

## Risky Business Week 2

### High Flying and Low Diving in Baltimore

The Sunday night battle between the Baltimore Ravens and the Kansas City chiefs lived up to the hype. The match-up featured two of the most dynamic quarterbacks in the history of the NFL as well as two of the most astute coaches. The Ravens emerged with a W by the thinnest of margins, and it was defined by some fascinating swings. The EdjSports simulation had this as a pick-em game while the Las Vegas Insider consensus showed the Chiefs to be a 4 point favorite. Additionally, the fair value of the money line at +185 indicated the betting public expected the Chiefs to come out on top about 65% of the time. Early in the season, it is not unusual to see these types of differences between the EdjSports' model projections and market prices as the data defining the team characteristics is still accumulating. However, just 50 seconds into the game, a pick-6 quickly shook up all the pre-game expectations. This blunder resulted in a dramatic drop of 15% GWC for the Ravens before their defense was even introduced. To put this in perspective, if, as our analysis suggested, this was truly an evenly matched game at the opening kickoff, that interception alone would have moved the Ravens from even money to nearly a 2/1 underdog.

Jumping ahead to the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Ravens finally took the lead with just over three minutes remaining in this high scoring game. After a failed two-point conversion, the Ravens kicked the ball back to the Chiefs and then into the eager hands of Patrick Mahomes. As the Chiefs marched across midfield, the Ravens were undoubtedly feeling helpless with the security of only one time out. It now seemed inevitable the Chiefs would get a crack at a game-winning field goal with no time remaining. This all changed when Clyde Edward-Helaire was stripped of the ball at the Ravens' 34 yard line with 1:24 remaining in the game. The fumble resulted in a massive drop of nearly -70% GWC. The Chiefs weren't quite dead yet as they could still get the ball back by using their three timeouts and stopping the Ravens short of a first down. The Ravens only managed to pick up 9 yards on their first three attempts, and this set up a 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 on their own 43 yard line. There was little doubt that Jim Harbaugh was not going to punt this ball. He understands fourth down analytics as well as anyone in the league and he certainly wasn't going to make a mistake like Mike McCarthy did late in the game against the Bucs last week (*insert week 1 risky business link here*). In fact, this decision to go for it is multiples greater than the value Dallas squandered in week 1. A misguided punt would have cost the Ravens -17% in GWC on average. This point was somehow lost on Al Michaels, and even more surprisingly, Chris Collinsworth. Once again, they showed their typical fair weather skepticism against such aggressive actions-unless of course such actions are successful in securing the win.

To get a better handle on just how clearly correct it is to go for it on this 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 we can consult the EdjSports' 4<sup>th</sup> down forecast tool. After the fumble recovery on their 34 yard line the Ravens needed to advance the ball 7 yards to the 41 yard line to justify a first down attempt. 4<sup>th</sup> and 3 would be the maximum allowable go attempt. Moving the ball to the 43 yard line was more than enough, and Harbaugh didn't hesitate. Moments later Lamar Jackson

popped through the line for a two yard gain and the Ravens put the finishing touches on their first win of the season.