

## **The Look Man Report 2006**

### **Week 6: Winless No More**

*"I once played poker with tarot cards. I got a full house, and four people died." - Steven Wright, comedian*

#### **OPENING**

Those of you who weren't doubled over with laughter at the Look Man's picks last week had an opportunity to make some real caish. Not only did the Look Man go 3-1 in the Look Ahead segment, he nearly got a coaching job with the AZ Deadbirds after head coach Denny (Sherman Klump) Green went Jim Mora at the postgame press conference.

All of the winless teams won in Week Six except Oakland, which remains In Search Of the elusive first W. Point Spread Week also prevailed, as the underdogs covered the preponderance of the ridiculous spreads. Parity, which had taken a holiday early, came back to fruition, making this NFL season a race to mediocrity.

One unusual factoid deals with the NFC's dominance in interconference play. Since 1997, the AFC has dominated the NFC, including last season's near whitewash. The AFC has turned that dominance into hardware, capturing the majority of Lombardi trophies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

But the NFC has a 13-8 record in interconference play in 2006, and threatens to take the series for the first time since 1995. During this period the old AFL has won eight with two ties. There are six interconference matchups in Week Seven, including the Black Cats at Toothless Tiggers, Blitzburgh at Atlanta, and Genocide Victims at Ponies. The Look Man sees the AFC turning the tide this week, but favors the NFC for the balance of the year largely because of the matchups.

The AFC South plays the NFC Least, while the weak AFC East plays the mediocre NFC Norse. The better matchups feature the AFC Asgard division against the NFC Souse. Blitzburgh, Cincy, B-More and Cleveland ought to make mincemeat out of their southern foes, while the AFC West and NFC West matchups promise to be close. AFC Souse teams Jacksonville and Indy's dominance over the NFC Least may be equalized by the struggling Flaming Thumbtacks and stumbling Houston Slim Shadies.

Ironically, the AFC features the stronger teams by far in 2006. The Bears exposure on MNF served to show that even the class of the conference will be no match for the AFC's best. The Look Man can easily identify five teams in the AFC that would beat the Bears, while the NFC's best would likely struggle. No other dominant team has emerged in the NFC through Week Seven.

So it looks like another season on the Island of Misfit Teams for the NFC, as the likely Super Bowl champ will be an old-AFL squad. Without further NFC bashing, the Week in Review:

## **WEEK IN REVIEW:**

### *Bengals at Corn Kings:*

The Nati looked like they were ready for two bye weeks in a row after allowing the previously winless Tampa team to slap them in the whiskers. Tampa's vaunted Cover Two put (Johnny) Carson Palmer and the Tiggers offense back on mothballs, giving up only thirteen points to the vaunted Bengal-Os. Seven of those points came courtesy of a fantastic TD catch by TJ (Ponytail) Houshmazooli, who beat Ronde Barber with a pylon pirouette on a deep bomb.

The real action came when the Zebras got into the affair with a roughing the passer call on a Justin (Dr. Zachary) Smith sack. Smith slammed Tampa QB Bruce (The New Polish Rifle) Gradkowski's dome into the turf, causing the rock to pop out in the process. Zebra Mike (Dancin' with the Stars) Carey promptly threw his laundry, giving the Corn Kings a first down in the red zone.

Polish Rifle version 2.0 then fired a 4<sup>th</sup> down TD pass to WR Michael Clayton (Powell), who made a nifty stretch for the imaginary line. The Zebras called it incomplete at first, but the replay boys upstairs begged to differ. After further review, Carey and Crew got it right, and the Bengals went home ticked.

"I don't know. I guess you have to cuddle him to the ground," said Bengals coach Marvin Lewis, when asked about the roughing penalty. "Will and Penny were out with the Robot when Dr. Smith made his play. Looks like we are going to have to go back to the Jupiter Two if we plan to win any more games." Smith chimed in with, "Oh, the pain. The pain."

The Ugly & Black had to replace OT Levi (Strauss) Jones in the first quarter due to injury which NBC commentator Al Michaels would call 'a knee'." Surprise starting center Eric (John) Steinbach moved out to tackle as the Bengals O-line has been shuffled more often than a Vegas blackjack deck. The result was a missing run game and serious heat on Mr. Tonight Show. The other result was a lot of laughter for a team that retained a blue jean manufacturer over the more durable Steinbach.

Perhaps more important was the hit that Tampa's safety put on Rudi (Ray Moore) Johnson in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Rudi got up uncertainly, and finished with a paltry 53 rushing yards on the day. Without the threat of play action, the Cover Two covered four, and Marvin is looking for answers.

### *Kansas City at Blitzburgh:*

Uber-back Larry (Grandmama) Johnson was pretty tentative after his vicious neck injury in Week Five. As a result, backup QB Damon (The Omen III) Huard returned to form, and the Stillers pounded the Baby Backs at Ketchup Field.

The Stillers were able to mount the only L in the Look Man's Week Six resume, largely due to the fact that KC gave up. The Baby Backs had no taste for the hard hitting issued by the ticked off Stillers, and the score was indicative.

(Big) Ben Roethlisberger finally figured out how not to turn the ball over, and the early Stillers lead allowed them to do what they do: run downhill and pin their ears back on defense. The Stillers installed big back Najeh (Dump Truck) Davenport, who ripped off an early 48 yard run. Once they sent notice that they were shooting their regular, KC

simply folded to avoid getting Huard knocked out before starter Trent Green is able to feed himself again.

The Stillers served notice that they are not done yet, and climbed to 2-3. They face the ATL Dirty Birds on the road this week in what should be their return to .500 ball.

#### Chicago at Arizona – MNF:

Many fans woke up on Tuesday wondering if their local news had a misprint. There is no way that the Deadbirds could have blown a 20-0 halftime lead and lost. Unless Denny Green is the head coach is the right answer.

The Look Man predicted that the 'birds would rue the day that they led by only 20 after two turnovers deep in Bears territory. The rule of thumb is that if you have less than 9 points off two turnovers, you are probably in trouble. You don't have to score a TD on every turnover, but if you don't make a team pay dearly for not protecting the rock, then you increase the likelihood of a loss.

Denny Green's ultra-conservative 2<sup>nd</sup> half game plan proved that he is an African American version of Marty Schottenheimer. When you play not to lose, that is exactly what happens. Only Denny could allow LB Brian Urlacher to rack up 19 tackles in a single game and cement his status as the best mediocre LB in Hawaii in mid-February.

There are those who believe that Green purposely went postal in order to avoid answering tough questions from the press. He has been on the hot seat in Phoenix for a while, and instead of having to defend specific coaching errors, he had us all talking about his meltdown. Pretty savvy for a guy who earned the letter 'D' back in his Christian name after holding the Bears to three offensive points. Of course, the Deadbirds need to teach the O-line how to tackle, because they gave up turnovers like a Jon Pickna bakery.

"The Bears are what we thought they were," said Klump, his voice raising. "We played them in preseason. Who the hell picks a third game in preseason like it's (expletive)? We played them in the third game. Everybody played three quarters. The Bears are who we thought they were. That's why we took the damn field. If you want to crown them, just crown their asses. They are who we thought they were, and we let them off the hook!"

On the positive side, the Deadbirds exposed the Chicago Bears for what they were: a decent defense that hadn't really played anyone. The other side of the coin is that Klump didn't bother to huddle up the offensive line or special teams to warn them that the Bears would not go away easily. The Look Man believes he should be summarily terminated instead of throwing his O-Coordinator under the bus - - - again.

#### **LAGNIAPPE**

##### Mora! Mora! Mora!

Tirades aren't always a bad thing. Sometimes they lead to a turnaround. Jynt's head coach Jim Fassel woke his team up with his declaration that he was "pushing all of his chips to the center of the table" a few years back. Herm Edwards had a memorable rant involving "HELLO! That's why you play the games!" And who can forget Jim Mora's "PLAYOFFS???! PLAYOFFS???!!" take that resulted in his retirement in Indy?

While the NFL is not college ball, and is largely dependent upon steady and consistent play as opposed to emotion, the Look Man is reminded of MLB's Tommy Lasorda. In May 1978, after the perennially hapless Cubs' Dave Kingman belted three taters to beat the Dodgers, Lasorda was asked for his opinion of Kingman.

"What the (expletive) do you think is my opinion? . . . (Expletive), he beat us with three (expletive) home runs? What the (expletive) do you mean, 'What is my opinion of his performance? (Expletive), he hit three home runs! (Expletive!)"

The Dodgers went on to the Fall Classic after that meltdown, and Lasorda is now doing MLB commercials featuring Cubs Fan in a tree.

#### Memory:

Chicago, Indy and Oakland are both still in the running to make NFL history. Though it is only a matter of time before someone punks the Bears, Indy has acquired DT Anthony (Booger) McFarland via a trade. Booger fell into disfavor with Jon (Chucky) Gruden in Tampa, and he is now reunited with former Corn Kings head coach Tony (Hume Cronyn) Dungy. Hume is happy to have the run-stuffing Rhinoloth Pirate after DT Corey Simon failed to stay healthy. Of course the Ponies never said, "Simon says stay healthy."

The Grayders will ultimately win a game and avoid the ignominy of the '76 Tampa team coached by John McKay. When queried about offense, McKay replied dryly, "I'm all for it." The Grayders D looked good in a tough road game at Investigation Field, holding the Brownco's to only thirteen points. On offense, they shot themselves in the foot repeatedly with false starts.

#### Celebrity NFL Fan of the Week:

Deadbirds owner Bill Bidwill invited QB Matt (Richard the)Leinart's SoCal posse to his private box for MNF. Actor Ashton Kutcher's presence next to the buttoned Bidwill made for a surreal scene, but maybe he was just telling Bill the Cardinals won't be getting punk'd anymore if he would just fire Denny Green. No word on the whereabouts of Demi Moore on Monday night.



*Why wasn't I invited?*

#### Dean (Smith) Spanos?

Speaking of Marty, is he trying to save LaDanian (the New LT) Tomlinson for the playoffs or just being stupid by playing Michael Turner? After seeing NLT almost reveal his secret true identity by vaulting over his 6'7" OT for a TD last week, you have to wonder. He made Sweetness look gravity challenged.

This guy is superman, and Marty is turning him into an average player. Like the old joke, "who is the only guy who held Jordan to ten points per game," Marty is absolutely killing a great Bolts team with his coaching.

## **ZEBRA OF THE WEEK**

### *KC at Blitzburgh: Zebra Scott (Seth) Green*

The questionable call came courtesy of RB Larry (Grandmama) Johnson, who tackled Troy Polamalu by his wig, nearly setting off WWII on the sidelines. The NFL ruled that hair tackles are indeed legal two years ago, when Ricky Williams' locks began to threaten to trip other players with his dreadlocks. In Grandmama's defense, it was the only tackle he had, but he didn't have to continue to style Troy's 'do after the tackle.

### *Chicago at Arizona: Zebra Jerome (Bogomil) Boger*

Bogomil called a decent game but allowed the clock to stop several times prior to the last five minutes of both halves. These clock stoppages can allow the crucial seconds needed to mount a John Elway style comeback.

The rules clearly indicate that the clock will run on out-of-bounds runs and incomplete passes until the last five minutes of each half. Penalties, temporary stoppages to set the ball, timeouts and the two minute warning are the only legitimate clock stoppers.

Knowing the rules, coaches typically do not pass during the last five minutes if they are up by a comfortable margin. When they do, it often catches the defense by surprise, resulting in a big play or a first down that eliminates comeback chances. Running the football forces the opposing coach to use defensive timeouts that he would like to preserve for his offense in order to gain additional scoring opportunities.

Arizona actually benefited from Bogomil's error, and they got into position to win it in regulation. Unfortunately, Neil (C)rackers blew a GW FG for the second consecutive week, and he is now on thin ice in the AZ desert.

### *Seattle at St. Louise: Zebra Ed (The Hulk) Hochuli*

The Mouflons were in position to win the game after that featured an incredible tip catch and run by Torry (Big Game) Holt. When the Shehawks got a first down at the St. Louis 39 with six seconds left and no timeouts, they were called for lining up with only five men on the line. St. Louis coach Scott Linnehan told the linesman, who threw the hanky, setting off a big time celebration by the Lambs.

Unfortunately, The Hulk correctly interpreted that the illegal formation call does not require a ten second runoff like a false start. The Shehawks kicked a GW 54 yard FG, plunging Linnehan into despair and making the Look Man wonder why an offensive penalty could ever be rewarded with an additional play.

### *Bengals at Corn Kings - Zebra Mike (Dancin' with the Stars) Carey*

There were two key roughing-the-passer calls against DE Robert (Guillotine) Geathers and Justin Wilson that were questionable, but Carey allowed so many other questionable spots and other calls that it was a wash.

The game featured the dreaded 'parabola flags' and bad spots on third down plays. You know when the flags fly in a parabolic arc that someone is going to go home unhappy.

Carey actually stepped up and overruled some questionable calls, but the Nati is in despair and soon to be in hot water with the league office for questioning those calls.

Guillotine issued a nasty facemask on the new Polish Rifle, but it was at least called. When taken in context with the decapitation of Trent Green and the other roughing call on the rookie QB, Guillotine can expect additional league scrutiny in the future.

The game hinged on a bad incomplete pass call for a late TD. The Corn Kings had one challenge remaining after winning an early one and losing a later challenge. Fortunately, the booth guys forced the review since the play clock was under 2:00.

The game also featured a hilarious flinch by the umpire, who began to call a TD on a reception, then pretended to fix his ball cap. The Look Man is not sure whether there are rules regarding which zebra calls the TD. It may be based upon the position of the back judge, side judge or head linesman, but this one looked pretty questionable.

Despite the right call being made at crunch time, this game had a herky-jerky feel that is antithetical to offense. Mike Carey, you are the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week**.

### **THE LOOK AHEAD:**

Things are looking up for the Look Ahead segment. Week Seven features a few nice opportunities for revenue, as follows:

#### Denver at Cleveland (+4.5):

Former Browns Kenard (kd) Lang, Gerard Warren, Ebenezer Ekuban, Mike (Halloween) Myers and Quincy Morgan return to the team that sent them packing. Denver head coach Mike (The Rat) Shanahan fortified his squad with Cleveland castoffs, leading Browns Fan to call them the Denver Browncos. That, and the fact that 4-1 Denver has scored only 12 more points than Oakland, at 0-5. The stench coming from their offense has been masked by defensive deodorant.

The Donkey D has allowed only one TD in 2006, and they are facing a rested ex-Donkey RB Reuben (Sandwich) Droughns. Sandwich has a bum shoulder from the Nati collision with David (Jackson) Pollack which put Pollack back in the painting business. He is now healthy and excited about facing his former mates. "Those guys are going to pin their ears back and be a little more excited to play against us," said Droughns. "I'm very excited to play against my former team. And I am not even a first round bust."

Look for Cleveland to expose the heralded Browncos defense, which is predicated on speed. Denver tries to force offensive plays to the middle, then drill you with safeties John Lynch (Mob) and Nick Ferguson. On offense, they are vulnerable if Jake (the Fake) Plummer cannot roll outside the tackle box, where his accuracy increases.

The Browns employ misdirection to take advantage of the over pursuit, and use TE Kellen Winslow Jr. in the middle. Jake the Fake struggles in the pocket against the healthy Cleveland secondary, and The Drive is avenged in Cleveland. Browns, baby, Browns.

#### Carolina at Cincy(-3):

If the Toothless Tiggers thought the Tampa Cover Two was tough, wait until they go up against the Black Cats of Carolina. It's Panthers vs. Tigers in this matchup and the best

may be DE Julius (Cayenne) Peppers. This guy is hotter than a two dollar shotgun, and he lines up on Mr. Tonight Show's blind side.

Cincy has begun to use 2<sup>nd</sup> round CB Jonathan Joseph in the nickel, hoping to phase out incumbent starter and frequent breakfast side dish Tory (Toast) James. With possession WR Keyshawn Johnson, number three WR Drew Carter, and speedster Steve (Jacob Jingleheimer) Smith coming to town, they had better do something.

Other keys to watch:

- Keyshawn is related to Chad (The Dentist) Johnson and Jacob Jingleheimer and Chad played together in junior college. There will be plenty of trash talking early, but more after the Dentist gets drilled.
- With WR Chris Henry suspended, injured WR Kelley (Secret Squirrel) Washington may be replaced by Chris (PUP) Perry. Perry has been mysteriously injured for most of the time since being picked in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round. Marvin Lewis hopes to surprise the Black Cats with a third down package featuring Perry and his band mates from Journey.

The Dentist is getting frustrated with his role in 2006. Until a 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 51 yarder in Tampa, his longest catch was 18 yards. The Dentist wants to go deep more often, but Marvin doesn't share his view. "That's what we did before, all the time," Johnson said. "Carson didn't care what defensive back or what safety was over the top. For what? Care for what? Just go make the play anyway."

"No, I don't necessarily agree, because Chad has a very tainted view of things all the time," said Lewis. "Greed is good. I think we would all like to make sure we continue to be aggressive, and I think that's all he's speaking to. But we're not going to be careless or foolish. We're not going to star in The Geisha Boy again, if that's what you're asking."

"How am I supposed to continue doing my commercials if I don't get the ball?" replied Johnson. "That ESPN spot on end zone celebrations has become ridiculous. I don't care if Carson has to reinjure the knee, just get me the ball or I will turn into TO."

The Bengals don't have enough to beat the resurgent Panthers at Pall Bearer. Carolina narrowly missed the postseason in 2005 by losing games like this one, so don't look for them to sneak a peak ahead to Dallas. Carolina covers and wins outright.

#### Pittsburgh at Atlanta (+2.5)

The Dirty Bird O-line is smarting after losing Kyle Fornan and Matt Lehr to injury and suspension. Their redzone scoring has been horrible, and they face matchup issues with the Stillers' speed. Mike (Ron Mexico) Vick could get punished if he runs the option, and he knows it.

Look for the Stillers offense to stay on a roll against a dinged up ATL defensive line. Stillers cover and win against a badly coached ATL squad. Afterwards Jim Mora Jr. screams, "They were who we thought they were!" before storming out of the pressroom.

Minnesota at Seattle (-6.5):

The Swedes have struggled to learn Brad Childress' new playbook, and are among the league's lowest scoring offenses. Their defense, however, has been very opportunistic. The Shehawks escaped with a W last week against their arch rival in the Arch City of St. Louise.

Don't look for them to repeat against the stiff Wicinga D. The Purple Helmet Wearers pound the Shaun Alexander-less Shehawks in a possible playoff preview in Coffeetown.

Jynts at Dallas (-3) – MNF:

The Jynts invade Big D on Monday night, looking to establish themselves as a player in the NFC Least. The retirement talk by RB Tiki (Torch) Barber is a thinly veiled scheme to get the G-Men to play better. Based on previous tilts with the Pokes, no additional motivation will be necessary for this prime time game.

The Jynts will try to turn Bledsoe into Statue Man with a hard edge rush by DEs Osi Umenyiora and Michael Strahan. Bledsoe will carve a defense up given time, but has looked horrible when he is pressured. Or if he has to pronounce Osi's last name, which sounds more like a female affliction than an NFL sack artist.

Roy (Rogers) Williams has not had a good year, and as a result, Doomsday Lite has struggled this season against the pass. The Pokes released S Marcus Coleman this week, so perhaps bullet magnet Keith Davis will see more action in the middle. Regardless, the Pokes had better be stronger up the gut if they want to earn the stars on their helmets.

Unless they can get pressure up the gut on the Dallas O-line, Bledsoe and Company will pick them apart. Look for TE Jason Witten's unveiling party on Monday night as the Pokes take control of the division.

## **EPILOGUE**

Parity is back as the winless teams post their first W. The Grayders are the exception, but they do look better than they have. Unfortunately, the injury to Huggy Bear could doom their season. RB LaMont Jordan needs to be benched for his running out of bounds and fumbling with the ball in the wrong hand moves.

The big, road grading offensive lines in the NFL has struggled in 2006. The Deadbirds failed to protect Leinart against a quick Bears front seven, and the Browns cannot even run an effective screen because of their slow line. Meanwhile, Denver posts a 1,000 yard rusher with the smallest linemen in the league.

The same cannot be said for wideouts. The day of the smallish wide receiver is over, as big, tough guys like Anquan Bolden become the norm. With defenses using speed on the corners and forcing plays to the middle, the big WR creates Yards After Catch. YAC is back, baby, so if your name ain't Steve (Jacob Jingleheimer ) Smith, you need to sit yowass down.

Peace,

The Look Man