

LMR 2003: Week 8 **A Glass Half Full**

As we look back on the halfway point in the season, most NFL fans want to see if there is some pearl of wisdom to be gleaned. We had two undefeated squads heading into Week 8, and a Highlander-esque one coming out. The class of the NFC went thud, as both the Vikes and the Cowpokes went down like free beer in their respective big games. By contrast, the KC Baby Backs parboiled up another sweet, saucy win over Buffalo to stay undefeated.

In addition, there were several teams that either established a winning streak or at least maintained the mediocrity that allowed them to stay in the race mathematically. We are talking about the Browns, Cards, Bungals, and Jyntz here.

Still yet another category goes to teams who may have become Sam (the Beast) Kinnison contenders (STBK: "I'm talking real love here, not no fake love. REAL FRICKIN' TEAR YOUR HEART OUTTA YOUR CHEST AND STOMP ON IT LOVE!!!"). The STBK group includes the Lambs, Chowds, Flaming Thumbtacks, and Horsies. These guys just keep cruising along, winning the games they should win, while notching their gun belts, and waiting for a big flameout by division pretenders.

At any rate, the whole NFL 2003 season has begun to jell. Teams may be finding themselves, fooling themselves or merely touching themselves, but at the halfway point, they had better be figuring some things out.

Big D @ Central Florida:

In the Game of the Week, the Dallas Starheads took their show on the road, this time versus some real competition. Playing in the NFC Least, competition is pretty uncommon, so the Lone Star Kids went to South Bay to see if they could catch an East Coast Pirate team napping.

Jon (Chucky) Gruden and the Pirates were not only fully awake, but after getting keelhauled by the West Bay Forty Niners, they were in a mood saltier than the nearby Gulf waters. They confused 'Pokes QB Quincy (Klugman) Carter with a completely new defensive alignment that featured nickel backs in the base package and the absence of big hitting John Lynch(mob). Ronde (The Other) Barber (of Seville) and Company dominated the Pokes receivers, while Warren Sapp out-quickened future Hall of Fame OG Larry (the Food Man) Allen. The Food Man then spent some time on the pine getting the serious fish eye from the Tuna.

Klugman was sacked and harassed into fumbles and INTs, and was suffering with kaleidoscope vision by the end of the game. Kaleidoscope vision is the illness that QBs get after taking a few good shots in the pocket. After a while, all the QB sees is colors zipping by at warp speed. Reading a defense is not an option with kaleidoscope vision. Keeping your lunch in your guts is considered a victory under these conditions.

Doomsday Light did acquit itself pretty well on the day. Despite an early flea flicker to TE Ken (Flowers for) Dilger(non), the Expensive Corn Kings managed only 1 TD and several field goals. The TD was largely due to a running into the kicker call on rookie Terrence (Cool Hand T) Newman. After that, D-day Lite stiffened, and to paraphrase the Tuna, the final score was not indicative of the Buccaneers domination on the day.

Speaking of domination, Pokes RB (Dr. Christian) Troy Hambrick questioned the talent of the Bucs D, saying that he felt that the Pokes simply made mistakes. Dr. Troy's performance was purely cosmetic, with 65 paltry rushing yards on the day. "He wouldn't know talent if you poured it on him", replied Warren Sapp. "Of course, he did a nice job on my *very close veins* last week, but that was easy compared to running on our D." After Sapp's Sunday Conversation with ESPN's Michael Irvin, one might say that Warren wouldn't know intellect if you poured it on him.

At any rate, the Pokes' loss is not a show stopper, and in fact sets up a nice game vs. the Capitol City Genocide Victims this week in Irving, TX. The real test is how they bounce back, especially Klugman and Larry Allen. One almost wonders whether the Tuna allowed this whipping to occur in order to deflate the egos of his formerly number one ranked offense and defense. Now the Master Po of Angling can actually teach the Pupil how to fish. Stay tuna-ed for more action from Big D.

South Beach vs. Bronx:

Speaking of which, the Look Man wants to give kudos to the other Big Fish as the MLB Florida Marlins knocked off the Yankees in 6 games of the Fall Classic. The Marlins parlayed a 72 year old manager and a mixture of youth and veterans into a world baseball championship. It sounds a lot like what Dick (The Crying Man) Vermeil and the KC Baby Backs are doing over there in the AFC West. The Look Man says to the Marlins (with no derision intended), "Go Fish!"

MLBs postseason this year was their best postseason in history, featuring genuine excitement, drama, and tons of celebs. Ironically, this 2003 season in the NFL is on path to be one of the best ever also, with dominant teams, overtimes, turnovers, sweet plays and above all, parity. With two more overtime games on Sunday, the NFL is now on pace for 27, which would break the record of 25, set in 2002.

St. Louise @ Blitzburgh:

Meanwhile, over in the other big game of the week, the St. Louise Mouflons went to Ketchup Field to take on the Burgh fresh off a bye. Bill (Iron Chin) Cower reinstated Jerome (The Bust) Bettis at RB, and hoped that a week off would rejuvenate his ailing offense led by Tommy (That Deaf Dumb and Blind Kid) Maddox. St. Louise has been vulnerable on grass, and the rainy conditions at Ketchup Field were a promising neutralizer to the Lambs speed on offense.

Another promising note was that no quarterback from the 'Burgh had ever returned to a win over the Stillers. Not Johnny Unitas, Joe Montana, Dan Marino nor even Jim Kelly could return to the Cradle of Quarterbacks and get a W. And Marc (The Scarecrow) Bulger isn't exactly enshrined in the Hall of Fame like those other jamokes.

So when the Scarecrow cranked it up early and often in rainy, cold drizzle, folks had to wonder what was up. Scarecrow completed some sweet rainbows to WRs Torry (Special-T) Holt, and Dane (Good) Looker, former Stillers coach Chuck Noll began to doubt whether the Stillers' 1,000th game in history was a good thing. The Scarecrow treated the Stiller endzone like the Yellow Brick Road, ending with nearly 400 bills in passing, with 174 of those going to Special T.

Special T is not usually mentioned in the same sentence with Terrell Owens, Randy Moss, and Clark Kent, but he will soon if he keeps up his current pace. Of course Special T could also be mentioned in the class with the NBAs Tyrone Hill and Scott (the Wood Nymph) Pippen. Some guys have a peanut head, but Holt has the shell. Word outta St. Louise is that the number one Halloween costume in town is the Torry Holt mask and Lambs uni. It closely edged out the Hideki Matsui and Benito Santiago masks in scariness quotient.

The Bust countered by coughing up the rock early, and TDDABK was not to be outdone, throwing 3 passes to the Mouflon D. Hard to blame the Pinball Wizard, after taking 7 sacks on the day, he was suffering from Quincy Carter disease. Like the Boys-Bucs, an Antwaan Randle El (Sid) punt return for 6 made this game seem closer than it was. The 33-21 final was not indicative of the beating doled out by the Mouflon defense, which played with ferocity. With the Lambs D looking pretty serious, their running game jellin' like a felon, and Marshall Faulk back in 2 weeks, the Mouflons may have become the class of the NFC.

During and afterwards, Cowher's chin was sticking way out at the performance of his Tissue Curtain Paper D following a bye week. Iron Chin's rants have obviously worn thin on this veteran team and it looks like we are headed for the Chaz Batch era in Blitzburgh. They don't have Kordell to kick around

any more, and TDDABK is going back to being in good hands with Allstate. Iron Chin is going to be Marty-fied, and leave town to join the Browns in 2004.

Note: The Look Man's **Pepto Bismol Pick of the Week** caused many serious heartburn as the Stillers couldn't cover the spread after a bye week. Who knew?

North Coast vs. Beantown:

The Cleveland Clowns traveled to Beantown to play at Gillette for the first time ever. The Browns were hoping Tim (Sofa Boy) Couch could avoid razor burn from Bill Bellicose's MASH unit defense, and escape with his cushions intact. The Browns' O-line was crippled as well, with four starters on the injured list.

The game went pretty much according to Hoyle, as the Chowds turned Sofa Boy into a love seat with a broken spindle. Kelly (Tires) Holcomb couldn't get much more traction in long relief role, and managed only a FG in the drizzling cold. The only Cleveland positive was that the Barking Dawg D showed up, including LB (Gentle) Ben Taylor, who had 21 tackles in a losing cause.

The Good News: National Football League teams are 23-2 when holding opponents below 10 points this season. The Bad News: Browns own both losses. One had to wonder whether it was the Browns-Chowds or the Tribe-BoSox when checking the 10-minute ticker. And this Major League Baseball tie-in includes the Curse of the Couch-ino. The Browns are 5 for 28 on third downs in the past two Sofa Boy starts. "The Deuce", as Couch likes to be called, needs to change his nickname to "The Trey", as in Trey and Out.

The Browns' 9-6 and 9-3 losses to Indy and the Chowds, respectively, illustrates the good, the bad and the ugly of their season as they go into the bye week with a 3-5 record at the midway point. Owi-owi-ohhh. Wah, wah, wahhhhh. Huh, bah, schwego!

Joizee @ Twin Cities:

The Look Man apologizes for jinxing the Minnesota Swedes last week by calling them the Class of the NFC. Either that, or the Jersey Jynts read The Look Man Report, because they stormed into the Twin Cities and pillaged the Vikes 29-17 on Sunday. The previously undefeated Norsemen allowed Kerry (Tom) Collins to burp his way to nearly 400 yards passing on the day. Jeremy Shockey(the World) treated the Vikes DBs like Nordic virgins, and QB Daunte (Stuffed) Culpepper threw his first 2 picks of the year.

Stuffed Culpepper burned G-Men CB Will (Toast) Allen on some early passes to WR Randy (Mouth) Moss, but then got burned when he went to the other side and got picked by a rookie. The Swedes running game was non-existent, and the flat performance resulted in a loss to one of the most schizophrenic teams in the league.

Through all of this action, Mouth Moss remained quiet. Unfortunately, Swedes owner (Rudolph the) Red (Nose) McCombs let fly with a liquored-up rant in the locker room about how the Vikes embarrassed the entire Land of 10K Lakes region by letting a booze hound carve them up like a smoked whitefish. "You @\$%^ think you're good enough to be undefeated?! You played like these were reindeer games out there! These ain't reindeer games. And that wasn't Clarice out there cheering you on either!" Head Coach Mike (Fried) Tice defended his troops saying, "Rooks rike we're have to cancer the prayoffs. And the kids were so good this year, too." Rudolph apologized afterwards, saying, "Why am I such a misfit? I just don't fit in."

So G-Men QB Tom Collins is still taking it one day at a time, while saying the Serenity prayer. RB (Ricki) Tiki (Tavi) Barber held on to the rock one carry at a time, and the G-Men stayed alive in the NFC Least with a loss by Big D. The Vikes will keep biding time until their NFC Norse title with a visit from the Gouda Group from Green Bay next Sunday in the Metronome.

Coffeetown @ Porkopolis:

So the theme song of *Don't Give Up On Us Baby* keeps going for the Jynts, Cards, and Expensive Corn Kings, while other teams use other themes. The Cincinnati Bungals for instance, reverted to a Jesse Jackson tome with a win at Pall Bearer Stadium over the Seattle Shehawks. The Bungals kept hope alive with 2 consecutive wins for the first time since 1989, beating the 'hawks 27-24 on a beautiful day for football.

The Bungals entered the game following a bizarre rant/trade demand from Corey (Marshall) Dillon mid-week. The Marshall then proceeded to wreck his sled on a rain-soaked interstate just minutes before he was due to report for the game. Bungals Coach Marvin (Jerry) Lewis inactivated the Marshall before kickoff and notified backup Rudi (Ray Moore) Johnson that he would start.

Rudi Ray Moore responded with a 101 yard rushing day to offset Jon Pickna's 300 yards passing. He also uttered an unprintable limerick for the home crowd, which yelled, "Rudi, Rudi, Rudi" each time he touched the ball. Marshall Dillon heard the chant and decided to leave the locker room just before the halftime. Of course, he might also have heard the less than sellout crowd making bigtime noise. For the first time in many years the Bungals Faithful actually resembled a Twelfth Man.

Pickna failed to bake up his usual, throwing instead for 2 TD's, including a big 52 yarder to Chad (The Dentist) Johnson. After bumping into RB Brandon Bennett(on), Pickna shotputted one out to the Dentist, who had one on none coverage. CB Willy Williams in single coverage due to the blitz, fell down instead of picking the put, and the Toothless Tigers took a 27-24 lead with about 8 minutes left. The Dentist received a celebration penalty for making a tooth pulling motion to the south end zone crowd. Rookie Referee and Anti-Dentite Walt (Richard) Anderson had no choice but to call unsportsmanlike conduct.

Of course, Anderson did a mean Oscar Goldman impression just before that play by calling Williams for delay of game. Anderson said Williams induced Chad Johnson to jump offsides, thereby turning a third down and 8, into a makeable 3rd and 3. For this Anderson gets the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week Award**.

But Holmgren's Hawks were not done yet, as QB Matt (Hair Club For Men) Hasselback drove them downfield all day. But at crunch time, the president and founder threw interceptions to end drives. The most critical came after the Hawks were in FG range with a little over a minute to play. The deflected pass was picked by Ugly & Black LB Brian (Richard) Simmons who was sweating to the oldies when the gift fell into his arms. Lost in the "W" was a horrible coaching call by Jerry Lewis. With 2:59 to play, Jerry called a pass on 3rd and 3. The incomplete pass stopped the clock at 2:55, and allowed the "hawks to get the ball with 1 timeout remaining as well as the 2 Minute Warning. The Simmons pick ended the drive, but the 'Hawks were already in FG range at the time, and could easily have tied or won.

So the Hawks fell to 5-2 while the Bungals climbed to 3-4, good enough for 2nd place in the horrible AFC North. The Toothless Tigers head out to Phoenix to take on Jeff (Shake n) Blake and the Deadbirds in the Desert. Jerry Lewis is calling it *Operation Get Blakey Freedom* in hopes of a 3 game win streak and a chance at the playoffs and Coach of the Year honors. Jerry could parlay the latter into a job with a real NFL team and avoid 2004, when rookie QB (Johnny) Carson Palmer must face the ticked off AFC North without the Dillonator or any experience.

Golddiggers @ Desert Birds:

During the bye week, Cardinals coach Dave McGinniss got tired of the lackluster defensive outings and made his team hit for 3 solid days. The team had several fights during the week, and the Niners got blasted by a fired up Cardinal D. The game featured some wicked shots including:

- 1) a decleater/dehelimeter combo on SF TE Jed (Clampett) Weaver, resulting in a 15 yard personal foul,
- 2) at least 2 brutal shots on Jeff (Jerry) Garcia, one resulting in a goal line fumble
- 3) a later ejection for PHX CB Adrian Wilson for kicking Uncle Jed in the face

Uncle Jed almost discovered black gold following the explosive hit. Wilson drilled him in the face, separating Clampett from a pass, and his helmet. "I think that's the first time my head hit the ground before anything else," said the Beverly Hillbilly. "I was asking some guys if I had grass stains on my hair. Jethro told me no, but I went down to the cement pond to wash up anyway."

McGinniss is challenging whether the hit was helmet to helmet with the league office. Unfortunately, he can't challenge what happened away from the ball on the next play, when Wilson kicked Uncle Jed in the face. Wilson was ejected from the game, but said, "I was just trying to kick a FG. Just ask Granny and Ellie May. They saw the whole thing!"

Marcel (Marceau) Shipp mimed his way to nearly 170 rushing yards on the day. Marceau, the Deadbirds replacement for Emmitt (10-10-220) Smith, was interviewed after the game, but refused to form words on his performance. Apparently Catch 22 has given Shipp numerous long distance calling cards, but his family hasn't heard from him since he watched a special on his namesake during childhood.

'birds QB Jeff (Shake n) Blake added a pathetic 97 passing yards, but didn't give the game away. He left that up to Golddigger PK and condiment magnate Owen P(l)ochman. Plochman missed 2 game winners and the Niners went down in overtime to NBA power forward and part-time PK Tim Duncan of the 'birds. "Who knew a 7 footer could kick like that?", asked Niners coach Dennis Ericksson. "After it went through the uprights, he retrieved it, and dunked it easily over the uprights for another 2 points. We are looking for a new PK. One who can cut the mustard as well as manufacture it."

The Look Man believes the Niners were looking ahead to the Lambs next week, almost as if they were a "good" team.

Miscellaneous:

Speaking of the NBA, the tip-off for the most athletic of major sports occurs this week. Amidst the highlights of the coronation of (King) LeBron James, infighting between Kobe and Shaq-Daddy, and the retirement of underrated coach Pat Riley, we also have some good matchups. The Look Man hopes for a great 2003-2004 NBA season that replicates MLB by not having the highest paid team winning the title. THAT would be Fan-tastic!

This week meteorologists and astronomers predicted a major solar flare called a coronal mass ejection or CME. These CMEs emit massive clouds of charged particles capable of creating the worst geomagnetic storm in recorded history. The size of the eruptions from the Sun are similar in volume to that of the Rocky Mountains. And the great part is that it is nearly "pure energy", as Spock would say.

Fortunately, the magnetic orientation of the storm was nearly the same as that of the Earth, probably saving us from massive cell phone and power outages, as well as fires, cable and satellite TV transmissions and other problems. The storm is expected to create colorful Northern Lights well south of the usual latitudes in the United States and Europe Wednesday and early Thursday. This enhanced aurora borealis lasts for several hours and is well worth catching if you have never seen one.

Quick Hits:

The league is cracking down on players who bump into a game official, even accidentally. Look for Denver OT Matt Lepsis (Colony) to be fined after being ejected in the fourth quarter Sunday for nudging a zebra. The going rate on these fines, it seems, is \$25,000, unless your name is Sapp, in which case, double the fine for having a big mouth.

Bungals wideout Chad Johnson now has eight 100-yard performances in his last 15 games. He also claims to have a \$50K war chest for fines due to his post TD antics. At this rate, Chad will run out of money before he runs out of games. Johnson will not be fined for his unsportsmanlike call last week, but he probably donated some of his paycheck to the Jerry Lewis Telethon.

The Detroit Cadillacs have now lost 20 straight road games, making the Motor City the 3rd worst road team in NFL history. Some would say their cars don't fair much better on the road, but the Look Man withholds judgement.

For the first time this season, no team scored defensively via interception or fumble recovery this weekend. KC flambéed the Bills with 7 to increase their league leading total of turnovers. The Swedes stayed number two in turnover ration, with SS Corey Chavous tying FS Brian Russell for the league lead with 6. A new lottery game called Pick 6 is being sponsored in Minnesota only.

Tommy Maddox's 11 interceptions in seven games nearly matches the 16 interceptions he threw all of last season. Get ready for the Chaz Batch Era in Steel Town, perhaps this week in Seattle.

Celebrity Drug Bust of the Week:

Cleveland RB William (Red) Green got popped with a blood alcohol of 0.165 at 6PM this week. Red had just left Possum Lodge around 2PM, and was minding his own beeswax when the cops pulled over his Escalade. Apparently, one of the locals called on a cellphone regarding his erratic driving. Red was busted for DUI, and the polizei located a small amount of marijuana in his sled as well. Red would say only, "My hands got a little sticky from the handyman's superweapon, duct tape." Green went on to say, "When I tried to let go of the wheel, it stuck to my hands. Like I always say, if the women don't find you handsome, at least they find your sled appealing."

One has to wonder how a 200 lb. RB can have 10 drinks between 2 and 6 PM on a school night? The last two Browns players to get busted like this ended up on the waiver wire. It is unclear whether Green will face suspension by the NFL or the Browns, but he is likely to get a call from Tom Collins of the Jynts regarding a 12-step program. He may also get a call from Randy Moss to see where he got his Chronic.

The Look Ahead:

The Browns and Chefs have bye weeks before a big matchup on 11/9 at Randolph Agarn Stadium in KC. Agarn is the toughest place in the league for visitors, but somehow, the Look Man sees the 3-5 Browns knocking off the 8-0 Chefs. Of course, he also thinks Larry Storch deserved an Emmy for his portrayal in F-Troop.

Bungals @ Desert Birds: The Bungals head into the Desert for *Operation Get Jeff Blakey Freedom*, or is it *Operation Get Respect*? Wait, it's *Operation Marlboro Country*. Regardless what it is, look for Blake and his Desert Birds to shut up the drivel about the Bungals contending in 2003. Shake N hasn't forgotten how he made the Pro Bowl in the Nati with no 100 yard rusher in 52 consecutive games, only to be dismissed when Boomer Esiason came triumphantly home to 4 wins in 8 starts.

Pack at Vikes: The Gouda Group heads into Vikes-ville with QB Brett Favre (Bean) nursing a busted passing extremity. Look for the Swedes to bounce back big time as Randy Moss goes lactose intolerant with a big night on ESPN.

Lambs @ Golddiggers: Sound like a blowout after the Niners fools gold in the desert last Sunday? Wrong. The Niners D is serious, and the Scarecrow got a little tenderized last week vs. the Stillers. Having said that, if the Lambs win this one on grass, look for Mouflon cashmere in the NFC Championship.

DC @ Big D: The Genocide Vix regroup with newly signed former Grayders DT Darrell (GHB) Russell. The GVs have looked good at times and awful at others, so no one knows whether Dr. Jeckyll or The Old Ball Coach will show up this Sunday. When the NFL plays Cowboys and Indians on Halloween weekend, look for the fireworks (and firewater) to fly. The Look Man likes the Pokes in a rebound.

Horsies @ Marine Mammals: There's a QB controversy potboiling in South Beach as Brian (Beer Batter) Griese looked sharp on MNF. Of course Beer Batter was working against a pathetic Bolts D. Look for BB to get kicked upside the head by the Dungy-led Horsies, thereby going off the wagon at Wet Willie's on South Beach.

Out.

The Look Man