NFL Predictions: Oakland Raiders AFC West Preview

Contributed by Matt Foust
Monday, 21 July 2008
Last Updated Monday, 21 July 2008

Lane Kiffin was unable to get the Raiders' ship right righted in his first season as head coach. Unfortunately for Kiffin and the Raider faithful, the franchise had become more synonymous with mediocrity than excellence prior to his arrival. The Raiders will have to overcome a tough Chargers team if they are to recapture old glories and a place atop the AFC West. NFL Betting odds at SBGglobal.com list Oakland at +800 odds to win the division.

The only positive for the Raider offense last season was their ability to move the ball on the ground. The team played quarterback shuffle for the majority of the year before finally handing the reins over to number one overall pick JaMarcus Russell in the final two games.

This year the offense should have a little more continuity as Russell will be under center from the get go. Also, the additions of wide out Jevon Walker and Arkansas phenom Darren McFadden will give a much needed boost to a team that has lacked playmakers in more recent years. Although the team's biggest talents are young players, they should be able to best last season's 17.7 point per game average.

What was a quality Raider defense in 2006 transformed into a disaster in last year. The unit's production fell off significantly as evidenced by their 26th ranked scoring defense (24.9 points per game). Oakland also allowed 145.9 yards rushing per game (31st ranking) last year and 341.6 yards per game total (22nd ranking). They did, however, play solid pass defense by holding teams to just 195.8 yards passing per game.

The Raiders were unable to retool their defense via the draft because they only had five picks, but the team did bring in a few quality players through trade and free agency. Former Giants Gibril Wilson (safety) and William Joseph (defensive tackle) signed in the off season and Oakland acquired cornerback DeAngelo Hall from the Falcons for two future draft picks.

Still, Oakland will need some young players to step up and do it quickly if they are to significantly improve last year's numbers.

NFL Betting odds at SBGglobal.com list the Raiders at +10000 odds to win the Super Bowl, and +3000 odds to win the AFC Championship. The team's win total is set at 6.5 with the over a +120.

Prediction: 4th Place AFC West.