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Bleacher report nfl predictions week 5

0/15Elaine Thompson/Associated Press We've hit the 2015 NFL quarterfinal mark. Some things have gone according to plan. The New England Patriots are undefeated and look like the defending Super Bowl champion. The Green Bay Packers are 4-0 and look like the Pats' big NFC contenders. There hasn't been a shortage of surprises either. The Atlanta Falcons and Carolina Panthers are both undescending. The Detroit Lions, who made the playoffs a year ago, are the last undefeated club in the NFL. There are more than a few big games on the Week 5 board. Can the Seattle Seahawks stay hot in Cincinnati against an unbeaten Bengals team? Can the Dallas Cowboys upset the Pats? Answers to these questions and more, we turned to NFL national lead writers and NFL analysts here at Bleacher Report. This is how they expect Week 5 to play. Roll call /standings1 15Ross D. Franklin/Associated PressOK, so we should have known better. Last week, the panel unanimously selected the Oakland Raiders to beat the Chicago Bears. I even heard the Raiders were picked to win something. Well, the joke was ours because the Bears and St. Louis Rams both pulled the upset after getting a single vote between them. It was the only thing that went wrong for NFL lead writer Mike Freeman. He missed only three games last week, overall lead by NFL national lead writer Matt Miller. Gary Davenport: NFL Analyst 9-7 (37-27) Mike Freeman: NFL National Lead Writer 13-3 (43-21)Brad Gagnon: NFL Analyst 10-6 (37-27)Matt Miller: NFL National Lead Writer 11-5 (42-22)Ty Schalter: NFL National Lead Writer 9-7 (35-29)Brent Sobleski: NFL Analyst 11-5 (40-24)Mike Tanier: NFL National Lead Writer 8-8 (37-27)Sean Tomlinson: NFL Analyst 9-7 (38-26)Consensus: 11-5 (543-21) Indianapolis Colts (2-2) at Houston Texans (1-3)2/15Darron Cummings/Associated PressThe Pick: Indianapolis Colts (7-1) Last week, the Indianapolis Colts played in one of the strangest NFL games of recent times. The team was without quarterback Andrew Luck. But the Colts and Jaguars spent the entire afternoon trying to give the game to another before Jacksonville finally showed he wanted to lose more. Now reports are swirling that Luck's injured shoulder could be worse than the player and the team gives, although Luck told reporters he plans to be on the field at NRG Stadium Thursday night: I'm getting ready to start and play. I think I'm getting better every day, Luck said. I don't think I'm necessarily where I'd like to be today in a perfect, perfect world. Still, NFL analyst Brad Gagnon was tempted to take on the Texans even though Houston tackled 48-21 at the hands of the Atlanta Falcons a week ago: It's so tempting to go with the Texans because Of The Injury of Goodness and Houston Is Actually Badly The Colts took three of their last five encounters at NRG Stadium. The problem is that Texans coach Bill O'Brien inexplicably holds on to Ryan Mallett, who has completed only 51.8 percent of passes this season in three and a half usually miserable performances. The Texans are doing the Colts' work for them. Matt Miller was shocked, but the rest of the panel can't make it to the Mallett Express. Colts: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonTexans: MillerChicago Bears (1-3) at Kansas City Chiefs (1-3)3/ 15Nam Y. Huh /Associated PressThe Pick: Kansas City Chiefs (7-1) Chicago Bears were one of two teams apparently injured in being selected as unanimous losers last week. The Bears won last week against Oakland, 22-20. And that win was enough to get them out of the basement at Elliot Harrison's power-scoring NFL.com:Props Robbie Gould, who has done more than his share of the Bears' big kicks over the years. (The 2006 division tour victory over Seattle immediately comes to mind.) The longest-serving member of the team sealed the deal with a much-needed W, coming against a Raiders club that's clearly no joke. And hey, if you're going to tear up Jay Cutler routinely, you better give him credit when he goes 5-8 driving the team nearly 50 yards in a two-minute workout, putting Gould in the game win. (Oh, and it also included a bad fall.) It's all true. It's also true that the Bears are still a bad football team. The defense is still a mess. And since Jay Cutler had a good game, Jay's cosmic rule dictates that he throws 13 interceptions in the first quarter against the Chiefs. The pass defense is a mess. The team has allowed Alex Smith to be fired more than any quarterback in the league in four games. Teams should just lean on Matt Forte and Jamaal Charles' back and try not to screw things up so badly. But one team has Cutler. And when it comes to screwing up, no one's against Cutler. Bears: MillerChiefs: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonSeattle Seahawks (2-2) at Cincinnati Bengals (4-0)4/15Paul Sancya/Associated PressThe Pick: Cincinnati Bengals (8-0)Spectre opposite lowly Bears we have undefeated Cincinnati Bengals, Who trailed only the patriots and Packers in Harrison's power-singing:How hard it is to play their Cincinnati Bengals game plan right now. You never know who's going to get a football or you're going to be the center of an attack. On Sunday, Giovanni Bernard got more touches from the back field than Jeremy Hill, but the latter. Three touchdowns. A week after posting 227 yards, A.J. Green gained Mohamed Sanu (84 yards on four catches), who had posted all 77 yards in total in the previous three weeks of play. Meanwhile, the run-pass ratio was fantastic, with coordinator Hue Jackson overseeing 26 running games compared to 24 assists. You couldn't draw it better. Harrison didn't even touch quarterback Andy Dalton, who plays as well as any signal player in the NFL in the first month of the season. Harrison also didn't mention the Bengals' front four, which is as talented as anyone in football - the advantage four that piled up five sacks of Kansas City's Alex Smith in a 36-21 victory last week. It's the defensive front that may well be the difference this week. Seattle's offensive line hasn't been good this season. If Russell Wilson wasn't as mobile and adept at keeping plays alive, the Seahawks wouldn't even have 2-2.If going to show how different things are in the NFL than we thought they were just a few months ago, now that the Bengals are a unanimous choice of two-time defending NFC champions. Of course, it also means we just threw a bad one at Dalton and the boys. Seahawks: Unanimous pick against Seattle. Wowza.Bengals: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Miller, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonWashington Redskins (2-2) at Atlanta Falcons (4-0)5/15John Bazemore/Associated PressThe Pick: Atlanta Falcons (8-0) During the first three games of the 2015 season, the Atlanta Falcons were kings of comebacks. In all three contests, the Falcons trailed in the fourth quarter. In all three games, the Falcons came back to win. That wasn't necessary in Week 4. The Falcons opened the famous trick for the unhappy Houston Texans, wrapping up a 42-0 lead before finally winning 48-21. Now the team many thought would struggle to make the playoffs has been labeled a Super Bowl contender by some. ESPN.com's Vaughn McClure isn't ready to go quite that far, but he admits there's a lot of these in the Falcons' four games: Since this is a topic of conversation four games into the season, all undescending are Super Bowl contenders right now. But let's see what their position is mid-season, which would be a better metric. The Falcons look very impressive on both sides of the ball. They have the game's best winger Julio Jones, the NFL's leading scorer in Devonta Freeman (seven rushing touchdowns to 42 points), the league's best red-zone offense (12 of 15 with 80 percent) and a plus-6 turnover ratio (eight takes, two gifts). Matt Ryan hasn't even played his best ball, and Roddy White hasn't been heavily involved in the offense, but the Falcons are still undefeated. The Falcons just don't play well at every stage, they also have the luxury of the league's weakest schedule based on the 2014 win Per McClure.Add it all together, and this is a team ready to make a real fuss in the NFC this season. Great win against the Eagles last week. This isn't the Eagles. Falcons: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Miller, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonJacksonville Jaguars (1-3) at Tampa Bay Buccaneers (1-3)6/15Marc Sorota/Associated PressThe Pick: Jacksonville Jaguars (6-2)Granted, Jacksonville Jaguars kicker Jason Myers snatched most of the hit in the Jags' Week 4 16-13 overtime loss to the Indianapolis Colts. Myers did his part in a week where the theme of kickers missing crucial field goals was the theme of the day. However, after his team failed to score in the second half against Indy, quarterback Blake Bortles admitted to Mike DiRocco ESPN.com that the entire offense let the team down: It's just a lack of games. On the field, guys have to be able to perform, whether it's in front or on the play or throwing the ball. We must continue to strive to make big plays. As DiRocco points out, the Jaguars may be looking to make big plays, but that hasn't happened much in recent years: The Jaguars were the worst team in the Red Zone in 2014 -- according to ESPN Stats & Information. They scored an NFL-low 13 touchdowns and scored an NFL-worst 39.1 percent of passes on 32 possessions - and haven't been much better this season. They've scored touchdowns on only 3-8 Red Zone possessions entering Sunday's game and went 0-for-1 against the Indianapolis Colts. And yet the Jaguars were a three-quarters pick from our panel to take down Tampa Bay at home - because as bad as the Jaguars are, the Buccaneers could be worse. If there's a game in Florida that nobody cares about, is that a game? Jaguars: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Miller, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonBuccaneers: Gagnon, MillerNew Orleans Saints (1-3) at Philadelphia Eagles (1-3)7/15Matt Rourke/Associated PressThe Pick: Philadelphia Eagles (5-3) It's Expectations vs. Reality Bowl sponsored by Disappointment! Sure, the New Orleans Saints aren't the team they once were, but few pundits thought it would take overtime in Week 4 before the Saints beat No.1 in 2015 (a 26-20 victory over Dallas). Meanwhile, the Eagles are also stuck in one win and are a team that has gone from trendy Super Bowl selection to a massive disappointment flagged by many. USA Today's Jarrett Bell thinks the Eagles are a mess:They've become the law of the NFL's Murphy. Whatever bad things can happen to the Philadelphia Eagles, it's going to happen. At least that was the rule during the latest collapse of a team built by Chip Kelly as the Eagles stumbled in a 23-20 loss to Washington that left them in last place in the NFC East.Do you realize how bad must be in place to claim last place in the NFC. In the 1990s times for a team that can't get out of its way. But at least there are plenty of accusations -- which must be some other law. Still, the Eagles, Chip Kelly's experiment went wrong, are a panel selection this week - because just like last game, there are bad teams, and then there are inferior teams. Saints: Freeman, Sobleski, TomlinsonEagles: Davenport, Gagnon, Miller, Schalter, TanierCleveland Browns (1-3) at Baltimore Ravens (1-3)8/15Larry French/Getty Images Selection: Baltimore Ravens (8-0) As John Eisenberg of the Ravens website reports, it's not so hard to figure out how Baltimore got its first win of the season last Thursday night, a 23-20 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers. The team returned to play Baltimore Ravens football. It doesn't change year after year. While they're built around a Super Bowl-winning quarterback who gets paid a lot to play games with his hand, they are -- and probably always will be -- a physical, downhill team. Running the ball is in their DNA, part of who they are. They then registered their first win last Thursday night in Pittsburgh when ... Yes... They finally got their ground game going when Justin Forsett piled on 150 of the team's 191 rushing yards. Do you get the picture? Although it's a bit of an over-the-top thing when they run it, they win, and when they don't, they don't. The call to the ground sounds even louder now that the Ravens' wide receivers are recovering from a debilitating injury. There's no doubt what the Ravens need to do starting this Sunday against the Cleveland Browns at M&M's Bank Stadium. Fortunately, if you're a team devastated by injuries in a passing game that absolutely needs to run the ball to succeed, you couldn't pick a better opponent than Cleveland Browns. In in 2014, the Browns were last dead in the NFL in running defense, allowing 141.6 yards per game. The team is a little better this year...141.5 yards per game. How can you expect to be taken seriously in those uniforms? Ravens: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Miller, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonSt. Louis Rams (2-2) at Green Bay Packers (4-0)9/15Jamie Squire/Getty Images Selection: Green Bay Packers (8-0)St. Louis Rams have a tough team to figure out. They've looked good in wins over playoff teams the Seattle Seahawks and Arizona Cardinals without a loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers and a loss to the Redskins. After Green Bay beat the San Francisco 49ers 17-3 to go 4-0 in the season, ESPN.com's Rob Demovsky thinks it's pretty easy for the Packers to read.At this point, the Packers should be favorites in the NFC, especially since the Arizona Cardinals fell out of the ranks of the invincibles in Sunday's loss to the St. Louis Rams. Inches They were probably favorites even before the Cardinals were wiped out. As we discussed after Sunday's win over the San Francisco 49ers, the Packers are the closest thing to a perfect team in this conference. Their defense is finally gaining weight after four years for Super Bowl XLV. And the big gaffes on special teams - like the failed onside kick recovery that kept them out of the Super Bowl last season - seem to have gone into the past. It's hard to resist the idea that the Packers are the best team in the NFC. And this game is played in Green Bay, where quarterback Aaron Rodgers hasn't thrown an interception since 2012. Will the Rams win the game? Let's not freak out. You're not just beating Rodgers at home. Sorry.Packers: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Miller, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonBuffalo Bills (2-2) at Tennessee Titans (1-2)10/15Tom Szczerbowski/Getty Images Selection: Buffalo Bills (6-2)Buffalo Bills are on the rise. Maybe for last week's game with the New York Giants, the Bills were talked about as a playoff contender. Buffalo didn't play more than one in a 24-10 loss, so afterward you'd think Bills players would talk about justifying the ship before Sunday's trip to Nashville. Instead, Buffalo's defensemen were busy complaining about Giants wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr., whom they accused of being a cheap shooter, according to the Buffalo News. ESPN.com's Mike Rodak summed up the quotes: That's what he does. He's off the hook, Brown told the paper. He's the golden boy of the league. He's on the cover of Madden. Sometimes things like that get away with it. ... He's different, Gilmore told The Buffalo News. It's like you're playing your little brother and he's mad at you for being too physical with him. I said, We're playing football. It's a physical game. He's a primadonna. He feels like he's on top of the world, and no one should do anything to him. Maybe Beckham is. But the Bills need to do less looking back and more to look forward to Sunday's game with a Titans team that has had an extra week to prepare. Unless they want to complain about the NFL's longest active playoff drought, which will get longer in a year in December. Gagnon, Miller, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonTitans: Freeman, SchalterArizona Cardinals (3-1) at Detroit Lions (0-4)11/15Norm Hall/Getty Images Selection: Arizona Cardinals (5-3)At this point a week ago, the Arizona Cardinals were talked about as one of the best teams in the National Football League. They had just dropped 95 points in total for the Chicago Bears and San Francisco 49ers since back week. After a 24-22 loss to the St. Louis Rams. The Cardinals looked flat (to be friendly), Yahoo Sports' Frank Schwab wrote that the Cardinals have been revealed:The Cardinals aren't a bad team, but are they one of the absolute best? Maybe not. The Rams' offensive line hasn't been able to block well all season, but it helped rookie Todd Gurley gain 144 yards in the second half. Nick Foles is not a good quarterback, but he completed 16 of 24 passes for 171 yards and three touchdowns without a catch against Arizona. The offense everyone was so excited about didn't score a touchdown until the fourth quarter, when the Rams were 24-15. They're probably going to be a playoff team. But they're not one of the top two or three teams in the NFL. They may not be the best team in the NFC West. It's just something to keep in mind next year when we go lying about an undescending team: Always keep in mind who it's had to beat. It may well be, but the Lions have also been exposed as a herky twitcher in attack with a porous line and a defense that is a shell of its former mighty self. In fact, one thing the Lions aren't is an NFL team that has won a game in 2015. And our panel expects them to carry that dubious difference for at least another week. Cardinals: Davenport, Freeman, Miller, Sobleski, TomlinsonLions: Gagnon, Schalter, TanierNew England Patriots (3-0) at Dallas Cowboys (2-2)12/15Elsa/Getty ImagesThe Pick: New England Patriots (8-0)Dallas Cowboys just can't get a break. In fact, they've caught them like crazy. Winger Dez Bryant broke a bone in his leg. Then quarterback Tony Romo broke his collarbone. In last Sunday night's loss to the New Orleans Saints, the carnage continued. Both Lance Dunbar and inside line defensemen Sean Lee (concussion) were forced out of the game. Dunbar suffered a season-ending ACL tear. Despite all the doom and gloom surrounding the Cowboys after their second straight loss, Jeff Sullivan of the team's website believes the Cowboys are doing well.The football glue factory left another team after a Week 4 loss a year ago, and that was the New England Patriots, who, after being destroyed by the Kansas City Chiefs' Monday Night Football, were 2-2. A reporter asked Bill Belichick if the quarterback's situation would be addressed. He laughed. And, of course, later won another Super Bowl. Except for the setback, Dez returns after a week against the Giants. Probably Randy Gregory, too. The only players lost this season are Orlando Scandrick, Lance Dunbar and Terrell McClain. Everyone else is coming back. Everyone else improves health day by day, Hardy and Rolando McClain are back. Sean Lee is expected to play Sunday. A team that is both undefeated and misses a giant week. You think Chicken Little's going to slead now? Wait till the streak hits three. Patriots: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Miller, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonCowboys: Far too many injuries. Denver Broncos (4-0) at Oakland Raiders (2-2)13/15Justin Edmonds/Getty Images Selection: Denver Broncos (7-1)The Denver Broncos aren't achieving their early-season success with quite the glamour they had during their Super Bowl run two years ago, but they're 4-0 in the season. In fact, when the 2013 campaign was all about Peyton Manning and a record-breaking Broncos offense, Denver will win with defense this year, as The Denver Post's Nicki Jhabvala reports:But the Broncos' effectiveness in defense continues to extend. Here's a numerical breakdown of their work:• [DeMarcus] Ware and outside linebacker Von Miller have 25 and 24 quarterback pressures (bags, hits and hurricanes combined). They lead the league according to Pro Football Focus. • 11 players have at least one sack, the most in team history. The Broncos' previous record was in 1984. • Ware has a league-high 41/2 sacks. He's the only player this season to have logged at least one in every game. • The Broncos have allowed 4.37 yards per game, the fewest in the NFL. The league average is 5.49. • Their 25 percent opponent conversion rate in Game 3 is the lowest in the NFL. League average: 39.3 percent. There are just a few numbers that bode well for Denver's chances against an Oakland team that still has the means after healing. Like losing the undefeated Bears in Week 4 ways to go. Broncos: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Miller, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonRaiders: Schalter (shocked special) San Francisco 49ers (1-3) at New York Giants (2-2)14/15Jim McIsaac/Getty ImagesThe Pick: New York Giants (8-0)Since their opening week victory over the Minnesota Vikings, little has gone well for the San Francisco 49ers. The offense has been as insensitive as anyone in the NFL. Quarterback Colin Kaepernick has gone from rising star to besieged by arrest. In last week's television broadcast, Fox Sports' Joe Buck actually discussed Kaepernick's chance to get hooked -- Blaine Gabbert.In Bleacher Report's Peter Panacy thinks it's a sad situation for a once proud franchise: It's hard to predict. But there are no good signs when trying to estimate exactly when the 49ers are going from here. The 49ers lack identity. They're missing direction. They lack organisational leadership. And it hurts when you consider that this franchise was a perennial favorite just a couple of seasons ago. The whole organization needs to work together from top to bottom -- an effort that preaches re-establishment and commitment to the 49ers franchise At the moment, the signs don't indicate that this is on top of San. Top. priority list. Right now, at the top of San Francisco's priority list, it probably says, Stop the three-game slide. Unfortunately, none of bleacher report writers expect that to happen.49ers: Raiders are better. When was the last time it was said in the Bay Area? Giants: Davenport, Freeman, Gagnon, Miller, Schalter, Sobleski, Tanier, TomlinsonPittsburgh Steelers (2-2) at San Diego Chargers (4-2) (two voters abstained)San Diego Chargers and Pittsburgh Steelers are both 2-2. Things could be worse for both teams. Of course, they could also be much better. Both teams have been eraicad. Both teams did their best in Week 4 to give the football game away with a terrible kick. The Steelers succeeded. While Pittsburgh will be without quarterback Ben Roethlisberger for a while yet, the Bolts will get a big boost Monday night. Eight-time Pro Bowl tight end Antonio Gates will play his first game of 2015 after suffering a four-game suspension to open the season. San Diego quarterback Philip Rivers wasn't shy about expressing his luck at regaining one of his main targets when talking to Eric Williams about ESPN.com. We look forward to seeing him back. He's going to help us on the field and in the locker room, Rivers said. I'm sure we've missed him. So that's a plus. We'll have a Free Agent from the Hall of Fame in about 24 hours. Whether it's the return of Gates, Rivers and Mike Vick or the Chargers playing at home, most of the panel expects San Diego to win Week 5 in the final game. Steelers: Freeman, TanierChargers: Davenport, Gagnon, Miller Schalter Schalter