



Sunday January 21, 2024

Tampa Bay Buccaneers @ Detroit Lions

Game Time: 3:00pm ET

Selection: Detroit Lions - 6

The Detroit Lions are coming off a massive win against a very talented LA Rams squad at home 24-23 and are full steam ahead into their Divisional Round matchup with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The win last Saturday night was the Lions first playoff victory in 32 years and the city is absolutely buzzing. This Detroit Lions fan base has been starving for football success and the intensity at Ford Field was palpable watching that game vs the Rams. Now one win away from a berth in the NFC Championship, I can't even imagine how loud that stadium is going to be on Sunday afternoon making for quite the home field advantage. The Lions have played great at Ford Field this season posting a 6-2 mark while the Buccaneers are 5-4 on the road.

These two teams previously met this season in Week 6 with the Lions dominating at Tampa Bay 20-6. Jared Goff lit up the Bucs going 30-44 for 353 yards and 2 touchdown passes. The Lions at this time were far from full strength as they were missing Jahmyr Gibbs, Brian Branch and Jonah Jackson. Star running back David Montgomery left the game with an injury after his 6th carry, and Jameson Williams just returned from suspension and only played 16 snaps. Now at full strength for this playoff tilt, I expect this elite Lions offense to move the ball at will against a very average Bucs pass defense.

Coming into this matchup the Lions are 3rd in Total offense (391.4 yds pg), 5th in Points Per Game (26.9 ppg), 3rd in Passing Yards Per Game (258.7 yds per game), 6th in Rushing Yards Per Game (132.8 yds pg), and 5th In Yards Per Rush Attempt at 5.6 yards per carry. It is a lethal well balanced unit playing in the pristine conditions of their dome.

Meanwhile this Bucs team is exactly what their record says they are, a very average team. 9-8 overall, 3-7 against teams with a winning record, and barely squeaked out of a weak NFC South. They are 22nd in the league in total offense, 19th in Points Per Game, 16th in Passing Yards Per Game, 31st in Rushing Yards Per Game, and 32nd in Rush Yards Per Attempt. All average. As I had mentioned earlier, things get particularly dicey in the secondary. The Bucs are 27th in Opponent Passing Yards Per Game (248.1 yds per game), and 22nd In Opponent Passing Yards Per Completion (10.4 yds per comp). This is a recipe for a Lions offense now at full strength to have a field day.

The Lions have the edge at QB where Jared Goff has been superior with a QBR of 60.3 compared to Baker Mayfield's QBR of 54.4 which is huge this time of year in a quarterback driven league. The Lions season point differential is +66 compared to the Bucs +23. You also have to give the Lions defense credit as they were able to hold a potent Rams offense (7th overall in Total Offense) to just 23 points.

The general public is going to be a prisoner of the moment this week as it pertains to the Bucs, which is why I think we are getting such a good number for the Lions at -6. Beating the defending NFC Champion Eagles

32-9 may look good on paper, but let's keep in mind that the Eagles team that took the field this past Monday night was a mere shell of itself from last year. They literally limped into the playoffs riddled with injuries to key players like Jalen Hurts and AJ Brown who were unable to suit up at all. Morale was poor and they looked very early in the game like a team that was completely done, far and away the weakest team in the playoff field. The Detroit Lions on the other hand, with the whole state of Michigan in a frenzy, will be poised to play the game of their lives to advance to the NFC Championship Game. Take the Lions at -6.

If a single game you purchased does not win based on the point spread, you will receive the next equivalent game FREE OF CHARGE.

Any questions or comments can be sent to: wiz@wizardraceandsports.com

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