

The Look Man Report 2005

Week Fourteen: A Contact Sport

"He's one of the best power forwards of all-time. I take my hands off to him."-- Scottie Pippen, talking about Tim Duncan on ESPN

Week 14 was supposed to be a bounce-back week for a jumble of teams all looking to make the playoffs. After a bizarre week in which the lowly Bengals beat the mighty Stillers, several key matchups would dictate the future of the playoffs. The media had written off the Stillers and Pokes, championing the Bengals, Chargers, Bears and Jynts. Week 14 would be decision week.

Week 14 would emerge as a week that showed the all-knowing media who was boss. In the words of that great 21st century philosopher, Tom Moore, "You can't win the blue chips without the big guts." Moore has led the Stillers and Colts to the brink of greatness, so he can't be all wet. Of course, if the Colts continue to win week after week, his wetness will be from a Gatorade shower.

The Bengals-Browns battle of Ohio put the Toothy Tigers in position for an AFC North title for the first time since the Paleozoic Era. The Stillers refused to cooperate by punking the Monsters of the Midway at Ketchup Field. That game included the Bus running over Brian Urlacher at the goal line ala Bo Jackson-Brian Bosworth. The Look Man figures if your name is Brian, it means you like to get run over by running backs.

The week also featured a great interconference matchup between the KC Baby Backs and the Dallas Cowpokes. The game included five lead changes, fantastic offense and multiple big plays. It nearly came down to who had the ball last before Jerry (The King of Pop) Jones won bragging rights over fellow Texan and KC owner Lamar (Mike) Hunt.

The Look Man has gotten a ration over the inaccuracy of his Look Ahead segment in 2005. Let the Look Man say this about that: 2005 has been a very weird season. Teams like the Pokes, Carolina, and J-Ville have lost games that they should have won, while the Vikes, Bears, Bengals, Broncos and Seattle provide the corollary.

Suffice it to say that parity rules and the Look Man would put his picks up against anyone's. Except that knife thrower on Fox Sports. He is over 60% accurate with picks derived from throwing knives at an NFL team wheel while blindfolded. How's that for parity?

Without further recriminations, the Week in Review.

Week in Review:

Browns at Bengals:

The Look Man posited that Browns QB Trent Dilfer would give the Browns the best shot at victory at Pall Bearer Stadium in the Battle of Ohio Part Deux. What he didn't know is that the poised young gun named Charlie (Biggie Size) Frye was ready to trade in his moniker for one that would give him more respect.

All Biggie did was outplay Pro Bowl QB (Johnny) Carson Palmer on a blustery, raw day on the shores of the mighty Ohio River. In fact, his play was so good that it had the look

Man singing: "I got sunshine on a wintry day – Frye Guy, Frye Guy, talking bout Frye Guy. Frye Guy!"

Frye opened up the game with a ball possession drive featuring RB Reuben (Hurricane) Droughns. The drive ended with Frye Guy turning the corner to the end zone untouched for a 6-0 Cleveland lead. The drive was stunning in its efficiency, with Frye battling the swirling winter wind with precision passing and power running. While it is unclear whether he called any audibles on that drive, it is certain that he looked more mature than his years.

The Bengals answered with a quick no-huddle drive to tie the score at six. On at least two of the passes, Browns DBs had opportunities to pick the rock and take it to the south end zone. Based on the Browns defensive back technique, or lack thereof, the Bengals clawed their way back into a game they should have trailed by 2 touchdowns.

The Bengals and Browns flip flopped in the second and third quarters as the Browns' running game evaporated and Rudi (Ray Moore) Johnson rumbled for a buck sixty nine on the day. The Browns front seven played as if on roller skates as the Bengals O-line pushed them around. Rudi provided the Roller Derby moves, doing his best Raquel Welch impression, while Mr. Tonight Show looked more like Burt Henry than an NFL QB. Palmer had only 93 yards passing on the day, including 2 for 22 to Chad (The Dentist) Johnson.

When it was all said and done, the Bengals and Browns were tied at 20 with a little over two minutes remaining. At this point, the Look Man turned to Long Suffering Bengal Fan Dave (Sundance) Sundin and uttered the prophetic words, "The Zebras are getting ready to get into this one." The Ugly & Black drove down the field on a penalty aided drive, scoring a GW field goal as time expired.

Comically, head zebra Terry McAulay did not see Bengals Coach Marvin Lewis signal timeout with four ticks left. Only the alert timeout call by TJ (Ponytail) Houshmandzadeh allowed Cincy to avoid OT. Nice job, coach.

The Bengals have come of age, and O-line mates Bobbie Douglas, Eric Steinbach and Rich Braham (Cracker) pushed the Browns front seven around most of the day. Braham got cracked on one series, but only left for one play. "Coach said he would use me for pie crust if I didn't get back in there," said Braham.

On the positive side for Cleveland, CB Lee Bodden held the Dentist to two legitimate catches before getting concussed by S Brian (Nipsy) Russell late in the game. The hit also injured the Dentist, who didn't need laughing gas to see stars on the play. The Browns avoided having to take Bodden out with a timeout, but his subsequent (and controversial) holding calls iced the game for the Nati.

"He's a scrappy and tough player. We needed him," Russell said of Bodden. Teammate Daylon (Come and Me Wanna Go Home) McCutcheon complained, "You've got to let the players play. It's football. It's a contact sport. They let them [receivers] push off on every play."

The Dentist wouldn't give Bodden any credit for his overall game. "Obviously, they weren't going to allow me to catch the ball," he said. "The only way [for them at that time] to stop me is to hold or collision me before the ball gets there, and we got the calls."

Right.

Bears @ Da Burgh:

Monsters Inc. ambled into Blitzburgh looking to capitalize on the release of the new King Kong movie. Instead, Jerome (The Bus) Bettis ended up being the only monster at Ketchup Field, sending the Bears running for the turnstiles.

Bettis, who could hardly walk during the week, rumbled over the Bears to the tune of 100 yards on 16 carries in a second half blizzard. His best effort was a TD run on which he bussed over Bears uberstar Brian Urlacher. The Look Man has always felt Urlacher was overrated, but Bettis put the exclamation point on this argument.

The Bears made news early in the week for the \$50,000 fines issued to O-linemen Olin Kruetz and Fred (Barney) Miller for fighting. Look for Urlacher to be the next Bears player to be fined 50 grrr when he sees the film of being run over by the Bus and his teammates begin razzing him.

The absence of hard-hitting safety Mike Brown made the Bears defense look mediocre, and if their offense can't score 21 points, they will end up just like the 2000 version, which went 13-3 en route to a first round playoff TKO.

All of the Coach of the Year talk for Lovie (Thurston Howell III) Smith is legitimate. Lovie is looking to escape from the Island with a rookie QB, mediocre WRs, and undersized players. The Bears D-line is small, with DE's Wally Ogunleye and Alex (Haley) Brown at about 260. The Bears are good when they stuff the run, and pressure the QB, but even a miniscule lead puts them in trouble. Blitzburgh exposed them on Sunday, and the SheHawks were surely watching and salivating for the playoffs.

KC at Dallas:

If you missed this game, you missed one of the best of 2005. Not only did Drew (Big Boi) Bledsoe throw for 3 bills and 3 TDs, Bill (The Big Tuna) Parcells opened his December trick bag wide open. His Doomsday Light Defense got shredded and exposed by Larry (Grandmama) Johnson, who ran for 143 yards on the day. Parcells countered with flea flickers, reverses, and fourth and goal gambles.

KC countered with a strong running game and timely passing by Trent (Long) Green. Long Green went long to WR (Fast) Eddie Kennison on a broken coverage by the Dallas safety. The play looked like the game breaker until Doomsday Lite put the cuffs on Grandmama in the fourth quarter, setting up a major faux pas by head coach Dick Vermeil.

The Crying Man decided to get tricky with a pass play late in the fourth. He yanked FB Tony Richardson and TE Jason Dunn, inserting Grandmama to block for Green. With the Chiefs' best two blockers out of the game, Pokes' OLB Scott Fujita (Film) ran over Johnson and stripped sacked his former teammate. DT Marcus Spears recovered and rumbled deep into Baby Backs territory to set up a fourth and one pass TD to TE Dan (Rhinestone Cowboy) Campbell.

Just when it seemed that the Pokes had the game in hand, they decided to kick deep to Daunte Hall. The resultant field position set up a controversial completion to WR Sammi Parker, and a deep crossing route to Hall to put KC in position for a GW 41 yard FG. Larry (Stick a Fork in Him) Tynes shanked the kick and Dallas won.

The Look Man saw several bad omens in this one. First, the Pokes need to remove the grass route to TE Dan Campbell from their playbook. If any of you saw the Turkey Day game versus the Donkeys, you will remember that CB Champ Bailey picked off this pattern for a TD. On Sunday, CB Patrick Surtain(ment) nearly did the same thing.

Secondly, Doomsday Lite needs a free safety very badly. The Kennison TD and the last deep ball to set up the missed game tying FG were the result of ridiculous blown coverages. If these kinds of errors continue, the Pokes will not make the post season. After all, you can only go deep into your play book so often before it bites you in the rump like Mike Martz.

LAGNIAPPE

AC in the Winter?

Iggles WR Terrell Owens threw himself a birthday party in Atlantic City last week. The party featured several scantily clad women wearing No. 81 jerseys with a question mark where the team name resides. Attendees included Iggles players Jevon Kearse, Lito Shepherd and Boz Skaggs. Andy Reid and Donovan McNabb were invited but did not attend. "Coach and I decided to eat Campbell's Soup instead. My mom gets paid in soup instead of cash, so we were all set," said McNabb.

Owens also invited Baltimore LB Ray (Ray) Lewis and other NFL stars. No details on other attendees, but fellow Drew Rosenhaus client Chad Johnson did appear with his gold teeth.

The party was rumored to have cost over \$300,000, and there were questions regarding whether TO could afford it. He was set to earn base salaries of \$770,000, \$5.5 to \$8.5 million in his contract outyears beginning in 2006. He may have had dishpan hands if his credit card bounced.

Death, where is thy sting?

The Jynts won 23-20 over Philly on Sunday, but not without a stiff price tag. Both OT Luke Petitgout and Kareem McKenzie were hurt, as well as underrated MLB Antonio Pierce. The losses may severely hurt their chances of winning the NFC East, especially since QB Eli Manning has gone color blind. Eli is throwing picks at an alarming rate, and the defense is now the G-Men's best option for scoring.

Happy Draft Day, Mr. President:

The Aeronauticals and Cheeseheads' meaningless wins on Sunday hurt their pursuit of all world USC RB Reggie Bush. These teams could take a cue from the Niners and Slim Shadies, who have taken the gas pipe in order to get Bush.

This action sets up a comical Week 17 "Bush Bowl" between Frisco and Houston. Look for both teams to punt on third down in that one.

Political Satyr:

ABCTV has decided to revamp its pregame and halftime shows, recruiting non-athletes to voice their opinions. The move is similar to Bill Maher's *Politically Incorrect* TV show format. ABC Sports has also added former Bulls F Scottie Pippen as an analyst. Pippen's number 33 was retired last week in Chicago. "I want to thank you for all the cheers we've shared. I put you all in the top of my heart," said Pippen at the ceremony.

When asked about his new position with ABC Sports, Pippen said, "I want to thank ABC for this perpetuity. It allows me to flatulate myself on my foreskin." Pippen denied rumors that he is actually a wood nymph passing as a human being.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Contestant One: Jeff (Beanbag) Triplette – J-Ville at Indy

The ZOTW race heated up in Week 14 after J-Ville head coach Jack (Vanessa) Del Rio catapulted his challenge flag aggressively at a game official. The flag missed the Zebra by inches, prompting River to say, "Challenge that, ----!"

This latest altercation came a week after a halftime rant in C-Town, where his troops trailed rookie QB Charlie Frye and the Browns. "He was a little fired up," said QB David Garrard. "But I've seen him worse. He didn't break anything, but we did have to stop him from going after Referee Jeff Triplette. He said something about a beanbag."

Del Rio is making his bid for the NFL All Angry Team coached by Bill (Iron Chin) Cowher, with TO at WR, Jamal Lewis at RB, Jeff Garcia at QB, and Bettis at RB. The squad is said to have, no room for Hines (57) Ward, who is always smiling on the gridiron.

Ironically, it was Tony (Hume Cronyn) Dungy who should have been angry. Former Colts LB was issuing cheap shots at an astounding pace according to players. After issuing an elbow to a player's head out of bounds in Cleveland, Peterson was flagged for a late hit on Reggie Wayne. Peterson was also accused of leg twisting on a backup TE.

Beanbag Triplette let the game get totally out of control, then called several makeup flags on Indy. Only a gutsy, Red Cashion-esque third down completion to TE Dallas Clark allowed the Colts to preserve a 26-18 win.

Contestant Two: Terry McAulay – Browns at Bengals

After swallowing the whistle the entire game, Mr. Bottlegate calls:

- a reception to Chad Johnson (reversed by replay booth)
- defensive illegal contact 1 (first down)
- defensive illegal contact 2 (first down, FG range)

The Bengals' last drive was aided by two first downs via penalty, the last of which put them in surefire range for the win.

Contestant Three: Mike Carey – Detroit at Green Bay

Carey is the best in the business, but his call on a safety on Pack RB Samkon Gado was shock and awe bad. When Gado was trapped in the end zone, he threw the ball to the 2 yard line where it was recovered by Green Bay. Carey initially threw two flags: one for offensive holding in the end zone, and the other for being tackled in the endzone. The

Lions declined the holding for the sure safety on Gado, only to be challenged by Pack coach Mike Sherman.

Carey's ruling stated something about Gado being called for illegally grounding a pass attempt, and ruled that it was instead a fumble. Since the Lions had declined the holding, they were now ineligible for a two-point safety, which might have won the game. Later, the game was decided in OT when Lions DT Shaun Rogers retaliated by throwing Gado into the stands from the sidelines. The resultant personal foul call put the Pack in FG range, where they won the game.

Contestant Four: Pete Morelli (Mushroom) - KC at Dallas

The Mushroom Meister allowed a sideline catch by Sammi (Bird) Parker that set up the missed 41 yard FG. Parker had a knee down, but never gained possession until hitting the stripe. If the Pokes lost this one, this call would have been as bad as the one that got Phil Lockett demoted.

And the winner is: Mike Carey, who knows better. Mike, you are the Look Man Zebra of the Week.

THE LOOK AHEAD

Bengals at Lions

Lions Fans decide to show their displeasure with GM Matt Millen by declaring an orange-out this week. They will wear Bengals orange instead of Honolulu Blue. No word yet on whether they will chant Who Dey or purchase the new Bootsy Collins *Fear da Tiger* T-shirts.

For some reason there was no line on this one at the beginning of the week. Then former Bengal Dan (Big Daddy) Wilkinson apologized for calling Cincy a racist city and the line went to Cincy minus 9. The Bengals clinch the AFC North with a win and a Stillers loss. The Lions win a moral victory with a spread less than nine.

Pokes at Genocide Victims:

This game is really a battle for playoff life disguised as a vengeance rematch for Dallas' last second loss to Washington on Monday Night Football. Dallas goes to FedEx Field needing a win, and GV Coach Joe Gibbs will likely retire again if he loses.

The Look Man likes the Pokes in this one, but look for the Zebras to actively root for the Genocide Vix.

Chargers at Indy: (Game of the Week One)

The Chargers might have had the ultimate look ahead loss last week to Miami. The Chargers are one of the most physical defenses in the league, and they feel they are being overlooked. Last year in Indy, this matchup came down to a Vanderjagt GW FG.

Not sure who wins here, but look for a battle. More importantly is the potential for the Marty Rule even if the Colts prevail in Indy.

Stillers at Vikes: (Game of the Week Two)

The Stillers head to Minnesota to take on the Hornheads in a game that will likely decide the AFC and NFC wild cards. Run-stuffing Hornheads DT Kevin Williams returns to team with big Pat Williams in the middle, so the Stillers' Bus tires could get deflated. The

Vikes defense is on a roll, and many are calling them the Purple Pill Eaters because of all the heartburn they have caused offensive coordinators.

The Look Man picked the Vikes to represent the NFC at the beginning of the year. The Stillers may have been tenderized by a physical Bears game, and they don't have great stats in domes. Look for the Vikes to cover, if not win outright.

EPILOGUE

While many have cited parity as a panacea, The Look Man wonders if it doesn't water down the product. If you segregated the NFL into bad, mediocre, good and great teams, you might have only 5 teams in the top two categories. Five out of thirty two is not a good ratio. Worse yet, many of the teams in the bad category have lost a boatload of games by seven or less points. With games this tight, the officiating can have a dramatic effect on the playoffs. Keep an eye on those zebras as we head into the stretch run.

Peace and goodwill to all men.

The Look Man