Raiders
3rd	Bills	Colts	Bengals	Broncos
4th	Jets	Jaguars	Browns	Chargers

The AFC East is scheduled to face all the teams in the AFC West this season, so their wildcards come from the AFC North and AFC South. The Dolphins, therefore, get the Ravens and Titans as their two wild card teams this season. The Jets, unfortunately for them, have the Chargers and Jaguars, which are a tough pair of last place teams. The Jets' two tough wild card match-ups and the fact that the AFC East plays the two toughest divisions in the league this season is certainly a contributing factor to their regular season win line of 4 minus 120.

The Texans won the AFC South again last season, which means that they get the Patriots as a wild card opponent. This season, they have the Chiefs as well and last season they drew the Bengals along with the Pats.

In 2016, the Eagles drew the Seahawks and Falcons as their wild card teams. This was a contributing factor to the Eagles last place finish in the AFC East. This season, they get the Bears and the Panthers.

In a season with only 16 games, a couple of wins is crucial and the wildcard matchups can certainly make a difference.

A complete listing of each team's wildcard match-ups for the upcoming 2016 season is shown in the table to the right.

The number in parentheses is the week in which the match-up occurs. For example, we can see that the Bears visit the Eagles in week 12 and then host the 49ers in week 13 for their two wild card games.

The home and away assignments are not predetermined, but assigned by the league each season - similar to the match-ups that are on prime time.

Team	Home Wild Card	Away Wild Card
Bears	49ers (13)	Eagles (12)
Bengals	Bills (5)	Broncos (11)
Bills	Colts (14)	Bengals (5)
Broncos	Bengals (11)	Colts (15)
Browns	Jets (5)	Chargers (13)
Buccaneers	Giants (4)	Cardinals (6)
Cardinals	Bucs (6)	Lions (1)
Chargers	Browns (13)	Jaguars (10)
Chiefs	Steelers (6)	Texans (5)
Colts	Broncos (15)	Bills (14)
Cowboys	Packers (5)	Falcons (10)
Dolphins	Titans (5)	Ravens (8)
Eagles	Bears (12)	Panthers (6)
Falcons	Cowboys (10)	Seahawks (11)
49ers	Panthers (1)	Bears (13)
Giants	Lions (2)	Bucs (4)
Jaguars	Chargers (10)	Jets (4)
Jets	Jaguars (4)	Browns (5)
Lions	Cardinals (1)	Giants (2)
Packers	Seahawks (1)	Cowboys (5)
Panthers	Eagles (6)	49ers (1)
Patriots	Texans (3)	Steelers (15)
Raiders	Ravens (5)	Titans (1)
Rams	Saints (12)	Vikings (11)
Ravens	Dolphins (8)	Raiders (5)
Redskins	Vikings (10)	Saints (11)
Saints	Redskins (11)	Rams (12)
Seahawks	Falcons (11)	Packers (1)
Steelers	Patriots (15)	Chiefs (6)
Texans	Chiefs (5)	Patriots (3)
Titans	Raiders (1)	Dolphins (5)
Vikings	Rams (11)	Redskins (10)

Finally, let's look at the sum of the RSW lines for each team's sixteen opponents over the 2017 regular season. We realize that this is not a flawless way to rank the difficulty of each team's schedule, as the number of wins a team is expected to achieve depends not only how good they are, but how good their opponents are. Nonetheless, the sum of the RSW lines for each team's opponents are presented on the next page.

The table is ranked from highest to lowest. This season the Bills have the toughest schedule at 136.5 opponent's expected wins and the Seahawks are at the bottom with opponents that are expected to accumulate 122.5 wins.

Team	Sum of Opp RSW lines
Bills	136.5
Chiefs	135.0
Dolphins	135.0
Broncos	135.0
Falcons	134.0
Bears	133.5
Jets	133.5
Buccaneers	133.5
Raiders	133.5
Browns	133.0
Lions	132.5
Redskins	132.5
Cowboys	132.0
Packers	131.0
Chargers	131.0
Steelers	130.5
Texans	130.5
Saints	130.5
Giants	130.0
Eagles	129.5
49ers	129.0
Ravens	128.5
Vikings	128.5
Rams	128.0
Bengals	127.5
Panthers	127.5
Patriots	126.5
Titans	125.5
Jaguars	125.0
Cardinals	123.5
Colts	123.5
Seahawks	122.5

In 2016, the team whose opponents had the highest RSW line total was the 49ers, with 138.5, followed by the Jets at 138. In 2016, the team whose opponents had the lowest RSW line total was the Cowboys, with 127.

Now let's look at some advanced scheduling features that probably are not already factored into the RSW lines.

### 3. 2017 Schedule Analysis

It is one thing to look at who plays who and this is certainly an important analysis to perform when researching NFL regular season win expectations. To complete the analysis, a handicapper must look at the details of each team's schedule. In last season's regular season win report, we revealed that the Dallas Cowboys had numerous "hidden" scheduling advantage and that was a contributing factor to making the Dallas Cowboy OVER 8 wins our 2016 NFL Futures play of the year. In the write-up we revealed that:

Dallas had ZERO teams on their schedule that were off their bye week all season. which means no opponent has extra time to prepare for them.

Three of their eight road games this season are against a team that has a Thursday Night national TV appearance upcoming. They have two opponents off Monday Night games; In week two they get the Redskins after Washington played Pittsburgh on Monday in week one and in week three the Cowboys get the Bears after Chicago played on Monday Night vs the Eagles.

They get four non-divisional opponents that are in a divisional sandwich. For example, when the Cowboys host the Steelers this season, Pittsburgh is off a road game in Baltimore with a road game in Cleveland next.

The Cowboys have the Vikings on their schedule and with Bridgewater out, this increases their chances for the win in that game.

Dallas started the season 11-1, making it over eight wins the week before Thanksgiving.

Let's look at the 2017 numbers.

The table below presents the number of times each team's opponent experiences a particular scheduling situation over the 2017 regular season. For example, the number of times a team gets an opponent off a bye week, before playing on the upcoming

Thursday, off a Monday Night game the previous week and when they are facing a non-divisional opponent that is in a divisional "sandwich." Let's perform a deep dive into these numbers.

Team	Opponent's Scheduling Situation							
	Bye Next	Off Bye	Off Thurs	Thursday Next	Off Monday	Monday Next	Div Sandwich	2nd Away
Bears	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0
Bengals	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	1
Bills	2	0	1	2	1	1	0	2
Broncos	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	2
Browns	3	0	1	0	3	1	2	2
Buccaneers	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	3
Cardinals	1	0	2	1	0	3	1	2
Chargers	1	0	1	2	1	2	1	3
Chiefs	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	4
Colts	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	4
Cowboys	1	1	3	0	4	3	3	1
Dolphins	3	1	0	0	1	1	3	5
Eagles	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1
Falcons	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
49ers	0	3	0	1	4	2	2	1
Giants	1	4	1	2	0	1	1	1
Jaguars	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	0
Jets	1	1	2	2	1	0	2	4
Lions	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	2
Packers	1	2	2	0	1	3	0	1
Panthers	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	3
Patriots	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	1
Raiders	1	0	2	1	0	3	3	4
Rams	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Ravens	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	1
Redskins	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	3
Saints	3	0	2	1	1	2	0	3
Seahawks	1	2	0	1	0	0	2	0
Steelers	1	2	0	2	2	1	2	3
Texans	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Titans	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	4
Vikings	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	1

Before we do, however, we'll present the SDQL text for each of the eight situations presented in the table on the previous page. The SDQL text is in bold.

SDQL for the Eight Scheduling Situations
Opp has bye next: <b>op:week = week + 2</b>
Opponent off Bye: <b>op:week+2 = week</b>
Opp Off Thursday: <b>op:day = Thursday and o:NB</b>
Opp Thursday Next: <b>on:day = Thursday and on:NB</b>
Opp Off Previous Monday: <b>op:day = Monday and o:NB</b>
Opp Plays Next Monday: <b>on:day = Monday and on:NB</b>
Opp in Div. Sandwich: <b>NDIV and op:DIV and on:DIV</b>
Opponent in 2nd away game: <b>H and o:NB and op:A</b>

In the first data column we see that there are eight teams in 2017 that have zero opponents with a bye week next and three teams - the Browns, Dolphins and Saints - that have three opponents in 2017 that will have the next week off. In 2016, there no teams that had three or more opponents with their bye week next.

The third column gives the number of times a team gets an opponent that is off their bye week. It is best to have zero teams off a bye week, and there are eleven teams in 2017 with this scheduling advantage. On the other end, we find the Giants, who have four teams this season with an extra week to prepare for them. In weeks 6, 7, 9 and 11, the Giants face the Broncos, Seahawks, Rams and Chiefs each of which is off their bye week. This can't be favorable for the Giants.

It is also worth mentioning that the Lions and 49ers each get three opponents in 2017 that are off their bye week.

The fourth column gives the number of times a team gets an opponent off a Thursday Night game. This column was added in 2012 because of the addition of regular Thursday Night games. Clearly, a team would like to have zero opponents off a Thursday Night game simply because of the days rest disadvantage.

In 2017 there are ten teams in the league that get no opponents off a Thursday game. Both the Cowboys and the Redskins get three such opponents – tops in the league. This is a scheduling disadvantage, as these teams have an extra half week to not only prepare, but two allow their injuries and minor dings to heal.

The fifth column gives the number of times a team is facing an opponent that plays on the upcoming Thursday. This is a scheduling advantage, as the team playing on Thursday will be looking ahead to the nationally televised game with short rest. In 2017, there are nine teams in the league that get no opponents that play on the upcoming Thursday and there are nine teams that get two opponents playing on the upcoming Thursday.

The next column presents the number of times a team gets an opponent off a Monday Night game. It is an advantage to have a large number of opponents off a Monday Nighter. There are nine teams in the league that will not enjoy this advantage this season.

The scheduling bonanza in this category goes to the Cowboys and 49ers each with FOUR opponents that played on Monday Night the previous week. In week two the Cowboys get the Broncos off a Monday game vs the Chargers. In week eight the



Cowboys face the Redskins when Washington faced the Eagles on Monday Night in week seven. In week nine the Cowboys get the Chiefs after they hosted the Broncos in week eight and in week seventeen, Dallas gets the Eagles off a Monday Nighter vs the Raiders. Over the past five seasons the Cowboys have had a total of only seven opponents that were off a Monday Night game. They are 6-1 in those seven games.

Column seven gives the number of times a team gets an opponent that plays the next Monday Night. There are thirteen teams in the league who have no such opponents and the Cardinals, Raiders, Packers and Cowboys each get three opponents looking ahead to a Monday Nighter the following week.

Column eight presents the number of times a team is facing a non-divisional opponent that has a divisional opponent both before and after. Since divisional games are more important, it is an advantage to face teams that are in a divisional sandwich.

There are nine teams in the league have NO opponents in this scheduling spot while the Dolphins, Colts, Raiders and Cowboys each get three non-divisional opponents that are between opponents from their own division. The divisional sandwich is an important situation and could be the difference between a loss and a win. While this is not as important as a key personnel change in determining the number of wins a team will have in the regular season, it is crucial when determining the expected *difference* between the expected number of wins and the RSW line because this information is *not* already factored into the RSW line. After all, this is what

handicapping is all about; uncovering *differences* between the line and the expected result.

Let's look at the Dolphins' three games in this situation. In week two the Dolphins face the Chargers. San Diego will be off a game vs Denver in week one and looking ahead to the Chiefs in week three. In week five the Dolphins host the Titans with Tennessee off a game vs the Texans and looking ahead to a game vs the Colts. Finally, in week 16, the Dolphins get the Chiefs with Kansas City off a game vs the Chargers and looking ahead to their home finale vs the Broncos. It is not difficult to imagine that this favorable schedule would be enough for an extra win and when handicapping NFL futures and extra win is huge.

The last column gives the number of times a team is hosting an opponent that is playing in at least their second road game in as many weeks. The Bears, Seahawks, and Jaguars are the only teams in the league that host *no* opponents that played on the road the previous week. That is, none of their eight home games are vs a team that played on the road the previous week.

The one team with a big advantage in this particular scheduling spot is the Dolphins, as their opponent will be playing in their second straight road game in FIVE of their eight home games this season.

Teams with four such opponents -- half of their eight home games -- are the Titans, Jets, Chiefs, Colts, and Raiders. If the reader is going to use any of this information to make an RSW play, it is a good idea to probe further into the scheduling situations presented here. After

all, when playing RSWs you are looking for a situational advantage that has the potential to change the straight up outcome of the game.

Let's now reveal some significant *differences* in the opponent's schedule. What we are looking for is a team that had a unlucky schedule in 2016 and has a favorable on this season or *vice versa*. Indeed, Dallas has some favorable scheduling spots this season, but they had many favorable scheduling spots last season so the advantage we have over the linesmakers is not as great.

We'll start with the "Off Bye" column. In 2016, the Eagles faced three teams off their bye week, but this season they have none, which is plus for them.

Next, we'll go to the "Thursday Next" column. In 2016, both the Packers and the Cowboys had three opponents that played on the upcoming Thursday. This season, both have no such opponents. This is a disadvantage for these two.

The next column contains the important "Off Monday" occurrences. In both 2015 and 2016, the Bengals faced three teams off a Monday Nighter. This season they get none, a distinct disadvantage.

The next column gives the number of times a team has an opponent that is looking ahead to a Monday Nighter. In 2016, the Cowboys had none and this season they have three. In 2016, the Eagles had three and this season they have none. Also, in 2016, the Redskins had three and this season they have none.

Moving to the divisional sandwich column, we find that the Dolphins had no teams in a divisional sandwich in 2016 but have three in 2017. On this unfortunate end, we see that the Texans had three opponents in a divisional sandwich in 2016 and they have none this season.

In the "2nd Away" column we find that the Bears hosted four opponents that were playing their second straight road game in 2016, going 3-1. The Bears were 3-13 in 2016, so ALL of their wins came when hosting a team that was playing in their second straight road game. In 2017, they have NO such games on their schedule.

Finally, we are going to remark on some scheduling data that does not appear in the large table. We'll start with any days rest advantage.

Rams and Giants only have ONE game in 2017 which they have more rest than their opponent. Dallas has six, which is the tops in the league.

Looking at it from the other side we find that the Bills, Jaguars and Panthers only play one game this season in which their opponent has more rest, whereas Giants and Lions each play five games in 2017 in which their opponent has more rest than they do.

It is also worthwhile to comment on grass vs turf games in 2016 because there are a couple of unusual scheduling situations of which any serious regular season win handicapper should be aware.

In 2017, the Falcons only play three games on grass all season - in Chicago, Tampa and Carolina. On the other side we see that the

Broncos, Raiders, Titans and Ravens each play fourteen of their sixteen games on grass this season.

Now let's take a look at the RSW results over the past six NFL seasons.

#### 4. NFL RSW Results 2011-2016

As usual, we like to look at RSW results from previous seasons. The tables in this section on give the regular season win results from 2011 through 2016. The tables are ranked by RSW margin. That is, they are ranked by the difference between their RSW line and their actual regular season wins. Teams that went over their RSW line are in the top section of the table and teams that are in bottom section of the table stayed under the total. We'll go over the seasons one at a time and then present a six-season summary at the end.

In 2011, San Francisco bested all expectations by going 13-3 when they were expected to finish 500 for the season. The biggest disappointment of 2011 was the Colts, but this line was before Manning was declared out for the season. The line dropped considerably after his neck problem was made public.

#### 2011 NFL Regular Season Win Results

Team	RSW Line	RSW	Diff
San Francisco	8	13	+5
Green Bay	11.5	15	+3.5
New Orleans	10	13	+3
Detroit	7.5	10	+2.5
Tennessee	6.5	9	+2.5
Denver	6	8	+2
Houston	8	10	+2
Carolina	4.5	6	+1.5
Cincinnati	7.5	9	+1.5
New England	11.5	13	+1.5
Arizona	7	8	+1
Baltimore	11	12	+1
Buffalo	5	6	+1
Oakland	7	8	+1
Pittsburgh	11	12	+1
Seattle	7	7	0
Atlanta	10.5	10	-0.5
N.Y. Giants	9.5	9	-0.5
Dallas	9	8	-1
Jacksonville	6	5	-1
Kansas City	8	7	-1
Chicago	9.5	8	-1.5
Washington	6.5	5	-1.5
Miami	8	6	-2
N.Y. Jets	10	8	-2
Philadelphia	10	8	-2
San Diego	10	8	-2
Cleveland	6.5	4	-2.5
Minnesota	6.5	3	-3.5
Tampa Bay	8.5	4	-4.5
St. Louis	7	2	-5
Indianapolis	10	2	-8

The 2017 KillerSports.com Journal of NFL Research will be available on August 1st 2017 at KillerCappers.com. It is a FREE download.



In 2012, the biggest disappointment was the Eagles, which only won four games while projected to win ten. We are proud to say that our 5-Star 2012 NFL Futures Play of the Year was Philadelphia UNDER 10 wins. The write-up is given below.

**MTi's 2012 NFL Futures Play of the Year  
5-Star Philadelphia UNDER 10 wins**

The Eagles are more smoke and mirrors than substance. They did win four in a row to close out the season, but they beat only the Dolphins, Jets, Cowboys and Redskins. None of these four teams finished the season over 500 and Stephen McGee was the QB for the Cowboys when the Eagles beat them. Philadelphia was a huge disappointment last season and they should be again this season. One reason is the "quirks" in their schedule.

For example, in both games vs Dallas this season, the Eagles are off a Monday Night game. Dallas was swept by the Eagles last season and will have an enhanced opportunity for revenge because of the favorable scheduling situation.

Even more importantly, the Eagles get FOUR teams off their bye week this season. In weeks 5, 6, 8 and 11, the Eagles get a team that has had two weeks to prepare for them. In week 5 they get the Steelers off of their bye, in week 6 they get the Lions off of their bye, in week 8 they get the Falcons off of their bye and in week 11 they visit the Redskins when they are off of their bye (Philadelphia has their bye in week 7). Certainly, the Eagles' quality opponents in these four games will benefit from the extra time - perhaps enough for their opponent to get the straight up win. It is also worth mentioning that the Eagles also have two opponents that are off a Thursday game this season, making two more games vs a team with extra rest. In all, the Eagles have NINE opponents with more than the normal six days rest this season - by far the most in the league (most other teams have three or fewer).

Andy Reid was a great coach earlier in his career, but it is evident in his press conferences that he is wearing down and will be frustrated by any dissent on among the players - which is very likely to occur when they lose a game they should have won. Reid was VERY close to retirement last season and it was evident that the Fans were disappointed when he decided to return for one more year. We don't think he'll last the entire season. Michael Vick is injury prone and is not the even close to player he once was. He committed 24 turnovers last season and there's no reason why this number should improve this season. That fact that the Eagles aggressively went after Peyton Manning is compelling evidence that the Eagles don't have that much confidence in Vick. We have them third in the division.

MTi's FORECAST: PHILADELPHIA 8-8

*Actual Result: Philadelphia was 4-12 in 2012*

The team that was best on the positive end in 2012 was the Colts, who finished 11-5 in Andrew Luck's rookie season with an RSW line of 5.5 wins. 2012 was an unusual season, as five teams finished at least four games above their RSW line - the Broncos, Falcons, Vikings and Seahawks. No team was four-plus games above their RSW line in 2016.

**2012 NFL Regular Season Win Results**

Team	RSW Line	RSW	Diff
Indianapolis	5.5	11	+5.5
Denver	8.5	13	+4.5
Atlanta	9	13	+4
Minnesota	6	10	+4
Seattle	7	11	+4
Washington	6.5	10	+3.5
Cincinnati	8	10	+2
Houston	10	12	+2
San Francisco	10	11	+1
St. Louis	6	7	+1
Tampa Bay	6	7	+1
Chicago	9.5	10	+0.5
Baltimore	10	10	0
New England	12	12	0
Carolina	7.5	7	-0.5
Cleveland	5.5	5	-0.5
Dallas	8.5	8	-0.5
Miami	7.5	7	-0.5
N.Y. Giants	9.5	9	-0.5
Green Bay	12	11	-1
Tennessee	7	6	-1
Arizona	7	5	-2
Buffalo	8	6	-2
Pittsburgh	10	8	-2
San Diego	9	7	-2
N.Y. Jets	8.5	6	-2.5
New Orleans	10	7	-3
Oakland	7	4	-3
Jacksonville	5.5	2	-3.5
Detroit	9.5	4	-5.5
Kansas City	8	2	-6
Philadelphia	10	4	-6

In 2013, both the Cardinals and Panthers performed much better than expectations. The Cardinals won ten games in the tough NFC West when they were only expected to win 5.5 and the Panthers were 12-4 when they were expected to be a tick below 500.

On the negative end in 2013, we find the Texans, who were a brutal 2-14 with a RSW line of 10.5 -- and they had no obvious excuse. The Falcons and Redskins also had a season in which they finished five-plus wins below expectations.

**2013 NFL Regular Season Win Results**

Team	RSW Line	RSW	Diff
Arizona	5.5	10	+4.5
Carolina	7.5	12	+4.5
Kansas City	7.5	11	+3.5
Cincinnati	8.5	11	+2.5
Indianapolis	8.5	11	+2.5
Philadelphia	7.5	10	+2.5
Seattle	10.5	13	+2.5
Denver	11.5	13	+1.5
N.Y. Jets	6.5	8	+1.5
New England	10.5	12	+1.5
New Orleans	9.5	11	+1.5
San Diego	7.5	9	+1.5
Miami	7.5	8	+0.5
San Francisco	11.5	12	+0.5
Tennessee	6.5	7	+0.5
Baltimore	8.5	8	-0.5
Chicago	8.5	8	-0.5
Dallas	8.5	8	-0.5
Detroit	7.5	7	-0.5
St. Louis	7.5	7	-0.5
Jacksonville	5	4	-1
Buffalo	7.5	6	-1.5
Oakland	5.5	4	-1.5
Pittsburgh	9.5	8	-1.5
N.Y. Giants	9	7	-2
Cleveland	6.5	4	-2.5
Green Bay	10.5	8	-2.5
Minnesota	7.5	5	-2.5
Tampa Bay	7.5	4	-3.5
Atlanta	9	4	-5
Washington	8.5	3	-5.5
Houston	10.5	2	-8.5

MTi's NFL Futures are the result of a complete analysis of each team's personnel and coaching changes, an analysis of their sixteen 2017 opponents, and deep dive into their 2017 schedule.

MTi's 2017 NFL Futures will be released Saturday evening September 2nd at 7:00 pm EST only at [KillerCappers.com](http://KillerCappers.com)



Looking at the 2014 results we see the Dallas Cowboys at the top of the heap with a regular season record of 12-4 with an RSW line of 7.5 plus JUICE. We are proud to claim that Dallas OVER 7.5 wins was our 2014 NFL Futures Play of the Year. The complete write-up is reproduced below:

**MTi's 2014 NFL Futures Play of the Year  
4.5-Star Dallas OVER 7.5 +165**

Everyone is down on Dallas. Their regular season win line has plummeted since it was released. This is reminiscent of what happened last season with Philadelphia. The Eagles RSW line dropped like a rock as all the "experts" were sure that they would be terrible in 2013 – with one outspoken NFL handicapper predicting 4-12. However, the Eagles not only went 10-6, they won the division when they were expected to finish last. This is what we call the lemming effect. Everyone thinks that Vegas is giving away money and want to get in on the action. With the line moving, everyone mindlessly jumps on board not wanting to miss the opportunity. However, they are not betting their own opinion, they are simply blindly following the crowd – like lemmings.

Dallas has terrific offensive weapons. Despite the fact that their defense had very disappointing season in 2013, they won eight games with a regular season win line of 8.5. Jason Witten recently stated "This is the best offensive line we have had in a long time." We think their defense and their offense will be better this season and they have a season win total of 7.5 at PLUS 165.

When the early season game lines were released, Dallas was favored in eight games and this did not include their week three game vs the Rams in St Louis, who will now be missing Sam Bradford. The fact that Bradford was lost for the season affected the Rams' season win line, but not that of the Cowboys, who face St Louis early in the season. Yes, Dallas has a tough schedule, but this is no secret. This, in fact, is a contributing factor to their low RSW line, but they had the Saints as one of their wild card opponents last season as well.

Also, Dallas lost THREE games by a single point last season – 17-16 in Kansas City and 30-31 in Detroit and 37-36 at home vs Green Bay. The Cowboys also lost a 51-48 barnburner to the Broncos and the lost 24-22 to the Eagles on the final week of the season with Kyle Orton at QB. With a healthy Romo and the offensive weapons at his disposal, we would not be surprised if this team won the NFC East and we already invested in Dez Bryant to have the most receiving yards in the league at plus 600.

MTi's FORECAST: Dallas 9-7 in 2014

*Actual Result: Dallas 12-4 in 2014*

Also besting their RSW line by at least two wins were the Cardinals, Bills, Lions, Steelers and Eagles.

Both the Bucs and the Titans had very disappointing seasons, as they each won only two games when each was expected to win seven.

**2014 NFL Regular Season Win Results**

Team	RSW Line	RSW	Diff
Dallas	7.5	12	+4.5
Arizona	7.5	11	+3.5
Buffalo	6.5	9	+2.5
Detroit	8.5	11	+2.5
Pittsburgh	8.5	11	+2.5
Philadelphia	8	10	+2
Baltimore	8.5	10	+1.5
Green Bay	10.5	12	+1.5
Houston	7.5	9	+1.5
Indianapolis	9.5	11	+1.5
New England	10.5	12	+1.5
Cincinnati	9	10	+1
Minnesota	6	7	+1
San Diego	8	9	+1
Seattle	11	12	+1
Cleveland	6.5	7	+0.5
Denver	11.5	12	+0.5
Kansas City	8.5	9	+0.5
Miami	8	8	0
Carolina	8.5	7	-1.5
Jacksonville	4.5	3	-1.5
Oakland	4.5	3	-1.5
St. Louis	7.5	6	-1.5
N.Y. Giants	8	6	-2
Atlanta	8.5	6	-2.5
New Orleans	9.5	7	-2.5
San Francisco	10.5	8	-2.5
N.Y. Jets	7	4	-3
Chicago	8.5	5	-3.5
Washington	7.5	4	-3.5
Tampa Bay	7	2	-5
Tennessee	7	2	-5

MTi's NFL Futures were perfect in 2015 with their 5-Star Futures Play of the Year on the Jets over 7.5, a 4.5-Star on Dallas UNDER 9.5 wins and a 4-Star on Atlanta under 8.5 wins. The write-up on the Jets OVER 7.5 wins is given in the column to the right.

### 2015 NFL Regular Season Win Results

Team	RSW Line	RSW	Diff
Panthers	8.5	15	+6.5
Cardinals	8.5	13	+4.5
Vikings	7	11	+4
Bengals	8.5	12	+3.5
Chiefs	8.5	11	+2.5
Redskins	6.5	9	+2.5
Jets	8	10	+2
Broncos	10.5	12	+1.5
Patriots	10.5	12	+1.5
Raiders	5.5	7	+1.5
Steelers	8.5	10	+1.5
Texans	8.5	9	+0.5
Buccaneers	6	6	0
Bills	8.5	8	-0.5
Falcons	8.5	8	-0.5
Jaguars	5.5	5	-0.5
Bears	7	6	-1
Packers	11	10	-1
Rams	8	7	-1
Seahawks	11	10	-1
Lions	8.5	7	-1.5
Saints	8.5	7	-1.5
Eagles	9.5	7	-2.5
49ers	7.5	5	-2.5
Giants	8.5	6	-2.5
Titans	5.5	3	-2.5
Colts	11	8	-3
Dolphins	9	6	-3
Browns	6.5	3	-3.5
Chargers	8	4	-4
Ravens	9	5	-4
Cowboys	9.5	4	-5.5

### MTi's 2015 NFL Futures Play of the Year 5-Star NY Jets OVER 7.5 Wins

5-Star NY JETS OVER 7.5 wins +100 -- Everyone is down on Geno Smith -- especially former teammate IK Enemkpali. He has been called the worst quarterback in the league. Indeed, he has made some bad plays on national TV. However, he is talented and it is much easier to coach decision-making skills than it is to coach athleticism. He should get the coaching he needs this season. The Jets certainly have the talent to make some noise in the AFC East. We like the Jets OVER 7.5 wins.

Last season, the Jets had six games in which they out-gained their opponent but lost the game. This was tops in the league. These losses were, for the most part, due to mistakes. Often they were early mistakes that got the Jets in a hole and forced them to play from behind. In fact, they outgained the Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots in both meetings in 2014 and lost only 27-25 and 17-16. Both games were legit.

In addition, New York had only two games last season in which they had a positive takeaway margin, fewest in the entire league. In the NFL is very hard to win games without a positive takeaway margin.

Geno Smith was a very young 21 when he came to the Jets. Right now he is 24 (turns 25 on October 10th). For comparison, Tom Brady was 24 years and one month in his first season as the starter for the Patriots (2001).

Recently Geno Smith gave the New York press an analogy, "The hardest steel was created in the hottest of fires, and so I've been in the hottest of fires, and I think it's made me a better person and a better player." We like it -- it makes sense.

There are two possibilities. 1. Fitzpatrick is terrific and keeps the job. 2. Fitzpatrick is not terrific and Geno Smith is welcomed by the players -- and perhaps even the fans -- with open arms.

The Jets' first seven home games this season are all winnable. They are against the: Browns, Eagles, Redskins, Jaguars, Bills, Dolphins and Titans. Their last home game of the regular season is vs the Patriots and this could a good spot for the Jets, as the Patriots may have already wrapped up the AFC East and will rest their key players.

The Jets have a lot of talent on defense and at wide receiver. The only thing keeping this line under 8 wins is their lack of a quality QB. If Fitzpatrick/Smith can avoid making key mistakes, the Jets should be able to challenge for a wild card spot.

FORECAST: NY JETS 10-6 in 2015

*Result: NY Jets 10-6 in 2015*



MTi Sports Forecasting cashed their third straight 5-Star NFL Futures Play of the Year in 2016, cashing with the Dallas Cowboys OVER 8 wins. The line moved to 9.5 wins after the play was released, but the Cowboys went 13-3. The write-up is given in the right hand column.

**2016 NFL Regular Season Win Results**

Team	RSW Line	RSW	Diff
Titans	5.5	9	+3.5
Falcons	7.5	11	+3.5
Raiders	8.5	12	+3.5
Cowboys	9.5	13	+3.5
Patriots	10.5	14	+3.5
Dolphins	7	10	+3
Giants	8	11	+3
Chiefs	9.5	12	+2.5
Lions	7+	9	+2
Buccaneers	7	9	+2
Texans	8	9	+1
Redskins	7.5	8	+0.5
Steelers	10.5	11	+0.5
Eagles	7	7	0
Saints	7	7	0
Ravens	8	8	0
Broncos	9.5	9	-0.5
Seahawks	10.5	10	-0.5
Bills	8	7	-1
Packers	11	10	-1
Colts	9.5	8	-1.5
Vikings	9.5	8	-1.5
Chargers	7	5	-2
Jets	8	5	-3
Cardinals	10	7	-3
Browns	4.5	1	-3.5
Rams	7.5	4	-3.5
Bengals	9.5	6	-3.5
Jaguars	7.5	3	-4.5
Bears	7.5	3	-4.5
Panthers	10.5	6	-4.5
49ers	7.5	2	-5.5

**MTi's 2015 NFL Futures Play of the Year  
5-Star Dallas Over 8 wins**

It is well known that the Cowboys have done a lot better with Romo than without. They are 9-22 (29%) in games in which Romo does not throw a pass and 81-54 (60%) in games in which he does.

This was especially true last season in which the Cowboys were 1-11 without Romo, trying out replacements Brandon Weeden, Matt Cassel and Kellen Moore. Dallas was actually in the division race until very late in the season due to a mediocre NFC East.

Romo's recent injury was in the preseason and this has made the Giants the favorite to win the division. The Giants?! Dallas will have time to recover and regroup and rookie Dak Prescott has got the team believing in him by working and playing hard. By virtue of their last place finish in the NFC East last season, the Cowboys get the Buccaneers and 49ers as wild card opponents. For comparison, in 2015 they got the Seahawks and Packers as wildcards because they won the NFC East in 2014.

With Romo injured, the Cowboys will be overlooked early this season. They have a very reasonable shot to start 4-0 as they certainly will be very motivated to knock the Redskins off their perch. Dallas has a number of "hidden" scheduling advantages that could be worth as much as one win. First, they have no teams off their bye week all season, which means no opponent has extra time to prepare for them. Second, three of their eight road games this season are against a team that has a Thursday Night national TV appearance upcoming. Third, they have two opponents off Monday Night games; In week two they get the Redskins after Washington played Pittsburgh on Monday in week one and in week three the Cowboys get the Bears after Chicago played on Monday Night vs the Eagles. Fourth, they get four non-divisional opponents that are in a divisional sandwich. For example, when the Cowboys host the Steelers this season, Pittsburgh is off a road game in Baltimore with a road game in Cleveland next. Many teams face no opponents in a divisional sandwich this season and no other team has as many as four. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Cowboys have the Vikings on their schedule and with Bridgewater out, this increases their chances for the win in that game.

This season's version of the Cowboys are not a team that must have Romo. They have a solid workhorse, three-down back in Ezekiel Elliot and a great offensive line. They need a QB that can manage the game.

The NFC East is weak this season and Dallas knows they can win it. They will enter the season with an underdog mentality. With this schedule, they should go something like 7-1 at home and 3-5 on the road. Take Dallas OVER eight wins.

Dallas 10-6 in 2016

*Actual Result: 13-3 in 2016*



## **MTi's 4-Star RSW Play on New England in 2016 Forecasts Pats 14-2 finish!**

4-Star New England OVER 10.5 wins - Yes, Brady is out for the first four games of the season, but after their opener in Arizona, the Pats have three straight very winnable home games vs Miami, Houston and Buffalo. The Patriots have an antagonistic relationship with the league office and would like nothing better to force NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell to hand them the Vince Lombardi trophy -- this season above all others. The Patriots will team-up and hunker-down and Belichick will demand excellence and dedication like never before. If they win in Arizona, they might run the table.

The Patriots have the two easiest wild card opponents that a division winner can draw. They get the Houston Texans, who won the AFC South last season and the Denver Broncos, which will have a serious QB mismatch when they face each other. For comparison, the AFC East champion Washington Redskins draw

division winners Green Bay and Arizona as their two wildcards this season.

New England has a terrific secondary and a raft of talented wide receivers and they have the best coach in football. He is well respected by his players and they all know if they have a below average season this year, Goodell will be pleased with himself. They have a manageable schedule with all three of their non-Sunday games at home and their bye in perfectly placed in week nine, the week before they face the Seahawks. We just don't see six losses on their schedule.

MTi's FORECAST: New England 14-2 in 2016

*Note: The Patriots started the season with a 23-21 win in Arizona getting 8.5 points with Jimmy Garoppolo under center and went on to finish the regular season 14-2 and win the Super Bowl.*



At this point it seems natural to look at the combined results over the past six seasons to see what we can conclude. These results are shown in the table on the next page. The table is ranked by cumulative margin by which the team has gone over or under their RSW line. At the top we find the Broncos and Patriots, who have total 9.5 wins above expectations over the past six regular seasons. They are followed by the Cardinals, Bengals and Panthers, although each of these fell short of expectations last season.

At the bottom, we find the Jaguars and Browns which have averaged two games under their RSW over the past six seasons. The Jaguars have been disappointing for six straight seasons now. The Rams and Bears have also not lived up to expectations, staying under their RSW by an average of 10.5 games over the past six seasons, and both fell well short of expectations last season.

Going into 2016, there were two teams that had gone over their RSW line for five straight seasons; the Broncos and the Bengals. Both stayed under last season. The longest current over streaks are that of the Patriots, and Chiefs who have gone over four straight seasons. Kansas City has actually gone over their RSW total by more than two games for four straight seasons.

The Giants were on a five season under streak going into 2016, but rookie head coach Ben McAdoo got them over by three wins with a record of 11-5 and a RSW line of 8.

The longest current under streaks besides that of the Jaguars are that of the Rams and Bears, both of which have stayed under for four straight seasons.

In last season's NFL Regular season win report the Tampa Bay Buccaneers were at the bottom of the table at minus 12 wins over the past five seasons. In the first season of the Jameis Winston era the Bucs went 9-7 with their RSW line at seven. Expectations are lower than last season and a big contributing factor is that the Bucs have the Giants and Cardinals as wild cards this season.

It is worth noting that the total of the 2011-16 column is MINUS FIFTY games. That is, over the past six seasons, the league has gone a total of fifty games under their RSW line. The reason is simply that the public like to bet the OVER and for this reason the sum of the RSW lines is greater than the sum of the available wins. This, in general, makes the under a better play than the over.

To be a successful NFL RSW handicapper, ALL of match-up and scheduling information must be combined with all the personnel and coaching changes to develop a comprehensive picture of a team's realistic expectations in 2017. Equally important is a thorough examination of each team's results over the past couple of seasons. Did the team have lucky wins, unlucky losses, key injuries? Did the team have an unusually high turnover margin or an unusually high takeaway margin? In other words, "is the team better than their record, worse than their record or about as good as their record?" Clearly, if a team has not been getting the breaks and losing games they should have won, you might lean toward the over. If a team has been on the right side of every close call and every 50-50 ball, you might lean to place them under their RSW line.

It is a lot of work to do all the research, but it can be very rewarding.

Team	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Streak	2011-16
Broncos	+2	+4.5	+1.5	+0.5	+1.5	-0.5	U1	+9.5
Patriots	+1.5	0	+1.5	+1.5	+1.5	+3.5	O4	+9.5
Cardinals	+1	-2	+4.5	+3.5	+4.5	-3	U1	+8.5
Bengals	+1.5	+2	+2.5	+1	+3.5	-3.5	U1	+7
Panthers	+1.5	-0.5	+4.5	-1.5	+6.5	-4.5	U1	+6
Seahawks	0	+4	+2.5	+1	-1	-0.5	U2	+6
Chiefs	-1	-6	+3.5	+2.5	+2.5	+2.5	O4	+4
Steelers	+1	-2	-1.5	+2.5	+1.5	+0.5	O3	+2
Vikings	-3.5	+4	-2.5	+1	+4	-1.5	U1	+1.5
Cowboys	-1	-0.5	-0.5	+4.5	-5.5	+3.5	O1	+0.5
Raiders	+1	-3	-1.5	-1.5	+1.5	+3.5	O2	0
Lions	+2.5	-5.5	-0.5	+2.5	-1.5	+2	O1	-0.5
Packers	+3.5	-1	-2.5	+1.5	-1	-1	U2	-0.5
Falcons	-0.5	+4	-5	-2.5	-0.5	+3.5	O1	-1
Bills	+1	-2	-1.5	+2.5	-0.5	-1	U2	-1.5
Texans	+2	+2	-8.5	+1.5	+0.5	+1	O3	-1.5
Dolphins	-2	-0.5	+0.5	0	-3	+3	O1	-2
Ravens	+1	0	-0.5	+1.5	-4	0	-	-2
Titans	+2.5	-1	+0.5	-5	-2.5	+3.5	O1	-2
Saints	+3	-3	+1.5	-2.5	-1.5	0	-	-2.5
Colts	-8	+5.5	+2.5	+1.5	-3	-1.5	U2	-3
49ers	+5	+1	+0.5	-2.5	-2.5	-5.5	U3	-4
Redskins	-1.5	+3.5	-5.5	-3.5	+2.5	+0.5	O2	-4
Giants	-0.5	-0.5	-2	-2	-2.5	+3	O1	-4.5
Eagles	-2	-6	+2.5	+2	-2.5	0	-	-6
Jets	-2	-2.5	+1.5	-3	+2	-3	U1	-7
Chargers	-2	-2	+1.5	+1	-4	-2	U2	-7.5
Buccaneers	-4.5	+1	-3.5	-5	0	+2	O1	-10
Bears	-1.5	+0.5	-0.5	-3.5	-1	-4.5	U4	-10.5
Rams	-5	+1	-0.5	-1.5	-1	-3.5	U4	-10.5
Browns	-2.5	-0.5	-2.5	+0.5	-3.5	-3.5	U2	-12
Jaguars	-1	-3.5	-1	-1.5	-0.5	-4.5	U6	-12

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