

## The Look Man Report 2005 Week One: Surprise Parity

*"Everybody who knows me knows how I get down."-- Michael Vick denying rumors that he's gay*

Well sports fans, it is the most wonderful time of the year again, as we begin the 2005 NFL season. This season will culminate in the biggest Super Bowl of all time, aptly named Super Bowl XL. The game will take place in Detroit, so instead of scantily clad females, attendees are instead invited to bring your jammies to the event. The Look Man has never been a fan of the cold weather Bowl sites, but the gaming in Detroit's Greektown should provide some heat in early February.

Pundits predict the same old teams will appear in the event, but the Look Man seriously questions that logic. Historically, we have seen teams rise from the ashes to become competitive in one year. San Diego and Carolina come immediately to mind. This season will be no different, and Detroit and Arizona could easily leap into contention when injuries tilt the balance. While most of the pundits are pointing to Keyser Soze and the Usual Suspects to repeat as playoff contenders, The Look Man will look more to the non-traditional underdogs to rise up and avail themselves of their piece of the Parity Pie in 2005.

### The San Francisco Treat:

Another large story in 2005 is the retirement of the San Francisco/Oakland treat, Mr. Jerry Rice. Rice a Roni made the Denver Donkeys as a 5<sup>th</sup> wideout, then decided that he didn't feel like playing behind guys that couldn't even carry his jock strap. Perhaps he just reviewed film of Jake (The Fake) Plummer and realized it is going to be a long year at Investigation Field.

Check out these freakish records:

- 208 career touchdowns (broke Jim Brown's record of 126 on MNF)
- 22,895 receiving yards (an 8,000-yard lead on No. 2, Tim Brown, with 14,934 receiving yards. By contrast, Rushing Leader Emmitt Smith has a smaller lead on No. 15 Ricky Watters than Rice has on Brown. Of course both Smith and Rice have permanent fork marks in their upper backs.)
- 1,549 receptions — (448 ahead of No. 2 man Cris Carter. In other words, if you added Hall of Famer Lynn Swann's career reception total (336) to Carter's, you'd still be over a hundred short of Rice's mark.

Super Bowl Records (4 games):

- 33 catches for 589 yards and eight touchdowns.
- Averaged 8.25 catches, 150 yards and 2 TDs per Bowl
- MVP Awards – One, but should have won at least another for 3 TDs each in SB XXVIII and XXIX. In his worst SB performance, Rice had 5 for 77 and a TD - - - at age 40.

The Look Man's favorite was his 11 catch, 215 yard undressing of the Bungals in SB XXIII. The story goes that Rice asked the Bungals to take that disgraceful uniform off, and when they refused, he did it metaphorically.

At any rate, Jerry is looking to enter Canton in Forty Niners colors as a first ballot guy, five years from his official farewell. Rumor has it that he was going to go in as a Raider, but the sculptor insisted that the bust be extended to reflect a fork emanating from his upper back.

Vaya con Dios, Jerry.

#### "D" is for Dominance:

The final point is the age old discussion regarding whether defense wins championships. Madden put it best when he said you have to be able to run the football, and you have to be able to stuff the run defensively. Football, despite its pageantry and color, is really basic at its heart. Strip away the graphics, the spurious statistics and the fireworks, and what you have is the physically demanding task of exerting your will over your opponent's. If you pick a team to win it all, make sure they meet the criteria, or you're simply wasting your money.

Without further ado, the week in review:

#### Cincinnati @ Cleveland:

This one was a battle - - for about 1.5 quarters. Between the scorching heat and the serious ugly of the Bengals uniforms, the Browns fell apart and never recovered after the half. Of course, it didn't hurt that some of the Cincy team was wearing black and white uniforms with no orange at all. The final result was a spoiling of Romeo Crennel's Cleveland debut.

The Bungals scored a TD on a long drive before the half, just like last year, and went up 17-10. They never looked back and won 27-13 against a hapless Browns defense. The offense looked good sporadically, but missed way too many mismatches. Browns QB Trent Dilfer seemed to decide who was getting the ball before the read, often with ugly results. He could easily have had 3 more interceptions to go with the 2 he threw and the 1 fumble.

The Browns D looked confused from the jump. Kennard (kd) Lang is no Willie McGinest, and the Browns missed starting CB Gary Baxter. But not as much as they missed a pass rush. The Bengals may be for real in 2005, but this game was hardly proof.

#### Tampa Bay @ Minnesota:

The Look Man saw little of this one, but what he did see was replacement center Cory Withrow getting shoved into the backfield on top of Daunte Culpepper. The Hornheads will rue the day that they refused to honor Matt Birk's contract in 2006. Withrow is awful and the sprained left foot of Bryant (Big Mac) McKinnie could be ugly.

The Swedes defense got beat by the run and wasted a TD by newly acquired S Darren Sharper. Sharper can take over a game and the Packers will miss him. The rest of the Vikes defense made rookie Cadillac Williams and Brian (Beer Batter) Griese look like future residents of Canton. Of course, the Vikings may just be missing offensive coordinator Scott Linehan, whose Dolphins exploded over KC. Next week's Rumble in the Jungle in the Nati may tell the tale on Culpepper.

#### Dallas @ San Diego:

For those of you who hate Drew Bledsoe, he might have something left in the tank. Drew put on a Phil Simms-like clinic in going 24 for 28 against a pretty good Bolts defense. The new OC in Dallas called a solid mix of run and pass, and the Starhead defense held LaDanian Tomlinson and Drew Cool Brees in check. The Bolts lacked TE Antonio Gates, but it may not have mattered against these Pokes.

#### Philly @ Atlanta:

This MNF matchup featured the rematch of the NFC championship game. The players were so testy that they started a fight during warm-ups, ala William Green and Joey Porter. The ejection of run stuffing Iggle Jeremiah Trotter pretty much sealed the fate of the Iggles, as the Dirty Bird offense doubled its run output from the previous game.

Of perhaps more significance is the injury to Donovan McNabb(sty). While the zebras called a ticky-tack roughing on Michael Vick, they allowed DT Lavolais (means clean hands in French) to spear McNabb. As a result, the Philly QB suffered a similar injury to the one that claimed Air McNair's 2004 season. Stay tuned, but the Look Man believes this may cost Gang Green 2-3 games this season.

Oh, and the game also featured NFL Rule 3, Section 21, Article 2, Note 2: "...any intentional forward movement of [the passer's] arm starts a forward pass, even if the player loses possession of the ball as he is attempting to tuck it back toward his body." Luckily Referee Walt Coleman (Lantern) was there, and he has a lot of experience with these things.

### **Celebrity Obit of the Week:**

Bob Denver, who portrayed the title character on the 1960s television show "Gilligan's Island," died last week at the age of 70. Denver died of complications from cancer treatments after having undergone quadruple heart bypass surgery earlier this year.

TV critics despised Denver's signature show, which lasted only 3 years, but audiences loved the comedy. America was in the midst of a Cold War, and the escapism and sexual tension formed the basis for such shows as *Three's Company* and *Friends*. The plotline was often compared to *Robinson Crusoe*, but the Look Man preferred to see it as contemporary version of *The Tempest*, minus the *deus ex machina* ending. More recently, TNT and beer advertisements revived the age old debate of Ginger or Mary Ann. The Miller Lite

While Denver was best known for the role of Gilligan, the Look Man loved his portrayal of Maynard G. Krebs, the bearded beatnik in "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis." The show aired from 1959 to 1963, and was featured in reruns throughout the 60s. Many believe that Krebs formed the basis for cartoon character Shaggy from *Scooby Doo*. Shaggy himself said he owes his acting skills to Denver. "He, like, came along when stoners weren't even like, cool, Dude," said Mr. Shaggy. "But Gilligan was distributing bud all over that island. How else could they have avoided being rescued all those years? They were buzzed man!"

The cast included: Alan Hale Jr., as Skipper Jonas Grumby; Bob Denver, as his klutzy assistant Gilligan; Jim Backus and Natalie Schafer, as rich snobs Thurston and Lovey Howell; Tina Louise, as bosomy movie star Ginger Grant; Russell Johnson, as egghead science professor Roy Hinkley Jr.; and Dawn Wells, as sweet-natured farm girl Mary Ann Summers.

Denver is survived by his wife, Dreama, and 4 children, including his illegitimate son, Lovie Smith, is currently the head coach for the NFL's Chicago franchise. When asked about the mother of Smith, Jim Backus had no comment.

### **Lagniappe:**

#### **Kanye Dig It?**

If you haven't seen the Kanye West ad lib at the nationally televised Hurricane Katrina fund raiser, please check it now. Kanye (means "James T" in Tanzanian), goes off the script, dropping the "George Bush hates black people" bomb, while Michael Myers continues to read the teleprompter. Myers, of *Austin Powers* fame, looks horrified by the ad lib, even going so far to move away from West so the sniper bullets don't accidentally take him out. And for you Pat Robertson fans, by "take him out" the Look Man is referring to assassination.

At the end of the clip, check out the look on Chris Tucker's face. Network officials had no idea West was so political. "That's why we turned down Dave Chappelle," said one network wonk. "We weren't looking for a crazy man. We just wanted someone who wouldn't make Myers look like a shrimp."

Here's the link:

<http://media.putfile.com/Kanye79>

### **Truth or Consequences:**

No one is talking about it, but the season-ending injuries to Javon Walker and Kris Jenkins may prove that Terrell Owens was correct in his stance. Granted a contract protects both sides, but NFL owners retain the right to cut any player who is physically unable to compete by its own

subjective evaluation. Walker, who was playing for about \$500K in 2005, now faces a year and a half before he returns to Pro Bowl caliber, if ever.

No money is guaranteed in the NFL, except for the signing bonus. Even that fee can be recalled if the player retires. Maybe it is time for the Collective Bargaining Unit to revisit the rookie cap and veteran free agency.

### **Zebra of the Week:**

This week's contestants: Mike Carey, who called back two TD's in the Vikes-Buccaneers game. Some rookie ref named "Green" followed suit the Cleveland-Cincy game. And finally, a Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom favorite, Walt Coleman (Lantern) who did the Monday Night tilt between Atlanta and Philly that resulted in the ejection of 2 players --- before the game even started.

Before the ZOTW is awarded, the Look Man would like to talk about Coleman Lantern. Not only is he responsible for the most infamous tuck rule play ever, we found out that he has not officiated a Raiders game since. That means that since January 19, 2002, the Lantern has not shone at any Raiders contest, anywhere. Let's for a moment, deny the Law of Averages. Let's ignore the fact that there is no NFL Officials schedule to indicate which officials will do which games. There isn't even a record of which officials did which games at the official NFL website. Coincidence? The Look Man thinks not.

There are some awful officials out there in the league. Jeff (Beanbag) Triplette, Terry (Replay) MacAuley, even Bernie (The Kook) Kukar. But the pantheon of bad officiating is about to seek a new low in officiating with Mr. Green from the Browns-Bengals last week. Green not only took 2 scores of the board for Cleveland, he also blew a punt return foul in which he enforced the new rule allowing a team to add the yardage to the original line of scrimmage. The Browns were forced to re-kick after the teams milled around for about 3 or 4 minutes during which Green conferenced with the other officials, the coaches for both teams, and his Aunt Petunia. The obscene officiating also extended to an umpire who failed to get out of the way of a Dilfer pass, resulting in an offensive lineman catching the carom and being flagged for the sinister-sounding illegal touching. Can illegal touching also be called on the umpire? On the field, that is.

Obscenity doesn't begin to describe Green's call on an interception by CB Lee Bodden. Bodden's pick for six occurred on the right sideline on a badly thrown ball by (Johnny) Carson Palmer. Meanwhile, in a land far, far away, the side judge on the left sideline calls a hands to the face illegal contact foul on CB Ray Mickens.

Apparently, the side judge was blinded by Chad (The Dentist) Johnson's gold teeth, because replay indicated that there was no foul. Even if there was, the bang-bang nature of the play never allowed Mr. Tonight Show to look in that direction. When combined with the electrifying 73-yard punt return TD, it was one of the most exciting plays of the weekend. Unfortunately, it didn't count.

Mr. Green, you are the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week!**

### **The Look Ahead:**

#### Minnesota at the Nati:

The Hornheads will be looking to counter its ignominious defeat last week with a W in Week 2. The Ugly & Black will be trying to prove it is a legitimate playoff team with a fast 2-0 start. Look for the Swedes to slap the Bungals in the mouth, sending the locals to Oktoberfest early. Here's why:

The loss of All Pro Center Matt Birk hurts a lot worse than the Vikes thought. Birk has been replaced by lightweight Cory Withrow, but former Browns C Melvin Fowler is waiting in the wings. Fowler played collegiately in Cinci, and will be ready to take over for Withrow, should the need

arise. Also, former SheHawks WR Koren Robinson has re-signed with the Swedes, and should be looking for some good German beer before during and after the contest.

#### New England at Carolina:

The Chowds take their well rested show on the road to face the Carolina Black Cats in Charlotte. The Chowds must be charmed. They face the Carolina Black Cats sans all pro DT Kris (Kringle) Jenkins, who suffered a season ending ACL tear in Week 1. After seeing the Brady Bunch maul the Raiders D-line, the Look Man fears another Christmas on the Island of Misfit Teams. Still, Jake Delhomme is the Man, and if the Black Cats feature the run, they should tenderize the Chowds before the big Stillers game in Week 3.

#### Cleveland at Green Bay:

The Cheeseheads lack of O-Line really hurt them last week at Ford Field. Brett (The Pope) Favre also had a tough time getting his jersey on due to the fork sticking out of his back. The Pope failed to throw a TD for the first time since St. Pius IX.

Look for the Browns to rebound, but the Zebras will be giving the Pope all kinds of help here. The Cheeseheads win on a last second victory in which Favre turns cheese into first downs. Good thing too, because when Favre gets injured, this game will be known as the Miracle of the Lost Season.

#### Washington at Dallas (MNF):

The Pokes looked good knocking off the Bolts in a tough one last week. This game looks like a lead pipe lock, but don't forget the Schottenheimer Rule. Any team that beats a Marty Schottenheimer coached defense can expect to struggle the following week.

The Look Man really likes the new Starhead D, featuring DeMarcus Ware, Marcus Spears and Marcus Wilkins. Actually, that last guy plays in the Nati, but there are a lot of Marcuses around. The Pokes also picked up former Chief LB Scott Fujita, who is estimated by weather service officials to be an F1 on the linebacker scale.

#### **Epilogue:**

Finally, the New Orleans Religious Icons forfeited their right to a home game by virtue of Hurricane Katrina destroying the Superdome. They now face the Jynts at the Meadowlands in what the NFL is billing as a home game for the Big Easy. The Jynts are bringing in Harry Connick Jr, Branford Marsalis and 3 Doors Down to make the Icons feel at home. No word yet on whether Corrupt Police and Rampant Racism are also invited to the game, which is the first game of a twin-bill on ABC TV.

The Pokes-Genocide Victims start promptly at nine EDT, but many folks will simply switch to ESPN to see the entire Icons game. The Look Man likes the Icons as America's (New) Team, and their emotional win last Sunday could be the beginning of a great story in 2005. How ironic that they could eclipse Dallas on the big stage.

The Look Man implores you to donate early and often to Gulf relief. While monetary contributions are not everything, all Americans should help shine a light on this dim chapter of our history.

Peace.

The Look Man

*"And so many of the people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them. But if they get out of line, you know, we do have the death penalty in this state." – former First Lady Barbara Bush, on how well the Hurricane Katrina evacuees are doing in Texas.*