

The Look Man Report 2006 **Week XVII: Bowling for Dollars**

"I sent him a 'Lights Out' hat and a 'Lights Out' T-shirt and a bag of popcorn so he can watch us in the playoffs." – Bolts LB Shawne Merriman, on Jason Taylor's criticism about contending for the Defensive MVP despite testing positive for steroids

OPENING

After 18 weeks of preparation, hard work, blood sweat, and tears, we have a select group of NFL teams ready to compete for the brass ring. Not only are these squads honed to a razor's edge, they have been forged in the cauldron of the stretch run. These teams are now ready to embark on a journey to the Tournament, in search of the Lombardi.

Well, maybe all except for Dallas, which has been backpedaling for the last four weeks, culminating in a ridiculous loss to the Detroit Cadillacs in Big D last week. Dallas has now lost three of four since the media proclaimed Tony Romo (the Place for Ribs) its savior. Bill (Tuna) Parcels said then "...not to get out the anointing oil..." and in the parlance of Romo's ex-BFF Jessica Simpson, you should always, "...ask any Tuna you happen to see."

Several other teams fought for the right to represent in the Tournament, only to be repelled in the final instant. Tennessee, J-Ville, and Buffalo had some postseason hope. Instead, they all lost in critical situations that tested the mettle of their metal. Green Bay and Carolina gave us reason to hope for 2007 by winning their final games against superior opponents in Chicago and New Orleans. Of course, neither of these division winners had anything to play for, having secured their spots with no opportunity to modify their seeding.

The most interesting battles occurred in the AFC, where Cincinnati and Denver snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. Both teams were in a 'win and you're in' position, and both lost in overtime at home. When an opponent comes into your crib and punches you in the mouth in a game that determines your playoff fate, THAT is a statement. And the statement is, "we stink."

Without further metallurgical metaphors, the LMR for Week 17.

WEEK IN REVIEW

Stillers (23) at Bungals (17) [OT]:

As predicted, the Bengals turned Bungals again at Pall Bearer Stadium. In honor of the collegiate bowl week, owner Mike Brown allowed corporate sponsorship for the contest. As a result, in lieu of the usual Bengal tiger, a giant Tampax logo adorned midfield. It was fitting since the Bengals typically end up bloody and have no second string.

Blitzburgh dominated the game until (Fast) Willie Parker coughed up the rock at the 2 yard line en route to the end zone. The Bengals seized the momentum, and scored via a long distance hookup between (Johnny) Carson Palmer and troubled WR Chris Henry.

Henry's sweet 65 yard TD reception put the Bengals in position to win the game despite doing nearly everything in their power to give it away. Not only did Marvin Lewis allow

the offense to go no-huddle in spite of the fact that the Bengals defense spent 40 minutes on the field, he mismanaged his timeouts down the stretch. Instead of holding onto his timeouts, he attempted to ice veteran place-kicker Jeff Reed. The kick was good, tying the score at 17, and instead of having two timeouts for his offense to win with 1:17 remaining in regulation, Lewis had one timeout remaining.

As Fate would have it, the Bengals completed another bomb to Henry, and then went into panic mode. Instead of running another play or spiking the football, they allowed the clock to nearly expire, forcing them to use their final timeout.

It was unclear whether it was the Bengals poor clock management, timer error or zebra error that caused this fiasco, but final blame lies with the head coach. The Nati was disorganized, incoherent and totally confused. After a kneel down that cost them one yard in field position, and a spike that failed to stop the clock for some reason, K Shayne Graham made his way on to the field. Like his cookie predecessor Neil, Graham cracked under pressure, pushing a 39 yarder into the tricky south end zone wind.

The Santonio Holmes overtime slant for 67 yards and the game was a mere formality afterwards. Thanks for coming, see you next season for another 8-8 record folks. The stunned crowd was eerily quiet on the way out, but the Look Man called it from the moment he saw Lewis huddling with the head linesman. Someone needs to tell Marvin that kicker icing is for when you have zero possessions left. Instead, he showed that he doesn't trust the Vaunted Bengals Offense or his own defense. The Bengals offensive and defensive teams played as if they were two different teams wearing the same uniform.

Not only did Marvin Lewis mismanage his offense, he failed to use a zone defense in the most critical situation of the year. Holmes blew by CB Tory (Toast) James and there was no safety within 15 yards. Lewis was badly outcoached by a guy whose major contribution to the NFL is epitomized in the quotation, "We are not trying to circumcise the rules here."

Here is a short list of Marvin's boo-boos:

- 1) defense can't stop the run, with da Burgh gashing them for five yards per carry;
- 2) running the no-huddle offense despite a 40-20 Time of Possession advantage by da Stillers;

Net Yards Rushing	207	44
Rushes	45	16
Avg. Per Rush	4.6	2.8
Time Of Pos.	39:40	20:20

- 3) uses 2nd timeout to ice veteran kicker Jeff Reed; costs them a chance to kick GW FG;
- 4) failure to run another play after the Henry bomb set up the GW FG; that south end zone is the same one where Matt Stover missed two weeks ago; the cross wind there is a home field advantage, but the Bengals miss anyway.
- 5) not in Cover Three in OT, Holmes goes for 67 yards and the game winner.

Lewis' coaching is so bad that Geico insurance is coming up with a new ad campaign: "Geico.com – so easy Marvin Lewis can do it!" Word on the street is that the "In Marvin we Trust" sign is headed for the Rumpke Dump next week.

Later, that same day, when the Niners knocked off the Donkeys in OT, the last AFC playoff spot went to Kansas City. The ultimate irony is that the Bengals beat the Baby Backs at Agarn Stadium in Week One, courtesy of Robert (Guillotine) Geathers' cheap shot. Who says the Football Gods have no sense of humor?

Detroit (39) at Dallas (31):

Dallas Pro Bowl QB Tony Romo (the Place for Ribs) gave up four fumbles, losing two, threw a pick, and was soundly outplayed by Cadillacs QB Jon Pickna. Pickna threw for three bills and a career high four TDs as offensive coordinator Mike (Megalomaniac) Martz outcoached Dallas D-Coordinator Mike Zimmer. Afterwards, Pickna announced he is now dating Jessica Simpson, much to the chagrin of Romo, Jessica's dad, Mrs. Pickna and the Church of Latter Day QBs.

The game featured a hilarious matchup between Dallas safety Roy (Rogers) Williams and Detroit WR Roy (Rogers) Williams. It was like the Star Trek original series episode where Kirk gets split into good and evil halves, and Spock has to figure out which is which. In this case, the real Roy Williams caught TD passes while the other guy looked to apply horse collar tackles in retribution. Even Trigger decided to go with the Detroit guy on this one.

Parcells and Romo pow-wowed on Monday and Tuna indicated he still backs the Ribs King. "I don't want to discourage his ability to create," Parcells said. "But the judgment has to improve on some things or else you have what happened on Sunday. Plus, he needs to keep it in his pants for a few more weeks, or we don't stand a chance in the playoffs."

When asked whether Romo's inexperience was a factor, Parcells replied, "No. Overconfidence and lack of celibacy. This guy gets more tail than a canine with multiple sex organs."

Doomsday Lite continued its slide, giving up four more TD passes in what has become the norm rather than an aberration. They have allowed a season full of TD passes in their last four games, and Seattle is licking its talons in anticipation of next week's Wild Card matchup. Large wideouts have made the Pokes struggle and the Shehawks are recruiting former Hornhead WR Marcus (Mister) Robinson for this contest.

Megalo Martz threw the Pokes a wrinkle, allowing Detroit skill players move randomly prior to the snap. On one occasion, QB Jon Pickna lined up wide, and then ran back under center. The spontaneous move wasn't in the playbook, but it forced Poke defenders to adjust, something they have struggled with all year. As a result, Detroit almost hung a 40 burger on Doomsday Lite, which has lost its last three home games, while allowing 104 points.

While most folks attribute the recent slide to defensive familiarity with Romo, the Look Man places the blame squarely on Doomsday Lite. The Pokes play best out of a modified 3-4 defense, but injuries have forced them to use more 4-3. The resultant man-to-man has exposed their lack of pass coverage 'backers, and fullbacks around the

league have feasted on them in the red zone. When the LBs come out of zone coverage, the lack of safety speed means man coverage on big wideouts, who have exposed injured CB Anthony Henry.

The cherry on top was Cadillacs WR Mike Furrey knocking the Cowboys star off the wall of Texas Stadium after a third-quarter TD catch. The converted DB pulled a Terrell Owens, exploding the logo and sending Pokes Fan into a booing frenzy. Not that it was noticeable, because Pokes Fan spent most of the day heckling the Starheads.

One highlight: Romo losing the ball in his own end zone in an unforced fumble, recovering the ball with some nifty footwork, and then completing a pass for positive yardage. That fumble...recovery...and pass completion by Romo was nothing short of spectacular, reinforcing the fact that Romo may be the most athletic QB in the NFL. His scoring records may never be broken, but most of them occur in the bedroom, not on the field.

Dirty Birds at Iggles (-8.0):

The Iggles had little to play for in this game since the Pokes had already locked them into the NFC Least title by losing to Detroit. As a result, they benched Jeff Garcia and decided to knock the rust off backup AJ (Touchy) Feely. Touchy showed touch, throwing some sweet deep balls to former New Mexico Lobo WR Hank Baskett for six.

The Dirty Birds did not play particularly well, culminating in the loss of Michael Vick to a bad ankle sprain. With little or no offense Andy (the Walrus II) Reid got a lead and then used his big, physical O-line to wear down the ATL front seven.

The loss knocked ATL coach Jim Mora out of his job in the Dirty Dirty. Despite having excellent records in his stint there, he couldn't overcome his own bad press. The ATL is now looking at a long rebuilding process. Good thing owner Arthur Blank(man) has a lumber discount from Home Depot.

Niners (26) at Donkeys (23) [OT]:

Despite substantial Zebra Love for the Donkeys at Investigation Field, the Niners knocked them out in OT, courtesy of QB Alex Smith outplaying Jay (the Knife) Cutler. Smith is coming into his own, but he still needs to learn to set his feet. The International Game Fishing Association contacted the Niners to complain that Smith's worm burner passes were reducing the number of viable baits throughout the US. "This guy has killed more night crawlers than lightning," said spokesman Babe Winkelman. "They rise to the surface for his games, only to face a fiery death due to his bad footwork. The horror."

The loss knocked Denver out of the postseason, and sealed local sentiment that head coach Mike (the Rat) Shanahan is an idiot. The Rat cost them a shot at the postseason by benching Jake the Fake Plummer in midseason and installing The Knife instead. Shanahan also sliced off his own nose on purpose in a move to prove that he could be handsome with or without it. He and Brian Billick of Baltimore are expected to sponsor a contest for most egotistical in the off-season, and the smart money is on the Rat.

LAGNIAPPE

ET Phone Home:

Stage and television star Carla Gugino has appeared in several television series since her 1988 debut on *Who's the Boss*. The Sarasota born beauty is best remembered for

her small but incredibly sexy role in Robert Rodriguez Sin City. The Look Man rediscovered her recently on two syndicated series: Sleuth TV's *Karen Sisco* and SciFi Channel's *Threshold*. Both shows are incredibly written, well acted, and thought provoking, but the latter is really something special. It deals with the Department of Homeland Security's attempt to deal with an extra-terrestrial invasion. Talk about 'terr'ists! If you haven't seen it, you need to check it out.

Not only did Ms. Gugino graduate as a high school valedictorian, this girl has beauty as well. Her modeling career bombed because of her height, but let's hope that some smart guy puts her in the right pilot or movie, because we would definitely like to see more of her.



Carla's Lips Would Make a Lollipop Very Happy

Spud Bowl

Much of the nation missed the Fiesta Bowl between Oklahoma and Boise State. You may recall that BSU entered the game at 12-0 amidst complaints of a BCS sleight. After seeing QB Jared Zabransky (Film) and head coach Chris Peterson, the Look Man is inclined to agree.

The BSU Broncos were routing the Sooners until late in the game when Zabransky nearly assassinated their chances. Instead of tucking tail, the Broncos got back in the saddle, perfectly executing two of the greatest plays ever in crunch time. The first was the old 'hook and ladder', called on a 4th and 18 gamble that went for six.

Once they went to overtime, the Broncos exploited the goofy collegiate overtime rules by going for a two point conversion on their very first TD. The conversion call: the Statue of Liberty play, modified with an empty hand pump fake and left-handed, behind-the-back hand-off. Game over, and thanks for inviting us to the BCS party, bitch. BTW, Zabransky is a gamer, and the Look Man would love to see him in brown and orange next year.

Kenny Rogers, Eat Your (Chicken) Heart Out

If you haven't caught the YouTube take-off on Tom (Zoolander) Brady, you are missing one of the funniest items ever to appear in the media. While the Look Man is not sure whether this is intended as comedy or simply an alternative lifestyle homage to the ex-Mr. Moynihan, it is simply not to be missed. Perhaps someone saw an opportunity to see if Zoolander wanted to change teams? Nuff said, except the URL, as attached. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ufwukWgKfI>



Clay's homage to Z?

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Despite the playoff implications of the Week 16 games, the zebras failed to distinguish themselves. They bumbled and blew several calls, beginning with Jyntz at Genocide Victims on Saturday, and culminating in the Niners at Denver game late Sunday. Here's the dealio:

Jyntz at Genocide Vix: Zebra Walt (Disney) Anderson couldn't determine whether WR Plexiglass Burress or DB Ade Jimoh committed pass interference, so he called them both. The offensive and defensive PI calls offset, nullifying a late first half TD and essentially reducing the margin of victory for the G-Men. "Jimoh cracked Cornrows, and I don't care," said Disney. "There were only 18 seconds left in the half, and we didn't want New York to cover the spread."

Commentator Phil Simms applauded the call, but the Look Man is not sure why. In nearly forty years of watching the NFL, the Look Man has seen this call only twice. And it stunk both times.

Niners at Donkeys: Zebra Larry Nemmers(kull) shot his regular at Investigation Field, trying to penalize the Niners into making a critical error. Fortunately, Shanahan had the Niners backs, passing in the critical fourth and fifth quarters. The result was excellent field position for Frisco, which parlayed the position into an overtime FG by veteran K Joe Nedney. Nedney is best known for his Oscar-winning portrayal of a kicker who had been roughed in the 2002 playoff thriller *Blitzburgh at Tennessee*.

Stillers at Bengals: Zebra Bill (Toyota) Carollo still hasn't overturned a replay call in over two years, but the coaches are beginning to figure him out. They simply don't challenge his calls because the risk of losing the timeout is not worth the gained yardage in most cases. Cowher passed up at least one challenge on this basis, and who knows what Marvin Lewis was thinking?

Toyota Carollo and crew blew a pass interference call on Chris Henry, mismanaged the play clock, and generally made nuisances of themselves. It was a good thing that Blitzburgh dominated this one with the run, because there were fights after nearly every play in the first quarter. Once the players got tired, Carollo had less work to do calling offsetting personal fouls.

Chowds at Thumbtacks: Zebra Ed (The Hulk) Hochuli got a real upper body workout as he and his crew threw flags early and often. The combined seven first downs by penalty may be a modern day NFL record. Although a number of these calls were of the personal foul variety, the Look Man's experience is that players rarely fight unless they are getting jobbed by the zebras. How often do you throw down at work?

Hulk Hochuli, you are the Look Man **Zebra of the Week!** You gurly mahn, you.

THE LOOK AHEAD:

The Iggles enter the postseason as the hottest team in the NFC, which isn't saying much. Still, between the Iggles and the Boy Scouts, the NFC should have a very competitive playoff from a story line perspective.

The postseason is usually about matchups, and Dallas and Chicago do not match up well against teams with big, fast wide receivers. Since there seems to be a preponderance of these types in the field, the Look Man expects both of these squads to struggle and yield.

BTW, why is it that the NFL allows Seattle to leave its retractable dome open during driving rainstorms? The Look Man wonders why they even have a roof if they never plan to use it. This attempt to establish a home field advantage reminds the Look Man of New England, which played upon a sloppy track until the league put its foot down. The result for the Chowds was several losses at home because the Football Gods don't like ugly.

Jynts at Iggles (-6.5):

It seems unlikely that the Iggles will mimic Washington's tactic of lining its safeties 15 yards off the ball, and allowing Tiki Barber to run right by them on the draw play. Barber had two runs over 50 yards against the Genocide Victims, and ended up with nearly 300 yards in total offense. Iggles safety Brian (the Hawk) Dawkins brings a load, and he will be aiming for Tiki's sore right hand.

These two played a thriller just a few weeks ago, and expect the same this week. QB Jeff (Cherry) Garcia plucked his way to a win with great reads and perfectly timed passes. Without Michael Strahan, the G-Men cannot apply the pressure necessary to send Garcia back to the studio to decompose. Iggles may not cover, but win anyway in the *Eli's Cheesecake vs. Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Bowl*.

Dallas at Seattle (-3.0):

Have the Tailpipes ever noticed how Romo has an extra stitch put in to make his uniform number look like an '8' instead of a '9'? This only occurs when the Pokes wear the white home uniforms, which they should be donning this week. It's almost as if Romo has 'Aikman envy' or something.

But, the Look Man digresses. This game should be a good one, but the Shehawks have a history of beating the Pokes. Seattle won the 2005 game when Drew Bledsoe threw the game away on a pick six. While the Shehawks defense is no where near its 2005 levels, look for Matt (Hair Club for Men) Hasselbeck to peck away at the Ooms-ay Efense. Shaun Alexander helps the 'hawks play keep away, despite major injury issues in the CoffeeTown secondary. Hawks squawk out a win in the *Charbucks Bowl*.

KC at Indy (-6.5):

The media keeps citing what a bad matchup this is for the Ponies, whose run defense is allowing historic numbers. The nattering nabobs of negativity shout how KC backed into the playoffs, and will win playing with 'house money.'

The Look Man totally disagrees with this theory. KC has better run D than Indy, but the Ponies typically struggle against the 3-4 while pounding the 4-3. Since KC runs the latter, look for Indy to get up big early, forcing injured Trent (Long) Green to force it to his receivers. Safety Bob (Colonel) Sanders will need to play well, but the Ponies win with ball control passing to TE Dallas Clark and move to Round Two. Say it with the Look Man: "Dee-caf! Dee-caf!"

Jets at Chowds (-8.5):

Again, the bandwagon is full for the Chowds, who win every other week it seems. Tom (Zoolander) Brady is back on the runway after getting the needle in his sore shoulder. Bill (Dr. Evil) Belichick is trying to take over the world again, one win at a time, but this week faces his former mentee, Eric Mangina. These two do not like each other, and this one has "slobberknocker" written all over it.

Dr. Evil is going through a messy divorce and his coaching is suffering. Zoolander broke up with main squeeze Bridget Moynihan, and his play shows it. The Chowds lost three top assistants, two starting wideouts and their play shows it. Why the media remains on the New England bandwagon is a mystery.

The topper might be that Dr. Evil is losing his hard boiled edge. After allowing 43-year-old Doug Flutie to execute a drop-kick in a meaningless 2005 finale, Dr. Evil inserted third-stringer Vinny Testaverde (means "green head" in Italian) at Tennessee. Vinny Greenhead set an NFL-record with a TD pass in his 20th consecutive season. The feat was not lost on Belichick, who is an avid football historian. The Flaming Thumbtacks were less sanguine about the feat, which extended the New England lead to 17 in a meaningless game. No word on whether the Football Gods approved, but it seems unlikely. The FGs frown on records set in garbage time [see also Strahan-Favre sack record].

The game will be sponsored by Skeffington's and dubbed *The Formal Wear Bowl* courtesy of Belichick and Mangina's tailors. Fortunately, the game is decided on the clean Field Turf surface, where safety Rodney Harrison is not expected to play. Harrison received his weekly season-ending injury last week at Tennessee, where the Flaming Thumbtacks tenderized the Chowds in a physical battle. The Chowds claim Harrison was cheap shotted by a low block, but the Look Man thinks that one of the best safeties in the league has simply mutated into a potato chip. He has a broken leg, a broken arm, a broken scapula, and a torn MCL in the last two years.

The Jets and Chowds split the season series with each winning on the other's turf. In the case of New England, make that mud. Still, don't expect any handshakes before this duel, and the Jets knock the Chowds out of the postseason in a stunner. J-E-T-S queef their way to a win behind *Comeback Player of the Year* Chad Pennington.

EPILOGUE

After 18 weeks the NFL season comes down to one-and-done. Win and you continue. Lose, and you're going fishing. Nothing says sudden death like the NFL postseason.

The Look Man likes the underdogs to continue the 2007 trend. Underdogs went 13-3 ATS in Week 16, upping their record to 136-97-6 for the year. More importantly, 100 of those 136 dogs won outright (including 11 of 13 in Week 16). This phenomenon is taking Vegas by storm, and making the Look Man very wealthy.

So before you plunk down the house on the Chowds over the Jets, before you buy your Super Bowl airfare in Chicago, before you try on your wife's lingerie, check yourself. The money you save may be your own.

Peace,

The Look Man

**NFL Point Spreads For Wild Card Playoffs - Wild Card
Weekend NFL Football Spread - NFL Playoff Game Dates
1/6 - 1/7, 2007**

Date & Time	Favorite	Spread	Underdog
1/6 4:30 ET	At Indianapolis	-6.5	Kansas City
1/6 8:00 ET	At Seattle	-3	Dallas
1/7 1:00 ET	At New England	-8.5	NY Jets
1/7 4:30 ET	At Philadelphia	-6.5	NY Giants