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# BATTLE FOR THE BIG APPLE

**SANCHEZ vs MANNING**  
THE JETS AND GIANTS LOOK TO WIN NEW YORK AND KEEP THEIR NFL PLAYOFF HOPES ALIVE

**PRO FOOTBALL PASS**

**WEEK 16:  
DEC 22-26**

**PHILADELPHIA AT DALLAS**  
Can the Eagles stay in the NFC East race?

**CHICAGO AT GREEN BAY**  
The NFC North rivalry is renewed at Lambeau Field.

**ATLANTA AT NEW ORLEANS**  
Two of the NFL's high-powered offenses meet on Monday night.



▶ Texans QB T.J. Yates could find success against an Indianapolis pass defense allowing an average of 274 passing yards per game in its past three contests.

**THURSDAY, 8:20 P.M.**  
**HOUSTON TEXANS (-6)**  
**AT**  
**INDIANAPOLIS COLTS**

Houston seeks its first win ever in Indianapolis when the AFC South foes square off at Lucas Oil Stadium. The Texans have lost all nine trips to Indy by an average score of 33-17. The Colts finally got in the win column last week, but a second straight victory will be a tall order. Their nightmare season started with a 34-7 loss in Houston, which was playing without Arian Foster. The Texans have simply run it down Indy's throats the past two years, averaging 173 rushing YPG and 5.3 YPC over three meetings. And with the Texans staunch defense, Indianapolis will have major problems moving the football.

**PLAY ON: ▶ HOUSTON -6**



▶ Dolphins RB Reggie Bush had a huge day in Miami's 30-20 win over Buffalo last week, gaining 203 yards on 25 carries, which included a 76-yard TD run.

**SATURDAY, 1 P.M.**  
**MIAMI DOLPHINS (+10.5)**  
**AT**  
**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS**

Miami proved it can play in the cold by winning in snowy Buffalo last week, and the Dolphins visit Foxboro this week, where they've covered in two of their past three December/January visits. The Miami offense has been much improved with QB Matt Moore under center, and the Dolphins should be able to move the ball on a weak Patriots defense. The Pats rolled up 622 yards in their Week 1 win over Miami, but Dallas is the only other team to throw for 250 yards against Miami all season. The Dolphins are 7-1 Against The Spread in their past eight games, holding opponents to just 71 rushing YPG on just 3.2 YPC.

**PLAY ON: ▶ MIAMI +10.5**

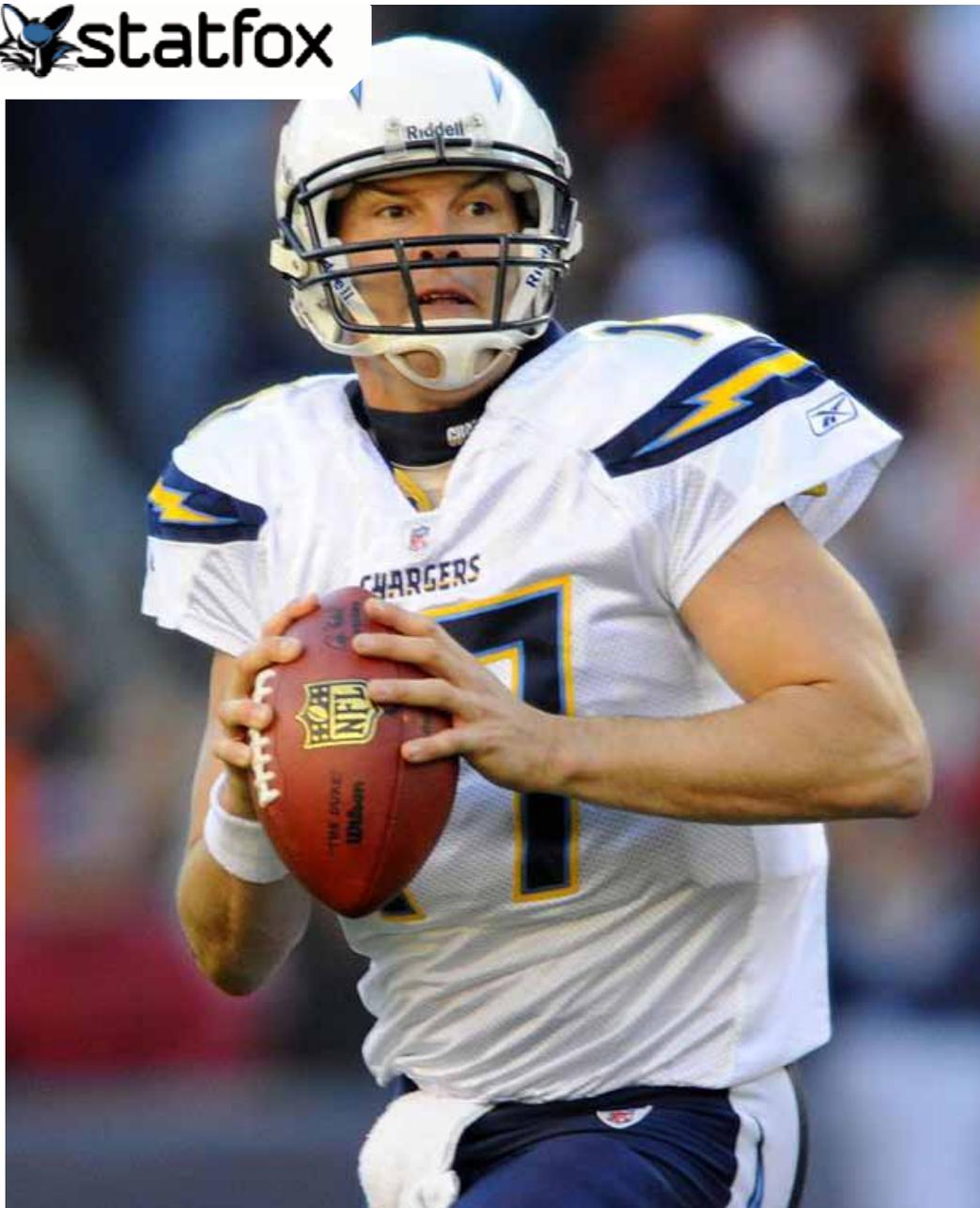
**SATURDAY, 1 P.M.**  
**NEW YORK GIANTS (+3)**  
**VS**  
**NEW YORK JETS**

The league's only in-town rivals are struggling heading into this matchup. Both teams were embarrassed in Week 15, with the Jets blown out by 26 in Philadelphia, and the Giants losing to the Redskins for a second time, dropping a 23-10 defeat. The Giants typically struggle in their home stadium when their passing game goes awry in December, and QB Eli Manning had 3 INT and no touchdowns in last week's loss, in large part due to poor performances from his receivers. If the wind is whipping, the Jets are better equipped to move the ball because of their superior running game and better underneath receivers.

**PLAY ON:** **NEW YORK JETS -3**



Jets QB Mark Sanchez has played better at Met Life Stadium (88.0 rating; 15 TD, 7 INT) than Giants QB Eli Manning has (86.9 rating, 11 TD, 9 INT) this season. ←



San Diego's improved offensive line has led to better play from QB Philip Rivers, who has eight touchdowns without an interception in his past four games.

**SATURDAY, 4:05 P.M.**  
**SAN DIEGO CHARGERS (+3)**  
**AT**  
**DETROIT LIONS**

San Diego is in the midst of its annual December surge, absolutely blowing away its past three opponents. The Chargers outscored the Jaguars, Bills and Ravens by a combined total of 109-38, and they're now 12-2 Straight Up and 8-5-1 ATS over the past three regular seasons in December/January. A big reason has been the improved play of the o-line, which added much-needed LT Jared Gaither after he was bafflingly cut by Kansas City. San Diego should be able to counter the strength of the Lions' defense, the front four. The pick here is for underdog San Diego to pull out a fourth straight win.

**PLAY ON:** **SAN DIEGO +3**

**SATURDAY, 4:15 P.M.**  
**PHILADELPHIA EAGLES (+3)**  
**AT**  
**DALLAS COWBOYS**

Even though they're a longshot for the playoffs, the Eagles would love to spoil the rival Cowboys' season with another huge win in Dallas on Christmas Eve. Back in Week 8 against Dallas, the Eagles played their best game of the season, rolling up 495 yards of offense and controlling the clock for 42:09 in a 34-7 blowout win. The outcome of this game should come down to what QB Tony Romo can do against an Eagles pass defense that has played well lately. Dallas has beat up on losing teams, going 7-2 SU, but is only 3-6 ATS in those games. The Cowboys are also 4-15 ATS (21%) as a favorite the past two seasons.

**PLAY ON:** **PHILADELPHIA +3**



Eagles QB Michael Vick had his highest-rated game this season against Dallas, completing 21-of-28 passes for 279 yards, 2 TD and 0 INT in a Week 8 win.



→ In seven regular-season meetings against Chicago, Packers QB Aaron Rodgers is 5-2 with a 69.4% completion rate, 242 passing YPG, 10 TD and 5 INT.

**SUNDAY, 8:25 P.M.**  
**CHICAGO BEARS (+13.5)**  
**AT**  
**GREEN BAY PACKERS**

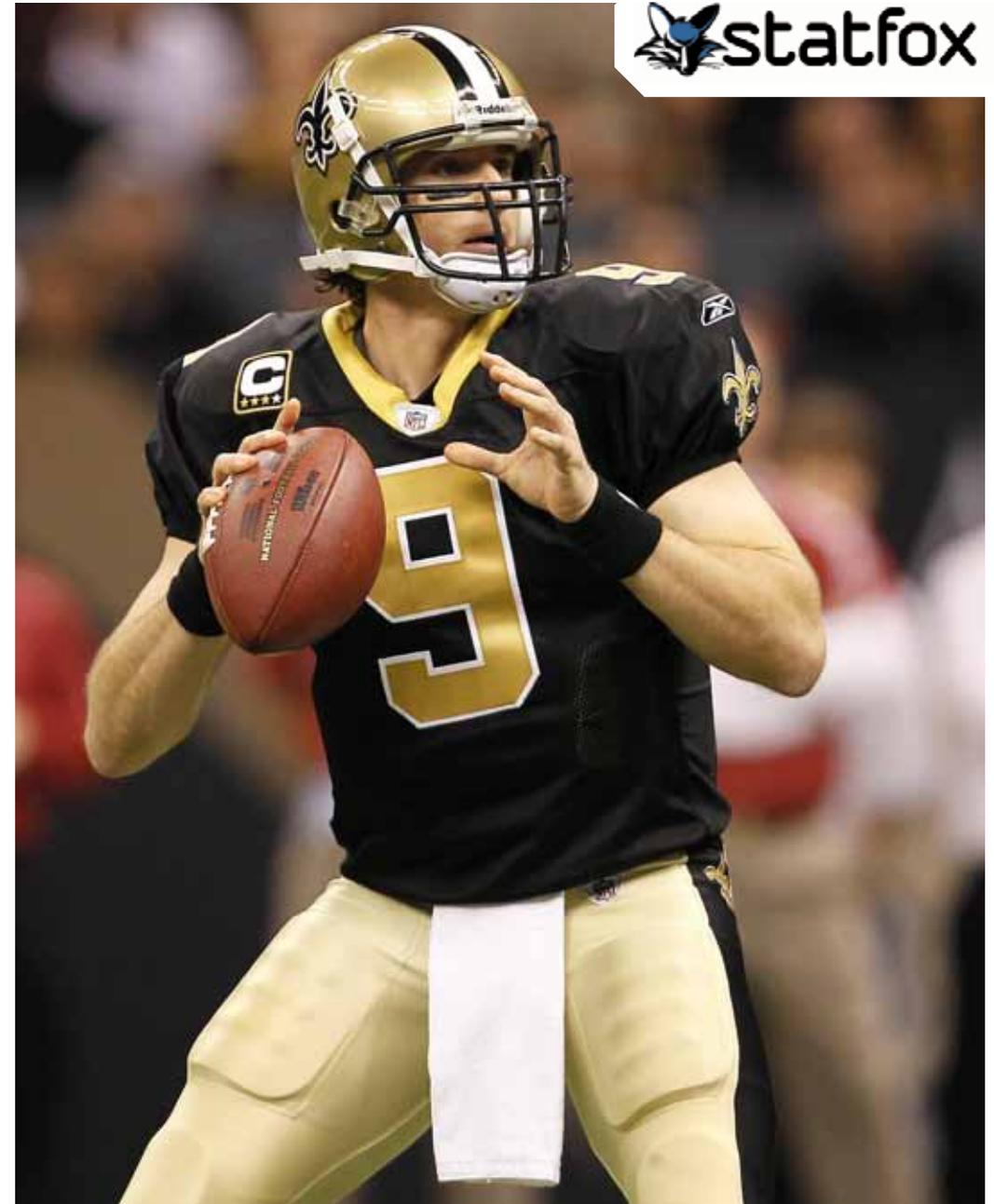
Chicago will likely once again struggle to score no matter which subpar quarterback starts, Caleb Hanie or Josh McCown. In the past three games, the Bears offense has generated one touchdown and 20 total points. The Packers scored a 27-17 victory in Chicago in Week 3 when Aaron Rodgers and TE Jermichael Finley connected on three touchdown passes. Rodgers should put up solid numbers against the NFL's sixth-worst passing defense (254 YPG). The Packers have turned the ball over only four times in their past seven games, while the Bears have coughed it up 12 times in the past four weeks.

**PLAY ON: GREEN BAY -13.5**

**MONDAY, 8:35 P.M.**  
**ATLANTA FALCONS (+7)**  
**AT**  
**NEW ORLEANS SAINTS**

The Saints look to celebrate the holidays with an NFC South title when they host the rival Falcons. New Orleans has won six consecutive games (SU and ATS), while Atlanta is 4-1 SU (2-1-2 ATS) in its past five contests. These teams have played three straight games decided by a field goal, including Atlanta's overtime win in New Orleans last season. The Saints should be able to beat Atlanta's mediocre secondary. QB Drew Brees has been on fire lately, and has also surpassed 300 yards in his past three games against the Falcons. The pick here is New Orleans to win and cover the moderate spread.

**PLAY ON:** **NEW ORLEANS -7**



Saints QB Drew Brees has had a lot of success against the Falcons in his career, going 9-3 against them while averaging 297 passing yards per game. ←



**OAKLAND (+2)**  
at  
**KANSAS CITY**

The Romeo Crennel Kyle Orton era in Kansas City got off to a great start with an upset win over Green Bay. The Chiefs controlled the clock against the Packers (36:11) and held their high-powered offense to 315 yards. Back in Week 7, the Chiefs destroyed the Raiders in Oakland 28-0, QB Carson Palmer's first game with the team. The Raiders' defense has struggled during a three-game SU slide, allowing 36.0 PPG. The Chiefs will run, and the Oakland rushing defense is allowing 153.1 YPG and 5.6 YPC over its past seven games.

**PLAY ON:**

**KANSAS CITY -2**

**DENVER (-3)**  
at  
**BUFFALO**

During their seven-game SU losing streak (1-6 ATS), the Bills have been completely unable to stop the run. They're giving up 165.4 YPG and 5.0 YPC, leading to 32.0 PPG, during their slide. Enter Tim Tebow and Denver's run-heavy, zone read offense. The Broncos should be able to move the ball with ease in Buffalo, and the Denver defense is playing well enough to create a touchdown-plus of separation. Look for another road win for the Tebow-led Broncos, who are 5-0 SU and ATS away from home since Tebow took the starting job.

**PLAY ON:**

**DENVER -3**

**JACKSONVILLE (+7.5)**  
at  
**TENNESSEE**

The Jags continue to limp toward the finish with a quarterback who can't play, an interim head coach, an injury-plagued secondary that can't cover, and now a hobbled franchise running back as Maurice Jones-Drew tries to play through an ankle injury. Back in Week 1, the Jags controlled the clock with the running game (39:38 time of possession) in a 16-14 win. The Titans run defense has remained shaky all year, but Tennessee is getting better play from its offensive line and should be able to move the ball more effectively this time around.

**PLAY ON:**

**TENNESSEE -7.5**

➔ In his first start as a Chief, QB Kyle Orton completed 23-of-31 passes for 299 yards in Kansas City's 19-14 upset of the Packers.

**MINNESOTA (+6.5)**  
at  
**WASHINGTON**

The Redskins are coming off two of their best performances of 2011, and they'll have a chance to beat up on the struggling, injury-plagued Vikings. Washington jumped all over the Giants on the road last week, one week after coming up just short at home against the Patriots. Since QB Rex Grossman reclaimed the starting job six weeks ago, Washington has gone 3-2-1 ATS. With barely enough healthy bodies to fill out their secondary, the Vikings have gone 0-6 SU and 1-4-1 ATS in their last six. They've allowed 34.5 PPG during that span.

**PLAY ON:**

**WASHINGTON -6.5**

**ARIZONA (+4.5)**  
at  
**CINCINNATI**

Arizona has caught fire, winning four in a row and six of seven SU, plus six of eight ATS. They're doing it with an improved defense, one that should be able to limit a Bengals offense that has failed to top 300 yards in any of the past three weeks and fattened up on easy opponents early in the year. The Cards have historically struggled when going east, but they won in Philadelphia in Week 10, and they're 4-3 ATS on the road this season. Also, Cincinnati is only 1-11 ATS (8%) as a home favorite over the last three seasons.

**PLAY ON:**

**ARIZONA +4.5**

**CLEVELAND (+13)**  
at  
**BALTIMORE**

Bettors will be jumping off the Ravens bandwagon after their embarrassment in San Diego, but this is a completely different team at home. This year, the Ravens are 7-0 SU and 4-2-1 ATS in Baltimore. And while their secondary can be beat, they're not going to be beat by the Browns passing game, even if QB Colt McCoy returns to the lineup. Plus, there's a powerful trend working in the Ravens' favor: Baltimore is 9-0 ATS after being outgained by its opponent by 100 or more total yards in the previous game over the last three seasons.

**PLAY ON:**

**BALTIMORE -13**



Ravens RB Ray Rice had a career-high 204 of Baltimore's 290 rushing yards in a 24-10 win over the Browns in Week 13.



➔ A shoulder injury kept Bucs QB Josh Freeman out for the team's first meeting with the Panthers, ending a streak of 36 straight starts.

**TAMPA BAY (+7)**  
at  
**CAROLINA**

Tampa Bay has lost eight in a row SU, going 1-7 ATS during that stretch. And three weeks ago at home against the Panthers, the Buccaneers allowed 163 rushing yards and 38 points. Tampa Bay started backup QB Josh Johnson in that game and generated only 285 yards of offense against a Panthers team that stacked the box to stop the run. The presence of QB Josh Freeman should help open things up for the running game this time around, but probably not enough to cover against a Carolina team that's played well of late.

**PLAY ON:**

**CAROLINA -7**

**ST. LOUIS (+14.5)**  
at  
**PITTSBURGH**

Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger was limited by an ankle injury on Monday night that he'd suffered in the previous game against the Browns, and he did not practice this Wednesday. It would be an upset if Charlie Batch isn't under center Saturday. The Rams have plenty of uncertainty under center, where Sam Bradford (ankle) and A.J. Feeley (thumb) are both unlikely to play. Third-stringer Kellen Clemens led the Rams to 13 points last week against Cincinnati, a total that would likely be enough to cover this week's big spread.

**PLAY ON:**

**ST. LOUIS +14.5**

**SAN FRANCISCO (-2)**  
at  
**SEATTLE**

The Niners clinched the NFC West weeks ago, but San Francisco has lost its last four visits to Qwest Field, both SU and ATS. These teams played a slugfest Week 1, with the Seahawks generating 219 yards of offense and the Niners 209. San Francisco's plus-3 advantage in turnover differential and two Ted Ginn return touchdowns were the difference in a 33-17 San Francisco victory. And considering the Niners should be able to hold down Seattle RB Marshawn Lynch, this should be a defensive-minded affair, one that San Fran should win.

**PLAY ON:**

**SAN FRANCISCO -2**

GAME	LINE	PREDICTION	PICK VS. SPREAD
HOUSTON at INDIANAPOLIS	<b>LINE:</b> HOU by 6 <b>TOTAL:</b> 40	<b>HOUSTON</b> 23 INDIANAPOLIS 16	<b>HOUSTON</b> <b>UNDER</b> 40
OAKLAND at KANSAS CITY	<b>LINE:</b> KC by 2 <b>TOTAL:</b> 42	OAKLAND 17 <b>KANSAS CITY</b> 21	<b>KANSAS CITY</b> <b>UNDER</b> 42
DENVER at BUFFALO	<b>LINE:</b> DEN by 3 <b>TOTAL:</b> 41.5	<b>DENVER</b> 24 BUFFALO 20	<b>DENVER</b> <b>OVER</b> 41.5
JACKSONVILLE at TENNESSEE	<b>LINE:</b> TEN by 7.5 <b>TOTAL:</b> 40	JACKSONVILLE 13 <b>TENNESSEE</b> 21	<b>TENNESSEE</b> <b>UNDER</b> 40
ARIZONA at CINCINNATI	<b>LINE:</b> CIN by 4.5 <b>TOTAL:</b> 40.5	ARIZONA 20 <b>CINCINNATI</b> 23	<b>ARIZONA</b> <b>OVER</b> 40.5
MIAMI at NEW ENGLAND	<b>LINE:</b> NE by 10.5 <b>TOTAL:</b> 48.5	MIAMI 21 <b>NEW ENGLAND</b> 27	<b>MIAMI</b> <b>UNDER</b> 48.5
CLEVELAND at BALTIMORE	<b>LINE:</b> BAL by 13 <b>TOTAL:</b> 38.5	CLEVELAND 10 <b>BALTIMORE</b> 27	<b>BALTIMORE</b> <b>UNDER</b> 38.5
NEW YORK GIANTS vs. NEW YORK JETS	<b>LINE:</b> NYJ by 3 <b>TOTAL:</b> 45.5	NEW YORK GIANTS 24 <b>NEW YORK JETS</b> 28	<b>NEW YORK JETS</b> <b>OVER</b> 45.5

GAME	LINE	PREDICTION	PICK VS. SPREAD
MINNESOTA at WASHINGTON	<b>LINE:</b> WAS by 6.5 <b>TOTAL:</b> 44	MINNESOTA 17 <b>WASHINGTON</b> 24	<b>WASHINGTON</b> <b>UNDER</b> 44
TAMPA BAY at CAROLINA	<b>LINE:</b> CAR by 7.5 <b>TOTAL:</b> 48	TAMPA BAY 21 <b>CAROLINA</b> 31	<b>CAROLINA</b> <b>OVER</b> 48
ST. LOUIS at PITTSBURGH	<b>LINE:</b> PIT by 14.5 <b>TOTAL:</b> 37.5	ST. LOUIS 13 <b>PITTSBURGH</b> 24	<b>ST. LOUIS</b> <b>UNDER</b> 37.5
SAN DIEGO at DETROIT	<b>LINE:</b> DET by 3 <b>TOTAL:</b> 52	<b>SAN DIEGO</b> 28 DETROIT 27	<b>SAN DIEGO</b> <b>OVER</b> 52
SAN FRANCISCO at SEATTLE	<b>LINE:</b> SF by 2 <b>TOTAL:</b> 38	<b>SAN FRANCISCO</b> 20 SEATTLE 17	<b>SAN FRANCISCO</b> <b>UNDER</b> 38
PHILADELPHIA at DALLAS	<b>LINE:</b> DAL by 3 <b>TOTAL:</b> 50.5	<b>PHILADELPHIA</b> 26 DALLAS 24	<b>PHILADELPHIA</b> <b>UNDER</b> 50.5
CHICAGO at GREEN BAY	<b>LINE:</b> GB by 13.5 <b>TOTAL:</b> 45	CHICAGO 14 <b>GREEN BAY</b> 28	<b>GREEN BAY</b> <b>UNDER</b> 45
ATLANTA at NEW ORLEANS	<b>LINE:</b> NO by 7 <b>TOTAL:</b> 53	ATLANTA 20 <b>NEW ORLEANS</b> 28	<b>NEW ORLEANS</b> <b>UNDER</b> 53



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