

Rambling Ever On Presents: Overrated/Underrated

We're back with more infallible opinions on those things in our culture that are a little too respected and things that need more love.

Ben Plunkett

Overrated – Big Toe

Everyone thinks he's the cool guy on the foot campus because he's this big old Hoss fella and he's the only piggy that actually does any work by going to market. All that is well and good, but he is also the only piggy that gets hurt. You ever think about that? So you're getting up in the middle of the night. Nine times out of ten, you are going to stub a toe and every single one of those times it the big toe and his bulbous ways.

Underrated – Pinky Toe

This is the dude that went wee, wee, wee all the way home. Okay, that does seem pretty lame, but people aren't asking about the context. It's all because all the other toes are so mean and stuff. So really, it all comes down to his sorry family life: His miserable brothers. There's the hifalutin biggest brother, the second eldest who stays at home all day playing video games, the third oldest who always eats all the food, and the pretentious fourth brother who constantly preaches on the many excellences of veganism. All in all, the poor guy has sorry role models and therefore has good reason to wee, wee, wee all time. Bless his heart.

Mike Lytle

Overrated – [Funyuns](#). I am not a fan of these artificial, processed, disgusting things that are made to look like the letter “o”. They are a disgrace to the chip family as well as the onion ring family. It is really hard to bring shame to two different types of food, but Funyuns pull it off easily. The fact that the word “fun” is in their name when they are opposite of fun is the cherry on top of this failure sundae. When most of your main ingredients sound like the names of villains in Harry Potter[2. Ferrous Sulfate would be exhibit A] then you have a problem.

Underrated – **Pork Rinds**. NOW WE ARE TALKING! Sorry about yelling, but I get excited about frying pork skin. They are natural, they are low in carbs, they are a great source of protein, but most importantly they are delicious. Whether you prefer plain, bbq, or hot and spicy, there is a pork rind for you. They are great served fresh at a state or county fair, but they are also great in a bag from your local Walmart or gas station convenience store. Sure they are high in sodium and fat, but most of us need more sodium and fat in our diet anyway so that is not necessarily a negative[3. This is completely false as most of us do NOT need more fat or sodium in our diets.]. In Spanish, they are called chicharrones which makes them sound even more scrumptious.

Gowdy Cannon

Overrated: Deep Dish Pizza from anywhere

Underrated: Frozen \$2.29 Pizza from [Aldi](#)

Oh, do I get made fun of for this in my church in Chicago. But I must keep it ¹⁰⁰ since the movie *Creed* taught me to. For pizza, I prefer a balance of ingredients. Deep dish has far too much sauce, which I assume is the point. The tomato sauce

is a role player on a good pizza to me, not the Allen Iverson of tastes. Hogging the ball.

I can, and have, eaten the big frozen Aldi pizzas five times in a week. They are simple yet thoroughly satisfying. I still remember when they raised the price from \$1.99 to \$2.29 at my local store. I wept for days. Because 30 cents over thousands of pizzas really adds up.

Phill Lytle

Overrated: Candy Corn

In 2016, [USA Today](#) conducted a survey to determine the favorite candy for each state. The people of the great state of Tennessee, my state, picked Candy Corn as their favorite.

Candy Corn.

I don't want to speak ill of my state, but this might be the dumbest thing Tennessee has ever done. Candy Corn is vile. It is a disgrace to candy. It is a disgrace to corn. It is sickly-sweet with the consistency and texture of hardened ear wax.

Underrated: Corn

Corn is the most underrated of all vegetables[1. I realize there is a lot of debate on this point. Some consider corn a vegetable, a fruit, and a grain. Basically, it's the holy trinity of food.]. It is versatile: you can put corn in just about anything and it makes that dish better. Corn on the cob – particularly grilled corn on the cob – is about the tastiest thing in the world. Other great examples of corn usage: Corn Casserole. Cornbread. Corn tortillas. Corn chowder. Cornhole!!!

Corn is king.

Ben Plunkett

Overrated – White Coffee (Overcreamed coffee)

This is what I call cups of creamer/milk with a little bit of coffee added. A lot of people apparently consider this the greatest thing since the invention of goat yoga. I have no problem with milk. I love milk. Milk is good people. But when I drink milk, I drink milk. When I drink coffee, I drink coffee. A wise coffee drinker once told me that you should never trust coffee drinkers who corrupt their coffee. I think there might be something to that.

Underrated – Black Coffee

And that brings me to the underrated king of coffees. It ain't just me, folks. There are dozens of us! Dozens! I'm thinking about starting a Black Coffee Matters movement. I think such a group has potential to make a true difference in the Java world. Who's with me?!

Phill Lytle

Overrated: Sleeping in

Sleeping in was fun when I was 13. Sleeping in stopped being fun when I became a man. Sleeping in is painful now that I am nearly 40. If I sleep in (basically any time after 9:00 AM) I feel like death the rest of the day. Plus, I feel like I wasted a good portion of my day.

Underrated: Naps

Naps were awful when I was a kid. Naps were essential when I was in college. Naps are glorious retreats to the world of slumber now that I am nearly 40! As much as it drives my wife crazy, I am able to take a nap every day at work on my lunch break. As a teacher, she is unable to do that, and so she resents my happiness and sleep.[1. She doesn't resent it. That

was a joke. Or maybe she does resent it a little. I don't know. I'm too relaxed and rested to really notice or care...due to all the naps.]

Mike Lytle

Overrated – Day old sushi. I am going to get very personal with this one. I once ate day old sushi that I purchased at a grocery store. I ate half of it the day I bought it and it was fine. I ate the other half the next day and it was not fine. Or perhaps I should say I was not fine. I have a pretty impressive record of stomach issues during my lifetime. This was especially true when I was younger. The sushi I ate that day messed me up for over a month. Most every topic covered in this article is a matter of personal opinion, but this one is fact – DON'T EAT DAY OLD SUSHI!

Underrated – Day old chili. I love fresh chili. I have had the honor and privilege of being judge/scorekeeper for several chili cook-offs and have tasted hundreds of chili varieties that were entered for competition. I have savored every moment. That being said, there is just something about eating chili the day after (or even a couple days after) it was first prepared. The flavors have more time to coalesce. The spices and seasonings have much needed time to meld with all the other ingredients and produce something truly special. Take your time, don't rush...you will thank me later.

Gowdy Cannon

Overrated: Pronouncing 'gif' with a Hard G

Underrated: Pronouncing 'gif' with a Soft G

“Gift” is an exception to an English pronunciation rule. “Giraffe” is the rule. I’m not even going to argue this. As a Level 1 ESL teacher I already spend way too much time trying to explain why OU has six pronunciations, why “both” and “bother” have completely different O and TH sounds and why “February” and “Wednesday” have the most random, ridiculous silent Rs and Ds (and if you think about it, the second E in Wednesday is silent as well...you can’t make this stuff up). All words we add henceforth need to be consistent. Think of the children! (And the immigrants)

Who Watches the Watchmen? (The NFL on REO)

In *Watchmen*, the genre-defining masterpiece by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, there is a slogan that can be seen throughout the graphic novel, spray-painted on walls, “Who watches the Watchmen?” It’s a message about keeping those in power accountable and if that is even possible. While the things I examine this week are much less important in the grand scheme, I believe they belong in the conversation. It’s too often that we find incompetence or worse coming from those that are in a place of power in the sports’ world – whether it be the leagues, the teams, or the media that covers it all. So here is my attempt to watch the watchmen.

Media Incompetence

Reading and listening to sports media is a frustrating and sometimes exasperating use of my time. I don't think I am alone in that reaction. I get it. There will be honest, and even logical, differences of opinion. I have no problem with those. I may not like it when my favorite teams get unfairly criticized or ignored, but on some level, I understand the reasoning behind those decisions. But sometimes, or a lot of the time, sports' writers and talkers go too far. They make absurd declarations that no intelligent person can defend. (See: EVERY WORD FROM THE LIPS OF SKIP BAYLESS.) Or sometimes, they seem to lack the simple skill of real analysis or evaluation. I'll give you an example.

Sports Illustrated does a weekly NFL Power Rankings Poll. There are typically 17 to 18 voters and most of them have voted throughout the season. Each submits their own Power Rankings and then the totals are compiled and the Official Power Poll is created.

In [this week's Power Rankings](#) (and last week's for that matter) my Tennessee Titans received a 30th place vote from one of the voters.

30th.

There are 32 teams in the NFL. And this person that purports to know the NFL voted the Titans as the 3rd worst team in the NFL. Look, I have no problem with the voters keeping the Titans out of the top half of the Power Rankings. They have not been a good team this year. They have been uneven and inconsistent. But even with all that, they are still 4-3, first in their division, and have wins over the Seahawks and the Jaguars – two teams that are numbers 5 and 13 respectively. The Titans' worst loss – the debacle in Houston

– was to the number 11 ranked team according to the Power Ranking. They don't "show their work" on the Power Rankings so I don't know who to call out publicly but if I could I would. It's dumb and completely unsupportable.

It depends on what your definition of the word "catch" is...

Another week in the NFL, another controversial catch/no catch situation. This week's biggest offender – the Zach Miller no-catch call in the Chicago vs. New Orleans game. At this point, no one officiating an NFL game knows for sure what a catch is. For an exhaustive breakdown of some of the most controversial calls in the past few years, [go visit this link](#). It has videos and gifs and everything.

I reached out to some of my fellow REO writers Mike, Gowdy, and Mark to get their opinions on this topic. Have it fellas!

Gowdy:

For the last seven years, the NFL has massacred logic and the English language over what the meaning of a "catch" is in football. It started with Calvin Johnson vs. my Bears in 2010, reached its controversial peak in a Dallas vs. Green Bay playoff game with Dez Bryant in January of 2015 and has continued until last Sunday when Zach Miller made (what is logically and semantically) a catch vs. New Orleans in the end zone for a TD. But no, the referees ruled that it's not a catch with the NFL's Pharisee-like definition of a very simple concept.

Look, I get it to some degree. When a player bobbles the ball as he's falling to the ground, it can mean he didn't catch it in that he didn't procure it to a reasonable level, meaning he "dropped" it. I don't want to throw the baby out with the bath

water and leave it all to subjectivity. But give the referees some latitude to use some common sense. Any time you over-define words and concepts, you run a huge risk of leaving out a human's ability to reason and interpret. That is exactly what has been happening in the NFL for years now. Their catch rule reads like a chapter in Leviticus. It needs to change. Because otherwise, it hurts people's brains, creates injustice (in a sports sense) and takes some fun out of the game.

Mike:

I am usually not a "things were so much better in the good old days" type person, but when it comes to catching a football in the NFL this was so much better in the good old days. I remember a time when players, coaches, refs, and fans all had the same basic understanding of what constituted a catch. Now we have to go through a checklist of questions like "Did he clearly possess the ball?" "Did he make a football move?" "Did he maintain possession all the way to the ground?" "At any point in the process of catching the football did the ball make any unnatural motion that could potentially leave an ounce of doubt in the minds of all those looking on as to the veracity of the aforementioned completion?"

I may have made one of those questions up, but you get my point. It should not be this difficult. I am not a Dallas Cowboys fan, but if what Dez Bryant did against the Packers in the 2015 playoffs can't be ruled a catch then we need to rethink the whole thing. It hasn't really improved since then despite the tinkering. The solution, as always, fire Roger Goddell.

Mark:

What exactly is a catch according to the NFL? Ah, one the great mysteries of the cosmos. Philosophers, scientists, and theologians have debated this topic for a millennium. Verily, this is an inescapable question that every man and woman struggles with at some point in their existence. Unfortunately, those who wrestle with this question are often

NFL referees. In recent years the definition of catch according to the rule book has become so convoluted that refs might need a legal degree to fully comprehend the nature of a catch. As a result we've seen legal "loopholes" exploited (occasionally at the most inopportune of times in the post season!) to deny a team/player of what should have been a catch.

I think they all make very valid points, especially the part about firing Goodell. Mike is wise. Listen to Mike. Gowdy is no slouch either using words like massacre and semantically. This is an NFL column for crying out loud! That kinda talk is too fancy for us common folk! And Mark, well Mark decided to take a more philosophical approach. Nothing wrong with that.

Titans Talk



Is there such a thing as a bad win? Or a good loss? According to Logan Ryan, Titans' cornerback, there are not good losses or bad wins. [Ryan has a radio show on 104.5 The Zone](#) in Nashville where he sits in with the guys from [The Midday 180](#). Yesterday, Paul Kuharsky vehemently pushed back against Ryan's assertion. In Kuharsky's view, the Tennessee Titans' overtime

win against the Cleveland Browns was a bad win. Ryan made a lot of good points in his response about how hard it is to win in the NFL, how some games just don't go the way you want them to and you have to do everything you can to pull out the win. That's what the Titans did against the Browns. It was an ugly win. It was a disappointing game for Titans' fans because we had hoped to see the Titans dominate from the opening whistle. But, a win is a win. I tend to side more with Logan Ryan, an actual NFL player who has won a Super Bowl, than with a sports personality/writer.

Let me frame it this way (echoing what Ryan said on the show): Would the Houston Texans' 41-38 loss to the Seattle Seahawks be considered a good loss for the Texans? Or would it be considered a bad win for the Seahawks? My guess is, most people (and Paul Kuharsky) would say that yes, it was a good loss because the Texans offense was so good in that game and it was very close. I also think that most people (including Paul) would say that it was a good win for the Seahawks. It was an exciting game, that's for sure, but does that make it a good loss and a good win? Both teams struggled to do anything on defense. Both teams allowed their opponents to move the ball almost effortlessly down the field. (Both QB's threw 4 TDs and over 400 yards. That's a sign of very poor defense.) So why would that be a good win for the Seahawks? One side of the ball played horribly – just like the Titans offense did against the Browns. One side played really well – just like the Titans defense did against the Browns.[1. Before you lose your mind yelling at me about the quality of the opponent, know that I understand that perspective. The Browns are an awful team. The Titans should have won that game by 10+ points. I was frustrated that they didn't. But at the end of the day, they won. To me, that is all that matters. I guarantee you that while Ryan and his teammates are happy with the win, they are well aware that they have to play much better in the future. Both of those things can be true. It's not an either-or scenario like some in the media or in the

fan-base want it to be.] A win is a win in the NFL. You take them any way you can get them. Assigning style points is for fans and writers and has no bearing what happens on the field and in the locker room.

Five Predictions For the 2017-18 NBA Season

The NBA regular season tipped off last week. The NBA has become a sport where the offseason gets more attention than the regular season. With all the blockbuster trades and huge free-agent signings, it is not hard to see why this is the case. Now we get to see how all those offseason moves will pan out. Last season I made five predictions about the NBA and somehow all five ended up happening. I was on cloud nine. My head grew to twice its normal size, I was invincible. I even considered flying to Vegas to put my skills to the test.

Thankfully the Vegas trip never happened. I contented myself instead, by making five NFL predictions for this current season. A couple of those NFL predictions aren't looking so good this point and I have come crashing back down to earth. Apparently, I do not have the gift of prophecy.

Despite my recent failures I have decided to dust myself off and try again. What follows are five predictions for the 2017-2018 NBA season. Maybe I can recapture the magic from last year.

LeBron James will win the league MVP award. I think this will happen for a couple reasons. First, there seems to be a growing sentiment among sports media members that LeBron should win again. He has won the award four times, but his last MVP trophy was in 2013. He is still considered the best player in the world so many find it odd that he has not won this award in four years.[1. I would counter that the guys who have won the last four MVPs each deserved them.] The second reason I think LeBron will win is more practical. No matter how good Golden State is Steph Curry and Kevin Durant will take votes from each other. Russell Westbrook won last year, but his Thunder team added two all-star players so while the team should be better his numbers will almost certainly go down. The same can be said for last year's runner-up James Harden after the Rockets added a future hall of famer in Chris Paul. Other contenders may emerge, but, if he stays healthy, LeBron's team should win plenty of games and his numbers should be MVP worthy.

The Milwaukee Bucks will win a playoff series. Their last series win was in 2001 so it's been a while. That is all about to change though. With Giannis Antetokounmpo[2. AKA The Greek Freak] they have a top ten player in the league. He may be a top-five player after this season. He should be a household name already, but his name is so hard to say and spell it has held him back.[3. If his name was John Smith and he played for the Knicks or Lakers you would be sick of hearing about him at this point.] He led the team in every major statistical category last season as a 22-year-old. The sky is the limit with this guy and they have built a decent team around him especially if Jabari Parker can come back from injury and regains his previous form. I expect 45-50 wins and a victory in the first round of the playoffs.

The Golden State Warriors will win 70 games this season. Only two teams in history have ever won 70 or more games in a season so to expect that out of the gate is a tall order. With the talent they have and the chemistry built by years of playing together 70 wins a real possibility. I don't think they will chase it like they did two seasons ago when they set the win record at 73, but it is hard to see them losing a lot this season.

Fewer players will sit out games due to rest this season. Despite criticism from some[4. Charles Barkley has apparently reached the stage in life where he complains about everything. Even decisions that make perfect sense. As a long time fan of his, all I can say is "You are better than that Charles!"] the league made a wise decision to spread the regular season out a bit. They are scheduling fewer games on consecutive nights and trying to avoid the dreaded four games in five nights stretches. This should mean coaches won't rest guys as often and it will be more likely that paying fans will get to see teams at full strength. If this works it is a win-win for everyone.

People will still complain when players do rest. I get the complaints, I really do. If someone pays the full price of a ticket only to find out that many of the players they came to see are not playing that can be a real bummer. At the same time, I totally understand why coaches rest players.[5. I find it interesting that in baseball it is a completely accepted part of the sport that players will sit out games to rest during the season, but when NBA teams started doing the same thing it signaled the rapid decline of Western civilization.] Up until about two years ago, the only team that routinely

rested healthy players was the San Antonio Spurs. The Spurs also happen to be the most successful NBA franchise of the past two decades winning five championships and being a legitimate contender every year since 1997-1998. It is not a surprise that other teams started copying their techniques and strategies. Even with the schedule changes, this issue won't go away. Coaches will rest guys during the regular season in preparation for the playoffs and sports talk show hosts and fans will complain.

There you have it. I would love to get your feedback on these predictions and hear what others think may happen this season.

[Being Petty: A Tribute To a Legend](#)

On Monday, October 2nd, we lost the heart and soul of American rock and roll. Tom Petty's career and influence spanned decades, leaving hit after hit in their wake. Everyone knows a Petty song. Everyone has a favorite. There are innumerable articles out right now highlighting his music, his career, and his legacy. We won't pretend that our take is the best you will read, but we do hope that for those that loved his music, it will serve as another opportunity to reminisce and reflect on an artist that helped create the soundtrack for many of our lives.

Josh Crowe

The American spirit is vast. It's hard to nail down. Many

artists have tried to do so and several have failed. Some who have succeeded are Bruce Springsteen with *Thunder Road* or Bob Seger with *Against the Wind*.

For me, Tom Petty's *Free Fallin'* also gets the job done. From the first chord to the fade out, I'm swept away to the life of a Southern California teen in the 80's. It's broad and simple. It's full of tension. The girl is good and the boy is bad. How many 80's romance movies played this situation out for us? Yet, Petty made us feel it again.

Mike Lytle

When thinking of which Tom Petty song to pick it is very easy to fall back on the old joke that I can't narrow it down to one song since I celebrate his entire catalog. In this case, it is not a joke though. *Free Fallin'*, *Runnin' Down a Dream*, *I Won't Back Down*, *The Waiting*, he has so many great songs that it is very difficult to pick one to pay tribute to. So instead of choosing a song, I am going with a Tom Petty movie. That movie is none other than the Kevin Costner classic *The Postman*. For those too young to remember (or those who have tried to forget) Kevin Costner decided in the mid to late 90s to focus his acting energies on three hour, post-apocalyptic epics. *Waterworld* received the most attention because it cost so much to make and went so far over budget, but *The Postman* is the better movie. A primary reason for this is Tom Petty and his role as Bridge City Mayor. He actually plays himself in the movie, but since it is set in a world that no longer cares about famous rock stars he is content to inspire people in other ways. Whether it is for his singing, songwriting, guitar playing, or acting, Tom Petty will be missed.

Gowdy Cannon

Chances are you have heard *American Girl* not just on the radio

but on any number of TV shows or movies, usually during a climax of a story about a woman triumphing. Americans have heard it in everything from sitcoms like *Scrubs* and *Parks and Rec* to movies you'd expect like *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* and movies you wouldn't like *Silence of the Lambs*. I read even *The Handmade's Tale* recently made use of it. We can't get enough of this song to help tell our stories. Musically it makes you want to cut loose and "dance all night," even if you can't dance or normally don't (like me). But it's deeper than that, which is why Hollywood keeps calling and why it's been covered dozens of times the last 40 years. It's so versatile it can tell any number of stories but I find it quite appropriate that the song didn't catch on for a while but later became a mega-hit. Because that is probably the story we love best. The story of Ben Carson and his library card, of Kurt Warner and his grocery bagging, of America being the underdog in its revolution. *American Girl* is, like the song's author, as American as apple pie and absolutely what is great about this country.

Phill Lytle

I don't have a singular story to share – no transcendent moment when a Tom Petty song knocked me over and captured my heart. What I do have is decades of unreserved love for *Learning To Fly*. From the opening guitar to the triumphant, drum-laced bridge, the song is a revelation every time I hear it. It's a simple melody, played with precision and care, wonderfully mixed to bring out the most of each instrument. The guitar solo is reserved and understated, fitting perfectly with the song's laid-back vibe. Petty's voice sounds as confident as ever, singing about living, failing, and trying again. It is a song with redemption echoing in every corner and it is as beautiful a song as I will ever hear.

David Lytle

A couple weeks ago I was listening to Tom Petty and talking to my wife about him. I made the comment that Tom Petty was my go to if I wanted something that made me feel good. I never get tired of the sound of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. Their sound makes a bad day bearable and a good day great. Then Petty died, and while the loss of a legend saddened me, I am grateful that the magic of recording allows the music to live on. For my dime, *Runnin' Down a Dream* is the quintessential feel-good song of an artist that never failed to make me feel better. It describes driving a car with music on and presumably the windows down. It's about life on the road encountering both the rain and the sunshine. The guitar riff "drives" the song so effectively that just hearing the guitar makes you want to jump in a car. Let's celebrate Tom Petty driving down the freeway as we hope for "something good waitin' down this road."

[The NFL on REO: Game Time!](#)

It's game time baby!

The NFL season kicks off tomorrow with the defending Super Bowl champions, the New England Patriots, facing off against the Kansas City Chiefs. I am so excited, even if this first game includes my most hated team in the history of all sports – the Patriots. It's real NFL football for the first time in over half a year! What is better than that?

To commemorate this momentous occasion, here is my interest level for each game this week. We'll start at the bottom.

The “Zzzzzzz...” group:



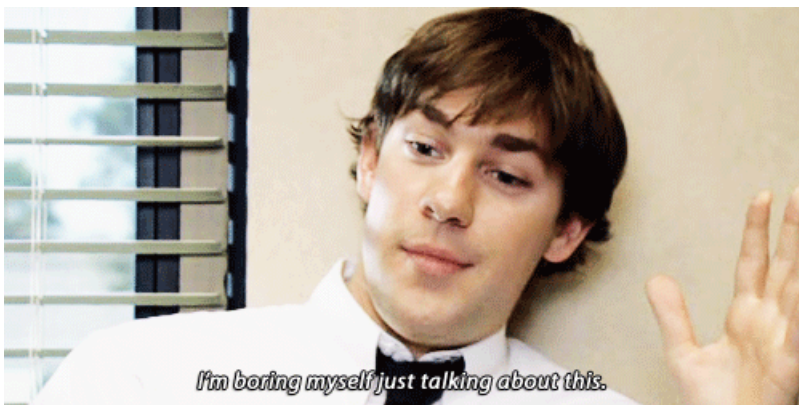
Jets vs Bills

Jaguars vs Texans

Colts vs Rams

The less said about these three games the better.

The “I’ll watch if there isn’t a better game on” group:



I'm boring myself just talking about this.

Panthers vs 49ers – I want to see Christian McCaffrey. That’s it. I don’t care about anything else in this game.

Ravens vs Bengals – This one just made it out of the first group. There is very little interesting about this game.

Cardinals vs Lions – Matt Stafford is on my fantasy team. So there’s that.

Falcons vs Bears – Matt Ryan and Julio Jones usually bring something interesting to the table.

Saints vs Vikings – AP against his old team deserves a little

attention.

The “I’m intrigued” group:



Buccaneers vs Dolphins – I want to see what Winston looks like in his third year with a full compliment of weapons on offense.[1. If this game actually takes place. The hurricane might not let that happen.]

Eagles vs Redskins – Does Wentz take the next step? Does Cousins improve or has he hit his ceiling?

Chargers vs Broncos – I think the Chargers are going to be a lot of fun this year if they stay healthy. Rivers is always worth a look.

Steelers vs Browns – ‘Burger, Bell, and Brown are an awesome trio to watch. I am also curious about DeShone Kizer.

The “Must See TV” group:



Giants vs Cowboys – Two heavy-hitters from the NFC East (Otherwise known as the only division in football to most of

the sports media.) This one could have huge ramifications at the end of the season.

Chiefs vs Patriots – Defending champs. Solid Chiefs team. First game of the season. Of course I am watching.

Seahawks vs Packers – Rogers is always must-see TV and these two teams have played in some great ones in the recent past. I'm sold.

Raiders vs Titans – This is not just my Titans' bias coming out. Two up-and-coming teams. Two young QB's on the rise. This one should be a lot of fun for the early Sunday schedule.

Staff Predictions for the Tennessee Titans



Gowdy Cannon

Anything less than a better record than last year's 9-7 would be at least a little disappointing to me as a Titans fan-in-law (being a Bears fan first but well connected to Nashville through REO and my college friends).

And I think the team is ready for a leap.

I voted for 12-4 last week. NFL Nation has them as one of several teams with 11 wins predicted[2. [Projected records](#)] and I think they are team that is easy to overlook and underrate since Nashville is not a major market. On that note, I think Mariota will be approaching a Top 5 quarterback by season's end, barring injury, and that will be worth a win or two by itself. Going on what Paul Kuharsky wrote last week, I think he is primed to pass Stafford and Rivers at least on his list.

If Indianapolis were in the shape we assumed they'd be in during Luck's early career arc, I would be less optimistic. But they are not. Tennessee looks to be in prime position to win the division and get a high seed. I'm excited for them.

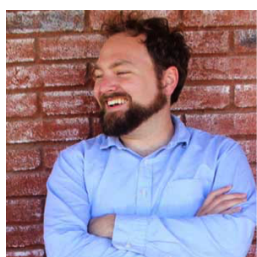


Mike Lytle

The Tennessee Titans had a solid season last year winning nine games and barely missing out on the playoffs. They lost a couple games they probably should have won and ended up stealing a couple games they should have lost so all in all they were what their record says they were – a slightly above average team with many strengths, but a few glaring weaknesses.

In the off season they added some solid pieces in free agency and had a definite plan in the draft. They drafted for positions of need and did not simply pick the best players available even if when some projected high picks fell to them. I have no problem with that strategy. As long as the scouts did their job in projecting future performance then this year's draft should help the team right away.

For these reasons I am predicting an 11-5 record. My head tells me 10-6, but I am going with my heart on this one.



David Lytle

This is my pessimistic take.

8-8

While the Titans have been going in the right direction under Coach Mike Mularkey and GM John Robinson, they may see a slump this year. As a whole, the team lacks depth and will struggle to compensate for injuries that come their way. Even though they added personnel to their defensive backfield and wide receiver core, they will continue to struggle to cover the pass or pass the ball very effectively.



Phill Lytle

I've been high on the Titans since last year. I believe they have made numerous improvements on both sides of the ball this offseason and I think that will translate to a few more wins. I am predicting the team will go 11-5 in 2017. This preseason has dampened expectations in Nashville, but we'll look back on our worries with a laugh by season's end.

Enjoy the opening week, football fans. It only happens once a year. We'll be back next week with a recap of Week 1 and a few other items of interest.

[The NFL on REO: Five Predictions For the Upcoming Season](#)

Here at REO, we are in a constant state of evaluation and evolution. We do this because we want to create the best content possible for you, our readers. A few months ago, we launched The NFL on REO as a more comprehensive and complete look at the game of professional football. So far, it has been a successful decision on our part. But, we are not content to just let things remain the same and grow stagnant. We want The NFL on REO to be as informative, entertaining, and thought-provoking as possible, so we have decided to change things up

a bit. Instead of this being just one man's perspective, we felt it would be a benefit to our readers to include more voices and more perspectives. So, from this point on, The NFL on REO will include contributions from many of the REO writers. We hope you enjoy the tweaked format.

For this week, Mike Lytle has gazed into the future and made five predictions for the 2017-2018 season.

Mike on the Mic

After my [NBA predictions](#) last season went so well I decided to look into my crystal ball and make some NFL predictions for the upcoming season. The NFL is much more unpredictable than the NBA so my crystal ball is a bit cloudy. Even so here are a few things I think could very well happen this season. They are in order of how likely I think they will happen, with one being the least likely and number five being the most likely.

1. The New England Patriots will finish 15-1 this season. Not 16-0, not 14-2. They will lose exactly 1 game in the regular season. Love them or hate them, the Patriots are always in the mix. They typically win 13 or so games each year regardless of who they add or subtract, who gets injured, or even what controversy they have created for themselves that particular year. Last season in games that Brady started they were 14-1 (including playoffs). They should have a healthy Rob Gronkowski this year and they've added quality players on both sides of the ball. They won't go 16-0 like they did in 2007. That is virtually impossible, but they will be very good and only have one slip up until the Titans take them out in the playoffs!

2. A wide receiver will break the 2,000 yard mark this season. This has never happened before in the history of the league. Calvin Johnson came the closest in 2012 when he totaled 1,964

yards. Teams pass more than ever before and the rules allow for a more wide open game. This record will fall at some point and this will be the year. Julio Jones, Antonio Brown, Odell Beckham Jr. are just three of the guys who are capable of breaking this record if things break right for them this year. Last season was actually a down year with no receiver even topping 1,500 yards. I expect to see those numbers trend up this year.

3. The Panthers and Cardinals will both bounce back. In 2015 these were the top two teams in the NFC going 15-1 and 13-3 respectively. They met in the NFC championship game with the Panthers winning and going on to lose in the Super Bowl. Last season they both regressed and finished under .500. I expect both to have winning records and fight for a playoff spot this season.

4. Bill Belichick will be less than forthcoming at a press conference. He may be angry about something that did not go exactly right in practice. Perhaps he will not like a question or the tone of a reporter after a 37-10 victory. He may even be having the best day of his life. Whatever the circumstances I am predicting that he will mumble and answer all questions in the shortest and least informative way possible.

5. Media and fans will overreact to wins and losses each week for the first two months of the season. The NFL season is short. They only play 16 games and injuries are more likely than in other sports so it is difficult to predict anything or really be sure how good (or bad) your team might be. This leads to huge overreactions each week, especially early in the season. Your team loses a close game on a last second field goal and they are the worst team ever. They win a close game because the other team misses a field goal and they are suddenly great. My advice would be to give it time before rushing to judgment, but I don't expect that to happen.

Let me know what you think if these and if any loyal reader

has a bold prediction they would like to make feel free to do so in the comments.

[Listen Now! A Rambling Ever On Spotify Playlist](#)

Seven members of the REO staff helped put this playlist together. The theme is place, as in geographical location. Each song mentions a place or places. It could be a city, state, country, or region. Sometimes the places in these songs are integral to the meaning of the songs themselves. Other times they may be mentioned, almost in passing, to provide added depth and texture to the song choices. Popular music of all styles and genres seems to be fascinated with this theme. There are separate Wikipedia pages dedicated to all the songs about cities like New York, New Orleans, and Nashville. For the most part we stayed away from many of the obvious choices and picked songs that resonated with us personally whether they are popular or not. That doesn't mean you won't immediately recognize some of the song choices. As with all our playlists we limited it to 30 or so songs selected by a handful of people. There are literally thousands and thousands of songs we could have chosen, so we know we left out plenty of good stuff. Let us know what some of your choices would have been.

One final note, this is the REO playlist debut of our very own Gowdy Cannon. We hope to hear more from him in the future!

Fool's Gold: Are the Golden State Warriors the Most Overrated Team of All Time?

The 2016-2017 Golden State Warriors are champions of the basketball world once again. This is their second title in three years, having defeated LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers both times. They went 16-1 in the playoffs which is the highest post season winning percentage in the history of the NBA. By every conceivable measure they appear to be a great team.

Unless you ask other NBA players.

Charles Barkely, Scottie Pippen, Rasheed Wallace, Robert Horry, Julius Irving, and Magic Johnson have all had less-than-kind things to say about this Warriors' team. All of them have publicly questioned their greatness, insinuating that they are the product of a watered down, less talented and more easily exploited league.

We here at Rambling Ever On decided to take a closer look into this controversy. What is it about this Warriors' team that causes all of these former (and current) players to withhold praise, or worse, to openly doubt? We have done our best to get a good sampling of reaction from various NBA players who have played in different eras.

We started our investigation with the players from the 80's and 90's, since they seemed to be the most vocal in their criticism. Craig Ehlo, a former Cleveland Cavalier from the 80's and 90's, noted "I have no doubt we'd take them. 5 games at most. We didn't win the championship but the league was

tougher back then. And with the new rules Mark Price would hit 22 threes a game, minimum. Between me, Wilkins and Price, we'd have the Splash Triplets. Curry would ride the bench in the 90's NBA."

Patrick Ewing, Hall of Fame center for the New York Knicks bristled when asked if the current Warriors are better than the 1996 Chicago Bulls. "Man, we played those Bulls' teams! They were great. Best ever. And we played them close. These pretty boys from Oakland would be crying on the court if they had to play me, Mason and Oakley. We sweep them or they would give up. Whichever comes first."

It appears there is a level of skepticism about the Warriors. We dug deeper.

Michael Olowokandi, the number one pick in the 1998 draft has also recently spoken out. "I'm confident the 99 Clippers would take these Warriors. I know I only averaged 8 points per game for my career, but the league was tougher back then. Draymond Green wouldn't be able to touch me. I'd go for 30 every night."

The skepticism and verbal attacks are not reserved for players from the 80's and 90's. NBA players from every decade are stepping up and taking their shots at Durant, Curry and the Warriors. Fred Carter, the leading scorer on the 1973 Sixers had some choice words.[1.The 1973 Sixers went 9-73 – the worst record in NBA history.] "Back when I played, there were only 17 teams in the league. There are 30 teams today. Obviously that has watered down the league. And we didn't have any of those European players. Those guys should just stick to soccer." Carter continued, "We didn't have the three point shot in my day either. It didn't exist. If it had been around, I am confident that at least half of my team could have shot it at least as well as Stephen Curry. Probably better."

Fred "Curly" Neal of the Harlem Globetrotters added his own

perspective. "Those guys are fancy. They dribble, they drive, they shoot from anywhere on the court. But we did all those things and we did them better. We looked better as well, you know what I'm saying? Don't give me that 16-1! The Globetrotters won 8,829 games in a row!"

Surely, we thought to ourselves, that at the very least, the current players would have a healthy respect for a team that has won 207 regular season games and two NBA championships in the past three seasons. So, we approached LeBron James, arguably the great player of his generation, to get his thoughts. James was thoughtful and political with his response, yet with enough negativity it was clear the questions about the Warriors extends beyond the older generations. "Well, they were a great team. No doubt. But they played in an era that honestly didn't have a lot of great teams. And their style of play worked for them in that era but would not be as effective against the great teams of other eras." We asked James if his Cavaliers team would beat the Kevin Durant led Warriors in a seven game series. LeBron smiled, "Absolutely. Our team could defend the perimeter which would have contained Curry and Thompson. We would have neutralized Durant completely. Our teamwork and passing would have made it impossible for their defense to key on any one player. And defensively, we played a physical and aggressive style that would have knocked them off their game. We would have won that series in 5, maybe 6 games."

There you have it. The Golden State Warriors, who set the NBA record for the most regular season wins in a single season AND over a three year span, winners of two NBA championships, are just not very good. In fact, ask any player, past or present, besides Dell Curry and Mychal Thompson, and they would tell you that pretty much any team that has ever played in the NBA could beat these guys. Even some great college teams could probably give them a good run for their money. In fact, there have been rumors that members of the 1995 College of

Charleston Cougars are saying they believe their team could also defeat the Warriors in a 7 game series, but none of them could be reached for comment.

[Listen Now! A Rambling Ever On Spotify Playlist](#)

Regular readers know that our previous published playlists have been based around a particular theme. Check out our [water](#) and [color](#) playlists. For this playlist we are doing something a little bit different. Instead of theme this playlist is based on a musical instrument. Each song prominently features what is perhaps the greatest of all musical instruments – the piano. Since its invention a little over 300 years ago the piano has made its way into virtually every style of music. Over time the number of musical genres has exploded, but the piano has been a constant. Equally at home in both secular and sacred music these 88 keys produce some of the most beautiful sounds heard this side of heaven. As you listen to this playlist try not to dwell on the fact that if you had paid more attention during piano lessons as a kid you too could have made it on an REO playlist!

For this list we had seven contributors that picked four songs each. Enjoy.

Listen Now! A Rambling Ever On Spotify Playlist

Spring is in the air. Personally I hate spring due to my lifelong struggle with seasonal allergies. Fortunately I have medication for this affliction so don't weep for me. Many people love this time of year though. According to a Gallup poll that I spent about 5 seconds researching, spring is the most popular season, with 36% of Americans voting for it. For many, spring brings to mind renewal and of course vibrant colors. That is what this playlist is all about. Color.

Each song has a color as part of the title or mentions a color or multiple colors prominently in its lyrics. Like our [water playlist](#) this was put together by a group of friends who picked songs that they enjoyed and wanted to share. It was not intended to be an article when we originally put it together, but the host of Celebrity Apprentice is our president now so crazier things have happened.

While I won't pretend to love every song on here I do love the variety. So many styles are represented. There are songs from the 1960s all the way to the current decade and every decade in between. We had eight people contribute 3-4 songs each to this list which is what helped with the eclectic nature of the selections.

Come and celebrate all the colors of the rainbow with us!