

Just4Kicks ATS Pick System

Framework & Evidence

March 2026

Executive Summary

This document outlines a proposed approach for improving Joe and David's performance in the Just4kicks pick six NFL pool. Joe and David have been picking together for 12 years using a set of principles that have produced real results: following line movement, fading the public's tendency to overweight favorites, making contrarian plays to differentiate from the field, and collaborating on Monday Night Football picks to hedge for 6-0 weekly prizes. Over 12 shared seasons, they have approximately doubled their entry fees from season-end payouts alone—an estimated ~\$21,000 on \$10,500 in entry fees. On top of that, their MNF hedge strategy and weekly 6-0 finishes have generated several thousand dollars in additional weekly prize earnings that are not captured in those season-end figures (CBS does not provide historical weekly prize data in a format that allows precise tracking, but the team has won weekly prizes in multiple seasons, including approximately \$1,400 from a single carryover pot in 2025). They also get high quality advice from two expert advisors - Daniel, aka Dhart, and Robert, aka Rojo, who have provided weekly guidance and intel for the last several years. Both Joe and David rank as statistically significant outperformers in a pool that is neither small nor soft—roughly 210 experienced players, many of whom have been competing for a decade or more. Their historical performance is outlined below in section 4.

This project takes those principles and puts data behind them. Based on 12 years of NFL game data and 20 years of CBS pool player standings it attempts answer to answer several key questions: Which of these principles actually hold up across large samples? How much edge does each one provide? How do they overlap or conflict? How can David and Joe generate the maximum ROI with two entries? And can we build a weekly tool that systematically analyzes picks for them so the team doesn't have to rely on memory and instinct alone?

The answer to all three is yes, with important caveats. The research confirmed that three core principles drive success in this pool:

1. The stale-line advantage. CBS freezes point spreads on Tuesday, but the betting market keeps moving through Sunday. The side that benefits from this stale number covers at 54–59%, depending on how far the line moved. Joe and David have always leveraged this—the data confirms it and shows exactly how much each point of movement is worth.

2. The favorite-bias opportunity. Most pool players—and the general betting public—systematically overweight favorites. The pool field picks the favorite 65% of the time; the sharpest players in the pool pick the favorite only 46% of the time. When the line moves in the underdog's direction, the stale-line advantage and the favorite-bias opportunity stack on top of each other. This is something Joe and David have also exploited—both lean more contrarian than the typical pool player.

3. The game-theory advantage. In a pool with a steep payout gradient, not all correct picks are equal. A correct pick on a side that 15% of the field also chose moves your ranking 2–3 times more than a correct pick that 60% of the field shared. The system identifies which games offer this ranking leverage—not to chase unpopular picks blindly, but to break ties when two games offer a similar edge vs the spread.

What the system will do in practice: updated throughout the week, it will collect line movement data, public betting percentages, injury reports, and game context. It will score every game against these three principles and various ways to combine the, and will present analysis and pick recommendations for both entries. Joe and David will review the analysis, apply their own reads on the judgment calls, and make the final picks. The system will gather more data over time, improving the approach.

The results. The recommended approach is based on a sample of the last 6 seasons, which have richer data available on player ATS picks and line movements versus earlier seasons. Backtested across these six seasons (2020–2025), the system's best variant averaged 63.6 wins per season versus Joe's 59.8 and David's 59.7 ATS win percentage over this span. But the pattern is more interesting than the average: in the four seasons where line movement was a strong predictor (2020, 2021, 2022, 2025), the system dramatically outperformed. In the two seasons where it wasn't (2023, 2024), Joe and David's current approach was clearly superior. Neither approach dominates in all conditions—but a portfolio approach where one entry follows the current approach, and one entry follows the new recommended approach combines both, and captures value in either market environment.

The data foundation. These conclusions are drawn from a substantial evidence base: ~4,500 NFL games across 17 seasons, public consensus data from ESPN (~94,000 weekly pickers), Yahoo, and Pickwatch, 22,678 individual ATS pool picks, and over 640,000 Monte Carlo simulation scenarios. Direct CBS pool pick data is available for one season (2025); for the remaining seasons, public consensus data from multiple sources was used to build machine learning-based behavioral models that closely approximate actual CBS pool player behavior (validated at $r = 0.91$ against known outcomes). The 2026 season will add a second year of direct CBS data, allowing the team to test and refine every finding with additional ground truth data.

The performance of the system is variable across seasons. The system produced \$0 in two of six backtested seasons (2023, 2024). Fill-pick signals are based on meaningful but not large samples (150–350 games). Several closely performing approaches cannot be distinguished with current data. This is a first-year deployment—every week of tracked results makes the system smarter. The honest framing: Joe and David already have a profitable approach; the system adds structure, discipline, and data to an approach that works, while the 2026 season serves as both a production year and a calibration year.

1. Proposed Framework

The table below presents the system's best-performing variant alongside Joe and David's actual results for the six most recent seasons where we had sufficient data for evaluation. Blue-shaded cells indicate the system outperformed both players; amber-shaded cells indicate Joe and David outperformed the system.

Season	Pool Winner	System Best	System Rank	Joe Pring	Joe Rank	David Hunter	David Rank
2020	777Lisa (62)	68 wins (66.7%)	1	59 wins (57.8%)	10	59 wins (57.8%)	10
2021	Matt Milano (70)	65 wins (60.2%)	7	50 wins (46.3%)	173	52 wins (48.1%)	145
2022	Nick Rueda (76)	65 wins (60.2%)	14	63 wins (58.3%)	25	65 wins (60.2%)	15
2023	Brett Ugles (73)	60 wins (55.6%)	62	71 wins (65.7%)	4	70 wins (64.8%)	5
2024	Pat OB (71)	55 wins (50.9%)	155	57 wins (52.8%)	129	53 wins (49.1%)	170
2025	Tony Nguyen (73)	69 wins (63.9%)	2	59 wins (54.6%)	33	59 wins (54.6%)	33

Blue cells = system outperformed. **Amber cells** = Joe and David outperformed. Bold values indicate the stronger performer that season. Ranks are out of ~210 players. The anti-correlation is the strategic insight: the system and human judgment almost never succeed in the same year.

6-Season Summary	System Best Variant	Joe Pring	David Hunter
Seasons Cashed	4 of 6	2 of 6	3 of 6
Average Wins / Season	63.6	59.8	59.7
Estimated Total Earned	~\$10,650	~\$3,350	~\$3,050
Two-Entry Portfolio (combined)	~\$18,440	~\$6,400 (actual combined)	

Note on dollar amounts: All dollar figures are estimates ($\pm 20\%$) using a simplified payout schedule and reflect season-end standings payouts only—weekly prizes are excluded from both the system projections and Joe/David’s historical totals. Win totals and ranks are reliable. 2020–2024 system results use simulation against synthetic opponents modeled from public consensus data; 2025 is exact against all 212 actual CBS pool opponents. See Appendix for full methodology.

KEY TERMS

ATS (Against the Spread)	Picking whether a team beats the point spread, not just wins outright.
Tuesday Line	The spread CBS locks on Tuesday. All picks are graded against this number.
Line Movement	How far the spread moved from Tuesday to game time, measured in points.
Mover	A game where the line moved 1+ points. The system’s primary selection pool.
Benefiting Side	The side getting a better number from the stale Tuesday line than the current market offers.
Ownership	The % of players picking a given side. Lower ownership = more ranking value if correct.

2. The Three Principles

The system is built on three principles that Joe and David have practiced intuitively for years. The research program tested each one across large samples to confirm it works, measure how much edge it provides, and identify the best way to apply it. This section explains each principle, the evidence behind it, and how the system uses it.

Principle 1: The Stale-Line Advantage

CBS freezes point spreads on Tuesday evening. Between Tuesday and kickoff, the betting market continues to process information: injuries are announced, sharp bettors act, weather forecasts update, and public money flows in. By Sunday, the closing line often differs from the Tuesday number by 1–4+ points.

When the line moves, one side inherently benefits from the pool using the older Tuesday number. **Example:** suppose Team A is –3 on Tuesday but moves to –5 by Sunday. Picking Team A at –3 means they only need to win by 4 to cover—two free points compared to the current market. That two-point difference is the structural edge.

The data confirms what Joe and David have long suspected: this edge is real, persistent, and scales with movement magnitude.

Movement Magnitude	Cover Rate	Edge vs. 50%	Games Observed	Assessment
No movement	50.0%	—	~1,100	No exploitable edge
0.5 points	52.1%	+2.1%	~880	Below system threshold
1.0 points	53.7%	+3.7%	~620	System threshold
1.5 points	54.5%	+4.5%	~410	Strong, reliable signal
2.0–2.5 points	55.8%	+5.8%	~380	High-confidence pick
3.0–3.5 points	59.2%	+9.2%	~180	Rare and powerful
4.0+ points	63–65%	+13–15%	~60	Very rare; wide confidence interval

Cover rates based on ~3,200 games (2014–2025), independently confirmed on AusSportsBetting data (5,431 games, 2006–2025) and CBS actual Tuesday lines (816 games, 2023–2025). Sample sizes vary by band; rates above 3.0 points carry wider confidence intervals.

How the system applies this: each week, the system ranks all games by how much the line has moved since Tuesday, and picks the benefiting side of the games with the largest movement. In a typical week, 6–8 games have moved at least 1 point—enough to fill the entire 6-pick card from high-movement games in 72% of weeks. When fewer than 6 games have meaningful movement, the remaining slots are filled using the signal-scoring approach described under Principle 2.

Principle 2: The Favorite-Bias Opportunity

The general betting public systematically overweights favorites. ESPN’s public pick contest (~94,000 weekly pickers) shows the public picking the favorite 75–78% of the time. The CBS pool is more experienced and less extreme, but still picks the favorite 65% of the time. By

contrast, the 26 sharpest historical performers in our pool pick the favorite only 46% of the time—and they are the pool’s best long-term performers.

This creates two opportunities. First, when the stale-line advantage and the underdog coincide—the line moved in the underdog’s direction—the edges stack. The benefiting side covers at an elevated rate *and* fewer pool players are on that side, amplifying the ranking benefit. Second, in weeks where the system needs to fill slots from games without large line movement, it looks for underdogs in primetime or divisional games where the public is heavily on the other side. These “stacked signal” games cover at 55–58%—a meaningful improvement over the 50% baseline.

This is not a new idea for Joe and David—both lean more contrarian than the typical pool player and have for years. The research confirms their instinct is correct and quantifies the specific conditions where it works best. It also identified where it doesn’t work: picking against the public on high line-movement games actually performs *worse* than following the crowd. The system avoids this trap.

Principle 3: The Game-Theory Advantage

In a pool with ~210 players and a steep payout gradient (1st place ~\$4,800, 20th place ~\$400, 21st place \$0), the value of a correct pick depends on how many other players also picked that side. A correct pick on a side that 15% of the field chose moves your ranking approximately 180 spots. A correct pick on a side that 60% chose moves your ranking approximately 85 spots. The unpopular correct pick is worth roughly twice as much for your standing.

The system exploits this in a specific, disciplined way: when two games have similar line movement—meaning they offer roughly equal probability of covering—the system recommends the less popular one. This doesn’t change whether the pick wins, but it changes how much a win is worth. Across six seasons, five different versions of this tiebreaking approach all performed within \$97/year of each other—too close to declare a winner. The production tool shows what each approach recommends, and Joe and David choose.

Importantly, the research showed that chasing low-ownership picks at the *expense* of line-movement edge hurts performance. Every simulation that replaced a high-movement pick with a lower-ownership alternative reduced expected earnings. The game-theory advantage only works as a tiebreaker between equivalent options—never as a reason to abandon the stale-line edge.

3. The Evidence Base

The research program was deliberately broad—testing not just the three principles above, but dozens of alternatives, to ensure the system is built on what actually works rather than what sounds plausible.

Scope

The analysis drew from multiple independent datasets: ~4,500 NFL games across 17 seasons, three seasons of actual CBS Tuesday lines (816 games), complete individual pick data for all 212 pool participants in 2025 (22,678 picks), public ATS consensus from ESPN (~94,000 pickers per game), Yahoo, and Pickwatch, and AusSportsBetting historical lines (5,431 games). Public consensus data from these sources was used to build synthetic behavioral models that closely replicate actual CBS pool behavior for seasons where direct pool pick data is not available. Over 50 strategy variants were evaluated via Monte Carlo simulation (640,000+ scenarios) and validated against exact 2025 CBS pool outcomes.

What Was Tested and Rejected

Documenting what failed is as important as what worked. 136 team-quality features (offensive/defensive EPA, completion % over expected, QB Elo, weather, rest, dozens of interaction terms) produced no model that beat 51.2% accuracy—barely better than a coin flip. The spread already incorporates all publicly available information. **Machine learning models** (logistic regression, XGBoost, random forest with walk-forward validation) confirmed this. **Picking against the public on high-movement games** performed worse than following the public. **Late-season adaptive strategies** (becoming more aggressive when leading, playing safe when trailing) actively hurt performance. **Forcing the two entries to differ during the regular season** using mechanical rules produced worse results than letting Joe and David diverge naturally through their own judgment.

Two significant data bugs were discovered and corrected during development—one that undercounted system wins by ~10, another that caused ~5 games to have missing data. Both were found through cross-validation against independent data sources. All results in this document reflect corrected data; the bugs are disclosed for transparency.

An Experienced Field

The CBS Just4Kicks pool is approximately 20 years old with ~210 current players, high retention (183 of ~210 current members have 4+ years of history), and a participant base that skews toward experienced, engaged bettors in their 40s and older. The top-20 finishers in 2025 already picked the line-movement-benefiting side 77% of the time. The pool's historical ATS average is 51.5%—above the theoretical 50% baseline, suggesting the field is collectively better than random. The system's advantage is not discovery—it is discipline: applying proven principles more consistently, with better data, than any individual can manage week after week across 18 weeks.

4. The Track Record

Joe and David have collaborated for 12 seasons (2014–2025), with David’s CBS record extending back to 2010. They coordinate closely—discussing games weekly and generally agreeing on high-conviction plays. They also get advice from their two expert advisors, DHart and Rojo, who have tirelessly provided weekly guidance and intel for the last several years. The impact of this is difficult to measure, but having trusted advisors who can serve as sounding boards and voices of reason throughout the season is clearly invaluable in helping Joe and David sustain their high level of performance. One thing that is less clear is how DHart and Rojo are being compensated for these contributions. That is a potential gap to address going forward.

Both Joe and David are statistically significant outperformers in a pool where the field averages 51.5% ATS across 20 years.

	Joe Pring	David Hunter
Seasons Played	12 (2014–2025)	16 (2010–2025)
Career Record	722 wins / 1,254 picks	890 wins / 1,662 picks
Career ATS Win Rate	57.6% (#1 of 184 qualified)	53.5% (#37 of 184 qualified)
Seasons Cashed	5 of 12 (42%)	7 of 16 (44%)
Estimated Net Earnings	~\$14,000 on \$4,500 fees*	~\$11,000 on \$6,000 fees*
Seasons Beating Pool Average	10 of 12 (83%)	11 of 16 (69%)
Statistical Significance	p = 0.004 (highly significant)	p = 0.019 (significant)
Consistency Rank	#6 of 183 multi-year players	#53 of 183 multi-year players

* note that this includes an estimate of additional weekly win earnings that we couldn’t measure precisely.

Combined estimated season-end earnings: ~\$20,940 on \$10,500 in entry fees (+99% ROI). At least one entry cashed in 6 of 12 shared seasons. Both cashed in the same season four times (2014, 2018, 2020, 2023). We estimate \$4000 of weekly winnings so the total is around \$25,000.

Weekly prizes are a meaningful part of the team’s overall returns. The pool awards ~\$2,100 per week (split among all 6-0 finishers), with unclaimed pots carrying over and occasionally exceeding \$4,000 for a given week. Joe and David have coordinated on Monday Night Football picks for years: when both entries are 5-0 heading into Monday, one takes each side of the MNF game—guaranteeing at least one 6-0 finish. This MNF hedge has been a consistent revenue source, capturing approximately \$1,400 from a single carryover pot in 2025, with significant wins in earlier seasons as well. Total weekly prize earnings over 12 shared seasons are estimated at several thousand dollars combined, though precise tracking is not possible because CBS does not provide historical weekly prize data in a readily accessible format. Including these prizes, the team’s total estimated returns are approximately \$25,000 on \$10,500 in entry fees.

Season-by-Season Results (Shared Seasons)

Season	Joe Wins	Joe Rate	Joe Rank	David Wins	David Rate	David Rank	Pool Size	Joe Cashed	David Cashed	Pool Winner
2014	67	65.7%	1	61	59.8%	9	220	Yes	Yes	Joe Pring (67)
2015	56	54.9%	45	47	46.1%	182	234	—	—	Hoan Le (64)
2016	55	53.9%	39	53	52.0%	65	221	—	—	Dave Zoladz (63)
2017	58	56.9%	34	54	52.9%	99	231	—	—	Rick K (67)
2018	62	60.8%	7	59	57.8%	19	229	Yes	Yes	Dean Bartzokis (64)
2019	65	63.7%	3	54	52.9%	85	236	Yes	—	Steve Silverman (67)
2020	59	57.8%	10	59	57.8%	10	205	Yes	Yes	777Lisa (62)
2021	50	46.3%	173	52	48.1%	145	219	—	—	Matt Milano (70)
2022	63	58.3%	25	65	60.2%	15	219	—	Yes	Nick Rueda (76)
2023	71	65.7%	4	70	64.8%	5	210	Yes	Yes	Brett Ugles (73)
2024	57	52.8%	129	53	49.1%	170	205	—	—	Pat OB (71)
2025	59	54.6%	33	59	54.6%	33	213	—	—	Tony Nguyen (73)

Green rows indicate seasons where at least one team entry cashed (finished in the payout zone). Pre-2023 standings are partial; ranks may not reflect true full-pool position.

Note: all earnings estimates use a simplified payout schedule ($\pm 20\%$ accuracy) and exclude weekly prizes (~\$4,000–6,000 estimated combined over 12 seasons). Win totals and ranks are more reliable than dollar amounts. Pre-2023 standings are partial. See Appendix for full methodology.

A Pattern Worth Noting

Both Joe and David lean more contrarian than the data suggests is optimal in most seasons. In years where that instinct aligned with market conditions—2023 stands out, with combined estimated earnings of ~\$4,550—it produced elite results. In years where the straightforward line-movement approach was working well (2020, 2021, 2025), a more disciplined mechanical approach would have captured more value. The system is designed to provide that disciplined floor while preserving room for the judgment that produced 2023.

5. The Competition

This is not an easy pool to beat. Understanding who we are competing against—and how they pick—is essential context for why the system is designed the way it is.

Who Are the Top Performers?

Of the 183 players with four or more seasons in the pool (2014–2025), 20 show statistically significant evidence of outperformance—meaning their track records are unlikely to be explained by luck alone. Joe and David are both in this group. But so are roughly 18 others, and several of them are very good.

The table below profiles the top competitive tier. “Consistency rank” measures how reliably a player finishes in the top 20% of the pool across multiple seasons. “Line movement alignment” measures how often a player picks the side that benefits from the stale Tuesday line on games where the line moved significantly—a proxy for whether they are tracking closing lines or sharp money. “Favorite pick rate” captures whether they lean toward favorites (the public’s tendency) or underdogs (the contrarian approach). The pool average is 65% favorites.

Player	Seasons	Consistency Rank	Avg Percentile	2025 Wins	LM Alignment	Favorite Rate	Notable Pattern
Pritch	7	#1	Top 19%	N/A	N/A	N/A	Most consistent player in pool history; no 2025 pick data available
Rob Lowe	8	#2	Top 22%	67	79%	32%	Elite contrarian who follows sharp money; one of the best long-term ATS rates in the pool
Arthur Lipka	6	#3	Top 22%	57	75%	56%	Balanced approach; strong line-movement follower with moderate contrarian lean
Nick Girard	12	#4	Top 24%	54	83%	25%	Most extreme contrarian in the pool; also the most predictable top player (80% of picks can be anticipated)
Sam Pham	12	#7	Top 28%	65	76%	56%	Strong line-movement follower; low predictability makes him harder to read than most
Stephen Ugles	11	#8	Top 29%	61	77%	64%	Follows sharp money but with a near-average favorite rate; steady, not flashy
FrankTheTank	12	#12	Top 30%	62	73%	34%	Heavy contrarian who follows sharp money; 12-year veteran with strong consistency

Steve Silverman	12	#33	Top 45%	64	89%	50%	Highest line-movement alignment in the entire pool (92% on big movers)
Niblickmaster	11	#46	Top 49%	65	86%	44%	Near-identical picks to Tony Nguyen (100% overlap); part of apparent coordinating cluster
Tony Nguyen	12	#107	Top 68%	73	85%	62%	Won the pool in 2025 (73 wins); historically inconsistent (consistency rank #107)

Pool average line-movement alignment: 58%. Pool average favorite rate: 65%. Joe Pring's LM alignment: 64%. David Hunter's LM alignment: 49%. Joe and David are profiled in the prior section and excluded from this table.

What the Data Reveals

Two distinct approaches produce success in this pool, and understanding them is central to the system's design.

The sharp-money followers. A cluster of approximately 26 players—led by Steve Silverman, Niblickmaster, Bruce Schilling, Nick Girard, and Rob Lowe—consistently picks the side that benefits from line movement. Their alignment rates range from 77% to 89%, compared to a pool average of 58%. These players are, in effect, doing a version of what the system does: tracking how lines move and picking the benefiting side. Silverman is the most extreme example—he picks the benefiting side on 92% of big-mover games. On games where this sharp cluster diverges from the ESPN public consensus, their preferred side covers at 64.5% versus 37.5% for the ESPN-preferred side. They are genuinely skilled, not lucky.

This cluster is the system's primary competition. When the system picks the benefiting side of the biggest movers, these players are likely on the same side. That is why the game-theory advantage (Principle 3 from Section 2) matters: among games where several sharp players are also on the benefiting side, the system looks for the less popular option to gain ranking separation.

The favorite-bias players. A second group—including Chris Smart, Bruce Torain, Kelly McKinnon, Chris Warfield, and Bryan Stewart—takes the opposite approach, picking favorites at rates of 73–87% (well above the pool average of 65%). These players' picks are highly predictable; some can be anticipated with 79–86% accuracy using nothing more than the point spread and which game they selected. Several have strong historical records despite this apparent rigidity, suggesting that in certain seasons a heavy-favorite approach works well. But their predictability is a structural weakness: when the system can anticipate what 40–50 competitors will do, it can make more informed decisions about which games offer the best ranking leverage.

The 2025 Pool Winner

Tony Nguyen won the pool in 2025 with 73 wins—an exceptional season. His line-movement alignment is high (85%), his favorite rate is near the pool average (62%), and his picks overlap almost perfectly with Niblickmaster (100% on 53 common games) and Steve Silverman (97% on 72 common games). Nguyen appears to be part of the sharp-money cluster, possibly sharing a model or information source with Niblickmaster and Silverman.

Despite winning the pool in 2025, Nguyen's long-term consistency rank is #107 of 183—meaning his prior seasons were much weaker. His 2025 was a breakout year, not a sustained pattern. The system's goal is not to beat any individual player in any single season; it is to finish in the top ~10% consistently across seasons, which is how sustained profitability is built.

A notable pattern within this cluster: Niblickmaster and Tony Nguyen picked the same side on 100% of their 53 common games in 2025—a result that is essentially impossible by chance. Bruce Schilling overlaps with Niblickmaster at 98%. This coordinating group of 3–4 entries always rises and falls together. From a game-theory perspective, a known block of entries on predictable games helps the system identify where the ranking leverage lies elsewhere.

What This Means for Our Approach

The competition analysis reinforces three aspects of the system's design:

First, following line movement is not a secret—the pool's best players already do it. The system's edge is not that it discovered line movement; it is that it applies it with more consistency, better selection when there aren't enough high-movement games to fill a full card, and deliberate attention to which games offer the best ranking upside among equal options.

Second, the field's behavioral tendencies are partially predictable. The heavy-favorite players and the sharp-money cluster together account for roughly 30–40 entries whose picks can be anticipated before the week begins. The system uses this information to identify games where a correct pick produces maximum ranking separation.

Third, running two entries with different sensitivity levels provides natural diversification against the sharp cluster. Entry A competes directly with the sharp-money players on high-movement games, while Entry B accesses edge from a different part of the game slate—games without large line movement where stacked positive signals point to an underdog or contrarian opportunity that the sharp cluster may not be prioritizing.

6. The Two-Entry Approach

Historically, Joe and David coordinate closely and their picks are often correlated—effectively running similar strategies. The proposed approach introduces deliberate, calibrated divergence while preserving each player's ability to apply their own judgment.

How It Works

Both entries start from the same foundation: the system ranks every game by how much the line has moved and identifies the benefiting side. The difference is how selective each entry is about which games to include.

Entry A casts a wider net. It includes all games where the line moved at least 1 point and provides detailed data on each of these based on other signals for improving ATS win percentage, and predictions about which of these games, and which sides, the top tier of players is likely to pick. In most weeks this fills 5–6 of the 6 required picks with high-movement games, leaving 0–1 slots for other selections. Entry A reviews the system's recommendations and applies his own judgment on the 1–2 margin calls per week where the system presents multiple reasonable options with analysis.

Entry B is more selective. It only includes games where the line moved the most after Tuesday. This typically fills 3–4 slots, leaving 2–3 slots to fill from games without large movement. For these remaining slots, the system scores each non-mover game by counting

how many positive signals apply: Are top-tier players likely to be on one side or the other? Is it a primetime game? A divisional rivalry? Is the public heavily on one side (creating a contrarian opportunity)? Is the underdog on the right side? The games with the most stacked signals get selected. Entry A sees the full analysis for every game and applies his own judgment, particularly on these fill selections where his contrarian instincts can add real value.

Why this structure works: the entries share the biggest, highest-conviction picks but diverge on the margin calls. When the broader set of line-movement games covers well, Entry A outperforms. When the carefully selected fill games cover well (they hit at 55–58% when the signal stack selects them), Entry B can outperform. The natural diversification between the two entries produces a smoother combined return profile. Over six backtested seasons, the two-entry portfolio produced estimated combined earnings of ~\$18,440 versus ~\$6,400 from the team's actual combined results.

Monday Night Football Hedge

Both entries always include the Monday night game. When both entries reach 5-0 after Sunday, one switches MNF sides—guaranteeing at least one 6-0 finish and the associated weekly prize. This formalizes what Joe and David already do. In 2025, the hedge captured approximately \$1,400 in a single carryover pot. The system estimates ~\$204/year per entry from this hedge alone.

Late Season (Weeks 16–18)

When one entry is near a payout boundary and the other is not, the safer entry plays standard while the other takes targeted differentiation plays against nearby competitors. The expected-value math strongly favors differentiation when entries are tied at payout boundaries.

The App

Joe and David will access an app, updated from Tuesday through kickoff, showing every game in CBS pick order. For each game, the tool presents line movement data, public betting percentages, signal flags, and the system's recommendations for both entries. Alongside the quantitative analysis, 2–3 research summaries per week cover injuries, weather, and line-movement narratives—automatically organized per game. The tool refreshes with current lines each time it is opened. Late-breaking news, including Sunday morning inactives, gets captured. Both Joe and David can access it anytime from any device. The tool presents information; the team decides.

6. Risk Factors

Data limitations. Direct CBS pool pick data is available for one season (2025). The remaining five backtested seasons use synthetic opponent models built from ESPN, Yahoo, and Pickwatch public consensus data, calibrated to match actual CBS pool behavior (validated at $r = 0.91$). These models closely replicate the pool's win-total distribution and behavioral structure, but cannot capture individual player strategies or week-to-week shifts. Each additional season of direct CBS data materially improves the evidence base—the 2026 season will approximately double the ground truth available.

Tiebreaker uncertainty. The five best approaches for choosing between games with similar line movement are separated by \$97/year over six seasons. This gap is not statistically significant. The system genuinely does not know which is best. The production tool displays all five and lets Joe choose. This is a known unknown that resolves with more data.

Fill-pick signal sample sizes. The best stacked signals for weeks with fewer movers (55–58% cover rate) are based on 150–350 games across 12 seasons. These are meaningful samples, but not large enough to rule out regression toward 50%. The fill-pick approach is the system component with the most uncertainty.

The system fails in certain market conditions. 2023 and 2024 were both \$0 years for every system variant tested. When line movement does not predict outcomes well, the system underperforms. Human judgment is the hedge against this—the anti-correlation between the system and Joe/David’s intuitive approach is a feature, not a bug.

Payout estimation error. All dollar amounts in this document are approximate ($\pm 20\%$). The simplified payout schedule distributes ~\$26K versus the actual CBS pot of ~\$38K and does not model tie-splitting. Win totals and ranks are reliable; dollar amounts are directional. See Appendix for details.

This is a first-year deployment. The 2026 season is both a production year and a data-collection year. Every week of tracked results improves the calibration of the fill signals, the ownership models, and the endgame coordination strategy. The honest framing: Joe and David already have a profitable approach; the system adds structure and data to what works, and the first season of production use will sharpen every finding.

Appendix: Methodology Notes

Payout Estimation

All dollar figures are estimates derived from a simplified payout schedule (1st = \$4,750, 2nd = \$3,800, 3rd = \$3,150, etc.) applied to each player's actual rank. This schedule has two known sources of error: it distributes approximately \$26,000 across 20 positions versus the actual CBS pot of ~\$38,000 across ~25 positions, and it does not model tie-splitting (where players at the same win total share combined payouts for the positions they span). These errors push in opposite directions. Where actual payouts are known (Joe 2023: \$3,160, est. \$2,650; David 2023: \$2,602, est. \$1,900), actuals exceeded estimates.

All season-end earnings figures exclude 6-0 weekly prizes. The pool distributes approximately \$2,100 per week among all players who finish 6-0, with unclaimed pots carrying over (carryover pots can exceed \$4,000). Joe and David's MNF hedge strategy—where both entries include MNF and one switches sides when both are 5-0 after Sunday—is designed to capture these prizes. Based on the system's estimated ~\$204/year per entry and Joe/David's historical ~\$175/year per entry, total combined weekly prize earnings over 12 shared seasons are estimated at \$4,000–6,000. Precise tracking is not possible because CBS does not provide weekly prize history in a format that allows systematic compilation. Known data points: approximately \$1,400 captured from a single carryover pot in 2025, and significant weekly wins in 2014. Including estimated weekly prizes, the team's total estimated returns rise from ~\$21,000 to approximately \$25,000–27,000 on \$10,500 in entry fees.

Simulation Design

2020–2024 system performance was evaluated using 200 synthetic opponent fields per season, generated from a two-archetype behavioral model calibrated to actual CBS pool data. The model reproduces the pool's win-total distribution ($r = 0.91$ with actual standings), 6-0 week frequency, and pick-correlation structure. Public consensus data from ESPN, Yahoo, and Pickwatch was used to calibrate opponent behavior for seasons without direct CBS pick data. 2025 is the only season evaluated against exact real-opponent picks for all 212 pool members, with zero simulation uncertainty.

Data Quality and Corrections

Two significant bugs were discovered and corrected during development. First, an evaluation bug in the validation code caused all line-movement picks to be assessed as away-team picks regardless of actual benefiting side (impact: ~10–15 wins undercounted in 2025). Second, a team-name matching issue caused 17 Los Angeles Rams games to have missing data (~5 wins). Both were identified through cross-validation against independent data sources. All results reflect corrected data.

Pre-2023 Standings Data

CBS pool standings for 2022 and earlier are partial—only currently active members appear. Ranks for those seasons may not reflect true position. David's earliest seasons (2010–2013) have additional data-quality issues. The 2014–2025 window is the clean analytical baseline; pre-2014 data is included for completeness.

Disclaimer: Past performance does not guarantee future results. All simulation results are based on historical data and simplified models. The NFL spread market is efficient and any edge is small and uncertain. This analysis is provided for informational purposes for pool participants and does not constitute gambling advice.