

NFL Preseason Pick: Dallas Cowboys vs Denver Broncos

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The Dallas Cowboys traveled north this week for their second taste of the AFC West division. Last week Dallas suffered a 31-17 beating at the hands of the Chargers in San Diego. Tonight at 9:00pm EST they will take on the Broncos at Invesco Field at Mile High. NFL betting odds at Sportsbook.com have Denver as a -2.5 home favorite.

Dallas and Denver have spent the past week running joint practices together and there has been a fair amount of trash talking from both sides. Consequently, tonight's game might have a little more energy than a typical pre-season game.

Dallas, while falling to San Diego, did do some positive things when their starters were in the game. Head Coach Wade Phillips limited his first unit offense to just one series last week, but he is going to give them a little more time tonight, mostly just for timing purposes. Phillips is well aware of what his veterans can do, and he is more concerned with the play of the roster's newer players.

Phillips was unhappy with some of the sloppy turnovers that the backups had last week as well as the poor punt coverage on special teams. He is hoping they can correct those issues against the Broncos. On a more positive note, rookie running back Felix Jones carried the ball six times in the San Diego game for 32 yards (5.3 yard per carry average).

Denver, like Dallas, dropped their first pre-season game. However, there were some good signs for Mike Shanahan's squad in their loss to the Texans. First round draft pick and new left tackle Ryan Clady looked very comfortable in both run and pass blocking situations. Quarterback Jay Cutler's performance was indicative of the line's good play as he completed eight of 10 passes for 59 yards. The Bronco ground game also produced 123 yards on 26 carries for a 4.7 yard per carry average.

The Denver coaching staff has also been pleased with the play of second round pick WR Eddie Royal. Royal had just two catches for 13 yards against Houston, but he has looked good on the practice field, especially this week against the Cowboys.

Defensively, the Broncos will be looking for a better pass rush in tonight's game. The Denver front seven provided little in the way of pressure against Houston and as a result the Texans completed 72 percent of their passes.

NFL Preseason Game Trends: Denver is 1-4 against the spread in opening home preseason games since 2003. Dallas in 5-0 straight up in their second pre-season game since 2003.

Sportsbook.com's line for tonight's game:

Cowboys +2.5 (-105), Over 37 (-110), +125 (Money line)

Broncos -2.5 (-115), Under 37 (-110), -145 (Money line)

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