

The Look Man Report 2006 **Week XV: ESPitN**

That's the number one thing in the National Football League -- you don't spit in another grown man's face. Hopefully, the NFL can go back and watch the film ... He just hauled off and spit in my face." – ATL CB DeAngelo Hall about Dallas WR Terrell Owens

OPENING

Showdown Week came and went in the 2006 NFL season with mixed results. Division leaders Baltimore, Dallas, Indy, San Diego, Chicago, and New England all answered the challenge by exercising their will on opponents. The Iggles, Jets, Niners, Stillers, and Denver kept their playoff hopes alive with quality wins in Week 15. Cincy, J-Ville, Kansas City and Atlanta lost games that they really needed in order to go Jesse Jackson until playoff time. Each now faces an uphill climb as the playoff hourglass slowly empties.

Which leads us to Week 16, aka "Gut Check Week." When teams get his deep into the season, everyone is nicked up, in pain, and worn out. Week 16 is the week that separates the wheat from the playoff chaff. Teams that can man-up and play consecutive competitive games against solid opponents deserve to make the playoffs. Dallas and San Diego come to mind here.

Teams that win numerous consecutive games and then lose during this stretch typically suffer from bad coaching. It doesn't take much to get the psyche of a team going when the players smell playoff checks and Pro Bowl accolades. Now is not the time to implement meaningless discipline for fairly minor transgressions. Now is the time to fortify your team by giving guys practice time off to heal while game planning for the long haul. Reinforce the run game. Refine your play calling. Practice special teams plays that might pull out a game for you. Simplify and dominate. In other words, don't turn into Marvin Lewis if you can avoid it.

If NFL 2006 was a horse race, it would be the Kentucky Derby. The race for the postseason tournament remains a wide open affair in which any team can get hot and steal the crown. If Blitzburgh can win with Big Ben posting a QB rating under 50, then anyone can grab the Lombardi. And the Look Man does mean anyone.

Without further metaphors, the Week in Review.

WEEK IN REVIEW

Dallas (38) at Atlanta (28) Saturday Night NFLN:

The Pokes rode into the ATL with bad intentions as both teams badly needed a win after tough Week 14 losses. The Dirty Birds needed it a lot more than the Pokes, especially after head coach Jim Mora told a Seattle radio station that he would walk from his current post if the UW job became available. Owner Arthur Blank(man) and QB Mike (Ron Mexico) Vick didn't exactly care for that comment, and Mora was on the hot seat.

The Pokes struggled, but were able to exploit CB DeAngelo Hall (of Shame) and the rest of the Dirty Bird secondary. Terrell Owens and Terry (She) Glenn ripped off yardage in chunks, while TE Jason Witten kept moving the chains. Doomsday Lite chipped in some nasty hits in a very physical contest.

The Dirty Birds offense played well for three quarters, with receivers catching balls and Vick scampering around and finishing drives. When push came to shove, the ATL allowed backup RB Marion (Predator) Barber to run over, around and through them for a game clinching TD.

Barber is one ugly thirteen letter expletive when he has the rock in his claws, and one has to wonder why he hasn't replaced Julius (Dr. J) Jones already. Perhaps the first half fumble he caused when he knocked the ball from Tony Romo's grasp on a blitz pickup is the answer. Predator looks as if he hasn't yet mastered the art of pass blocking and Dallas cannot afford to have Ribs King sauced up in the backfield.

So Dallas won the critical middle of a three game torture test. They won the right to play the Iggles in Big D Christmas Eve after going 2-0 against the Jynts and Falcons on the road. How 'bout dem Cowpokes?



"I totally don't know what a Lombardi is, but I wont it..."

Cleveland (17) at Baltimore (27):

The Browns have an old new rival in the AFC Asgard, as Cleveland version 1.1 played version 2.0. The Dumpster Ducks survived the first quarter loss of starting QB Steve (Air) McNair to pound the Browns and win the division courtesy of a Nati loss on MNF.

Things looked great early as Browns LB Andra Davis knocked QB Steve (Air) McNair out by stepping on his throwing hand. Enter Kyle Boller (Hat), a Cleveland favorite who has lost regularly to the Browns. After turning the ball over three times, it looked like Boller Hat was making his usual fashion statement.

The Browns stole defeat from the jaws of victory when QB Derek (Bigfoot) Anderson threw two picks and nearly put WR Joe (Sid) Jurevicius in the hospital in the hospital on another throw. Bigfoot threw a ball into safety Ed Reed's wheelhouse, and Sid got ear-holed trying to

catch it. After that, WR Braylon Edwards refused to go over the middle, even when the pattern dictated it. The Ducks gobbled up the pick in the confusion.

Two good things came out of this loss. Andra Davis' concussion forced the Browns to install LB Leon Williams, who had a great game. The reshuffled defense also included special team LBs Chaun Thompson and Mason (J)Unck, who responded by tenderizing Baltimore with punishing hits. Williams stripped RB Jamal (Bam Bam) Lewis and generally caused mayhem in pass coverage. All in all, his play will result in the Browns realizing that Davis stinks and that his \$6 million deal is money up a pig's rectum.

The second positive was the play of Bigfoot. While even Pro Bowl QBs typically score ratings in the mid-sixties against the Baltimore defense, Bigfoot posted an 85.5 rating despite five sacks and several wicked hits. The sack he took from LB Bart (Simpson) Scott should've resulted in a penalty, but he returned and could have led the Browns to a win with even mediocre play calling. Cleveland Fan hopes that Charlie Frye has taken his last snap as a starter even if the front office won't admit it.

Bengals (16) at Ponies (34) (MNF):

When the 2006 NFL schedule was announced, this game had all the earmarks of one of the best of the season. Not only did they play a 45-38 thriller in 2005, but the Ugly & Black wanted to serve notice that there is a new power in the AFC. Well, the King is dead. Long live the King.

The game should have been a great one, but the Nati was badly out-coached. The list of transgressions may begin with Marvin Lewis and Chuck Bresnahan's failure to pressure Peyton (Madison Avenue) Manning. Once Manning got comfortable, he and (Starvin) Marvin Harrison torched the Bengals in a game that wasn't nearly as close as the final score indicated.

The etymology of the name "Marvin" supposedly comes from an Old English derivative meaning "famous friend." It is likely a variation of the Welsh name Merfyn, a ninth century monarch. In the case of this game, it is the Tale of Two Marvins.

Marvin Harrison emerged from a month long slump to catch three TDs and embarrass the Nati secondary. He lived up to his well deserved fame in a battle with WR Chad (Ocho Cinco) Johnson, who missed most of the 3rd quarter due to too many Sausage McMuffins. Ocho Cinco had to get IV fluids in a game where he got drilled by: (1) a ball to the gonads causing a drop and a replay overturn, (2) by backup safety Matt Giordano('s Pizza), and (3) by the league uniform police for wearing quite possibly the ugliest shoes ever in warm-ups.

The other Marvin, coach Lewis, imploded spectacularly on the night. He benched CB Deltha (Superfly) O'Neal as a continuing disciplinary action for a DUI. The 2nd best WR in the league carved the overrated defense for 3 TDs. Lewis called a timeout following a 21-yard completion to Ocho Cinco that was initially ruled a catch. The timeout gave Indy coach Tony (Hume Cronyn) Dungy time to review and challenge the call.

Marvin Lewis then completed the trifecta, nearly getting (Johnny) Carson Palmer killed by calling a Hail Mary despite having both of his starting offensive tackles on the bench. With (Big) Willie Anderson and Levi Jones out, down only 17-10 on your own 47-yard line why call timeout at 0:02 in the half and place your All Star QB in a vulnerable

position? Mr. Tonight Show injured his throwing shoulder on the play when DE Robert (Johnny) Mathis blindsided him.

"I was humming *Sleigh Ride* on that play, because it was truly a gift," said Mathis. "It was certainly lovely weather for some sack time together with the King of Late Night, don't you think?"

Marvin compounded a horrible game plan with the injury to Palmer. WR TJ (Championship) Houshmazooli spent the night on the side of a milk carton. Championship nearly beat B-More, Cleveland, and San Diego single-handedly, but he caught few balls in the RCA Dome. Instead, the game plan focused upon Ocho Stinko, who ran out of gas and had to get fluids.

"Normally he gets them at halftime," said Lewis on Wednesday. "They chose not to give him an IV at halftime this time. Again, we make sure we do that when the timing is better. I think we might have to use the orange drink IV with the Extra Value Meals. It tastes pretty good, but the urinals are a mess afterwards." Ocho's dehydration was especially ignominious in light of the video that aired Monday in which ESPN crews followed Ocho to every fast food joint in town.

ESPN analysts decried the fact that the Bengals ran too much in order to take advantage of the porous Indy run defense. The Look Man disagrees. The Bengals should have run even more, but they should have set it up with more deep balls early on. The one deep ball to WR Chris Henry was nearly complete, and throwing deep 2-3 times early on forces the LBs and secondary to drop out of the middle, opening up the running game. More importantly, the Bengals need to dump that idiotic pitch-sweep that doesn't really maximize Rudi Johnson's talents. That play serves only to get Rudi concussed and disappear from the gameplan altogether.

As bad as the Bengals were on Monday, if they beat Denver, the Flaming Thumbtacks beat or tie the Bisons, and either the Aeronauticals or J-Squares lose, Cincinnati clinches a Wild Card. If Marvin Lewis and Chuck Bresnahan repeat their coaching prowess from Monday night, it will be another season on the Island of Misfit Teams for the talented Bengals.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

The Zebra of the Week award had numerous possible contestants. The list included the following:

Bolts at Baby Backs: Zebra Jeff (Beanbag) Triplette made several favorable calls for the visitors, and then advised KC Coach Herm Edwards not to challenge them. For some reason, the zebras now caucus on questionable calls, and then tell coaches the reasons why the challenge will not overturn the calls. It may help the zebra's postgame grades by the league office, but it undermines the review process.

The Look Man would advise coaches to challenge bad calls early and often, then drop throw in the middle of the field if the zebras don't straighten up. It might result in fines, but at least your team knows you aren't afraid to go to the mattresses on their behalf.

Pokes at Dirty Birds: Zebra Jerome Boger(mil) went straight outta Beverly Hills Cop in this one, allowing Pokes O-linemen to tackle at will. He also missed TO spitting in the

face of a defensive back, allowed Boys S Roy (Rogers) Williams to brand defenseless receivers, and had to do his Mills Lane impression when the players tussled in response.

Possibly the worst call was after Atlanta score a TD to make it 17 all. Vick threw a sweet pass to FB Justin (Andy) Griffith, who took the rock to Mayberry. After congratulating each other on the sidelines, the zebras took away the score for an illegal formation. The call was correct, but no flag was thrown until nearly a minute after the play. The PAT team was set to kick and the scoreboard indicated the TD. Despite the fact that Atlanta scored again on the next play, it was a horrible precedent. At least until the next day when the something similar happened in New Orleans.

The league wanted America's Team to win this one in order to shore up mediocre NFC postseason matchups, but this was ridiculous. Atlanta went 11 on 18 and nearly won the game, but the offensive holding wore down their undersized defense.

Browns at Dumpster Ducks: Zebra Terry (Bottlegate) McAulay still holds a grudge against Cleveland, but this bordered on ridiculous. Bottlegate allowed LB Bart Scott to drill the Browns QB to the ground in what is typically called roughing. Further Ed Reed went helmet-to-helmet without a hankie, the Browns recovered two fumbles that were ruled Down by Contact, and the first down ball spots were "creative."

Genocide Victims at Boy Scouts: Zebra Walt Coleman (Lantern) didn't allow the Boy Scouts any offensive rhythm while allowing the Genocide Victims to hold on offense. There was also a bizarre situation where Brees threw the ball after running beyond the line of scrimmage.

Coleman's crew failed to throw a flag until after Joe Gibbs challenged the call. The Black and White Lantern then shed light on the play by throwing a flag 40 seconds after the play was whistled dead, then giving Gibbs back his challenge flag.

Bengals at Indy (MNF): Zebra Gene Steratore (means "throws a lot of linen" in Sicilian) threatened to turn this one into a virtual flag fest, with numerous calls early and often. If you see Steratore doing your team's game, be prepared for the hankies to fly. He and his crew lead the league in penalties called, and he takes an inordinate amount of time on replay.

The calls this season have been awful, but this recent syndrome of throwing flags well after the play is maddening. The Look Man doesn't understand how this can be allowed except that Commissioner Roger (Rabbit) Goodell is handing out fines like candy at Christmas. The Look Man guesses you have to pay attention in the NFL, because you can't afford Free Speech.

Congratulations Lt. Bogomil. You are the Look Man **Zebra of the Week!** You single-handedly knocked the dangerous Dirty Birds out and guaranteed a high seed for the Pokes. Before you go patting yourself on the back, you better read the fine print. In Doomsday Lite's last eight quarters: nine TD passes, 70 points, 624 passing yards allowed. Good luck with that in the postseason.

THE LOOK AHEAD:

The Bengals head to Denver to take on the Donkeys and rookie QB Jay (The Knife) Cutler in a must-win for both teams. New Orleans backed into the playoffs with a loss to

the Genocide Victims, but they now face a desperate Jynts squad in the Meadowlands. Baltimore at Blitzburgh, Philly at Dallas and the Jets at Miami round out Gut Check Week with its distinctive playoff implications. All in all, the NFL is carrying a full slate of games on Christmas Eve, with Thursday, Saturday and a doubleheader on Monday if you need it.

For 7-7 teams in the AFC, every remaining game is a must-win. The corollary in the NFC is that 8-8 could still be great with the right combination of wins and losses. Ironically, the NFC Least has turned competitive with Dallas, the Jynts and Iggles all sniffing the postseason. Frisco could actually win the NFC West division after sweeping defending conference champion Seattle. Carolina and Atlanta still have a glimmer of hope in the NFC Souse, but it's fading faster than Kevin Federline's career. Let's just hope that the team wives are not spotted going commando with Paris Hilton.

Bungals at Donkeys (-3.0):

CBs Tory James and Deltha (Superfly) O'Neal return to The Mile High City with the hope of knocking the Donkeys out of the playoff hunt. Both hold a sustained grudge against coach Mike (The Rat) Shanahan, whose installation of rookie QB Jay (The Knife) Cutler has begun to yield positive results.

Meanwhile, coach Marvin Lewis must deal with injuries to both offensive tackles as Andrew Whitworth and Stacey Andrews step up. Both rookies got abused in Indy last Monday night, and (Johnny) Carson Palmer has a banged up shoulder to show for it. The Bengals claim that Carson's shoulder is fine, but this is the same team that claims a "bone bruise" can cause players to miss an entire season.

The Look Man likes the Ugly & Black to win this one, but it's more hunch than logic. The Bengals are much better than their performance in Indy, and they should be able to beat the zebras and the Donkeys at Investigation Field. Of course, this is contingent upon Marvin avoiding more stupid errors against The Rat, and that is far from a sure thing. Bungles, baby, Bungles.

Expensive Corn Kings at Browns (-3.0):

Jon (Chucky) Gruden reversed field and installed QB Tim (Wicker) Rattay last week over The New Polish Rifle. The result was that the Yucks nearly knocked off da Bears at Tommyknocker Field. Chucky has now decided to ride the hot rocking chair in C-Town as the Corn Kings attempt to twin their first game ever when the temp is below 40F. Of course, the Midwest is expecting an unseasonably warm winter.

Coach Marvin Crennel notified the media that Derek (Bigfoot) Anderson will be starting for the injured Charlie Frye this Sunday. The sad part is that Crennel is attempting to avoid a QB controversy. Bigfoot is twice the QB that Frye is, but nothing times nothing is nothing.

Still, the Look Man has seen flashes of greatness in Anderson, who completed a Kosar-esque 13 consecutive passes in Baltimore. The Look Man is not saying Mr. Anderson is The One, but he is willing to follow the white rabbit for two more weeks. Browns win, and knock themselves out of the Brady Quinn Sweepstakes, thank the gods.

Indianapolis at Houston (+7.5):

The Ponies are taking their show on the road to Wild, Wild West Stadium in H-Town. The Ponies typically struggle against the Slim Shadies, but last week's cruise control game over the Bengals bodes well. Even better, TE Dallas Clark could return for the playoffs because his knee injury was not the dreaded ACL.

Look for the Ponies to pound the punchless Slim Shadies, setting up a battle for home field in the AFC. The Bolts, Dumpster Ducks and Ponies all need to win out, therefore avoiding the meaningless games in December. More importantly, Peyton looked very businesslike in the win over the Bengals on Monday. He is even thinking of wearing the *Falcon and the Snowman* costume from his cellular telephone commercial.

Philly at Dallas (-7.0):

Dallas' victory over Atlanta may have come at a cost. First off, the Terrell Owens spitting incident was just another brick in the wall. Second, the Zebras gave the Pokes so much love that it was embarrassing. And last, SS Roy (Rogers) Williams hit anything that moved, including his own players. CB Anthony Henry and DE DeMarcus Ware both absorbed punishment courtesy of the Singing Cowpoke. The game was physical anyway, so the Look Man believes that there may be a hangover effect.

On the other hand, the Iggles also played a physical game against the G-Men. Unlikely hero Jeff (Jerry) Garcia toked his way to a win, and he has really endeared himself to the team and its fans in the absence of McNabbsty. No one can forget how much Garcia hates Owens, so this game needs no hype. It will be a war, and the violence won't be the cartoon variety featuring Antonio Tarver and Sly Stallone.

The NFL would like to see at least one NY team in the postseason, so a Dallas loss might help the Jynts. Since the Boys Scouts will beat the G-Men on Sunday, this game is less likely to be determined by the Zebras. Even though Parcels is twice the coach that Andy (The Walrus II) Reid is, the Look Man likes Philly.

Philly has showed some defensive teeth of late, courtesy of DE Trent (King) Cole and S Brian (The Hawk) Dawkins. These two took over the game the other night in the Big Apple, and it could happen again if they use the hard edge rush to make Tony Romo (The Place for Ribs) stay in the pocket. Take Philly and the points, and laugh all the way to see *Rocky Balboa* at the theater.

Baltimore at Blitzburgh (-3.0):

Cleveland tenderized the Ducks last week while the Stillers cruised. This game has been a blood feud since LB Ray (Ray) Lewis teased Stillers LB Joey Porter (Paints) about getting shot in his butt, so expect a slobberknocker.

Stillers win with McNair questionable and TE Todd (Uriah) Heap limping. Boller Hat and Company get knocked out of the home field playoff race while the Stillers keep their slim playoff hopes breathing. The Stillers need too many things to fall in order to make the playoffs at 9-7, but this one sets up an interesting finale at Cincy on New Years Eve. Any way you slice it, the physical nature of this game puts both teams in the grinder down the stretch.

NY Jets at Marine Mammals (-2.0):

The Look Man warned the Tailpipe Nation that the Jets would be a contender. Now coach Mangina is queefing his way to the postseason with a balanced offense, solid defense, and wins over the Chowds, Swedes, and Green Bay.

The Aeronauticals now face perennial nemesis Miami, which was shut out 21-0 last week in Crapchester. Gang Green is *getting 2* against a Marine Mammals team whose coach has been the subject of every collegiate post that has opened since September. J-E-T-S cover to make them one big ole *Jet Airliner* away from a season ending win over the Grayders.

Chowds at Jacksonville (-2.5):

The Chowds blasted Houston last week, and J-Ville is ticked after being beaten by phenom Vince Young and the Flaming Thumbtacks. This sets up a great game between teams that do not like each other.

The Chowds are also ticked that Tom (Zoolander) Brady didn't make the Pro Bowl roster. The ex-Mr. Moynihan may have something to prove, but he had better watch himself in J-Ville. Hendu Henderson, Marcus Stroud and the rest of the J-Ville defense can put you in traction. The same cannot be said for the piece-meal unit in Beantown.

J-Ville's inconsistency has doomed their 2006 postseason hopes, but the Look Man likes the Sports Cars in this one. They cover and beat the Chowds and their celebrity super ex-girlfriend having QB. Perhaps next year the Chowds will actually get some receivers for Tom Terrific. Jags, baby, Jags.

EPILOGUE

The media has really pounded the issue of the rebuilding of New Orleans over a year following Hurricane Katrina. The Boy Scouts additions of Drew (Cool) Brees and Reggie (Mr. President) Bush have them a couple of games away from a first round bye in the NFC. Backlash to the media hype is hurting them with the fans, which are looking for a team to root for in the pathetic NFC.

The Look Man still likes New Orleans to do some damage in the postseason, but it will need some help. A bye might allow WRs Joe (Blow My) Horn and Marques (Watergate) Colston to get healthy just in time for a match up with da Bears. The cold weather at Tommyknocker Stadium in January could hurt them, but the Monsters of the Furniture Mart always struggle against big, possession receivers. If you saw the Tampa Bay OT game last week, you know what the Look Man is talking about.

So as the 2006 regular season comes to a close in Gut Check Week, coach Sean Payton ought to seriously think about getting his guys healthy for the Second Season in the Second City. While momentum is important, a rested team might actually be more relevant in terms of going deep into the playoffs.

Have a happy, healthy and festive Christmas holiday.

Peace,

The Look Man

NFL Point Spreads For Week 16 - Week Sixteen NFL Football Spread - NFL Game Dates 12/21 - 12/25, 2006

Date & Time	Favorite	Spread	Underdog
12/21 8:00 ET	At Green Bay	-3.5	Minnesota
12/23 8:00 ET	Kansas City	-6.5	At Oakland
12/24 1:00 ET	At Buffalo	-4.5	Tennessee
12/24 1:00 ET	At NY Giants	-3	New Orleans
12/24 1:00 ET	At Atlanta	-6	Carolina
12/24 1:00 ET	At St. Louis	-2.5	Washington
12/24 1:00 ET	Indianapolis	-9	At Houston
12/24 1:00 ET	At Pittsburgh	-3	Baltimore
12/24 1:00 ET	At Cleveland	-3	Tampa Bay
12/24 1:00 ET	Chicago	-4.5	At Detroit
12/24 1:00 ET	At Jacksonville	-2.5	New England
12/24 4:05 ET	At San Francisco	-4	Arizona
12/24 4:15 ET	At Denver	-3	Cincinnati
12/24 4:15 ET	San Diego	-5	At Seattle

Monday Night Football Point Spread

12/25 5:00 ET	At Dallas	-7	Philadelphia
12/25 8:30 ET	At Miami	-2	NY Jets