

The Look Man Report 2007

Week Minus 1: Vee Vill Haff Order!

"I personally believe that U.S. Americans are unable to do so because, um, some people out there in our nation don't have maps..." - Miss Teen South Carolina Lauren Kaitlin Upton, when asked why Americans can't locate the US on a world map.

The 2006 NFL season ended on a fairy tale note as underdogs Peyton Manning and Tony (Hume Cronyn) Dungy took home the trophy, the money and the girl in Super Bowl XLI. The Colts pounded the supposedly more physical Bears, using a solid running game and run stuffing defense to win it all. Afterwards, new Commish Roger (Rabbit) Goodell was only too happy to celebrate the win. After all, it proved that nice guys don't always finish last.

Those rose colored glasses didn't last long, as a suddenly irate Dungy got the mike. The normally reserved coach went on a tirade, punctuated by dropping the Enny Green Special, "The Bears were who we thought they were!! And we *didn't* let 'em off the hook! So crown OUR asses!"

Well, maybe that didn't really happen, but the offseason made that nightmare scenario look like a daydream. Adam (Pacman) Jones proceeded to get arrested in a bizarre strip bar situation in Vegas. The Cincinnati Jail Blazers continued to break all kinds of arrest records, with Chris Henry, Odell Thurman, and Frostee Rucker appeared on *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*.

But the Michael Vick dog fighting coverage took over the airways for weeks on end. When Ron Mexico was indicted for dog fighting and federal racketeering charges, and PETA arrived with the posters of pit bulls looking sympathetic, everyone knew the cake was all dough.

Roger Rabbit had to act swiftly and decisively in light of the allegations. The League was being assaulted by images of chaos while TV revenues reached a third of a billion dollars. Media scrutiny on player conduct was about to kill the proverbial golden goose, so Rabbit made Jessica proud by suspending players and establishing a league-wide personal conduct policy.

Goodell also made a lot of owners happy, since the negative press has hurt the prestige and bargaining leverage of NFLPA President Gene Upshaw. Seen by many as the most powerful man in sports, Upshaw faces attacks from retired players for pension payments while pushing to maintain labor peace. When the Collective Bargaining Agreement option expires at the end of the 2007-08 season, owners will fight to get the players off 58% of the TV revenue, while Upshaw battles over concessions, marketing and stadium loge dollars.

Set against this backdrop, the 2007 season holds some promise. There are a plethora of new head coaches, old faces in new places, and at least one dynasty attempting to reload. Manning and the Colts hope to establish themselves as an emerging dynasty, the Bears, Saints and Bolts want another chance at the Brass Ring, and the Chowds simply want Bill Belichick to be able to afford something other than hoodies.

Without further ado, the NFL 2007 in Preview:

PICK 'EM

The Tailpipe Nation is again on the hook to provide its take on the NFL 2007 season. Please send your picks to the Look Man for incorporation into the Winner Takes All pool. You may wish to keep in mind that eight Super Bowl teams failed to appear in the playoffs the following season. The Look Man likes the Bears to disappear courtesy of the Jurassic Park QB, while the Ponies struggle against a tougher AFC Souse than years past.

Here are the Look Man's 2007 picks with winners in highlight:

NFC North

Chicago Bears	2
Detroit Cadillacs	3
Green Bay Cheeseheads	4
Minnesota Wicinga	1

NFC Least

NY Jynts	3
Philly Iggles	1
Dallas Cowpokes	2
DC Genocide Victims	4

NFC Souse

Atlanta Dirty Birds	4
Carolina Black Cats	2
New Orleans Religious Icons	1
Tampa Bay Expensive Corn Ki	3

NFC West

Frisco Seven Squareds	1
Arizona Deadbirds	4
Seattle Shehawks	3
St. Louise Lambs	2

AFC Norse

Baltimore Dumpster Ducks	1
Cincinnati Toothless Tiggers	4
Cleveland Browns	3
Pittsburgh Stillers	2

AFC Least

New England Chowds	1
Miami Marine Mammals	3
Buffalo Bisons	4
NY Aeronauticals	2

AFC Souse

Houston Slim Shadies	4
Indianapolis Ponies	1
Jacksonville J-Squareds	2
Tennessee Flaming Thumbtac	3

AFC West

Oakland Grayders	3
KC Baby Backs	4
Denver Donkeys	2
San Diego Bolts	1

NFC - Champs

Carolina Black Cats

AFC - Champs

San Diego Bolts

Super Bowl Champs

Bolts

You have a chance to see your teams in Week One, but get your picks in right away. Operators are standing by....

LAGNIAPPE

Michael Jordan, UNC Class of '84

The Look Man is not a big fan of college football, but the season opening weekend featured one of the biggest upsets of all time. Heavily favored Michigan lost to Appalachian State at Le Grand Maison in Ann Arbor. The fallout has the NCAA, Wolverines head coach Lloyd Carr and the BCS scrambling.

Not that Appy State is chopped road kill. The Boone, NC school has won the Division I-AA crown back to back, but no one envisioned them beating the fifth ranked BCS team. The Mountaineers did so despite a coaching gaffe that should have cost them the game. With less than a minute to play, and Michigan having one timeout left, A-State chose to kick the potential game winning FG. The problem: it was only first down and there was enough time for Michigan to mount a FG winning drive of their own even if the A-State FG was good.

Sure enough, the Wolverines hit a deep bomb to set up their own subsequent game winner. Only a missed protection assignment allowed A-State to block the kick and win the game. Of course, you can't spell "Lloyd Carr" without two L's, and Michigan is well on its way to blowing another championship in 2007.

By the way, Miss Teen South Carolina, Lauren Caitlin Upton announced her post pageant plans to attend A-State in pursuit of a geography degree. Miss Upton can already point to Ann Arbor on a world map.



Cartography for 2000 please, Mario

Manhattan or New England Style?

New England obtained a chowder pot of new receiving talent in the persons of Randy (the Chronic) Moss, Wes (WWII) Welker, Donte Stallworth and Kelley (Secret Squirrel) Washington. On defense, the acquisition of Pro Bowl LB Adalius Thomas shores up a major weakness. If championships were won on paper, the Chowds would have a ring ceremony this weekend.

More importantly, the Chowds and BoSox are doing their best Yankee impersonations by attempting to buy a championship. It hasn't worked in Manhattan, but only time will tell in Beantown.

Mea Culpa un poco?

Michael Vick, in a surprise move, will be represented at his sentencing hearing by former Attorney General Alberto (A-Gone) Gonzales. A-Gone is expected to retract Vick's guilty plea and request a jury trial, citing a little known legal principle entitled *Quarterback Privilege*, which provides immunity for the leader of an NFL football team.

A-Gone is also expected to contend that since dog fighting is illegal in VA, the pit bulls are *enemy combatants*, not sanctioned soldiers with real rights. If accepted, this strategy could result in a complete acquittal and reinstatement for Vick in 2007.

In an exclusive LMR interview, ESPN legal analyst Roger Cossack said, "This is a stunning development. Gonzales' does have Mexican ancestry, so he could be just the guy to vindicate Ron Mexico. After Gitmo, the outing of CIA operative Valerie Plame, and the illegal termination of US Attorneys, A-Gone has proved to be pretty slick. And let's not forget, this guy got away with torturing *human beings!*"

Vick is expected to be released by the Dirty Birds. As part of his ongoing league punishment, he will then be acquired by Cleveland, and forced to listen to barking dawgs while holding a clipboard.

Once every Fort(y)night

The Ugly & Black are celebrating their Fortieth Anniversary season in 2007, complete with uniform patches and redesigned stadium banners. The number forty is fitting as well because that represents the average number of points scored by the offense if the Bungals are to make the postseason. Marvin (Jerry) Lewis returns a defense that failed to even show up several times in 2006. The Nutty Professor added a rookie CB, but acquired no real improvements to a defense which lost playmakers Brian (Gene) Simmons and S Kevin (Special K) Kaesvihearn to the Icons.

CB Tory (Toast) James has moved over to the AFC Least Division and there is still a weakness at TE. Lewis' bizarre 2nd round draft of RB Kenny (Tony Stark) Irons went to waste after he got a knee in preseason. Lewis was heard to yell, "Oh my God, they killed Kenny!"

In short, Jerry's Kids are looking at a whole lot of 34-31 losses in 2007. After three consecutive 8-8 seasons, Lewis needs to polish the resume, because the locals will boil him in oil if this offensive juggernaut fails to make the postseason again.

Mr. Greenjeans, I Presume?

The Pokes look to rebound after dumping Parcels and replacing him with Bob Keeshan. Teams that replace a disciplinarian with a players coach tend to get a nice bounce in the wins department in Year One of the new regime. The Pokes won't disappoint, as their defense ratchets up the pass rush in the NFC Least.

On the offensive side of the ball, new OC Jason (Voorheis) Garrett will get the rock to TO early and often, improving on TO's 16 TD catches in 2006. Further, TO won't have the broken mitten that allowed him to lead the league in dropped balls. Marion (Predator) Barber looks to take over as the number one running option, but Julius (Dr. J) Jones is in a contract year, so look for him to dunk the rock when he plays. All in all, injuries will be the only factor that limits the Pokes, and the Look Man expects them to win a wild card berth in the NFC Least.

THE WEEK IN PREVIEW:

Stillers at Browns (+4.5):

The 2007 Stillers look outstanding with Bruce Arians promoted from WR Coach to OC. Arians was the brains behind the Browns 2001 playoff run, using quick hitters, motion

and misdirection to accentuate speed. Look for Hines (57) Ward, Santonio Holmes and TE Heath (Bar None) Miller to have excellent seasons.

On the other side of the ball, new OC Rob (The Cannibal) Chudzinski implements his San Diego offense in C-Town. Look for TEs Kellen Winslow II and Steve Heiden to flourish in this scheme. RB Jamal (Bam Bam) Lewis has lost 11 pounds, but at 239, he still has plenty of rocks in his pockets. The Browns will start slow until their revamped O-line gets cohesion, then surprise some teams in 2007 with power offense and speed defense.

Big Ben lost some weight in the off-season, and he looks quicker and more decisive. The Stillers will be a force in the AFC again in 2007, but only after the Browns take them out in Week One. Browns baby, Browns.

Bears at Bolts (-6.0)

The Monsters of the Furniture Mart are apparently ticked about a commercial featuring LaDanian (the New LT) Tomlinson. NLT is shown running all over the MOTFM in slow motion glory. The only problem is that the video used the old Bolts uniform, which has been modified in 2007.

Look for NLT and the Bolts to take up where they left off in the 2006 regular season. They hand the MOTFM a road loss, with the Bolts defense knocking T-Rex Grossman into the nearby LaBrea tar pits. The Bears will get their hands caught in the San Diego honey jar. Afterwards, the Bolts will roll the credits, including T-Rex as Christopher Robin, and Urlacher as Eeyore.

Detroit Cadillacs at Oaktown Grayders (-2.5):

The Grayders got younger on the field and in the front office in the off-season, and look for the youth movement to pay off on Sunday. The overrated Caddies lose a tire as the Grayders cover and welcome new coach Lane Kiffin to the win column.

Jynts at Pokes (- 6.0) [SNF]:

The Jynts get DE Michael Strahan back from retirement in time to get their butts kicked on national TV. The Team Turmoil title has migrated from Big D to the Big Apple as Tiki Barber has taken on Eli Manning and Tom Coughlin just in the last two weeks. The bickering comes to nothing in Week One as Tony Romo (the Place for Ribs) and Terrell Owens handle Big Blue. Pokes corral the G-Men.

B-More at Bungals (-2.5) [MNF]:

B-more won't be 13-3 again in 2007, but they won't need to in order to compete for the conference trophy. The loss of Adalius Thomas hurts a little, but the defense has reloaded and the offense has acquired star RB Willis Magahee (Steed) from Crapchester.

When teamed with a healthy Todd (Uriah) Heap, he will bring to mind the BBC Series *The Avengers*, only this version will be much less civilized. In fact, they will present a *Clear and Present Danger* to the *Patriot Games* in the AFC.

Having said all of this, the Look Man likes the Ugly & Black to win on Monday Night. The Nati scores points in bunches, and they always give the Dumpster Ducks fits. The Nati gets one of their eight wins this week, then fall to Cleveland in Week Two.

Peace,

The Look Man