College football is officially over and just seven NFL games remain as the betting season is starting to wind down for most recreational players. Really sharp amateurs are taking advantage of early tennis and golf lines, while other players are bobbing and weaving through basketball season. The return of the NHL will give players another sport to bet on, though it is not one that gets a lot of action. With mostly just regular season hoops going on, it's a tough time to be a profitable bettor.

There are four NFL games this weekend worthy of taking a look at, so that's where I'll start this week. I'll start in the NFC, as both AFC games have big spreads. The NFC presents one very interesting opportunity this week with a very interesting line. The Atlanta Falcons, fresh off their bye week during the wild card round, host the Seattle Seahawks. The Seahawks are in a traditional fade spot, making a cross-country trek for the second straight week. The line sits at Atlanta -2.5, which would indicate that the Seahawks would be favored on a neutral field. With the way the Seahawks are playing and general skepticism about the Falcons, it seems like a fair assessment.

Last week, the Seahawks fell behind 14-0 before Robert Griffin III's knee started to give out on him and the Redskins suffered as a result. In the final three quarters, the Redskins offense managed just 54 yards, while the Seahawks rattled off 24 unanswered points and dominated time of possession. It will be a quick turnaround for the Seahawks, who really aren't used to this position and will be taking on a Falcons team that finished the season 7-1 at home, with the only loss in a meaningless finale against the Buccaneers. The Falcons, however, have lost four straight playoff games, so there's a lot of pressure on them.

Travel is the biggest issue here for the Seahawks, as they match up fairly well with the Seahawks. The last west coast team to win back-to-back playoff games on the east coast was

the Los Angeles Rams in 1989. This is also a Seahawks team that started 1-5 on the road, before beating Chicago, Buffalo, and Washington last week.

To me, one of the concerns is that Atlanta is coming off a bye and the bye week has hurt teams in recent years. Since 2002, teams coming off a bye in the playoffs are 25-15 straight up and 17-23 against the spread, according to SportsMemo.com . I look at the New York Giants from last season and the Green Bay Packers from 2010 as examples of wild cards having big success in the playoffs. In 2008, the team coming off the bye was 1-3 against the spread and all three losses were straight up.

In the other NFC tilt, the same situation could apply as the Green Bay Packers head to San Francisco as three-point underdogs. Just like the last game, you have a young quarterback in Colin Kaepernick taking on a guy who has been around the block a few times in Aaron Rodgers. The difference, of course, being that Rodgers has had playoff success while Matt Ryan has not.

This game is defense against offense. The 49ers have allowed just 311.5 yards per game, best in the NFC, while the Packers and their prolific passing offense hung the second-most points in the NFC. The Packers went just 4-4 on the road this season, despite the fact that Aaron Rodgers threw 22 TDs against just three interceptions in those eight games.

This looks like the best game on the board, but also the hardest one to bet. The 49ers have a good pass rush and Aaron Rodgers was sacked 51 times during the regular season and three more times by the Vikings last week. My suggestion here would be to watch it and avoid betting it.

In the AFC East, neither game projects to be close, as both the Broncos and the Patriots are 9.5 or 10 point favorites over their opponents. The Broncos host the Ravens, while the Patriots and Texans meet again. It’s very hard to lay big numbers in the NFL playoffs, but this might be the spot to do both.

With the Broncos/Ravens matchup, the Broncos were excellent at home, using their 7-1 record as a springboard to getting home field throughout the playoffs. Peyton Manning was downright surgical at home, with a 22/3 TD/INT ratio and throwing for just shy of 300 yards per game. The Denver defense was also awesome, giving up 23 points less than any other team in the AFC.

The Ravens struggled en route to the playoffs, losing four of five, but looked like a better team last week, taking advantage of the Colts' bad offensive line. With a pass rush seeming unlikely against Manning and his three-step drop, the Ravens will have to rely on their pass coverage. The Ravens were in the middle of the pack in most defensive passing categories, so it would seem that the Broncos have an advantage.

Houston and New England played in a highly anticipated matchup on December 10. It was a measuring stick game on Monday night for the Texans. They lost by four touchdowns. Now, they get another shot after an ugly win over the Bengals. The key here is Matt Schaub, who has been awful on the road this season. Even though Houston is 6-2 on the road this year, Schaub has just a 79.5 QB rating in eight road games and just one more touchdown than interception. His completion percentage is also seven points lower on the road than at home. In cooler weather, temperatures below 60, Schaub played three games, throwing four interceptions and completing just 54.7% of his passes.

Tom Brady's time to shine has arrived. The Michigan grad is usually nails in the playoffs and has a 10-2 record at home in the playoffs. The Patriots also enter this game atop the league in turnover margin at +25. The Patriots may see a steady diet of Arian Foster in this game, which could make the cover of a big number a little bit more difficult.

As far as hoops goes, it's been an up and down season for most of the people I respect and it is a grind to make money on the hardwood. In some respects, given the NBA and college games running simultaneously, it's very similar to the grind of the baseball season. Coin flipping is not the way to make money betting, hence how little I've discussed basketball this season.

I will have some notes on betting hockey next week as the season gets ready to start on January 19. The condensed schedule should give a lot of quality betting opportunities, especially with teams who could struggle out of the gate with a shortened training camp and a lot of roster/staff turnover. For now, though, it's still time to focus on the NFL playoffs.

Good luck and pick winners, everybody.