

## **Are you ready?**

**By Brad Young**

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LAS VEGAS – The pro football season keeps getting longer and longer, but the offseason still seems to last forever. However, the regular season is less than a week away with Thursday's kickoff between New York and Washington.

Las Vegas Sports Consultants have released odds on all the Week 1 action, with a couple intriguing stories according to senior oddsmaker Cesar Robaina.

It all begins with the Thursday tilt between the Jets and Redskins. LVSC opened Washington as a four-point home 'chalk,' with the total set at 40. The line has moved at various casinos to three and 41.

Injuries are part of any season and any team, but three notable signal callers have been dinged up during the preseason. New York's Chad Pennington is expected to miss 12 weeks with a broken left wrist, leaving veteran Vinny Testaverde calling the shots.

"If Pennington were playing, the line would have probably opened with the Redskins at 1 ½ with a total of 42," stated Robaina. "Vinny could be alright, but the Jets are worse than they were last year with all their defections."

The most notable quarterback injury hit the Atlanta Falcons and superstar Mike Vick in the preseason. Atlanta visits Dallas Sunday as a two-point underdog with a total of 36 ½.

"The Falcons would be a two to 2 ½-point favorite with Vick in the lineup," said Robaina. "Doug Johnson is a capable quarterback, but he's not Vick. Dallas finished strong in the preseason, which is a Bill Parcell's staple. He will have the Cowboys ready for this contest."

San Francisco hosts Chicago with quarterback Jeff Garcia listed as "probable." The former Canadian Football star has started 53 consecutive games for the 49ers, ranking fifth among active quarterbacks. Garcia missed some preseason action due to a back injury. LVSC installed San Francisco as a touchdown favorite, with the total set at 40.

"There is a little more mystery to making Week 1 odds because teams change from year to year," noted Robaina. "We're assuming Garcia is fine, but he may be a bit rusty after missing some time."

Another interesting Week 1 matchup replays last year's AFC Championship game between Oakland and Tennessee. The Raiders prevailed in both games versus the Titans last year (41-24 and 52-25), but enter this road game as a 3 ½-point underdog with a total of 47.

“Oakland could have Tennessee’s number, but the Raiders looked awful in preseason,” said Robaina. “The Titans have improved during the offseason, and have something to prove against the defending AFC champs.”