

The Look Man Report 2007 **Week Two: Defense Takes a Holiday**

"Really, sad day for the NFL. It's another case of the 99 percent good things that are happening being overshadowed by 1 percent bad. Again, people aren't talking about our product, they're talking about a negative incident." – Colts Head Coach Tony Dungy regarding SpyGate

If the NFL season is a four quarter endeavor, we are at halftime of the first after Week Two. The media pundits proved wrong again as the previously hapless Cleveland Browns beat the Nati in a 51-45 shootout. The Look Man always looks askance at the NFL Power Rankings, and obviously, so did Number Thirty-Two. One has to wonder about the basis for these rankings, as past results are not indicators of future performance.

As a result, NFL talking hairdo Mark (Squarehead Spongepants) Schlereth has proclaimed the Bengals "...a 12-4 offense and a 4-12 defense." Simple addition results in a prediction of 8-8, and a grand prize of a new HD TV to watch the NFL playoffs at home. Not that the Look Man often agrees with Squarehead, who last week demanded Brady Quinn be installed as the starter in Cleveland.

The other surprises of the week were the number of 2-0 and 0-2 teams. Detroit, Houston, Washington, Green Bay and Frisco joined Indy and New England atop the heap, while New Orleans, the Jets and St. Louise remain winless. If nothing else, it proves out the Jim Mora theory: "You think you know, but you don't know, and you never will."

Without further Mora Mora Mora-isms, the Week in Review:

WEEK IN REVIEW

Bengals at Browns (+7)

The Look Man knows all of you Tailpipes were thinking he should put down the crack pipe after the prediction of Browns over Bengals. Long Suffering Bengals Fan Dave Sundance actually "...thought someone had high-jacked the video feed from Cleveland Stadium and patched in a high-quality digital movie of a Browns fan's dreamscape. I couldn't make myself believe that what I was watching was really happening." And yes, it was that bad for Bengals Fan.

Despite the Look Man's mediocre record overall, the Pepto pick rarely fails, and this week was no exception. Just to prove the point, the Look Man actually traveled to C-Town to see this Titanic struggle up close and personal. The trip reinforced the *Power of Positive Viewing*, as the Browns snatched a win even without the Magic Turnover Ball in evidence.

The game began like many other Browns contests, with an opening drive score by the opposition, followed by an inauspicious three-and-out by Cleveland. The Look Man chalked it up as a good sign, even uttering, "That could be the best thing that happened in this game. The Nati will be overconfident, and the Browns can take advantage."

Surely enough, Browns QB Derek (Neo) Anderson focused on bending some spoons, beginning with a sweet TD pass to WR Joe (Sid) Jurevicius. Sid beat rookie CB Leon Hall to the pylon, and the game was on. When Braylon Edwards pulled an Antonio Freeman, plucking a deflection out of the air while laying prone, the Look Man had a good feeling.

The catch inspired the sleepy, ill-tempered Browns Fan, who kept calling for Brady Quinn (Medicine Woman) when not chanting anti-Michigan dogma. Neo donned his sunglasses and began the task of getting the safety out of box with seam routes to Kellen (The Soldier) Winslow and deep balls to the wides. Once Agent Smith backed off, Bengals Killer Jamal (Bam Bam) Lewis gashed the D with off-tackle 31- and 66 yard gains.

The Barking Dawg D kept getting drilled courtesy of Chad (The Dentist) Johnson. Johnson used nitrous to put rookie CB Eric Wright to sleep on a post-flag, then feigned jumping into the non-Dawg Pound. His later foray into the real Pound resulted in Browns Fan offering him free beer, but without a cup.

The game turned into a shootout, with kick and punt returns ripping off huge chunks of real estate. Neither team played much defense, as the contest turned into a Name That Tune of who could score in the fewest plays.

Despite the 96 total points, the Barking Dawgs delivered the majority of the kill shots, knocking LB Ahmad (Jihad) Brooks, and WRs Tab (Fresca) Perry and Glenn Close out of the game. FB Lawrence Vickers blocked LB Lemar Marshall out of his socks in Week Two, forcing the Nati to sign free agent Dhani Jones to play air guitar for Week Three. Dhani is best known for his high-profile, low tackle output with the Iggles and Jyntys in the NFC Least.

The final was like a who's who of Fantasy Football. Jamal Lewis became the first RB to go over 200 yards rushing since the immortal Jim Brown. Chad Johnson surpassed two bills with two TD catches. The Browns had two receivers over the century mark in receptions, and a third with two TD catches. Neo nearly matched (Johnny) Carson Palmer's six TDs with five of his own, but his 328 yards were dwarfed by Mr. Tonight Show's 406. Not a bad afternoon for the so-called "worst team in football." Bodden got his revenge with a late pick to seal the deal, but only after a booth replay inside of two minutes.



"There is no spoon?"

Swedes at Cadillacs:

Neither offense could mount much of a threat, and Minnesota put Detroit QB Jon (Pickna) Kitna in a coma before the half. Pickna wasn't making any sense on the sidelines, but his replacement JT (JOTS) O'Sullivan didn't have the luck of the Irish on the field. When JOTS couldn't manufacture any offense, Pickna reentered the contest to get the Caddies a victory in OT.

Pickna claimed he was feeling "really, really out of it" as a result of getting sandwiched by two Purple Helmet Wearers in the 2nd quarter. When asked where he was, Pickna asked, "Is this Heaven?" He later added, "I thought basically the day was done for me."

Pickna claims his head began to clear at the half, virtue of Divine Intervention. Of course, God's name must be Mike Martz, who after seeing O'Sullivan stinking, began handing out Red Bulls to his starter at an alarming rate. As a result, Pickna claimed to regain his mental acuity, and even ran the ball several times in the second half.

The Swedes missed a game winning FG in regulation, and really didn't have a chance after starting QB Tarvaris Jackson pulled a groin. Jackson apparently is not a Christian, so he couldn't finish the game.

The NFL needs to scrutinize these returns by concussion suffers before someone really gets hurt. Pickna, Dumpster Ducks S Ed Reed, and Bungals WR Glenn Holt all returned to the field this season after getting the snot knocked out of them. So much for NFL crackdowns on concussions in 2007.



"I'm Batman!"

Bolts at Chowds (-3.0) [Sunday Night Football on NBC]

The Chowds did indeed take out their embarrassment on the field after a week in which Bill (Dr. Evil) Belichick got popped for SpyGate. RB LaDanian Tomlinson and Philip Rivers were shut down in a bikini wax at Gillette. Leave it to Belicheat to turn his faux pas into an "us against the world mentality."

Tom (Zoolander) Brady carved the Bolts defense after Rivers couldn't keep the offense on the field. Free agent LB Adalius Thomas contributed a sweet pick six, sealing the rout, and sending a message to the rest of the league. And that message is that the Chowds are the best team in the league in Week Two.

The Bolts are struggling to find an identity, and got distracted by the media hoopla. It's never easy to get a W at Gillette, and all the talking didn't help. The nadir was Shawne Merroidman's *Lights Out* celebration after the scoreboard showed the game was over. At this rate the Bolts need some electricity if they want to face the Chowds again in the postseason.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK:

Peter Morelli (Mushroom) is running away with the competition as he single-handedly attempted to give this one to the Ugly & Black. While Bottlegate McCauley made a strong push in the Dallas - Miami game, he couldn't overcome the following by *Myxomycota*:

- a flagrant facemask penalty by Chad (The Dentist) Johnson on CB Leigh Bodden; The Dentist attempted to put Bodden in a hospital bed next to the Bisons TE, by grabbing and holding the headgear. The first quarter flag was discussed and waved off.
- Illegal grounding by Mr. Tonight Show; Palmer saw his LT tackling the DE, then threw the rock into the turf as he was being tackled. Two possible penalties were waved off AFTER the flag flew.
- Unnecessary roughness on a bang-bang helmet to helmet collision between Brodney Pool (Boy) and Glenn (Close) Holt. The Pool Boy drilled Holt on a sideline route. Close then went *Fatal Attraction* by coming back into the game after suffering an obvious concussion. Poole was not so lucky, and he spent the rest of the afternoon looking for his boiled rabbit.
- TJ Houshmandzadeh failed to get two feet down on a key fourth quarter TD, but got the points anyway. Romeo Crennel correctly threw the red hankie, only to be overruled. Even Whosyomama knew he stole one, rolling his eyes and cackling following the ruling.

Finally, Mushroom allowed three illegal clock stoppages around the 8:50 mark in the fourth quarter. The Bungals were down by ten at the time, and the stoppages saved them time-outs that nearly allowed them to artificially create an Alcoa Fantastic Finish.

The clock is supposed to run until the five minute mark before each half irrespective of incompletions or out-of-bounds runs. You Tailpipes may wish to check this out in the future, as the Look Man has witnessed this times too numerous to discuss. Of course, it is incumbent upon the head coach to watch for this as well, then to blast the Zebras, who will typically claim ignorance.

At any rate, Mushroom Morelli is the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week**. He will next appear on a T-bone with marsala sauce.

Sideline Shenanahans

Mike (The Rat) Shanahan stole one against Al Davis and the Grayders by calling timeout just as the ball was being snapped. DUI-akowski hit the potential game winning 52-

yarder, only to find out his license had been revoked. He subsequently doinked the next one off the uprights, and the Donkeys stole yet another W.

The Look Man is calling for the immediate cessation of these sideline time-outs. The Rat and other coaches have taken a page from Iron Chin Cowher's tactical guide and it stinks. Since when do the coaches enter into the strategy on the field? Let's take the game out of the Zebras' paddock and put it back in the hands of the players.

THE LOOK AHEAD:

The Look Ahead features several outstanding matchups. The Pokes at Bears, Ponies at Houston, and Bengals at Shehawks could all be postseason previews. Here's the Look Man's take on Week Three:

Ponies at Slim Shadies (+6)

The Ponies slim two point victory over the Flaming Thumbtacks raised eyebrows, but only because Manning failed to connect on some easy TDs. Still, the 'tacks played hard and tenderized Indy on its road to repeat. The Ponies now face up-and-comer Houston, which has shown substantial improvement in one of the toughest divisions in football.

The Slim Shadies have a key injury to All World WR Andre (The Giant) Johnson, hurting their passing attack. Still, after beating the Ponies last season, the Look Man likes them to cover in this shootout. The Look Man really likes Indy this season, but take the points and the Cattle Crew in this one.

Bolts at Cheeseheads (+3)

San Diego coach Norv Turner has taken the brunt of the criticism for the Bolts' slow start, but the fault really lies with GM A.J. Smith. Smith shocked Bolts backers by sacking Marty Schottenheimer, forcing assistants Cam Cameron and Bob Keeshan to sign elsewhere. These actions have put a Super Bowl contender in the position of having to beat a spunky Cheesehead squad in Flambeau, a place where half the team wears black and white uniforms.

Philip Rivers now needs to run the new offense installed by Turner, using inexperienced wideouts to move the sticks. WR Vincent Jackson is a load at 6' 5", and he will blossom in this game and the rest of the year. Look for the Bolts to rebound after suffering an ugly loss to the Cheatin' Chowderheads last week at Gillette. Bolts, baby, Bolts.

Hornheads at Baby Backs (-3)

This one could get ugly as 0-2 KC attempts to get off the schneid under Herm Edwards. The Swedes turn to perennial backup Kelly (Tires) Holcomb after young Tarvaris Jackson suffered a groin in the Detroit fiasco (Ouch! As we all know, a loose groin is a happy groin). KC is one of the toughest venues to get a W, but Minnesota prevails with physical D, and patient offense. Vikes.

Seven Squareds at Stillers (-9)

The Stillers are quietly becoming a powerhouse in the AFC, but head coach Omar Epps is running the wheels off of (Fast) Willie Parker, who's on pace for 400 carries in 2007. Niners LB Manny Lawson tore an ACL in practice this week, and is done for the year. Lawson was a force on that defense, and his loss will make it difficult for the Seven Squareds to stop the run-first, run second offense in Stilltown.

Look for Fast Willie to throw a shoe down the road, forcing Dr. Eric Foreman to win with Big Ben at QB. Foreman may need to use his medical skills on both Parker and Double B, both of whom have gotten *Housed* in the past. Stillers win this one, but take the points and Frisco.

Browns at Grayders (-3)

Neo takes his Matrix on the road to the Black Hole for what is sure to be a martial arts masterpiece. The Browns don't look to drop another 50-burger on the Grayders pass defense, but they should be able to beat an injured Josh McClown and Company.

Don't sleep on the Grayders however. In addition to one of the top rated defenses, they also have huge wideouts that can overpower smaller DBs. Tack on the addition of former Browns/Donkey DT Gerard (Big Money Wasted) Warren, DE Derrick Burgess (Meredith) and an aging Warren Sapp, and you have a stout defense.

Unfortunately, The Penguin is injured, and TE Kellen (The Soldier) Winslow II should roast their slow-footed safeties for a big day. Browns win a close one.

Bungals at Shehawks (-3.5)

Marvin (Jerry) Lewis has gone from being the Messiah in the Nati to just being a mess. Jerry's Kids got the Ashton Kutcher treatment in C-Town, and now go on the road to meet one of the NFC's finest. The good news is that the NFC stinks; the bad news is that the Bungals may be looking ahead to the Chowds matchup next Monday night.

The Bungals have been exposed at linebacker and cornerback, so look for Mike (The Walrus) Holmgren to go scumbo on Sunday. Nati native Shaun (Big SA) Alexander has taken heat for causing a key fumble in crunch time last week against the Deadbirds. The Big SA goes off on the Bungals, who can't stop the run or the pass. Shehawks cover in a rare NFC win over the AFC.

Pokes at Bears (-3)

Bad Rex has reappeared in the Big Windy, and the Pokes have marked this game on their calendars for a while now. Together, this equals a showdown at Spaceship Field on Sunday Night. Either that, or Grossman gets nominated for *Worst Man in the NFL* by Olbermann.

The X-Factor is the first game of Bears TE Greg (G-Reg) Olsen. The former Hurricane and charter member of the Seventh Floor Crew is a big, fast target. He can split the seam, and easily beat the twin turtles in the Dallas secondary. The only question is whether T-Rex will have time to go Jurassic Park on the Pokes. If Benson the Butler fails to block, we could see the beginning of the Brian Griese Era.

The Monsters of the Furniture Mart are also vulnerable to the TE, and Dallas has a very good one and a decent backup. If Witten gets double digit catches, this game could be a rout. Tony Romo (The Place for Ribs) needs a big win to finalize his long term contract extension, and the Look Man thinks he gets it on Sunday Night. Pokes prevail, sending Lovie back to Gilligan's Island for his sleep mask.

Flaming Thumbtacks at Religious Icons (-4) [MNF]

Icons chief Sean (Secret Squirrel) Payton is killing the Golden Crawfish with his delusions of grandeur. Instead of running the football down the throats of opponents,

Secret Squirrel wants to prove he is an offensive genius. The results are indicative of what happens when a head coach goes "Brian Billick."

The Tacks are vulnerable to quick strike offense as long as a power running game follows. Fisher wants to prove worthy of his recent contract extension, and he sends Vince Young against a New Orleans defense that needs a douche.

The speed defense of the Big Easy rises up in an emotional battle, buoyed by a surprise appearance by the offense. Lagniappe abounds as the Icons get their first win in the Vieux Carre. Icons.

EPILOGUE

The NFL went to Congress this week to discuss the tar-baby of pensions for older ex-NFLers. While Roger (Rabbit) Goodell attempted to tar the NFLPA with the burden of responsibility, Congress made it clear that the NFL must resolve this in-house. Congress has threatened to step in should the league fail to recognize its obligation.

The owners should bear the responsibility of pensions for retirees, not the players association. Upshaw's job is to maximize revenue for existing players, as well as maintain labor peace with the owners. He has done a fine job of both during his tenure, which began after two very ugly strikes in the 80's. Despite the eloquent moralizing of Ditka, Moose Johnston, and others, the job of providing for the pillars of the NFL rests with the owners.

Ditka provided some nice sound bites, but let's not confuse him with a geologist. While the Look Man shares his desire to provide dignity for these alumni, he does not want it at the cost of reducing current wages. Certainly, the pension plans for current players is ridiculous in light of their salaries, but the owners still refuse to share revenues associated with loge boxes, parking, concessions and the like. If the league wants to take care of its own, charity begins at home. And that includes protecting concussed players from themselves.

The Look Man now has the final picks, but he spent too much time musing over the big win in Cleveland. Look for the Pick Segment next week, along with a recap of the Look Ahead picks for 2007.

Peace,

The Look Man