



BRONCOS FACE MURDERERS' ROW EARLY



August 18th, 2011: The ISFL schedule makers didn't do the Broncos any favors this year. After finishing last year with just four wins against twelve losses, the Denver Broncos 2011 ISFL schedule is tied for the 8th toughest in the league.

And if the Broncos are to be competitive this year, they need to survive their opening five games, all of which are against teams that made the playoffs in 2010. The Broncos face the Houston Texans twice in those first five games, and also face the Colts, Steelers, and Jets once each. In 2010 the Broncos managed only one win against five losses in games against those four clubs. If they get swept early in those first five, the chances of a successful season are remote at best.

The Jets swept through the league last year, winning all 16 regular season games and winning the Super Bowl. The Broncos faced them twice last year, losing both, and falling by a combined 58-6 score. They managed only two field goals in week 12 in the 28-6 loss, but that was an improvement over the 30-0 shellacking the Jets handed out to Denver in week nine.

The Colts ended 2010 winning the AFC Central with a 12-4 record, advancing to the second round of the playoffs, where they fell to the Dallas Cowboys. They beat the Broncos 19-10 in week four last year.

Both the Steelers and Texans finished 11-5, and made the playoffs as wildcards. They faced each other in the first round of the playoffs, and Houston advanced, only to fall to the eventual Super Bowl Jets. The Steelers downed Denver 17-13 in week 10, while the Broncos managed a split against the Texans, upsetting them in week 11, 21-12, but falling 23-7 in week 13.

The remainder of the Broncos schedule is easier, and if they survive the first five games with even two wins, they actually might have a shot at a .500 record, as their opponents over the final 11 games averaged only 6.5 wins in 2010. Four of their final 11 opponents had ten or more wins last year (Buffalo twice, and the Bears and Jets once each), but the other seven opponents averaged only 3.4 wins last year - fewer than the Broncos four wins in 2010. The Broncos thus have a nearly perfect dichotomy, as they face nine opponents with 10 or more wins, and seven others with five or fewer wins.

Overall, the Miami Dolphins have the toughest schedule, with their average opponent putting up 9.75 wins in 2010, while the Chargers have the easiest schedule at 6.44 opponents average wins. The Broncos are tied for eighth toughest schedule with the Packers at 8.31 opponents average wins.

The below table lists the strength of schedule for all 28 ISFL teams. Of course, this listing is based on last year's records, so it is backward-looking, rather than forward-looking. We won't know who actually had the toughest schedule in 2011 until the 2011 season is complete.

| ISFL 2011 STRENGTH OF SCHEDULE | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| RANK | TEAM | TEAM WINS | OPP WINS | AVG OPP WINS | |
| 1 | Miami | 2 | 156 | 9.75 | Toughest Schedule |
| 2 | Cleveland | 5 | 147 | 9.19 | |
| 3 | New England | 1 | 143 | 8.94 | |
| 4 | Buffalo | 11 | 140 | 8.75 | |
| 5 | Houston | 11 | 140 | 8.75 | |
| 6 | Carolina | 4 | 136 | 8.5 | |
| 7 | St. Louis | 13 | 134 | 8.38 | |
| 8 | Denver | 4 | 133 | 8.31 | |
| 9 | Green Bay | 9 | 133 | 8.31 | |
| 10 | Atlanta | 7 | 130 | 8.13 | |
| 11 | San Francisco | 5 | 130 | 8.13 | |
| 12 | Tampa Bay | 7 | 130 | 8.13 | |
| 13 | Kansas City | 11 | 129 | 8.06 | |
| 14 | Seattle | 7 | 129 | 8.06 | |
| 15 | Arizona | 8 | 128 | 8 | Average Schedule |
| 16 | NY Giants | 9 | 126 | 7.88 | |
| 17 | Tennessee | 7 | 126 | 7.88 | |
| 18 | Minnesota | 3 | 125 | 7.81 | |
| 19 | NY Jets | 16 | 125 | 7.81 | |
| 20 | Chicago | 10 | 123 | 7.69 | |
| 21 | Jacksonville | 4 | 122 | 7.63 | |
| 22 | Indianapolis | 12 | 121 | 7.56 | |
| 23 | Pittsburgh | 11 | 121 | 7.56 | |
| 24 | Philadelphia | 3 | 118 | 7.38 | |
| 25 | Detroit | 14 | 115 | 7.19 | |
| 26 | New Orleans | 15 | 114 | 7.13 | |
| 27 | Dallas | 12 | 107 | 6.69 | |
| 28 | San Diego | 3 | 103 | 6.44 | Easiest Schedule |
| | AVERAGE | 8 | 224 | 8 | |