

Healthy Pack likely will be perfect favorite

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Unless key players are unavailable to the Green Bay Packers in some games this season, there is no game in the regular season in which they will be made the underdog by oddsmakers.

According to a Las Vegas expert in such matters, every game the Packers play this season figures to be one in which Green Bay is the favorite. Not playing Dallas at Texas Stadium is one key in this little

drama.

"One of our guys looked at it the other day and he didn't see any games where they would be a sure bet dog (underdog) the entire schedule," said Cesar Robaina, odds manager for Las Vegas Sports Consultants, which provides betting lines for most of the sports books in Nevada. "Obviously, we are talking if everyone stays healthy.

"Their two toughest games will be at Carolina (Dec. 14) and at home against Dallas (Nov. 23)," said Robaina. "If they played Carolina next week, we'd have to open the Packers at 3- or 3 1/2-point favorites. Against Dallas, the Packers would be at least 6, possibly a 6 1/2-point, maybe a 7-point favorite."

Robaina stressed that point spreads have much to do with how a team is perceived to be at a point in time. If the Packers are 11-0, or close to it, going into the Dallas game, said Robaina, then the spread will be bigger, maybe 8 or 9 points, unless Dallas also has a comparable record. If they are 6-5 and Dallas is 11-0, then it might be a "pick 'em."

But given that the Packers could be the favorite in every game, going undefeated for the season is more than unlikely, said our expert. You might get someone to take your money at 50-1 odds, he said, but the reality of the Packers going 19-0 is closer to 100-1.

The question about 19-0 is "pretty ridiculous" said Robaina. "I look at the Green Bay Packer team and I don't see that they are any greater than either of the Dallas Cowboys teams that won Super Bowls or the 49ers teams that won Super Bowls. Neither of those teams went 19-0. They are a nice team."

But if someone wanted to place that bet, what kind of odds would they get?

"We came up with something like 50-1," said Robaina. "But that seems a little low to me. It's probably higher than that. That's something that a book(maker) would book here in town because you obviously don't want to take too much liability. But the odds of it really happening are closer to 100-1. But it's not out of the realm."