

VSIN PRO

SUPER BOWL

BETTING GUIDE

PRO EDITION



HOW TO BET CHIEFS VS 49ERS

PROPS, PICKS, AND PREDICTIONS FOR SUPER BOWL LVIII

OUR PRO GUIDE INCLUDES

- EXPERT PICKS AND INSIGHTS
- FAVORITE PROP BETS FROM VSIN HOSTS
- IN DEPTH TEAM BREAKDOWNS

VSIN



VIVA, BABY!

SUPER BOWL PAST AND SOON-TO-BE HISTORY

by Brent Musburger

It was the morning after Super Bowl 1, only it wasn't yet called Super Bowl, and I was waiting to catch a plane back to Chicago when Joe King, then a New York World Journal sportswriter, passed by and told me how much his editor liked his story about the Green Bay Packers win over the Kansas City Chiefs.

I almost choked on my coffee. I didn't have the heart to tell Joe that he hadn't written a single word of the story that so pleased his editor back in New York.

The date was January 15, 1967. I was assigned to cover the NFL-AFL Championship Game in Los Angeles for Chicago's American, an afternoon paper owned by the Chicago Tribune. Those were the Golden Days of sportswriting. No internet. No cable TV. Just typewriters and Western Union operators transmitting the stories and statistics about a sport that the country was falling in love with.

It had been a strange week in Southern California. Vince Lombardi had taken his Packers to UC Santa Barbara and let it be known that writers weren't welcome. Hank Stram, on the other hand, held court daily at Veterans Field in Long Beach. Stram relished the attention leading up to the game. Lombardi would later admit that he felt enormous pressure to win and defend the reputation of the more established league.

Curfew-busting Max McGee became the unlikely hero of Lombardi's victory when he replaced the injured Boyd Dowler three plays into the game and caught seven passes for 138 yards, including the Super Bowl's first touchdown, a 37-yard pass from Bart Starr. Packers 35, Chiefs 10. Betting on that first game was hardly discussed unless you had an account with a local bookmaker.

While the morning paper writers filed their stories from the Coliseum press box, the afternoon guys worked both locker rooms for quotes from the Packers and Chiefs and then caught a bus back to the hotel, where we wrote our stories in the NFL-provided press room.

NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle had been kind enough to leave the bar open, and the party was on. That's when we noticed Joe King slumped over his typewriter without a single word typed out. In those days, writers were fierce competitors for scoops but loyal friends after the stories had been filed. Our plan was hatched. Milton Gross, lead columnist of the New York Post, was selected to write the lead. The rest of us took turns. I wrote the eighth paragraph. Western Union transmitted the story back to New York. Joe King was the name on the byline, and a career was saved.

A lot of Super Bowl memories have come and gone since, and somewhere packed in a cardboard box in Montana are two tickets to that first game, a gift from the commissioner. I offered them to the bellman at the hotel, but he wasn't interested in going.

This time, I'll be taking my grandson to Super Bowl 58 between those same Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers. Super Bowl tickets today cost thousands of dollars, and bellmen are distant memories. Betting on the game is now a national obligation. Back on December 9th, I bet a Super Bowl exacta box with Circa on the Chiefs (+1400) and 49ers (+1100). A winner either way.

I'm also looking forward to making an in-game wager or two because that's something we didn't know about 57 years ago.

Finally, a big shout out to all the folks in Las Vegas who are working to make sure our city becomes a regular stop on the Super Bowl circuit. Viva, Baby!

SUPER BOWL LVIII SCORE AND MVP

PREDICTIONS

FEMI ABEBEFE

Chiefs 24, 49ers 20
MVP: Travis Kelce

GILL ALEXANDER

49ers 34, Chiefs 23
MVP: Christian McCaffrey

JOSH APPELBAUM

Chiefs 24, 49ers 20
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

MATT BROWN

Chiefs 24, 49ers 21
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

STEVE BUCHANAN

49ers 27, Chiefs 17
MVP: Christian McCaffrey

STORMY BUONANTONY

49ers 27, Chiefs 24
MVP: Brock Purdy

ADAM BURKE

Chiefs 24, 49ers 23
MVP: Travis Kelce

KELLEY BYDLON

Chiefs 24, 49ers 17
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

ZACHARY COHEN

Chiefs 23, 49ers 20
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

JULIAN EDLOW

Chiefs 23, 49ers 21
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

SEAN GREEN

Chiefs 28, 49ers 17
MVP: Travis Kelce

PAULY HOWARD

Chiefs 23, 49ers 21
MVP: Isiah Pacheco

STEPHANIE KAMERSCHAK

49ers 27, Chiefs 20
MVP: Brock Purdy

RYAN KRAMER

49ers 31, Chiefs 23
MVP: Christian McCaffrey

MICHAEL LOMBARDI

49ers 27, Chiefs 23
MVP: Christian McCaffrey

EMERSON LOTZIA

Chiefs 31, 49ers 20
MVP: Rashee Rice

STEVE MAKINEN

Chiefs 23, 49ers 21
MVP: Isiah Pacheco

PATRICK MEAGHER

Chiefs 24, 49ers 17
MVP: Isiah Pacheco

MITCH MOSS

49ers 30, Chiefs 24
MVP: Christian McCaffrey

TIM MURRAY

49ers 24, Chiefs 20
MVP: Brock Purdy

MIKE PALM

Chiefs 23, 49ers 20
MVP: Travis Kelce

MIKE PRITCHARD

Chiefs 24, 49ers 21
MVP: Travis Kelce

WES REYNOLDS

49ers 27, Chiefs 20
MVP: Brock Purdy

DAVE ROSS

49ers 29, Chiefs 21
MVP: Brock Purdy

AMAL SHAH

Chiefs 27, 49ers 17
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

TYLER SHOEMAKER

49ers 24, Chiefs 20
MVP: Christian McCaffrey

JARED SMITH

Chiefs 29, 49ers 27
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

MIKE SOMICH

Chiefs 20, 49ers 17
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

STUGOTZ

Chiefs 42, 49ers 14
MVP: Isiah Pacheco

DUSTIN SWEDELSON

49ers 24, Chiefs 20
MVP: Christian McCaffrey

ROSS TUCKER

Chiefs 24, 49ers 20
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

DAVE TULEY

Chiefs 23, 49ers 20
MVP: Isiah Pacheco

JONATHAN VON TOBEL

49ers 21, Chiefs 14
MVP: Brock Purdy

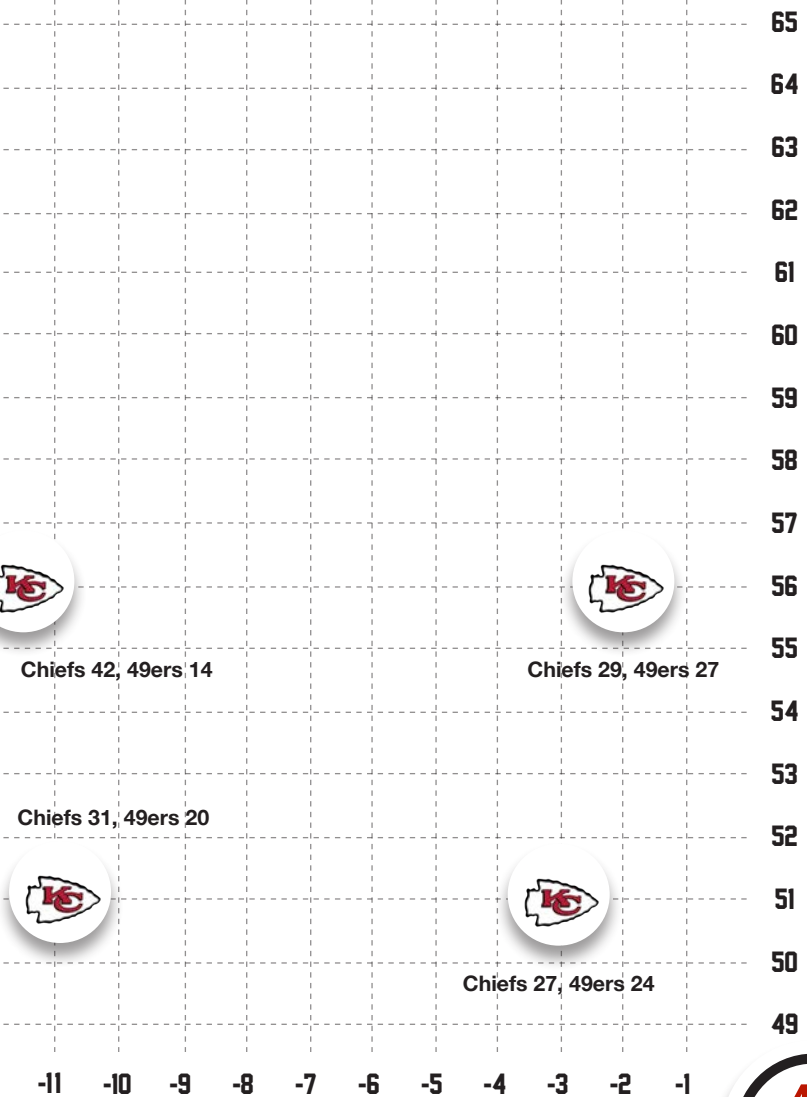
BEN WILSON

49ers 26, Chiefs 23
MVP: Deebo Samuel

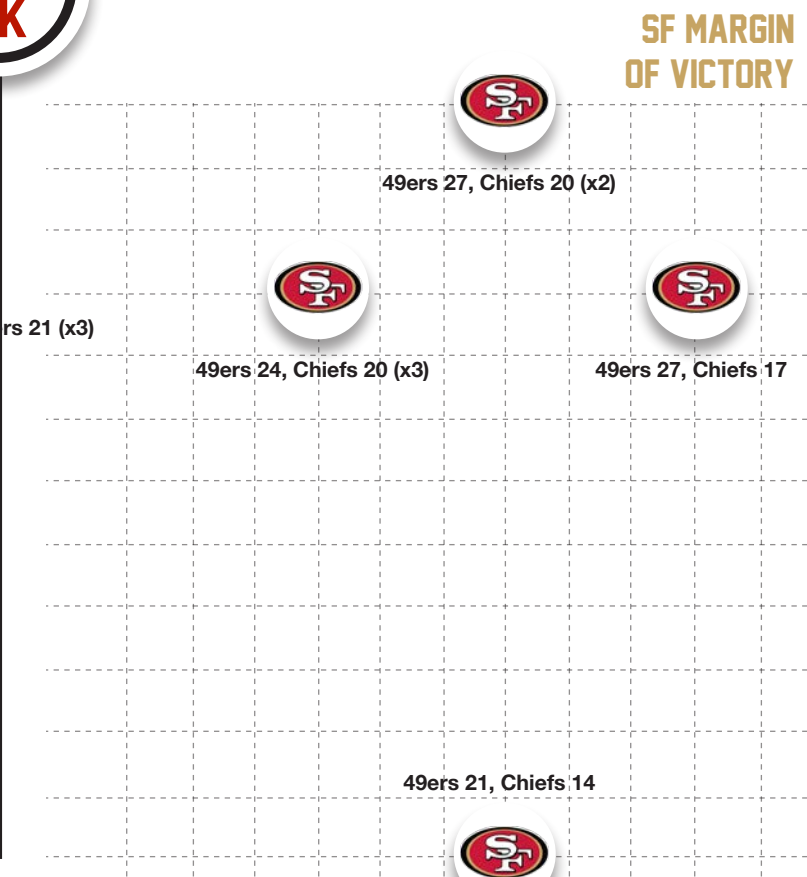
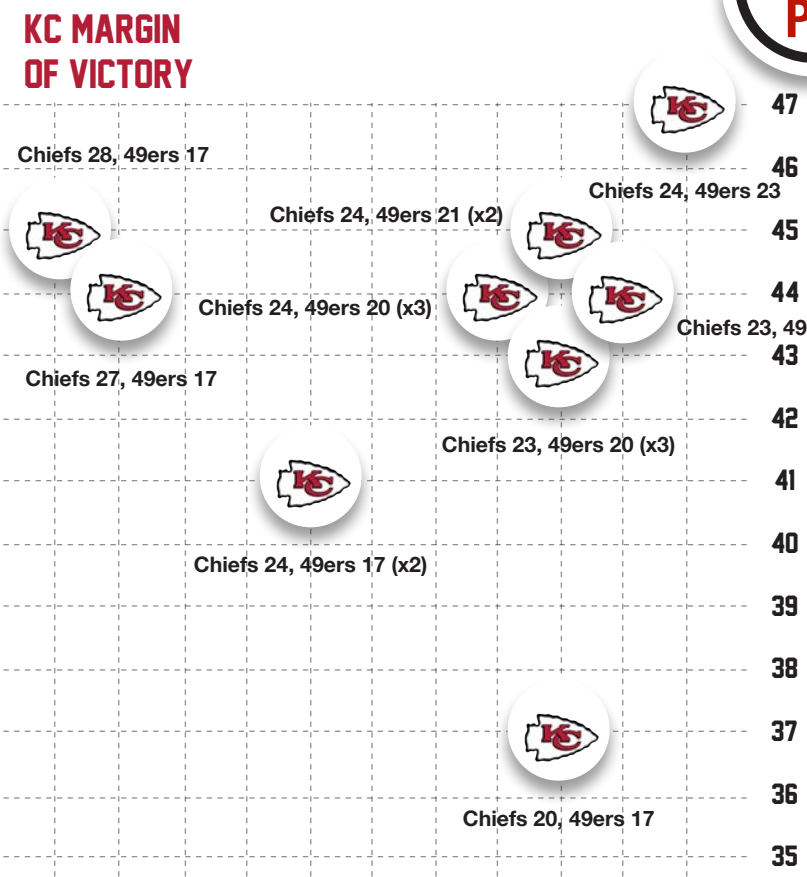
MATT YOUMANS

Chiefs 27, 49ers 24
MVP: Patrick Mahomes

VSIN EXPERT PICK MATRIX



**48
PK**



TOTAL POINTS SCORED

VSIN EXPERT SUPER BOWL PROP

BEST BETS

FEMI ABEBEFE

Patrick Mahomes Over 25.5 Completions (+100)

Based on how the Kansas City Chiefs have played this postseason, I'd expect them to try to protect their defense and play an efficient, ball-control type of offense. Ever since their Christmas loss to the Raiders, Mahomes has done a terrific job of taking what the defense gives him and protecting the football. KC has only turned the ball over twice in three playoff games, both of which were fumbles. I'd anticipate Mahomes being able to find completions over the middle to his trusted targets Travis Kelce and Rashee Rice—almost as an extension of the run game. With a lot of the discussion about the Niners run defense needing to step up, my guess is they sell out early to stop Pacheco, which should allow Mahomes and the passing attack to matriculate the ball down the field.

GILL ALEXANDER

Christian McCaffrey Most Receiving + Rushing Yards (-160)

The juice might scare some away but in his last eight games, regular season and playoffs, McCaffrey has led this category six times. I prefer playing it over a bet in one of the two separate categories of most rushing yards and most receiving yards because I worry about an emphasis on Isiah Pacheco eclipsing McCaffrey in the former, and a Niners receiver besting CMC in the latter despite KC's solid corners.

JOSH APPELBAUM

Longest Kickoff Return Under 27.5 Yards (-145)

The Under is heavily juiced, signaling sharp liability and a possible fall to 27 or less before gametime. The game will be played in a dome at Allegiant Stadium, which means the ball is likely to travel further in a controlled environment, leading to more touchbacks. Both teams are top 12 in terms of average kickoff yardage allowed (KC 20.1, SF 21.8). Butker has a touchback percentage of 87% and Moody 60%. Why risk a runback and potential fumble/turnover (or get pinned deep) when you can give the ball to your offense at the 25?

For the Swifties (DK Sportsbook): "15"

Mahomes 15+ rush yards, 215+ pass yards (-140)

Mahomes has seen his passing yard prop rise from 259.5 to 261.5. The game will be played indoors. Jared Goff just threw for 273 against the 49ers in the NFC Championship game. Mahomes threw for 286 against the 49ers in the Super Bowl four years ago. In terms of rushing, Mahomes has seen his rushing prop rise from 25.5 to 26.5. He rushed for 44 yards against the Eagles in last year's Super Bowl. He is also likely to dive and fight for extra yardage instead of sliding since it's the Super Bowl. I'll combine the two props together at a far better yardage number and pay -140.

Kelce Over 70.5 receiving yards (-130)

Kelce has gone Over this receiving yard number in all three postseason games thus far and has seemingly gotten stronger every week. He had 71 yards against Miami, 75 against Buffalo and 115 against Baltimore. He leads the Chiefs in postseason targets with 27. Kelce is likely to benefit from a week of extra rest as well. He has averaged 98.2 receiving yards in his last 12 postseason games. The 49ers just gave up 97 yards to Sam LaPorta in the NFC Championship game. Plus, Kelce has the added motivation of trying to impress someone very famous in the box suite. Give me Kelce to record 71 yards or more on Sunday.



Isiah Pacheco

MATT BROWN

Isiah Pacheco Most Rushing Yards in Game (+170)

This one comes down to some simple math and how I predict the defensive strategy to play out. The high rush total is very, very likely to be either Christian McCaffrey or Pacheco as the lead backs for both teams. Pacheco's market high rush yards prop (as of this writing) is 67.5 yards. His rush attempts prop is 16.5. That comes out to 4.09 yards per carry, a half-yard less than his 4.6 yard per carry average on the season and far less than the 4.9 and 6.3 yards per carry the 49ers have allowed to the Packers and Lions this postseason.

I have the Chiefs winning the game, so the potential for a few more Pacheco carries is there as they try and ice the game. I also have the Chiefs selling out to stop the run and begging Brock Purdy to dump to the middle of the field or test their elite outside corners, potentially limiting McCaffrey's upside. Given their roles as bell cows and how I project the game, the price on Pacheco (+170 to CMC's -250) is too good to pass up.

STORMY BUONANTONY

Isiah Pacheco to score a Rushing TD (+115)

Pacheco is -125 in the Anytime Touchdown market, but +115 to score a rushing touchdown. While Pacheco has made his way to the end zone eight times in the last seven games, just one of those scores was a receiving TD. He's also scored a rushing TD in each of the three playoff games to this point. Since the Chiefs got embarrassed on Christmas Day, they've altered their offensive philosophy and have leaned more on Pacheco and the run game. They should also have the upper hand against a 49ers team that was 15th in run defense DVOA during the regular season, a far cry from a unit that ranked first in that category each of the last two years. While Aaron Jones didn't score a TD in the Divisional Round against SF, he still gashed their defense for more than 100 yards. Both David Montgomery and Jahmyr Gibbs got their yards and punched in scores during the NFC Championship Game for the Lions.

ADAM BURKE

Elijah Mitchell Over 1.5 Rush Attempts (-115)

The 49ers should be looking to take advantage of Kansas City's front seven and run the football in this game. The Chiefs were 27th in Defensive Rush DVOA and are now missing Charles Omenihu, which is a hit to the defensive line, even if he's used in more of a pass-rushing capacity. In all but one of the 11 games Mitchell was active for in the regular season, he had at least two carries. He had four

against the Lions after only playing one offensive snap against the Packers.

My guess is that Kyle Shanahan tries some two and maybe even three-back sets to confuse the Chiefs defense and look for some power-running opportunities. If nothing else, Mitchell could be used to spell Christian McCaffrey here and there in what will be a very high-octane game.

L'Jarvis Sneed Over 4.5 Tackles + Assists (-115)

Sneed finished the regular season tied for third in combined tackles with Drue Tranquill and just behind Trent McDuffie. Justin Reid was far and away the top tackler and I do think Over 6.5 at a nice plus-money price is worth consideration as well. The reason why I pick Sneed here is that the 49ers like to run a lot of stretch plays and get McCaffrey out on the boundaries. That will force the corners to help out more in run support.

Sneed had five tackles and assists in the games against Buffalo and Baltimore, but the Niners will have more outside running than those two teams. San Francisco also likes to get receivers involved in the run game, which could help Sneed find an extra tackle or two.

Patrick Mahomes 1st Quarter Rushing Yards Under 6.5 (-120)

During the regular season, Mahomes only had nine rush attempts in the first quarter. He had 58 yards on those nine carries, but he's not going to run around and take any unnecessary abuse in the early portion of this game. Also, the first quarter usually moves pretty quickly in these games because of the scripted drives of each offense. You have two gifted play callers here in Andy Reid and Kyle Shanahan, so I anticipate some longer drives in the early going.

Scripted runs for Mahomes don't strike me as a thing and he's really good at extending plays until somebody gets open. He also had his highest quarter by completion percentage (75.2%) in the first quarter, so the scripted plays work and he'll find somebody open that will keep him from having to run.

KELLEY BYDLON

Isiah Pacheco Over 66.5 Rushing Yards (-110)

Patrick Mahomes being back in another Super Bowl will steal most of the headlines, but this Chiefs team has continued to improve this season as they've leaned more on their defense and running game. Despite one of the overall best defenses in the NFL, the 49ers have struggled to stop the run at points this season and Pacheco has been a go-to weapon for this Chiefs offense, especially lately. He's gone Over this number in four straight games, and six of his last eight games. Even when he has struggled to get big gains, we saw in the AFC Championship game the Chiefs continue to go back to him, as he finished with 24 carries.

ZACHARY COHEN**Travis Kelce Alt Receiving Yards 80+**

Kelce was tremendous in the win over the Baltimore Ravens, hauling in 11 catches for 116 yards and a score. It's just very clear that Patrick Mahomes is more comfortable looking in his direction than anywhere else. That said, Kelce is going to be targeted a ton in Super Bowl LVIII. The 49ers are also a middle-of-the-pack team when it comes to yards per game for opposing tight ends (52.6 YPG) and Kelce, obviously, isn't your average tight end. So, even though this is a good San Francisco defense, the matchup isn't all that bad for Kelce. With that in mind, I'd suggest playing Kelce to have at least 80 yards at plus-money odds. The 49ers gave up 97 yards against Sam LaPorta in the NFC Championship game, plus 86 yards to T.J. Hockenson earlier in the year. They have struggled with top-tier tight ends, and Kelce clears all of them.

JULIAN EDLOW**Patrick Mahomes Longest Rush Attempt Over 12.5 Yards (-120)**

Plenty of urgency in the postseason, along with Mahomes operating with the worst WR room of his career should lead to more scrambling. He's 2-1 to the Over on this prop in this postseason, with a narrow miss against Baltimore – long carry of 11 yards. Mahomes is 9-6 to the Over on this number since the 2020 postseason. Why go with longest rush over total rushing yards? You may recall the last Super Bowl between these two teams when Mahomes went well Over his rushing prop, but lost about 15 yards on late-game kneel downs to ultimately cash his Under in one of the bad beats in Super Bowl prop betting history.

Isiah Pacheco Over 66.5 Rushing Yards (-120)

Pacheco has been a battering ram in the postseason, going Over this number in all three games so far, averaging 84.7 rushing yards per game. Now he'll face a Niners defense that's been all bark and no bite in the postseason – surrendering 159 rushing yards per game against the Packers and Lions at home. In those matchups, the lead backs for the opposing teams easily cleared this number, with Aaron Jones ripping off 108 yards on 18 carries and David Montgomery pounding it 15 times for 93 yards (with Jahmyr Gibbs and Jameson Williams combining for another 87 rushing yards on 13 carries).

Travis Kelce Over 70.5 Receiving Yards (-120)

Super public prop here betting an Over on Taylor Swift's boyfriend, but Kelce's postseason dominance cannot be ignored. Mahomes and Kelce recently passed Tom Brady and Rob Gronkowski as the duo with the most postseason touchdown connections of all-time, and the chemistry was obvious in the AFC Championship Game in Baltimore. Kelce reeled in all 11 of his targets in that one for 116 yards – including some improvised plays on the field that just cannot be stopped. Kelce has now topped 70 receiving yards in 12 consecutive postseason games, a span in which he averages 98.2 yards per game.

SEAN GREEN**San Francisco 49ers Under 20.5 Team Total (+170)**

Patrick 'Showtime' Mahomes is getting a ton of talk in the week leading up to the Super Bowl, but this Kansas City defense needs more credit. They've played 20 games this season and held their opponents to 20 points or less 16 of those times for an 80% hit rate to this number. L'Jarius Sneed, who is one of the league's best CBs right now will be licking his chops at the number of Brock Purdy interceptable passes has thrown this postseason. Purdy has struggled when playing elite defenses like the Browns and Ravens.

In addition, this KC defense has shined against top-tier opponents like the Bills, Ravens and Dolphins already this postseason. If the 49ers do have success it will likely be from pounding the rock with Christian McCaffrey which will slow down the game script and lean the entire game towards the Under. Sure, maybe Purdy will throw his patented deep bomb off the defender's helmet right to Brandon Aiyuk's hand, but I'll be betting against it.



PAULY HOWARD

Team That Scores Last Wins The Game: 'Yes' (-195)

VSIN Betting Guide editor Matt Devine noted that this prop has won 20 of the 22 times in the Super Bowl on his Follow The Money appearance.

Both Teams to Have a Rush TD: 'Yes' (+130)

Both Teams to Make a 33+ Yard Field Goal (+110)

Chiefs +2 (-110)

Due to having the better QB, coaching staff, defense, special teams, and Patrick Mahomes is 10-1-1 ATS as an underdog.

STEPHANIE KAMERSCHAK

Christian McCaffrey - Anytime TD in the 1st Half (+130)

In addition to betting on McCaffrey to score the game's First Touchdown, I'll be playing it safe with this bet that is somehow at a plus-money price. This is the easiest way to get away from the ugly -220 out there on Anytime Touchdown and, in my opinion, it's the same bet. Including the playoffs, CMC scored a touchdown in the first half of 13 of his 18 games this year. I also like this better than the +150 for him to score the 49ers' first touchdown, since you don't need to stress if somebody else scores first, as you have the entire first half for him to find the end zone. That peace of mind is worth the measly 20 cents.

RYAN KRAMER

49ers First Reception - Kyle Juszczyk +2375

First, we set the stage, Super Bowl 58 features a couple of teams, the Chiefs and 49ers with narrow target distribution. Since Week 12, 81% of the targets have gone to four dudes - Deebo Samuel 23%, Brandon Aiyuk 21%, Christian McCaffrey 19%, and George Kittle 18%. This presents top-heavy pricing, which tends to produce value "down the board" in a market like first reception. We then remove possession variance by isolating the 49ers first reception market.

Kyle Shanahan is the ultimate galaxy brain, tendency breaker in the big spot and I believe he has tipped his hand heading into the big game. With all eyes on his four dudes against the vaunted Ravens defense in Week 16, on the second play of the drive (after a McCaffrey catch) they targeted Juszczyk over the middle like a tight end. Now, skipping again to the NFC Championship Game vs. the Lions, after a McCaffrey run, Juszczyk once again was targeted by Brock Purdy but the pass was deflected.

Often the fifth member of the skill group out there with McCaffrey, Deebo, Aiyuk, and Kittle has been Juszczyk. In two of the last four

games, Juszczyk has been targeted on the first drive of the game. The big four are all priced between +290 and +400, and Kyle is priced to the moon at +2375. Let It ride.

MICHAEL LOMBARDI

Christian McCaffrey Over 35.5 receiving yards (-110)

The 49ers will need to borrow the plan from the Bills offense, mix running and short passes which will set up perfectly for McCaffrey to have a big day catching passes. Who can cover him for the Chiefs? No one and Shanahan needs to exploit the matchup.

EMERSON LOTZIA

Travis Kelce 1st TD scorer (+700)

We've reached the biggest stage in football. And you know who tends to show up on the biggest stage in football? Dudes who are trying to impress their superstar, global icon, billionaire girlfriends. And only one guy in this game fits that description: Travis Bleepin' Kelce.

Maybe it's Mahomes, perhaps it's Taylor Swift, but Big Yeti is back to his old productive self. Throughout this KC playoff run, he's racked up a thicc 23 receptions for nearly 300 yards and three touchdowns. He's well rested and in love with a 12-time Grammy winner, which, to me, points to a very productive Super Bowl Sunday. I expect him to be involved early and often on the Chiefs' first possession. He scored the first touchdown against Baltimore in the AFC title game AND in last year's Super Bowl against the Eagles. It's hard to pass up the value in this market with the great odds DK Sportsbook is offering. And for what it's worth, Kelce also scored a short TD in KC's Super Bowl 54 win over San Francisco, albeit not the first.

STEVE MAKINEN

Brock Purdy Under 245.5 Passing Yards (-110)

There are a lot of experts looking at this year's Super Bowl as a matchup of Patrick Mahomes against the 49ers dynamic offense. However, I feel the unit being overlooked most in this game is the Chiefs defense, which has been nothing short of dominant in the last couple of months, just like in 2020 when these same teams met in the NFL title game. In that one, KC held 49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo to 219 yards through the air. My projection for this Sunday is 213 for Purdy. The most the Chiefs have allowed in any recent game was 255 last week to a desperate, come-from-behind Ravens team. My forecast model shows that the expected KC defensive yards per attempt allowance is a little over 4.0, a miniscule number by NFL standards. I don't think Kyle Shanahan can put this game on Purdy and expect to win, so I think win or lose, Purdy doesn't make it to 245.



Kyle Juszczyk



Brock Purdy

PATRICK MEAGHER

Brock Purdy Under 247.5 passing yards (-110)

Purdy has averaged 259.5 pass yards in two playoff games vs. the Packers and Lions, but faces a much better Chiefs pass defense here and they are peaking. The Chiefs gave up an average 176.5 passing yards allowed in the regular season, the fourth-fewest in the league. Shanahan is innately run-first and I think that philosophy plays out here with more time to prepare. With KC's secondary peaking, 247.5 is too high.

MITCH MOSS

Marquez Valdes-Scantling Longest Reception Over 13.5 yards (-110)

MVS saw his route rate percentage go from 56% vs. Buffalo to a season high 96% at Baltimore. Patrick Mahomes hasn't been able to trust many of his receivers deep down the field for the entire year. Valdes-Scantling has emerged as that guy during the playoffs. I like San Francisco to win the game. In doing so, Kansas City could be chasing throughout the game. I believe MVS will see some mid-to-deep targets if Mahomes is taking shots down the field. MVS also had two catches of 30+ yards vs. Buffalo, another 32-yard catch at Baltimore, and did go Over this number in eight regular season games.

MIKE PRITCHARD

Christian McCaffrey/Isiah Pacheco Anytime TD Parlay (+159)

Peyton Manning has predicted that both offenses will move the ball very well in the Super Bowl. My bet is a high percentage play, but it is a parlay. McCaffrey should receive multiple opportunities to score a rushing TD and the same goes for Pacheco.

WES REYNOLDS

Distance of Longest Punt Over 56.5 Yards (-130)

With Allegiant Stadium being an enclosed venue and 2,000 feet above sea level, it is a very good environment for kickers and punters.

49ers P Mitch Wishnowsky played two games this year in permanently enclosed stadiums. He kicked a 67-yarder at SoFi Stadium and a 62-yarder at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Chiefs P Tommy Townsend played games in the same two stadiums and kicked a 61-yarder at SoFi and a 58-yarder in Minneapolis. Plus, he had a 68-yarder at retractable roof Deutsche Bank Park in the game held in Frankfurt, Germany.

Both these coaches are still more "old school" than "new school" and are willing to play a more traditional field position game and both these punters will have opportunities.

TYLER SHOEMAKER

Kansas City Chiefs Under 21.5 Points (+120)

This one is all about math for me (as it often is). My T Shoe Index projects a 24-20 49ers win in this game, for starters. On top of that, Kansas City has only scored 22+ points in nine out of 20 games (45%), which means they've gone Under this 21.5 total in 55% of their games; furthermore, in games against TSI top 10 teams, Kansas City has only gone Over 21.5 in two out of five games (40%). However, the +120 odds that DraftKings is currently offering implies a 45% chance they go Under the total, leaving us with a big enough edge for me to feel comfortable with this bet.

JARED SMITH

Under 4.5 Sacks (-110)

Patrick Mahomes and Brock Purdy ranked second and third respectively this season in "pressure-to-sack" rate, which measures the percentage of a quarterback's pressured dropbacks that result in a sack. Only Josh Allen had a lower mark. In the Super Bowl last year, all I heard all week was how the vaunted Eagles pass rush, which set a single-season record in sacks, was going to wreak havoc on Mahomes. Well, they forced plenty of pressure, but failed to get home once.

This year things aren't as simple as just betting the Chiefs to have more sacks at plus-money, because Purdy is also adept in this category. For this game, I think the best way to play the sack market is to just bet the Under as I don't see five total sacks. Another way to play it is to bet for a touchdown to occur before a sack, which I saw priced around -125. I think with these two offenses we will see one of the scripts prevail with an early score.

MIKE SOMICH

Highest Scoring Quarter - 2nd Quarter +165

Generally, the two most likely winners of the highest scoring quarter are either the 2nd or 4th Quarter and the odds accurately represent, but the wrong quarter is currently favored. Currently, the 4th Quarter is +150 while the 2nd Quarter is +165. The Chiefs have gone Under in the 4th Quarter in 19 out of 20 games this year and their pace of play has slipped from one of the 10 fastest in the NFL in the first half to one of the five slowest in the second half. Factor in that if this is a close game, which most expect, both teams are capable and willing to grind out long, ball-control drives that chew up clock. Conversely in the 2nd Quarter, both teams will still be focused on putting points on the board. Sign me up for the better price in the more likely quarter to hit.

Most Receiving Yards in the Game - Rashee Rice +320

This is another price that I disagree with. You have four primary pass catching options on the 49ers facing the fourth-best pass defense in the NFL. It will be tough sledding for any individual player to go off for San Francisco, especially with the way the Chiefs limit big plays through the air. That leaves Kelce and Rice as the two most likely game leaders. San Francisco will come into this game with a determination to take away

Kelce which should lead to additional Rice targets. While Kelce leads the way in targets in the playoffs for the Chiefs with 27, Rice is right behind with 25 and has shown he is capable of a big game with his 130-yard effort versus the Dolphins in the Wild Card round.

Marquez Valdes-Scantling Longest Reception Over 13.5 Yards (-110)

MVS's receiving yards prop is sitting at 18.5 for the game and, while I think he goes Over that mark, I'd rather play his longest reception prop since I am effectively getting a five-yard discount. This season, he has never eclipsed the 19-yard mark without catching a pass of 14 or more yards. However, he does have a game where he has a reception of over 14 yards and did not go Over 19 yards. The routes that he generally runs are all deeper than the 14-yard mark, so we are looking for Mahomes to connect with him once on those.

I did play Over MVS's receiving as well, but I played the alt lines of 25+ and 40+ receiving yards at plus-money prices instead of laying juice at 18.5. His targets will be down the field, so I would rather have the upside of one long catch that could get Over both numbers.

DUSTIN SWEDELSON

Christian McCaffrey 1st 49ers TD (+145)

The 49ers aren't going to get down to the red zone and let Brock Purdy mess up their drives with a turnover. Plan A will be utilizing CMC as the dynamic weapon he is once San Francisco is inside the 20-yard line. McCaffrey has scored the 49ers' first TD in 8 of 18 games that he played in this year. He had the most rush attempts and second-most rush yards in the red zone this year among all NFL players. Among NFL running backs inside the red zone, CMC was also: second in receiving yards, first in receiving TDs and second in rushing TDs. He was also one of the most popular red-zone targets this season.

Harrison Butker Over 1.5 Field Goals Made (-110)

Dan Campbell just showed us how different the playoffs and postseason are. You can't walk away from points in the name of analytics when the sample size is just one game. This isn't the explosive Chiefs offense we are used to seeing and they are prone to drives stalling out. Kansas City was just 19th in Red Zone TD Scoring (52.7%) this season. Because the offense is less reliable, I don't think Andy Reid will be afraid to use his kicker, especially when the kicking game is an edge for the Chiefs in this matchup. Butker has made at least two field goals in 12 of 20 games this season. In the playoffs, he made four vs. Miami and two at Buffalo, but just one in the AFC Championship at Baltimore. And remember, when KC lost to Tampa Bay in Super Bowl LV, the Chiefs were held out of the end zone but Butker nailed three field goals in the loss. Also, the losing team's kicker from the last four Super Bowls has had at least two field goals in the game and I like San Francisco to win.

ROSS TUCKER

Christian McCaffrey Over 35.5 Receiving Yards (-110)

The Chiefs have really good cornerbacks which means the Niners will have to try to exploit their linebackers in coverage and McCaffrey is the best way to do this. His Over/Under for receptions is 4.5 so even if he falls short and is at four catches, that is still only nine yards per reception to hit the yardage Over, which seems very doable with a good chance he will have one or two that go for 10+ yards.

DAVE TULEY

Game tied after 0-0 (following PATs) (-120)

In the recent era with Super Bowl point spreads relatively close to pick 'em, I love this prop, as we just need to get tied during the whole game. After missing two years in a row, it cashed last year when the Chiefs and Eagles traded TDs on their opening drives for a tie at 7-7.

Before the two-year mini-drought, this bet cashed in four straight Super Bowls and it's 6-3 overall in the last nine years. It can happen as early as 3-3 in the 2019 game between the Patriots and Rams, or as late as

28-28 in 2017 when the Patriots famously rallied to catch up with the Falcons with 57 seconds left in regulation.

The 49ers and Chiefs are pretty evenly-matched, as the low point spread indicates (and some books looked like they could be moving toward pick 'em), so we expect this to be a close, back-and-forth game with both teams fully capable of matching scores at some point.

Largest lead Under 14.5 points (-130)

This is another prop tied to our prediction of a close, back-and-forth game. Since joining VSiN, I've gone 5-1 with this prop (and 7-2 the last nine years with the only losses being the Buccaneers' 31-9 rout of the Chiefs three years ago and the Falcons' infamous 28-3 lead vs. the Patriots seven years ago).

Again, we're counting on both offenses to be able to rally if falling behind by two scores. I'm not crazy about the increased juice, but I'm actually relieved as I feared that oddsmakers might lower the number to 13.5 (or increase the juice further) with all the recent success along with the spread so close to pick 'em.

Halftime Tie/49ers Win 17/1 and Halftime Tie/Chiefs Win 20/1

This is basically a bet on there being a tie at halftime, again based around our prediction of this being a close, back-and-forth Super Bowl. Since we don't see "Will the game be tied at halftime?" prop offered anywhere, we play this "Double Result" and take both the "Halftime Tie/49ers Win" at 17/1 and "Halftime Tie/Chiefs Win" at 20/1 options (a little higher than recent years, which is nice as we see it even more likely).

If the game is tied at intermission, we know we're going to end up with a net profit of +750 if the 49ers win or +950 if the Chiefs win. This has been a long-term profitable play as it cashed four years ago when the Chiefs-49ers Super Bowl LIV was tied at 10-10 and the Patriots-Seahawks Super Bowl XLIX that was tied 14-14, and just missed a couple of other times, so always worth a shot, especially in games lined under a field goal.

BEN WILSON

Isiah Pacheco Over 15.5 Rush Attempts (-120)

Pacheco has looked like a man possessed ever since fellow RB Jerick McKinnon went down with injury in late December. In the six games since, he's taken 89% of the team's carries and racked up over 107 yards per game in the process. For a back who can both pound the ball between the tackles and bounce it outside the numbers, it's a dream matchup against a 49ers rush defense that gave up a combined 288 rush yards on 57 carries in their two playoff wins (that 5.1 YPC allowed would have ranked dead last in the NFL if extrapolated to a full-season sample). San Francisco also finished the regular season 25th in Rush EPA and 24th in defending runs outside the numbers, so it's not like the small postseason sample size is an outlier.

MATT YOUMANS

Christian McCaffrey Over 90.5 rushing yards (-110); Over 35.5 receiving yards (-110)

The 49ers' path to winning the game is on the ground with McCaffrey, and you can bet coach Kyle Shanahan knows it. Shanahan is not planning to ride the inexperienced Brock Purdy and his erratic arm. The Chiefs' run defense is vulnerable — the Bills, who rushed for 182 yards against Kansas City, wisely took that path before the Ravens lost their way.

In the playoffs, McCaffrey had 20 carries for 90 yards and four receptions for 42 yards versus the Lions after totaling 17 carries for 98 yards and seven receptions for 30 yards versus the Packers. I like McCaffrey's chances to go Over his rushing and receiving totals. I'll bet both props and if he falls short in one, no harm done. If the 49ers win, McCaffrey is probably the MVP.

THE ULTIMATE LOOK-AHEAD GAME SUMMARY

VSIN Director of Analytics Steve Makinen simulated Super Bowl LVIII and here is the projected score, team stats, and player stats to help with your bets on the Big Game. Head to VSIN.com for a more detailed explanation of Steve's projections and methodology.

I started by projecting the scores, time of possession, and yardage statistics for the Super Bowl LVIII contest overall, and then expanded into the individual players and their projected output based upon these overall numbers.

For enhanced accuracy, I have only utilized the last 10 meaningful games for each team, making the assumption that the performances in that span were more indicative of the teams' themselves and the quality of opponents which they faced. I've made appropriate adjustments for where the teams had or played against teams with injured star players. For the record, I did ignore the regular season finales for both Kansas City and San Francisco, as each opted to rest numerous starters for those games.

PROJECTED SCORE

Let's start by looking at some overall projections for the game, using my EFFECTIVE STATS method as the basis for calculation. This method takes into account the team's performance against weighted averages of its opponents. In other words, STRENGTH OF SCHEDULE is built in.

Effective Offensive Points	Effective Defensive Points
Kansas City: 25.99	Kansas City: 11.62
San Francisco: 25.23	San Francisco: 26.76

I, along with a few of my statistical colleagues in the industry, typically estimate that about 2/3 of the "scoring output" is dictated by the offenses. Using that ratio, the score projection would be:

Last 10 Games Effective Scoring Forecast
Kansas City: 26.25
San Francisco: 20.69

The total points of 46.94 is a little less than a point below the actual total of 47.5, and the Chiefs would be expected to be about a 5.6-point favorite. This obviously dramatically exceeds the actual line being offered. Incidentally, the last time this model projected the underdog to win outright was three years ago, when Tampa Bay upset Kansas City.

PROJECTED BOX SCORE

Kansas City

Passing	Comp (DK)	Yards (DK)
Patrick Mahomes	19.6 (25.5)	263.7 (261.5)
Rushing	Att (DK)	Yards (DK)
Isiah Pacheco	18.6 (16.5)	83.5 (66.5)
Clyde Edwards-Helaire	4.7 (N/A)	23.1 (N/A)
Patrick Mahomes	5.0 (4.5)	21.1 (25.5)
Receiving	Rec (DK)	Yards (DK)
Rashee Rice	5.3 (6.5)	80.6 (66.5)
Travis Kelce	5.5 (6.5)	78.5 (70.5)
Marques Valdez-Scantling	1.48 (1.5)	36.5 (19.5)
Noah Gray	2.0 (1.5)	17.9 (11.5)
Justin Watson	1.0 (1.5)	16.3 (16.5)
Isiah Pacheco	2.5 (2.5)	17.0 (16.5)
Clyde Edwards-Helaire	1.9 (1.5)	16.7 (N/A)

PROJECTED TEAM STATS



Team Stats

Yards Per Play	6.09	5.45
Total Yards	377.6	309.6
Total Plays*	62.0	56.8
Rushing (Yards)	129.5	115.4
Rushing Attempts	29.7	23.7
Yards Per Rush	4.36	4.87
Passing (Yards)^	248.1	194.3
Comp-Att	19.6-32.3	19.9-33.1
Yards Per Attempt	7.68	194.3
Time of Possession	30:15	29:45

San Francisco

Passing	Comp (DK)	Yards (DK)
Brock Purdy	19.9 (20.5)	213.2 (247.5)
Rushing	Att (DK)	Yards (DK)
Christian McCaffrey	15.4 (18.5)	75.9 (90.5)
Brock Purdy	3.6 (3.5)	20.3 (12.5)
Elijah Mitchell	2.7 (1.5)	10.6 (3.5)
Deebo Samuel	2.0 (2.5)	8.4 (15.5)
Receiving	Rec (DK)	Yards (DK)
Brandon Aiyuk	4.2 (4.5)	54.5 (62.5)
Deebo Samuel	4.8 (4.5)	48.8 (58.5)
George Kittle	3.3 (3.5)	47.1 (47.5)
Christian McCaffrey	4.0 (4.5)	28.1 (33.5)
Jajuan Jennings	2.4 (1.5)	23.1 (14.5)
Kyle Juszczyk	1.2 (0.5)	11.3 (3.5)

*Yards per play adjusted for 2/3 offense, 1/3 defense formula

^ Kansas City: 248.1 / 7.68 (KC 263.7 total passing yards minus yardage of 2.4 projected sacks against)
San Francisco: 194.3 / 5.87 (SF 213.2 total passing yards minus yardage of 2.9 projected sacks against)

**(DK) = DRAFTKINGS ODDS
AS OF FEB. 5**

THE GREAT DEBATE

SUPER BOWL MVP

Everybody has an opinion on everything for the Super Bowl. That includes the MVP market. We have plenty of different Super Bowl MVP opinions across the network, but our participants in "The Great Debate" will be Jonathan Von Tobel, Zachary Cohen, and Adam Burke.

Whether you agree, disagree, or like somebody else to woo the voters and claim the award, JVT, Zach, and Adam will be making impassioned cases for their picks to win the Most Valuable Player of Super Bowl LVIII in a back-and-forth, mostly civil discussion.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

JVT: It's an old adage in journalism: Keep it simple, stupid. There's no need to overthink this. Thirty-two of 57 Super Bowl MVPs have been quarterbacks. Twelve of the last 16 MVPs have been quarterbacks. Kansas City also has the best quarterback of his generation, and the face of the league in Patrick Mahomes. If the Chiefs win this game – barring a ridiculous 3-0 final score – Mahomes (+125) will get the nod from the voters come Super Bowl Sunday.

Burke: Calling me stupid already?! You haven't even heard what I have to say! I will grant that it is a QB-driven award, but let me take you back in time. The year was 2005...

Tom Brady and the New England Patriots won Super Bowl XXXVIII (38) in 2004 and were looking to run it back in Super Bowl XXIX (39). Brady won the second of his five Super Bowl MVPs in 38, but you know what the voters did in 39? They gave the MVP to Deion Branch. Why? He caught 11 passes of Brady's 23 completions and racked up 133 of his 236 yards. He didn't even have a TD catch!

Voters didn't want to give it to Brady for a second straight year. Two guys in Super Bowl history have won back-to-back MVPs - Terry Bradshaw (13 & 14) and Bart Starr (1 & 2). When the Broncos won B2B, it was Terrell Davis and then John Elway. Cowboys - Emmitt Smith and Troy Aikman. 49ers - Joe Montana and Jerry Rice.

What changes this year?

JVT: I'm going to go out on a limb and say the voters who voted for MVP in Super Bowls I, II, XIII and XIV are not going to be deciding who wins the award on Sunday. I'm sure they're ... not covering the league anymore.

What changes this year is that Mahomes is putting the stamp on a run of dominance we haven't seen since Brady. He also gets a defense that has been subpar, especially in the secondary.

Jared Goff picked this defense apart in the NFC Championship Game. On the dropbacks in which he was not pressured, Goff went

22 of 28 for 247 yards and 8.8 yards per attempt. He also posted a PFF passing grade of 78.2 on passes of 20 or more yards downfield, and the 49ers did not force a single turnover worthy play on those attempts.

Lamar Jackson challenged this secondary on Christmas Day and completed 7-of-11 attempts 10-19 yards downfield for two touchdowns and 9.3 yards per attempt.

Joe Burrow obliterated this secondary when they faced him back in Week 8. Burrow went 3 for 3 and a touchdown on throws 20 or more yards downfield against them. For the day he had a PFF passing grade of 85.7 and averaged 8.8 yards per pass attempt.

When this defense has been at its worst this season it has been against legitimate quarterbacks. I would say that Mahomes – who has completed 67.4% of his passes in the postseason with a 5.3 touchdown-to-interception ratio – is a legitimate quarterback who can challenge this unit.

Burke: Those voters are not...at least not to my knowledge, though I'm guessing some of them still have BBWAA votes for the Baseball Hall of Fame. But, that's a different discussion entirely.

Mahomes deserves his flowers, but he's gotten many bouquets already. You know who hasn't? Travis Kelce. A tight end has never won the Super Bowl MVP and, let's be honest, Mahomes has done a lot of what he's done, especially this season/postseason, because of Mr. Taylor Swift.

This postseason, Kelce (+1200) has accounted for 36.5% of Mahomes' passing yards, 75% of the passing touchdowns, and nearly 33% of the receptions. During that stretch, Kelce became the most prolific pass-catcher in playoff history. Call it a lifetime achievement award. Call it an easy story to write making MVP history. Call it an easy story for clicks to simply mention the global pop icon that he's dating.

Damien Williams should have won the MVP in Super Bowl LIV, but voters were lazy and also submitted before his final rushing touchdown. Kelce had 6-43-1 in that game and Mahomes was really, really pedestrian. He only threw for 182 yards last season, but won MVP. The voters want something different and arguably the best TE ever is something different.

If Mahomes is good enough to win it, Kelce will be a big part of the reason why. And the price is a lot better.

JVT: Kelce is getting 33% of his receptions and 36.5% of his yardage, but you know who is doing 100% of the work? Patrick Mahomes!!!

Look, at the end of the day the plan should be to play Mahomes, especially if you like Kansas City. Quarterbacks are the favorite to win the award for a reason. A Chiefs victory heavily correlates with Mahomes winning the award. Instead of taking a watered-down moneyline price of +105, bettors will be in a much better spot with a Mahomes MVP ticket in their pocket.



SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

JVT: Once again, I'll make the obvious choice here and go with the quarterback. I was vocal with my dissension when it came to Brock Purdy winning MVP in the regular season, but this is obviously much different.

Purdy (+225) has the strongest narrative of the potential 49ers candidates being a former "Mr. Irrelevant". I also believe San Francisco's loaded roster works in his favor. What happens if Deebo Samuel, Christian McCaffrey and George Kittle all score? Purdy will get the benefit of the doubt if the playmakers of the 49ers do their job. To me, he is the obvious choice for San Francisco, as the odds reflect.

Cohen: At what point do you become relevant enough to shed the "Mr. Irrelevant" tag? It sure seems like we're talking about this guy a lot. I actually have a soft spot for Purdy as a big college football bettor. I absolutely loved him when he was at Iowa State, even if that backwards pick-6 he threw against TCU is up there as one of the worst plays I've ever seen. He's also an Arizona guy and I drive by quite a few billboards cheering the Gilbert product on. However, I have been in the "system quarterback" camp for most of the season. He has done a great job of doing what Kyle Shanahan has asked of him, but I'm not sure he can do much more than that. And his play in these playoffs has left a lot to be desired.

It just feels like we're a miraculous Brandon Aiyuk reception away from having a much different conversation about Purdy. Sure, he made some tremendous plays with his legs against the Lions, but this 49ers passing game isn't clicking the way it should. And Purdy is now entering the biggest game of his life, meaning the pressure on him will be insurmountable.

I also just can't shake the fact that the best pathway for the 49ers to win this game is by riding McCaffrey's legs. Kansas City was 27th in the NFL in Defensive DVOA against the rush this season. This is not a defense that can be trusted to stop the run, and San Francisco happens to have the most explosive runner in the league. So, I just wouldn't be shocked if the 49ers really pound away with McCaffrey (+475), especially after seeing the Ravens completely abandon the running game in the AFC Championship Game. The Chiefs have a stellar secondary, so why test it more than you need to?

JVT: You want to go DVOA, Cohen? Let's do it!

Do you know where Kansas City ranks by DVOA standards covering running backs out of the backfield? A whopping 21st of 32 teams!

For as good as this secondary is, the linebackers struggle in coverage. Drue Tranquill is the best linebacker in coverage by PFF standards and his grade is only a 66.4! Four linebackers for the Chiefs who have dropped back into coverage have a PFF coverage grade of 56.9 or lower!

Shanahan's system loves to pick on linebackers. It moves them from side to side, gets them flowing one way when the destination of the play is really the other, and it specifically attacks that position group. It could be a massive day for McCaffrey, but that could come by way of receptions.

Purdy was second in PFF passing grade among qualified quarterbacks on play action pass attempts (93.3). He completed 79.8% of those attempts for 12 touchdowns and two interceptions. One way to limit the mistakes of a quarterback is effective play action, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest he can dominate with a play fake.

Why would you challenge the secondary when you can just pick on the weak linebacker core?

Cohen: In my best Skip Bayless voice: Shannon, I hear you...BUT...

I definitely see a scenario in which McCaffrey eats as a pass catcher out of the backfield. But again, I think the voters would be smart enough not to credit Purdy for the work McCaffrey does after the catch. Nobody wants to see a quarterback dinking and dunking his way to a Super Bowl MVP. Even short crossing routes to McCaffrey would look better on him than Purdy.

In order for Purdy to win MVP, I think we'll need to see him put up big numbers — or make throws that average quarterbacks can't make. Nick Foles threw for 373 yards and three touchdowns when the Eagles beat the Patriots in 2018. It's disrespectful to compare Purdy to Foles, but I do think the 49ers signal caller will need to wow people in order to shake his league-wide perception.

Of course, a running back hasn't won this award since Terrell Davis did it in Super Bowl XXXII (back in 1998). But this is a game in which the Under looks like the right play, and that benefits McCaffrey as a workhorse back. I just feel better about taking McCaffrey at +475 odds, even if it's more likely Purdy wins. If McCaffrey rushes for 100 yards and a score and Purdy doesn't throw for multiple touchdowns, I can't see that being enough for the quarterback to win.

JVT: Zach, you hit on my biggest issue with betting McCaffrey for MVP. A same game parlay of San Francisco moneyline, both McCaffrey Over 89.5 rushing yards and Anytime Touchdown and Purdy Under 1.5 touchdown passes has +750 odds at DraftKings. All of those things need to happen for him to win MVP, so why bet him to do so at the price the market has?

I admit that the market has it right in saying McCaffrey has the best odds of the non-quarterbacks, but there's no need to overthink this thing. Just bet the signal-caller of the side you like and call it a night.

All compelling arguments. All players that could very well be worthy of the award, but there are others that could win as well. Only one team will be crowned the champion and only one player's name will join the prestigious group of 58 (multiple MVPs in Super Bowl XII). Chuck Howley (Super Bowl V) is the only player to win the Super Bowl MVP on the losing team, an honor that will probably never happen again, so the first step is picking the winning team before looking into who will win the MVP.

Lastly, as we put an end to the football season on Sunday, note that JVT and Zach are not only sharp NFL minds, but also our resident NBA experts at VSiN.com and both are having strong years with their picks and analysis. Catch their write-ups throughout the remainder of the NBA season and on into the playoffs, plus hear them on the Hardwood Handicappers Podcast along with VSiN Senior Producer and co-host Kelley Bydlon.

HOW TO BET SUPER BOWL FIRST TOUCHDOWN PROPS

By Stephanie Kamerschak

Think predicting who scores the first touchdown of a game is impossible? Wrong! While it's not a perfect science by any means, there are some trends and rules that have helped me cash FTD (first touchdown) tickets all season long.

Here are some reminders heading into the big game:

- Inferior offenses aren't always inferior at scoring first.** Some of the best FTD teams didn't even make the playoffs this season. This could reflect the aggressiveness of the head coach, the team's ability to execute a scripted drive, or big-play ability. Case in point, the Chiefs averaged just 21.8 PPG in the regular season, yet managed to be the third-best team at scoring the game's first touchdown. Typically, I recommend sticking to one team's players based on which team has the better FTD success rate, but we have the #2 and #3 teams on our hands, therefore I won't be scared by Kansas City's mediocre offensive output this year. I'll have bets on both teams this time.
- Bet on more than one player.** The shortest odds I've seen in this market is of course, on Christian McCaffrey at +350. This means if you bet him, you can still bet on two other players and make a profit. If you leave him off (although I do not recommend this), every player is at least +600, meaning you can bet up to six players and come out ahead. There is no need to put all of your eggs in one basket.
- Look to bet team-first touchdowns if you can.** Most sportsbooks will offer odds to score the game's first touchdown and who will score the team's first touchdown. While the odds for team-first touchdowns (TFTDs) aren't nearly as long as they are for game-firsts, it's much easier to predict. Both of these teams have some favorite targets that we can hopefully cash in on, even if it isn't the first of the game.
- Getting the ball first means nothing.** Yes, in theory, the team with the ball first has a better chance of scoring the first touchdown. But it just doesn't happen as often as you'd think. Of the 12 playoff games we've had so far, the game's first touchdown was only scored on the opening drive four times. On top of it being impossible to be 100% sure what a team will do if they win the coin toss, teams are typically conservative early in games. They are comfortable punting or kicking a field goal as opposed to trying their hardest to get in the end zone. This trend is emphasized in the 57 Super Bowls we've had, as the game's first touchdown has only been scored on the opening drive FIVE times. If you decide to only bet players on one team, and the other team gets the ball first, it might actually be a good sign based on the data.

Now that we're in the right mindset, let's make some picks.

I realize most of my picks are near the top of the odds board, so why not throw a couple bucks on a longshot or two for fun? **Marquez Valdes-Scantling** (+3000) went from zero to hero in the AFC Championship game against the Ravens, catching a 32-yard pass which allowed Kansas City to kneel out the clock. After missing multiple crucial catches this season, this reception could have restored Andy Reid and Patrick Mahomes's faith in him. For the Niners, **Brock Purdy** (+2800) intrigues me. He showed off his wheels against Detroit, rushing for 48 yards on five carries. He only has two rushing touchdowns on the year, but could Kyle Shanahan draw up a surprise play for Mr. Irrelevant? I'd love to see it!

49ers	TFTD	FTD
McCaffrey	8	4
Aiyuk	3	3
Samuel	3	2
Kittle	2	2
Mitchell	1	1
Mason	1	1
Bell	1	1

TFTD - team first touchdown
FTD - first touchdown of the game

I'm going to bet on players from both sides in this game, so I'll start with the NFC Champion 49ers. San Fran was the 2nd best FTD team this season, finding the end zone first in 14 of their 19 games. They are also one of the most consistent teams in terms of player targets. Christian McCaffrey scored their first touchdown a whopping EIGHT times - that's nearly half of their games. He comes with ridiculously short odds, or what I call the "McCaffrey Tax", but it's worth it. For reference, the shortest shot in last year's Super Bowl was Jalen Hurts at +700, which cashed. I'll have a ticket on McCaffrey (+350 at DraftKings), but with two units to help offset the cost. My other picks on this side also sit atop the list of Niners favorite FTD targets, Deebo Samuel (+850) and Brandon Aiyuk (+850). Both players had huge roles in their win over the Lions and have also been great at scoring the first touchdown with three team-firsts each.

Chiefs	TFTD	FTD
Pacheco	6	4
Rice	4	3
McKinnon	2	1
Kelce	2	1
Moore	1	1
Toney	1	1
Valdes-Scantling	1	1
Watson	1	1
D/ST	1	1

(KC did not score a TD in one game)

While being very successful this season, the Chiefs are a much more annoying FTD team. While they've scored the game's first touchdown in an impressive 14 of 20 games, they've done so with eight different offensive players and even had a defensive score. That said, they do have two players I'm going to bet on. Isiah Pacheco (+600) has become a massive part of this Chiefs offense, with at least 24 carries in two of their three playoff games. He was also their #1 FTD guy this season, scoring first for KC in six games. I'll also be on Travis Kelce (+650). The superstar tight end had a down year in terms of scoring FTDs compared to 2022 when he had nine team-firsts and five game-firsts. But, he has reemerged as Patrick Mahomes favorite red zone target over the last two weeks. He's now scored KC's first touchdown in back-to-back weeks after going all season with zero. After fading him every week since September, I'm back on board!

A Colorful **UPDATE** Prop-a-what?

By Matt Devine

Matty's 6th Annual Big Game Prop-a-Rating-Palooza selections are set! If you aren't familiar with my Prop-a-Rating-Palooza, be sure to [read my article](#) released last week in the 2024 Big Game Betting Primer and on VSIN.com.

After a deep-dive into the historical outcome of over 300 props for all of the Big Games dating back to 2002, there are 12 props that qualified as bettable for Super Bowl LVIII based on my 'exceptional rating'. In short, the 'exceptional rating' is nothing more than a way to try and quantify the value of a prop's betting line, and as a result, the advantage a bettor might have in placing a bet on that prop. How do you calculate the 'exceptional rating'? Be sure to [check out my introductory article](#) where I explain it all.

Good luck with all your Big Game plays!

CLICK HERE! TAKE-AWAY TOOL!

The most significant take-away of this year's article is the spreadsheet containing nearly 250 prop results from the last 22 Super Bowls, as well as a breakdown of 'Square' results for all four quarters. I'll be adding more as the week continues, so be sure to check it out!

Prop (1u = 1 unit, 4u = 4 units, etc)	My Wager Is On	Historical Yes	Historical No	Implied Wager Odds	Actual Odds I'm Betting	Exceptional Rating
Longest field goal in game Over 54.5	No, 6u	0, 0.00%	22, 100%	Infinity	-600	Infinity
Will there be a kickoff return for a touchdown	Yes, 1u	3, 13.64%	19, 86.36%	+633	+2700	2067
Will the game be decided by exactly 11 points	Yes, 1u	2, 9.09%	20, 90.91%	+1000	+3000	2000
Any player 150+ receiving yards	No, 3.8u	1, 4.55%	21, 95.45%	-2098	-380	1718
Will there be a touchdown and field goal every quarter	Yes, 1u	2, 9.09%	20, 90.91%	+1000	+2000	1000
Will the game be decided by exactly 4 points	Yes, 1u	3, 13.64%	19, 86.36%	+633	+1500	867
Team to score last wins the game	Yes, 2.05u	20, 90.91%	2, 9.09%	-1000	-205	795
Will the opening kickoff be a touchback	No, 1u	4, 18.18%	18, 81.82%	-450	+300	750
Both teams to have 2+ field goals	No, 4u	2, 9.09%	20, 90.91%	-1000	-400	600
Will there be a safety	Yes, 1u	4, 18.18%	18, 81.82%	+450	+1000	550
First play from scrimmage will result in a 1st down	No, 5u	2, 9.09%	20, 90.91%	-1000	-500	500
Will the game be decided by exactly 14 points	Yes, 1u	2, 9.09%	20, 90.91%	+1000	+1500	500
12 TOTAL WAGERS	RISKING	27.85 units				

NOTE ABOUT MY BETS

The Super Bowl prop market this year resulted in fewer props with an 'Exceptional Rating' of 500+ than in previous seasons. Additionally, this year I found that a greater number of the props that did qualify include a larger risk and larger reward tag. Seven of my 12 props are dogs (+), many you might consider to be long-shots. I do realize that this year, more than any year previous, the margin for a significant swing into the red or black is very possible, if not likely. Finding a 4, 11 or 14 point margin when the clock reads 0:00 might make-or-break the evening.