

# DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

## 2018

Four more games, two today, two tomorrow. Win or go home. All the platitudes. I have been spending a great deal of my time the last week with the porcelain god in the bathroom, and nearly all of it the last 24 hours. Also have a pretty important little trip have to make here early this morning, so one and all please feel free to fill in background and predictions on the games.

First up for Saturday is Atlanta at Philadelphia. The weather will be freezing cold, and temp expected to keep dropping during the game. Atlanta is a southern dome team with not much, uh, exposure to such conditions. That heavily favors the Eagles, and their superior defense, who are. But the Falcons have Matt Ryan at QB and the Iggles are stuck with backup Nick Foles. A great kid, who can be pretty good on occasion, but Foles is no Matt Ryan. The trendy pickers seem to all be taking the Falcons. And I will too. Philly needs to open up their offense and see if Foles can't get on a run. Again, he is capable of that streakiness. But if they go conservative, they are toast. Play to win the game.

Late game Saturday is Tennessee at Patriots. More cold weather will be in store in Foxborough. Keep them balls inflated boys! Seems like every year that the Pats are the Saturday night game in Divisional week. Go figure. Marcus Mariota is young, talented and mobile. The kind of QB that can give New England fits. The Pats' secondary has really come along nicely since the start of the year. So, really, this will come down to the ability of their D-Line to pressure and contain Mariota. James Harrison should get significant opportunity to help them out in that regard. The Titans are a nice story, and look like a team growing a solid core for the future. Hard to see them slaying the Pats tonight though. Also, how can a team win a history on

their team name like this?? (c/o our wonderful friend @StephStradley)

Early game Sunday is Jacksonville at Steelers. This could be a great defensive struggle...or not. I tend to think not. Pittsburgh defense may not be what the Jag's currently is, but it is not bad at all. And it is just really hard to see how the Jags are going to produce enough offense to keep up with Big Be and the Bumblebee Boys. In fairness, the passing game may be more check offs and mid range stuff if Antonio Brown is hobbled or out. But I expect Brown to suit up and do fine. This is Pittsburgh and the playoffs dammit, not some meaningless late season game. The Steelers are itching to get back to the Patriots in Foxborough, and I think they are going to get their wish.

Last game standing will be Saints at Vikings. Vikes are 4 point faves at home. Seems about right I guess. That said, this is the one game that truly looks like a pickem to me. Case Keenum and the Vikes have been quietly excellent on offense, and scoring plenty of points this year. And the Minnesota defense is fantastic. Saints are a little up and down this year, but did seem strong down the stretch for the most part. The Nawlins defense is quite improved over what they have suffered for many years. But it is not on the level of the Vikings. If the Saints are going to win this, and there is a path for that to happen, will have to be by Drew Brees and Alvin Kamara running wild. Hey, it could happen, but not putting hard money on it.

Okay fans and fannys, that is it. Hoop it up. Music this week is by Stevie Nicks playing with Bob Welch and his band. May be the best version of Gold Dust Woman around. For some reason, and never seen this before , the video is not interacting well with our blog. So here is the link. It is worth a watch.