

The Look Man Report 2004

Week 19: Defense: It's Everywhere You Want to Be

Just when you think you have your finger on the pulse of the NFL, something like Week 19's Colts-Chowds game comes along to knock sense back into you. The Look Man should have seen this coming a mile away when the Colts bandwagon starting to lilt due to too much weight. If the Colts bandwagon was an elevator, the weight buzzer would have gone off when the spread began to drop during midweek. The result was a one-sided affair that was not nearly as close as the 20-3 final score.

While New England put on a surprising performance, it was far from the surprise that Mike (The Cockatoo) Martz received in the Georgia Dome. His Lambs were publicly sheared, and some of the hits on Marc (The Scarecrow) Bulger were almost too brutal to watch. It was like one of those old surfer movies where the commentators say, "He can't take much more of this, Bob!"

The Iggles also got by the schizoid Vikes, and the Stillers dodged a big bullet against the Jets. The net result is 4 teams remain in the hunt for the *Junket to Jacksonville* in February. And the competition is reaching a fever pitch for the conference championships on Sunday.

The Week that was:

New York Jets @ Blitzburgh:

You know its a big game when you hear Dan Dierdorf and Dick Enberg on CBS. Unfortunately, Enberg is turning into Pat Summerall, and referred to RB Jerome (The Bus) Bettis as 'Burress' several times. Since Plexiglass and the Bus have no physical resemblance, it left Dierdorf chortling, "Oh my!!!"

The Look Man's theory about Famous Girlfriend Syndrome (FGS) ended up panning out as Big Ben Roethlisberger threw 2 picks, including a horrid one in the redzone. Luckily, the Jets' Chad Pennington (and Pound Foolish) didn't fare much better after getting hit in the AC joint while throwing. His pedestrian numbers ruined the homecoming of Jets RB Curtis (My Favorite) Martin.

The Stillers were lucky to get the "W" after Big Ben' bout with FGS. Though Dierdorf wondered aloud about Big Ben's hand injury, everyone is dinged up at this juncture of the season. The Look Man blames the conservative play-calling of Bill (Marty Lite) Cowher. The Stillers threw in predictable situations, and missing was the spontaneous Big Ben rollout. Cowher had better wise up and quick since only 2 missed Doug Brien FGs, a tremendous defensive effort, and bad coaching by Herm Edwards allowed the Stillers to advance to the AFC Championship.

Edwards pulled a page out of Marty Schottenheimer's playbook, going conservative late in regulation. His Red State approach was compounded by bad clock management by the Jets, who have a coach whose only job is to manage the clock. Herm's failure to learn history's lesson last week doomed him to failure. The result was 2 long FG misses and a version of the home game in January.

St. Louise @ the ATL:

Mike (The Cockatoo) Martz really knows how to get his team ready for a big game. The Lambs rolled into the ATL and looked like they had spent most of the previous night at Atlanta's infamous *Gold Club*. The Dirty Bird offense ran for over 3 bills on their

defense, while the ATL D punished QB Marc (The Scarecrow) Bulger. When faced with vicious decelerating hits in 2 consecutive weeks, the Scarecrow decided to disembark the Yellow Brick Road to the playoffs.

Michael (Jack B Nimble) Vick and (Dionne) Warrick Dunn took turns making record breaking playoff runs of 47 and 62 yards respectively. When they weren't carrying the rock, RB TJ (Hooker) Duckett blasted through the line and nearly went the distance. The net result was a 47-17 domination by the Dirty Birds.

The ATL has now served notice that they are for real, and we already knew how Michael Vick likes to get down. Beating the Lambs has become so simple that even a cave man could do it. "Hey, Man. That is NOT cool", said rookie head coach Jim Mora. "CAVE MAN!!! CAVE MAN!!!", shouted father Jim Mora. "In my opinion, that sucks!"

Vikes @ Iggles:

It seems that every QB the Look Man lauds ends up laying an egg. Daunte (Pep) Culpepper decided to go deep to Randy (Moon) Moss repeatedly despite double coverage. TE Jerome Wiggins was open like Seven Eleven all day, but couldn't get a ball until it was too late.

Mike (Fried) Tice was outcoached, missing a chance for a fake FG and other opportunities to win this game. Though the score was lopsided, the Vikes were could have cut the lead to 21-14 in the 2nd and 3rd quarters. Despite the Iggles bad clock management at the half, the game felt as if it was already over.

Fried Tice should have gone to Michael Bennett at RB, whose extra wiggle and speed would have allowed him to get to holes that Onterio (Oh Canada) Smith missed. Oh Canada had several good screens where he failed to set up his blockers or blew the timing. The result was several arm tackles for loss or no gain. And BTW, this tip to you budding coaches out there: if the defense doubles your wideouts, spread the field and go to the TE on the deep seam rout. The TE should catch about a dozen balls.

The Iggles looked good offensively, but they got the benefit of every bouncing ball. When TE LJ (Silver) Smith coughed up the rock, Iggles WR Freddie Mitchell caught the fumble in mid-air for six. The hit by Vikes CB Antoine Winfield was excellent, but went for naught. It was one of those Game Over moments where you know everything is going right for the opposing team.

Colts @ Chowds:

What was supposed to be the Game of the Week turned into a car wreck when Peyton Manning couldn't hit anyone with a decent pass. When he did connect, he nearly put WR Brandon Stokely (Carmichael) in the hospital. Manning's tendency to do the Snoopy Dance in the pocket produced a lot of worm-burner passes to no one. It obviously didn't help that Chowd Fan was chanting, "CUT THAT MEAT!" all afternoon, an homage to Peyton's Visa ads.

While applauding the game plan by Dr. Evil, Tony (Hume Cronyn) Dungy was simply outcoached. Any fool knew that Belichick would try to shorten the game with ball control. The real question is why the Colts didn't beat him to the punch with their own version. The Look Man would've used James Mungro (Jerry) draw plays until they stopped it, then gone deep over the top.

The (Virgil) Dominic Rhodes strip by Bruschi was the capper. Bruschi snatched that ball away like a bully taking candy on the playground. The Pats simply wanted it more than the Colts.

So the *Can't Win The Big One* stigma is back on Peyton. Too bad really, because he had a fine season. Now the Horsies have to retool and hope to get home field in 2005.

Zebra of the Week:

Tonight's contestants: a former police officer from New Jersey, Bill (Done)Leavy. A mob boss from Little Rock, Arkansas, Pete Morelli (Mushroom). A Japanese automaker who spends his spare time making paper hats, Bill (Toyota) Carollo. And an optometrist, who dodges plastic beer bottles as a hobby, Terry Macaulay.

The Look Man will take *Stupid Human Tricks* for \$100, as the Stillers Joey Porter (Paints) went Jackson Pollock on Chad Pennington after one pass. Porter Paints dropped his crown right into Chad's sternum, and Leavy made the proper call. Leavy is battling Ed (the Hulk) Hochuli for biggest guns in the league, and though he has some room for improvement, he called a decent game. There was one generous spot on 3rd and 13 to Justin (Timberlake) McCareins, who didn't have a *wardrobe malfunction* on the play.

Meanwhile, the Colts @ Chowds game, Toyota Carollo and his fleet of zebras were driving with no headlights. Maybe it's just the Look Man, but haven't the Patriots gotten an unusual amount of calls this season? While many bemoan the Colts D, they actually played pretty well considering they were on the field for ridiculous stretches of time. Many of the Chowds drives were penalty-aided, either with non-calls or tight calls on the Colts.

The Asante Samuels-Brandon Stokely (Carmichael) head shot looked like the Zapruder Film. John Lynch paid \$75K for a hit that was just slightly worse, and at least 2 other DBs have paid NFL Charities for less.

The Look Man has also spotted an O-line trend that the Chowds turned into an art form. The O-line holds by 'steering' D-linemen using the bottom rung of the facemask like a Suicide Knob. It hasn't been called yet in the postseason and despite Tom (Zoolander) Brady getting hurried a few times, it never cost the Chowds a first down.

Pete Morelli (Mushroom) and his crew gave the Iggles not one, but two pass interference calls that were totally ridiculous. One of the calls went against Pro Bowl CB Antoine (A-Win) Winfield, who promptly voiced his displeasure by blasting TE LJ Smith hard enough to force the pop fly fumble. The Iggles receivers have only proved that they are lucky, not good, and the lack of a physical, deep threat will hurt them this week. The worst part of it was that with all of the lucky bounces, the Iggles didn't need help from the animal kingdom. The effect disheartened a road weary Vikes squad, and hurt the credibility of the Iggles win. Morelli Mushroom, you are the Look Man Zebra of the Week!

The Look Ahead:

ATL @: Philly:

Cheesesteak-ville will be jumping as the Iggles attempt to get the 800-lb. gorilla off of their backs in this week's NFC Championship. Gang Green wants to avoid becoming the first team ever to lose 4 consecutive conference championship games, a feat that would knock 4-time Super Bowl loser Buffalo right off the pop charts in the futility category.

The Iggles' offense looked good against a pedestrian Land o' Lakes D, but the Falcons actually have a defense not comprised of milk solids. The undisciplined Iggles offense typically goes for the big play instead of protracted ball control drives featuring the run. They simply use the run to lull you to sleep and in many ways they are similar to the Mike Martz Lambs offense.

This impatient approach will not work versus the small but speedy Falcons DBs, who will pick off McNabb and take the ball to the House. The Look Man likes Michael (Jack B Nimble) Vick and the rest of the Dirty Bird starters to step up and really play in this one. Like the Chowds from last week, they are not getting the respect that they have earned by being the number one rushing offense in the league. Despite the recent appearance of Jeremiah (Jerry) Trotter, the Iggles have been run over by the Browns, Dallas, Washington and the Bungals this season.

Further, the Look Man really likes the Dirty Bird coaches. Defensive Coordinator Ed (4th and 26) Donatell returns to the scene of the crime with a new team. He has not forgotten the lessons learned with Green Bay in last year's NFC Championship, and now he actually has some playmakers. Head coach Jim Mora impresses me more than overrated Andy (The Walrus II) Reid, whose Coach of the Year trophies far outnumber his conference championship rings.

In other words: Falcons win; Iggles fans gouge their own eyes out.

Chowds @ Blitzburgh:

The Stillers had the giant condiment bottles flowing in the first meeting at Ketchup Field. In a rare case, the stats provide some insight into how bad this beating was:

	Category	
<u>Chowds</u>		<u>Stillers</u>
248	Net Yds	417
4	Turnovers	0
4	Sacked	0
3 of 9	3rd Down Conversions	9 for 16
72.9	QB Rating	126.4
17:02	Time of Possession.	42:58

Irrespective of these numbers, the Chowds actually had a chance late in the 4th quarter, before their defense got mowed like spring grass. The D-Line simply couldn't stop the Stillers run game.

With Americuh's Team on the road, the Bus will not be making any stops for overrated linebackers. Look for Bettis, Duce and a little known 3rd down back named Verron (Isaac) Hayes #34, to go hot buttered soul on New England. Once the Stillers go ball control, Isaac Hayes can pick up the blitz, and beat you on the draw. He also does a mean "Chef" impression from South Park, yelling, "be careful childrens!" as he picks his way upfield.

This game will feature a lot more defense but the Look Man likes the Stillers to get over the hump for one reason: they played a tougher schedule. The Stillers knocked off undefeated Philly, undefeated Jets, and undefeated Chowds **in consecutive weeks WITH A ROOKIE QB**. Nobody does that in today's NFL.

While Big Ben is a little dinged up, the Stillers simply need to play their style of ball and effect their will over the Chowds. Physically, the Stillers are more dominant, and their emotional win over the Jets in a game they shouldn't have won will be the difference. The Chowds were as emotionally up for the Colts as any defense the Look Man has ever seen. Trying to reach that plateau for 2 consecutive weeks is very difficult.

Dick LeBeau(nhead), the slowest talking D-Co in the NFL is said to be ticked at the press that Belichick and Romeo Crennel have received. "Ah...am the shiznit...in...this Burg", says LeBeaunhead. Belichick is 13-0 with the Chowds when seeing a QB for the second time in a season. He will see Big Ben again on Sunday, and conventional wisdom says that if he can rattle Peyton, then what chance does a rookie QB stand against his evil genius. Maybe Cowher will start Tommy (That Deaf, Dumb and Blind Kid) Maddox just to cross him up? Knowing that Dr. Evil uses tendencies, perhaps you simply 'pull a Costanza' and do everything in opposite.

It's just crazy enough to work, but the Look Man doesn't ascribe to the theory. Instead, sometimes quarterbacking is trusting your instincts. Whether it's taking off on a scramble or forcing a throw through a keyhole, the QB must be a playmaker with a short memory. In fact, the very act of running the football often gets a QB loosened up to make big plays.

Look for Double B to do this on Sunday, while Zoolander reverts back to his inner gunslinger demonstrated against Cincinnati and Miami this year. When faced with a pass rush up the gut, Mr. Brady throws into a crowd. The Colts dropped at least 2 picks when Freeney came off the corner, so watch what happens when the Stillers come up the gut with bad intentions. Especially since the weather looks to be bad, as it does in both championship sites.

Instead, the Stillers should again use the deep pass to set up the run, going play action on 1st down. Patience is good, but taking shots is equally important. The Stillers should go deep early, ball control late, but it will take guts, and lots of them.



Will Double B reveal his secret true identity vs. the Chowds or suffer FGS?

The (emotional) pick: The Football Gods cackle as the Stillers represent the AFC despite the Bungals' stupidity for trading Corey Dillon to the Chowds.

Epilogue:

Will the Chowds have a letdown after last week? Will Bill (Marty Lite) Cowher be able to coach his way out of a wet paper bag? Will the Dr. Evil get dynasty status? These and other questions will be answered by Sunday Night.

We like Donovan McNabb(sty) and his 31/8 TD to INT ratio, but his mom Wilma is a jinx. Just like the Madden 2000 video game jinx, the Campbell's Soup deal has hurt McNabb, Urlacher and Strahan, who all suffered major injuries after appearing in the ads. In other words, "Let me hear your war cry! AAIIIIYYYYYI!!!!" will lead to Gang Green crying in their soup.

So after seeing his Viking ship sunk, the Look Man now officially projects ATL and PGH in the Bowl. The Stillers dodged a bullet, and now again seek *One for the Thumb*, while the NFL wants to see the marketability of the *Mike Vick Experience*.

Out.

The Look Man