

# Random Musings (The NFL on REO)

## Goodbye Fitz!

Earlier this year, a few of us from the REO staff worked on a Power Rankings for Nashville Sports Talk Radio. We assigned points to every show in four categories, we took the averages of each of those ratings, and then we used that data to come up with our final rankings. Before we had a chance to finalize the article to present our rankings, one of the major radio stations in Nashville made some major changes to their lineup, which obviously rendered our previous rankings pointless. We decided to go back to the drawing board, allow the new iterations of shows some time to come into their own, and then re-rank everyone. Sadly, that delay is costing us again as one of the local shows – [Braden and Fitz on 102.5 The Game](#) is coming to an end. Jason Fitz is moving to a nationally syndicated show with ESPN Radio and Braden Gall will probably be part of whatever show 102.5 The Game puts together once Fitz departs.

I hate this. Not to get too deep into the inner workings of REO, when we conducted our original rankings, Braden and Fitz came out as the number 2 show in Nashville. Braden and Fitz were a new show – they have barely been on the air for a year – and they already were doing a show that was smarter, funnier, and more enjoyable than some of the long-standing local shows. Fitz is very good at keeping the conversation moving and he worked really well with Braden Gall.

So, I am happy for Fitz because this is obviously a huge career opportunity for him but I am sad for our Nashville market because we are losing a good show. I hope that whoever they get to replace Fitz will be able to keep the show as interesting. (On a personal note, I would love for them to

move Willy Daunic to mornings but I realize that is probably impossible with his Nashville Predators responsibilities.)

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## Skycam?



On Thursday Night Football, the NFL Network and NBC decided to use Skycam as the primary camera angle. It was a big deal, as no other game had been purposely covered that way before. From what I can tell, it received a mixed response from fans. There was no mixed response in my house: We all hated it. My sons watch football with me, particularly my two oldest who are fourteen and thirteen. The thirteen-year-old loves to play Madden. He is probably the perfect audience for the Skycam view and he was not particularly thrilled. My fourteen year old has never been a big gamer so his negative response was much more predictable to me.

Though I am no longer a gamer, when I was younger I did play video games a lot. In fact, I spent hours playing video games. I concentrated mostly on sports' games, with lots of Baseball Stars and Joe Montana Football. (You see, we had the Sega

Genesis and never owned any Nintendo after the original, so we were unable to play Madden unless we were at a friend's house.) Mostly though, we played Tecmo Bowl and Tecmo Super Bowl. And for my money, football video games hit their peak with those two and have been going downhill ever since. So my preferred camera angle is whatever camera angle looks the closest to how Tecmo displayed the action. And that is certainly not Skycam!

What did you, my dear readers, think about Skycam? Would you be okay with more broadcasts using it as the primary camera angle or would it work better if used as part of the rotation?

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### **Three Takes on Marcus Mariota**

Mariota has had a very uneven season. Perhaps you are having a hard time figuring out why he seems to have regressed this season. I am here to help. Here are the hater, the homer, and the halfway take. We will start with the hater.

#### **Hater**



Marcus Mariota is not a good NFL QB. He cannot play from the pocket, as his stats in 2017 bare out. He has only thrown 8 touchdowns this season and 10 interceptions. The Titans added weapons to the offense and somehow he has gotten worse. He

is uncomfortable under pressure, cannot throw to the outside, and has a less-than-average deep throw. In addition, he is not a good leader. He does not talk. He does not rally his team by getting in their faces and pushing them to be better. He is too timid, too quiet, and too mild-mannered to ever be an elite QB in the NFL.

## Homer



Marcus Mariota deserves the benefit of the doubt for this season. His critics like to forget that he missed the entire offseason, rehabbing a broken leg. He was unable to do football activities until right before training camp started.

Missing all of the offseason work and preparation put him behind from the opening game. Then, to make matters worse, he injured his hamstring the fourth game of the season and has not been anywhere near 100% since that game. In addition, do not forget that many of his interceptions this season have been on his receivers running the wrong route. Yes, the team added weapons this offseason, but becoming familiar with each other takes time and with Mariota missing time due to injury, they have not been able to gel the way they need to. We just need to give it time to work. Mariota is still capable of being an elite QB in the NFL.

## Halfway



Marcus Mariota has been inconsistent this season. While he has not been anywhere near as bad as his detractors will claim he has not been blameless in the Titans offensive struggles. He has been less comfortable in the pocket, for a variety of reasons. He has been less

decisive and accurate in third down and red zone opportunities. He has made a few throws that were just plain awful. However, he has also had his share of bad luck with multiple touchdowns either dropped or taken off the board due to bad calls. Those things affect his final stat line in ways

that critics and national media people simply do not acknowledge or recognize. This will be a frustrating season for Titans fans though because as it stands, it does not appear that Mariota will have enough time to truly heal and feel comfortable with his new offensive weapons. That does not mean this will be a lost season. Even with a less than 100% effective Mariota, the Titans should still be a playoff team which is a huge step forward for a team that has missed the playoffs for nearly a decade. Right now, Mariota is a middle-of-the-pack QB with the ability to take strides to make it close to the top 10 by the time the season ends. Will he do it? I am leaning ever so slightly to yes.

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In a couple of weeks, we will be posting the  $\frac{3}{4}$  season Power Rankings. This time around, I hope to be joined by Gowdy Cannon and Mike Lytle in coming up a more definitive Top Ten. The next two weeks are going to be huge for so many teams as far as playoff implications are concerned. People might complain and criticize the quality of teams in the NFL this season, particularly in the AFC, but right now, there are 13 teams in the AFC with legitimate hopes for the playoffs. And the NFC has 13 as well. That is 26 teams out of 32 that are still holding on to hope for a postseason berth. That is insane. I realize the product is a bit watered down this season but at least this is not like some other sports where the outcome seems set in stone two weeks into the regular season. Hope springs eternal in the NFL.

See you next week.