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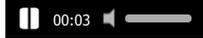
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FOOTBALL EXTRA POINTS -
MONDAYS @ 9:00PM EASTERN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2013

HOLIDAYS ARE FOR THE BIRDS: EARLY WEEK 14 FANTASY FOOTBALL PICKUPS

Bah, humbug, I say!



Yeah, the holidays are among us, and I, for one, am not pleased. Not only did my fantasy teams let me down (why did Andrew Luck decide to throw 4 touchdowns the only week I sit him? And does Reggie Bush have no sympathy for fantasy football players by deciding to sit out for a calf strain AFTER the 1 PM deadline for changing our rosters passed? The nerve!), but I also happen to be located near "The Tree" at Rockefeller Center in New York. You know "The Tree". It's that gigantic monstrosity covered with lights that people fly half way around the world and then camp out for half a day in the cold just so they can see the lights turn on.



And seeing as how my office used to be near the ice rink in front of "The

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Pickups



Off-season

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Tree", I'd hear the 45 minute holiday music loop over and over again (since 30 Rock is a historical building, the windows can't be updated to keep out noise) until I wanted to fling myself out of the window directly at the speakers in hopes of knocking it out and saving the rest of midtown Manhattan from the inevitable madness that will befall them if they continue to listen to this annoying loop (which is particularly unfortunate in 30 Rock since the windows also cannot be updated to remain closed – you heard me right, the windows open on a skyscraper. Clearly, the architect who thought that was a good idea never had a bad day at work before. I doubt Ted Mosby from "How I Met Your Mother" would make that mistake. He's had more bad days than is humanly possible at this point. But I digress...).



But what saves the holidays for me is looking back to my heritage and finding a comforting holiday song. Since I'm originally from New Zealand, that would be looking back to the famous holiday song written in the 1960's "Sticky Beak the kiwi". To those who don't know, Sticky Beak the kiwi (who, to be clear, is a bird, not a fruit) actually guides Santa's sleigh in the southern hemisphere, kicking Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer to the curb. First of all, I didn't realize there was a turf war between reindeer and kiwi over pulling Santa's sleigh. Sounds like a particularly unattractive prize to me. But secondly, and more importantly, why in the world is Sticky Beak the kiwi called Sticky Beak? I feel there's a whole untold story there that might not be appropriate for children.



Anyway, the point is that sometimes you have to go back to where you started to feel comfortable. And quite frankly, in the fantasy football playoffs, you generally should play who got you there, and perhaps who you started with from the draft, regardless of the matchups. But there are times when you need to fill the gaps due to injury, and there are plenty this week, so perhaps you can start with one of these free agent pickups (as usual, available in at least 50% of Yahoo standard leagues):

Da'Rick Rogers – WR – 1% Owned

We all now know that Darrius Heyward-Bey can't catch. He's darn fast, but unfortunately that's only half of being a good WR. So much for getting an opportunity with the Reggie Wayne injury. The Colts needed another option. And undrafted talent Da'Rick Rogers appeared to be the answer. Undrafted due to character issues, he's apparently done well with the off-field problems since coming into the NFL. Lucky for him, good behavior got him an opportunity, and he did the most with that opportunity catching six passes for 107 yards and two touchdowns in only his second career game. Rogers was targeted a game-high nine times as he saw a ton of playing time in two- and three-wide sets with T.Y. Hilton and LaVon Brazill. At 6-foot-3 and 206-pounds, Rogers is going to be tough to bring down. If you need some help with a WR3/WR4 in 12-team and deeper

an Elite 2013 Fantasy Quarterback?

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leagues, perhaps Rogers can be a good stash.

Marcel Reece – RB – 12% Owned

With Rashad Jennings unable to clear his concussion protocols in time and Darren McFadden sidelined with another injury that at this point we can't even be bothered to keep track of, Marcel Reece was pressed into starting for Oakland. Reece came through against a relatively stout Jets defensive line with 19 carries for 123 yards and a touchdown with a bonus two catches for 38 yards. Surprisingly, although Reece was a WR in college and has had success catching the ball out of the backfield, he wasn't used as a passing back but actually used as a running back. And he looked great when he outran the entire Jets defense on a 63-yard touchdown in the second half. If Jennings clears his concussion protocols, then there won't be much value here, but if not and Run DMC remains out, then Reece may be a good desperation flex play for those in 12-team and deeper leagues.

Jordan Todman – RB - 2% Owned

Maurice Jones-Drew was having the game of his season when he suddenly pulled up lame with a hamstring injury. And we all know how tricky a hamstring injury can be. As I noted in the comments of last week's article, Jordan Todman is the back up and should be picked up by MJD owners. In less than a quarter Todman rushed seven times for 14 yards with one catch (on a trick play from Ace Sanders of all people) for a 21-yard touchdown. Since Justin Forsett is still out with a broken foot, Todman would potentially get the start next against the Bills if MJD remains sidelined. MJD later stated that he was going to play next week, but we all know that players overestimate their ability to heal. If he starts, Todman might be worth flex consideration in 14-team and deeper leagues.

Toby Gerhart – RB – 6% Owned

Unluckily for the Vikings, Adrian Peterson was tackled on the sidelines in pain and was quickly helped off the field and into the locker room. Filling in for AP, Toby Gerhart rushed 15 times for 89 yards and a touchdown. Of course nearly half that production came on one 41-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter. But that's what he can do, he can break tackles and get significant yards after contact. AP was later diagnosed with a mid-foot sprain, which could be season ending. Even if it isn't (and AP insists it's not) there's no reason for the Vikings to put their star RB at risk with their season already over. Gerhart should be picked up in all 12-team and deeper leagues, and definitely by any AP owner.

And here's a list of pickups mentioned in previous weeks that I still recommend picking up if they're still available: *Zac Stacy, Nick Foles, Kris Durham, Harry Douglas, Fred Jackson, Brian Hartline, Julian Edelman, Rueben Randle, Jared Boykin, Mike Glennon, Jordan Reed, Tim Wright, Mike Tolbert, Tiquan Underwood, Brandon LaFell, Tavon Austin, Doug Baldwin, Justin Hunter, Ace Sanders, Dennis Pitta, Andre Holmes and Michael Crabtree.*

If you want to know more about any of these past pickups, go ahead and check out my pick up discussions here:
<http://www.footballxtrapoints.com/search/label/Ha%20Kung%20Wong>.

So get ready for the playoff run and for the holidays! And remember that if you ever look up into the sky and see a kiwi bird leading a pack of reindeer and a sleigh, you're probably somewhere in the southern hemisphere. Or that gas station sushi you had for lunch really was a bad life decision and you should seek medical attention immediately.

By Ha Kung Wong (Twitter: @Rhihan)

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2 comments:



Hakung Wong December 10, 2013 at 10:12 AM

UPDATE -- Todman has been named the starter if MJD can't go. Rashad Jennings passed his concussion tests and is slated for 70% of the carries, thus potentially limiting Reece's upside. AP's MRI scans on his foot are going to a specialist...and that's never a good sign. Prepare to be without AP this week.

Keep checking back for more updates!

[Reply](#)



Hakung Wong December 13, 2013 at 4:46 PM

UPDATE 2 - For those of you looking to use Todman, MJD was listed as "Doubtful" for Sunday's game, so Todman may be a decent play against the bottom 10 Bill's run defense. Also, time to bench Josh McCown as Jay Cutler is starting this Sunday for the Bears against the Browns. Aaron Rodgers still out, so beware of all Packers players not named Eddie Lacy this week with Matt Flynn continuing at the helm (though even Lacy is mildly injured, so temper expectations). AP fooled us all with a questionable tag. Who is this guy, Wolverine? If he does play, you can bench Gerhart, but even if he doesn't play, Gerhart is dealing with his own injury and was only able to practice once on a limited basis this week. Avoid him. And to no one's surprise, Run DMC remains out, but Rashad Jennings practicing in full all week, so looks like you should bench Reece this week (and perhaps until the end of the season).

Good luck everyone and keep checking back for more updates!

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