

LMR WEEK 6 Curses - Foiled Again!

Typically each year, NFL Films does a Halloween Edition, replete with costumed fans, weird supernatural bounces of the oblique spheroid and other goofy and frightening occurrences. The Cincinnati Bakers are featured nearly each year, if only because of their All Hallows Eve color palette. This year's MLB playoffs featured a similar scheme, with the Cubs' Billy Goat Curse [AKA Cheeburger Cheeburger Curse], and the BoSox Curse of the Bambino [aka Buckneritis]. While both of these curses probably have more to do with bad managers than actual paranormal activities, the Look Man felt obliged to mention them. After all there are 3 basic themes in all literature: Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature and Man vs. Supernature (the Supernatural). Since we have mano y mano each week in the NFL, and last week featured Man vs. Nature ("when wild animals go wild, on Fox TV!"), it was about time to feature the X-Files.

The Truth may be out there, but there are also other little-known curses in the NFL. The Look Man has provided just a few of these for your consideration. In Cleveland, RB William (Red) Green has "the Curse of the Duct Tape" which has caused him to have 1st quarter fumbles in 3 out of the last 4 games. Denver QB Jake (the Fake) Plummer is under the deadly spell of the Curse of the Great Expectations, and cannot support his high salary based on field performance. The Fake is now suffering from a broken wheel and will be out for a month or more.

Horsies Head Coach Tony Dungy is suffering from the Curse of the Instant Replay, and has had back to back games with replays that seemed questionable. In the first, he was able to overcome the curse, but last week, against yet another good defense, he got burned when a fumble recovery and subsequent strip was called otherwise. Maybe a better name might be the Curse of the Tenacious D, since it seems to happen against tough defensive teams.

Tommy (That Deaf Dumb and Blind Kid) Maddox is under the spell of the Curse of the Pickamonus Bacteria, a mysterious ailment that caused the elbow to release balls to teams wearing the wrong colors. Other symptoms include touchdowns by the opposing defense, and benching by one's own head coach. Look for TDDABK to suffer the latter following this week's picks.

Speaking of strange bacteria, there is an unusual form of penicillin resistant staph germ that is affecting the NFL. Miami Marine Mammals LB Junior Seau and several other Fish contracted the infection and got seriously ill. J-squared QB Mark Brunell may have also gotten a dose when his lacerated elbow was infected. Brunell ended up having surgery on the elbow and will miss several weeks as a result. At any rate, this strange new bacteria is floating around out there, and it is very scary.

Of course this bacteria is nowhere near as scary as J-squared Head Coach Jack Del Rio (means "a River Runs Through It") left a loaded ax in the Jaguars locker room. Riverboat Jack decided that he would illustrate the metaphor of "keep chopping wood and the tree will fall" by installing an actual oak tree stump and ax in the locker room. Jack then had his River Rats take turns hacking at the stump to drive home the metaphor. The aptly named J-square PK Jason Hanson decided to try his hand at chopping some wood and inadvertently chopped into his non-kicking foot. Of course, it may simply have been a case of demonic possession. Football fans will remember the last case of exorcism for Jason was when he and fellow foot fetishist spent time on the Injured List after covering themselves with hot fondue. If Pleasure is the Child of Pain, Hanson is at least the nephew. He darn near went reverse *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and amputated his foot. Now Jason will have to spend time up at Camp Crystal Lake instead of kicking the ball through the uprights. While there, he might check out his cousin Leatherface, in the new *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* remake.

When asked about removing the stump to avoid another "ax-ident", Riverboat Jack said, "I don't have any immediate plans to take it out. "I took out the `weapon,' as some people have called it, but I figured the smell of wood chips might really motivate the linebackers." The Look Man has his own ax to grind after noticing these types of metaphors in a lot of clubhouses, including the Bungals. The League Office had better act quickly before someone decides that a late game fumble is subject to further review with a teammate's head on the chopping block. The Jags are pretty much snakebit, having WR Jimmy Smith being busted for cocaine, Jason's cut, and Brunnell getting a staph infection.

Iggles @ Pokes:

The Dallas Starheads had a meaningful game early as they took on the Philly Iggles in Big D on Sunday. Head Coach Bill (Tuna) Parcells' review of the tapes of the Iggles identified a tendency to go for an onside kick to start the contest. He mentioned it to Special Teams coach Bruce deHaven, and the result was a Cowpokes touchdown when WR Randal (One-L) Williams caught the ball and took it to the House. This from reigning Coach of the Year Andy Reid, aka Wile E. Coyote.

One-L scored the quickest TD in NFL history by scoring at 14:57 in the first quarter. Knowing that the clock doesn't start until the ball is fielded, how does a guy go 40 yards in 3 seconds, you might ask? The Look Man is "axing" the same question.

At any rate the Young Guns acquitted themselves by winning ugly against a willful Iggles team. Doomsday Lite punished Donovan McNabb(sty) and the offense pretty much sealed the Tuna's bid for COTY in 2003. "We're a reflection of our coach," said Pokes LB Dexter (I Snort Alotta) Coakley. "He's a fighter. We're fighters. He's been a fighter in the league for a long time. ... It's not like he wills us to victory. But he gets you to play hard for him. And he gives you the tools with which to win. The man has a ton of knowledge that he is passing on to us. Excuse me while I powder my nose."

Starheads owner Jerry (Michael Jackson) Jones feels that the Sashimi Meister's presence spells playoffs for the team. "To be honest, our skill level probably isn't as good as our record, and that's why this is such a statement game for us," said the King of Pop. "We beat a very good team today. And we're moving toward being a pretty good team ourselves. That's why I pay Bill the big money. Now excuse me while I go surgically repair my nose."

Regardless of the reasons, the 'Pokes are a force in the NFC Least Division, especially with the Green Birds and Jynts falling on hard times. Dallas has won four straight games for the first time since 1998, and are firmly in first place in the NFC East. It looks like a runaway wagon train to the division title can only be slowed by a major collapse by the Buckaroos.

Grayders @ Browns:

The Browns entered into a trap game following an emotional win over the Stiller on ESPN. They were setting up for a loss to a winless Grayders squad that can't find a "W" without the aid of bifocals. Tim (Sofa Boy) Couch was in search of getting his real name back with a solid performance in this game. Neither would happen in Week 6.

The Browns decided to go at the weakness of the Oaktown team, their run defense. The Black and Silver was at the bottom of the league going into the game and William (Red) Green was coming off a hundred yards rushing against the Stillers. Butch (Hurricane Boy) Davis reasoned correctly, that he should hand it off to Red early and often, in order to wear down the Grayders starters, who were missing Bill Romanowski and John Parella.

The approach seemed to backfire as Red forgot the duct tape and put the rock on the ground deep in Browns territory early on. Grayders QB Rich (Loose) Gannon immediately found WR Teyo Johnson in the endzone for a 7-0 lead. The Browns offense responded with a nice FG drive to make it 7-3, and then the game shifted.

The Browns defense, led by new defensive coordinator Dave (Papa Smurf) Campo from Dallas, began to stuff the passing game of the AFC Champs. They held Hall of Fame WRs Tim Brown and Jerry Rice(a-Roni) to zero catches thru the first 3 quarters and they stuffed RB Charlie (Rockford Files) Garner. The Browns defense, which normally plays every other week, decided to show up and with some help from the 12th Man, they punished the Raiders, keeping them off balance and making them look slow and predictable.

The Browns LBs may be young and inexperienced, but they make up for it by flying to the ball and bringing a load when they arrive. OLB Ben (Grimm) Taylor hit everyone and their Aunt Petunia and ended up with 11 tackles on the day. DE Courtney Brown contributed some hurries and a nice strip sack of Loose Gannon. And SS Robert Griffith changed the mood of Grayders TE Doug Jolley with a decleating hit. All in all, the Browns defense is beginning to resemble a Doomsday product, albeit absent a "disrupter" like Charles Haley.

Taking a cue from his defensive mates, first round C Jeff (Don't Take My Name In) Faine decided on a few moves of his own. When Sofa Boy's hard counts got the D-line jumping, DTMNI decided to go with the old muscle flex to help them along. By gripping the ball and flexing the muscles in one's forearm, the center can simulate the start of the play without getting called. Faine seems to have perfected it, and with Red Green busting through the line with some nice forward lean, the Browns put together a nice 90-yard drive late in the game to go up 13-7. The big play was a nifty fake FG with holder and punter Chris Gardocki flipping it to PK Phil (Family Feud) Dawson for a 14 yard gain on third and short. The fake was perfectly timed and took advantage of the Grayders sellout formation to block the FG. Family Feud would have scored if not for his desire to keep his kicking leg intact.

Although Sofa is still Sofa and the Browns tempted fate by giving the ball to Red Green 9 consecutive times (see also Ernie Byner and The Fumble), the Browns showed heart on this drive. Hurricane Boy showed coaching prowess, and the only thing missing was a dagger thru the heart of the West Coast Pirates at crunch time. The Look Man has complained about the lack of emotional growth by the Browns version 2.1, but this team grew on Sunday. Nothing illustrated that more than the proud fan in the Dawg Pound with the Raiders-mocking sign that read "Welcome to the Brown Hole."

Several kudos need to be issued for the Browns performance. While they should have beaten the Grayders handily, they demonstrated guts beyond belief. LT (Carl) Barry Stokes has been battling a high ankle sprain all year while playing out of position for Ross Verba. Jeff Faine and LG Shaun (Commissioner) O'Hara finished the game with knee sprains and won't play this week vs. the Bolts. Even Red Green ran his tail off after an idiotic first quarter fumble. This Browns team may not be the most talented, but no one can question their heart. For more on the Papa Smurf D in Cleveland check out the following:

http://sports.espn.go.com/nfl/columns/story?columnist=pasquarelli_len&id=1636680

Stillers @ Donkeys:

Stillers LB Joey Porter (Paints) returned to the city where his posterior was perforated with a bullet on Sunday with the hope that he could inflict similar damage to the Donkeys football squad. Of course, while in town, Porter Paints and the rest of the team did investigate a few sports bars just to see if any gangsters were present.

While he and the rest of the Black & Gold clad defense were tough, the Donkey offense was just a little tougher. Steve (Christian) Beuerlein took over for injured Jake the Fake Plummer and sudsed his way to a win over the struggling Stillers with the help of WR Rod Smith. Smith caught two perfectly thrown passes to tie the game and set up the eventual overtime FG. TDDABK was sacked 7 times as the Donkey defense hit anything in a black and gold uniform. The game also featured Referee Mike Carey, the best in the business and a good counterpoint to Johnnie Grier.

Carey evaluates each play on its merit, describes them succinctly and manages the game well without a lot of superfluous calls. He did, however, blow a call on the day. The play featured a fumble, which was recovered by Pittsburgh's Porter Paints, whose attempt to return the fumble for a score included being stripped by Denver. Since PP had recovered the ball, the only question was whether he made "a football move" prior to being stripped. If, in the judgement of the officials, he did so, then the ball should have been Denver's with a first down awarded for change of possession. Carey called the play as a continuous non-possession, reasoning that the LB never made a football move.

While reasonable people disagree, this interpretation is the same as when a receiver catches the rock, gets drilled, and loses the ball on the carpet. In the good old days, that play would have been called a catch and fumble. Today, it is called an incomplete pass. The same thing happened in the Indy-Carolina game with D-tackle Chad Bratzke. Indy Coach Tony Dungy said after his episode, "I'm watching the same replay as the official and I'm trying to figure out what they see to overturn it. The official said he saw enough evidence that Chad never had the ball. Hey, do you really think I look like Hume Cronyn?"

The Look Man is interested in your interpretation of this rule. Is it a good rule, or is it too subjective to allow men clad in black and white Halloween costumes to interpret possession during high-speed collisions? Inquiring minds are dying to know, and so is the Look Man. For more on the officiating angle check out the following:

http://sports.espn.go.com/nfl/columns/story?columnist=clayton_john&id=1636660

Game of the Week: Undefeated Carolina @ Colts:

After this one a lot of fans are swinging the old Neil Diamond song "Sweet Carolina." Following Indy's surprising win over the East Coast Pirates, folks figured the Horsies are for real. What they failed to realize was that the Confederate Black Cats ain't exactly chopped Montecore either.

We had in one game all three literary themes: Man vs. Manning [Jake (The Man) Delhomme vs. Peyton (MVP) Manning]; Man vs. Nature [the tired Horsies going against a rested Cats squad], and Man vs. Supernature [the way Manning is throwing the ball the last few weeks, one might think he is not of this Earth].

The Black Cats feature a defense that is nice. Their front 4 includes Mike Rucker, Brenston Buckner (PGH), Julius Peppers, and Kris Jenkins. These guys may be the best starting D-line in the NFL. Their O-line kicks in former Viking OT Todd Steussie, C Jeff Mitchell (JAX), G Kevin Donnalley (TN), and Matt Willig OT. If you throw in names like Jake Delhomme, WR Ricky Proehl (PHX/STL), RBs Stephen Davis and DeShaun Foster, you have a dynamite squad. These guys are not only for real, they handed the Buccaneers a whoopin'.

For those who don't know The Man spent 6 seasons as a backup to Aaron Brooks and others in the Big Easy, as well as 2 seasons in the NFL Europe (formerly the WeLAF). He follows other NFL QBs like Kelly Holcomb, Brad Johnson, Jay Fiedler and Kurt Warner. Of course, he may be the third one to wear a ring if they keep playing the way they are playing now.

Quick Hits:

The ATL Dirty Birds looked awful vs. the Greatest Show on Turf on Monday night. One of the big adjustments is the right-handed QB Doug Johnson versus the left-handed Mike Vick. Also, Doug Johnson stinks.

If you've never suffered even 1 concussion, here's what it's like:

As teenagers, the Look Man and his Posse headed over to the local field to play some tackle football. The crew included Davey Dave, Big Phil, Chuck Dawg, and the Look Man. Chuck Dawg, official friend of the Look Man, suffered a concussion when he tackled Big Phil, a large future entrepreneur who happened to be a ballcarrier. Chuck Dawg was woozy, and immediately after assuring everyone that he was all right asked the question about his bicycle. "I'm okay. I'm

all right now. Hey, where's my bike?", said CJ. When notified that he had been ridden up on the handlebars of the Look Man's bicycle, Chuck Dawg shook his head in agreement as if he remembered. A scant 2 minutes later, he asked again, "Where's my bike?" It didn't take Lisa Guerrero to tell everyone he was done for the day.

If you haven't seen the movie *Out of Time* with Denzel Washington, you need to. Unless you don't like action movies with beautiful women and funny sidekicks. In that case, go see a psychiatrist.

Detroit claimed WR/KR Reggie Swinton off waivers from the Cowpokes. Swinton couldn't break into the starting lineup with the 'pokes, nor could he move out KR Zuriel Smith. He now takes Charles Rodgers' spot on the Cadillac O.

If you haven't seen Halle Berry in the new Fred Durst video, you should. Durst, of Limp Bizkit, is going "Prince" and dating some of the most beautiful women in the world. Of course, Halle's ex has some serious sex addiction issues. Of course, what man doesn't?

The trading deadline came and went without a move despite scuttlebutt about the Starheads looking to pick up Bungals RB Corey (Marshall) Dillon and Jags QB Mark Brunell. Of course the chemistry in Big D is already great, so why ruin a good thing? Tuna may look to add players in Year 2, but the Look Man is guessing they won't include the Bungals RB who hasn't even finished a game healthy since before the 2002 season. Tuna is interested in Kevan Barlow of the Niners for next season.

The Nation's Capitol Genocide Victims may have lost RB Trung (The Manchurian) Canidate and CB Fred Smoot(ie Tang) for Sunday's game at Buffalo. Smootie Tang bruised his sternum tackling WR Keyshawn Johnson. Apparently, Key's mouth was moving at light speed and inadvertently hit the chest of the tackler, breaking his shoulder pads in two, and causing the injury.

The Donkey's lost LB Ian (90210) Gold for the season when he tore his ACL on a special teams play. The soap opera star got faked out of his cartilage by Antwaan Randle El on a punt return. Randle El returned his knee ligament and his jockstrap after the game.

Flintstones RB Jamal (Bam Bam) Lewis busted his shoulder in AZ last week in a physical matchup. Cards QB Jeff (Shake N) Blake wanted to exact revenge on his former employer but instead got picked 3 times, including one 83 yd for a TD. The Flintstones won on defense, and face a rested Nati squad on Sunday at the Sandbox. Look for Marvin (Jerry) Lewis to have his boys prepared and ready. Every season the Bungals play one great home game that is not televised due to a non-sellout. This could be the one in 2003.

MLB Playoff Action

The Look Man has never been a super fan of Major League Baseball. Having said that the 2003 playoffs have been outstanding. Between the battle of the underdog Cubs, Marlins and BoSox, plus the collisions, fights and strategizing, it is the best year in recent memory for baseball.

The Look Man particularly liked the Yankees BoSox battle where Pedro Martinez body slammed the 72-year old Don Zimmer. For those of you who said that you can't body slam an old man, think about Zimmer's head setting off metal detectors on Yankee airline charters. One more step and Zim might have been in position to head butt Pedro. If you saw Rahman's dome after Holyfield got through with his head butt, you know how bad it could have been. And Holyfield doesn't even have steel plate (we hope!). As Boston reliever Scott Sauerbeck put it, "I don't care if the guy is in a wheelchair, you have to defend yourself. That guy has a pair on him," Sauerbeck said admiringly of Zimmer. "Was what (Zimmer) did idiotic? Yes. Could he have hurt Petey? No. Hell, Pedro didn't even have to fix his eyeliner afterwards."

The Look Man's favorite quote was from the Rocket: "Andy Pettitte and I went over there and I saw a bald head on the ground," Clemens said, delivering what may be the most bizarre quote in postseason history. "We weren't sure if it was Zim or (David Wells). I was like, Oh, my gosh, and he wasn't getting up. We went over and Andy and I were talking to Zim and we were just glad he was healthy, a man of his age. But that's Zim, he's got more fire than half those guys in the dugout and that's why I love him. Of course, not as much as I love putting on rubber underwear and playing house with Mike Piazza after the season."

Celeb Obit of the Week:

In a week featuring the deaths of Joan Kroc, Willie Shoemaker and Joe Santoni one might have thought it would be tough to pick. Nah. The Shoe wins it feet down.

Willie Shoemaker was born Aug. 19, 1931, in the west Texas town of Fabens. He weighed so little at birth that one story has it that he was placed in a shoebox next to an oven to keep him alive that first night. The Shoe went on to race horses for nearly 4 decades. In between his first ride in 1949 and his last in 1990, Shoe won nearly 9,000 races.

His biggest triumph might have been in 1986 when he won the Kentucky Derby riding Ferdinand, at age 54. The Shoe continued racing until 1990 when he became a trainer. In 1991, Shoemaker was left paralyzed from the neck down, when he rolled his truck while talking on a cell phone. Despite being confined to a wheelchair, he returned to training horses. He finally retired in 1997, with a record of 90 wins in 713 starts and \$3.6M in earnings as a trainer.

His career as a rider and a trainer is remarkable. Though he only stood 4' 11" and weighed 97 pounds, the Shoe was a giant.

Zebra Of The Week:

Johnnie (Big Bootay) Grier wins in another hands down decision. He again flashes across the 8th Dimension to throw over 20 flags in the Browns-Grayders game. The final call came on an out pattern to HOF WR Jerry Rice. When the side judge ruled that Rice's knee hit the chalk, and was therefore out of bounds on a 4th and 1 reception, the booth signaled for a replay since the clock was inside 2:00. After further review Grier, a ZOTW all-time winner, indicated that the review was inconclusive and the play on the field stood.

Rice would later say that Grier told him that he was definitely in, but that the review couldn't overturn the call on the field. "That's right", said Grier. "I simply needed a little more face time after the 2 minute warning. I have political aspirations, and one day, I may run for governor of California on the yellow hankie ticket."

At any rate, the game featured a penalty on 5 consecutive downs at one point. Grier's games are almost too painful to watch, but he was in good company last week with Hulk Hochuli and Larry Nemmers.

Looking Ahead:

Bolts at Browns: Another tough game for the Browns, who seem to have one of the toughest schedules out there. Marty Schottenheimer returns to Cleveland whose newfound running game blew a gasket with the loss of Faine and O'hara.

Donkeys at Vikes: Christian Beuerlein faces the Vikes D in the return of Daunte Stuffedpepper. Look for Stuffed to be rusty, and the Vikes to face a stiff challenge in the Denver D.

Flaming Thumbtacks @ Confederate Black Cats: A tough, rock 'em sock 'em matchup of physical defenses. Steve (Air) McNair looks like the MVP (again) and is doing it with very little help from the running game. Black Cats are tougher than folks think, and if they win this one, look out!

KC Chefs at Oaktown: Chefs look to stick a fork in the Grayders, who are done. Of course it IS Monday Night Football, and the Grayders were surprisingly flat vs. C-town. Still, the Chefs have too many weapons.

Out.

The Look Man

Information from The Associated Press was used in this report