

The Look Man Report 2007

Week Four: Change Ends of the Field

"The pizza man knows when he comes to my address, he's coming for free. But I am real polite and I say, 'Thank you, sir.'"-- multimillionaire WR Roy Williams, on WDFN radio in Detroit.

One of the basic tenets of the NFL game is that teams change ends of the field at the end of each quarter. In a game where field position is key, this change signals the passage of time toward the final gun. It also dictates offensive strategy when wind and weather conditions take away the deep ball. Week Four is the effective end of the first quarter of the NFL season, reminding us to figuratively change ends in our thinking about the 2007 season.

What a week in sports. Baseball comes down to a one-game playoff in the NL. The Tribe had a shot at home field advantage all the way down to game 161. There were four major upsets in the top ten in college football. A Presidents cup upset overseas, and home underdogs answering the bell in the NFL rounded out one of the best autumns in recent memory.

It was a perfect storm worthy of George Clooney and that underwear model. The only things missing was Mary Elizabeth Mastroantonio yelling into the microphone and a guy with a hook in his arm getting pulled underwater. Of course, that happened, too, but Daunte Culpepper was able to dive in and pull him out in Miami.

Week Four signaled the beginning of some major injuries as Luke Pettigout and Cadillac Williams went down for Tampa. OT Tra Thomas was lost mid-week in Philly, exposing Donovan McNabb to twelve sacks. Frisco QB Alex Smith got crushed in the first quarter, forcing relief pitcher Trent (Big Pickle) Dilfer to emerge from the Witness Protection Program. Marvin Harrison, Joseph (Live and Let) Addai, and Rob Morris got nicked up in Indy, and every linebacker within a 100 square miles of the Nati developed an injury. Dallas carved up the Lambs, with Bulger suffering badly from broken ribs.

Injuries separate the deep/good teams from the also rans in the NFL. As we figuratively change ends of the field, we can expect things to change even more dramatically.

Without further bone breakage, the Week in Review:

WEEK IN REVIEW

The Look Man turned his prediction slide around last week, missing only on the Swedes over Cheeseheads. The Deadbirds, Baby Backs and Browns nearly destroyed the favorites, and the Pack won largely on the strength of a tidal wave of Zebra Love for Brett (The Pope) Favre.

More importantly, the picks really hit the mark, including Cincinnati's linebacker problems. The Bungals ended up playing a 5-1-5 defense using safety Chinedum Ndukwe (means "way too small" in Swahili) at LB. Predictably, the Chowds run him over en route to a 34-13 whitewash of the Ugly & Black. The Monday Nighter wasn't just ugly, it was fugly.

Ducks at Browns (+4)

The Browns parlayed a ball-hawking defense and opportunistic offense into a 27-13 sniping of Baltimore. QB Derek (Neo) Anderson reinforced the belief that he is The One with a 78-yard TD to Braylon Edwards over shutdown CB Chris McAllister. Jamal (Bam Bam) Lewis ran just enough to keep it real, and the Browns produced a disturbance in the AFC Matrix.

The Barking Dawg D answered despite giving up 100 yards to RB Willis McGahee, while keeping Air McNair off balance until the fourth quarter. The return of OLB Willie McGinest helped solidify the D, nullifying the horrid Andra Davis, and awful D-line. The Browns need only look at Arizona for pointers on how to play the run and the pass.

The Look Man would be remiss if he didn't cite the solid O-line play and offensive play-calling of OC Rob (Fine Young Cannibal) Chudzinski. Chud went deep just enough to keep the running game solvent, and the Browns should have capitalized on a few more red zone opportunities. Still, this young team is on the come in the AFC, largely due to coaching.

Bears at Cadillacs:

Brian (Beer Batter) Griese needed Rustoleum on his arm, as he went Pickna Lite against the Real Article. The Bears blew a big lead after Devin Hester (Prynne) slept with every player on the Lions team en route to a TD kickoff return.

Detroit QB Jon Pickna turned in his apron, scoring a record 34 fourth quarter points en route to spanking the Monsters of the Furniture Mart. Pickna replaced sweet pastries with sweet passes, contributing to the reemergence of the white wideout. Detroit's Mike Furrey (Package), Philly's Kevin Curtis and Cleveland's Joe (Sid) Jurevicius are taking the league by storm, making everyone wonder what happened to Matt Jones of JAX.

This game would've been a complete whitewash, but OC Mike (Megalomaniac) Martz was too busy trying to throw while deep in his own territory. Megalo is getting Pickna killed and giving no help to LT Jeff (Mr. Magoo) Backus, employing a protection scheme where tackle blocks down and the RB takes the DE. The NFLPA needs to step in on behalf of the green dotted helmet wearers, before they become an endangered species.

Green Bay at Swedes:

Green Bay QB and noted theologian Brett (The Pope) Favre conducted mass in the Metrodome on Sunday and 60,000 of his flock showed up in support. The Pope keeps demonstrating the Fireman's Carry following his TD passes. At his current rate, he will end up with a guest appearance on FX's *Rescue Me* next to Denis Leary.

Rookie WR Greg Jennings complained, "I am not sure why he keeps picking us up after TDs. I wonder if Deanna quit giving it up after he decided not to retire this season. It's kinda like the Roger Clemens cell phone commercial if you ask me."

The game was interrupted for a taped video message from Dan Marino. "I loved holding the touchdown record for the past 13 years," Marino said. "But if someone was going to break it, I'm glad it was someone like you, who has always competed at the highest level and always played to win. You may not remember, but we met once, and I kissed your ring."

Favre erased Dan Marino from the TD record book with numbers 421 and 422, while Minnesota backup QB Kelly (Tires) Holcomb threw a late pick that cost his team. It's hard to blame Tires, after he was sacked mercilessly by a Pack D that is getting little love from the media. DE Khmer Baja Biamilla (KGB) put plutonium in Kelly's nitrogen inflation tank, sticking him from every imaginable angle. The White House is investigating to determine whether pancake uranium was involved.

The ageless Favre topped three bills passing for the 50th time in his reign. Good thing, too, because the Pack is last in total rushing yards. Their 217 total is only one yard more than Cleveland's Jamal Lewis posted in a 51-45 win over Cincy.

Baby Backs at Bolts

The Bolts are officially struggling after blowing a 16-6 halftime lead. KC added some offensive sauce to go with their mixed grill on defense, as rookie WR David (D-)Bowe scored a long TD on a slant to win the game. It was the second straight week that the slant pattern has beaten the Bolts, and folks are wondering what's wrong with the D.

D-Bowe enjoyed a breakout game, with eight grabs for a buck sixty four and a TD. His 51-yard scamper in the final stanza was his third in as many games. He had three receptions for 20 or more yards at the Murph, and six first down grabs. D-Bowe is quietly booking a trip to Honolulu in February.

The Bolts are really missing NT Jamal Williams in the middle. The backup NT ain't picking up the slack, and the league is running all over the Bolts. Worse, QB Philip Rivers is gripping, and Norv Turner forgot to hand the ball off to LaDanian Tomlinson after 116 first half rushing yards. Norv is well on his way to getting fired ---- again.

Donkeys at Ponies:

Indy continued on their inexorable win streak, pounding the Donkeys with a physical rushing attack. Donkeys head coach Mike (the Rat) Shanahan decided to go unconventional, with a defensive alignment that included four DEs, two LBs and five DBs. The alignment is called "Frisco", and it didn't work any better than anything else Denver has tried against the Ponies.

"I was afraid they would go no huddle, and we wouldn't be able to get Sam Adams' fat ass off the field in time," said the Rat. "These D-linemen all weighed less than 270, and Sam weighs that with one foot on the scale." Adams was on the inactive list, and decided to go over and order the entire right side of the menu at the trendy St. Elmo's Steakhouse, a few blocks away. He nearly caused a stampede when the local cow population heard he was even coming to town.

"We had to figure out what they were doing," said Colts coach Tony (Hume Cronyn) Dungy "Once we got a chance to look at the pictures and everybody got comfortable, we got in our minds we're going to run the ball. We had all of our cocoons in the pool for this game."

Cocoons weren't needed as Joseph (Live and Let) Addai and backup Kenton Keith combined for 216 yards in 29 carries. TE Dallas Clark (Bar None) caught a couple of sweet TDs just to keep up his Pro Bowl ballot count, and the Ponies crushed and rushed for another win over the Donks.

LAGNIAPPE

Selfish Play in the Jungle?

Marvin Lewis employed an unconventional defense against the Chowds on Monday night, then claimed the loss was because the team was "selfish." One has to wonder how the Bungals go into a game with only four LBs in the first place. The loss of third WR Chris Henry is hurting their offensive output, and they seem to be "a team in disarray." Looks like Jerry's Kids are about to tank the season, after having high hopes for a playoff berth.

Dog Fighting in the ATL

Fox Sports commentators called the Jynts punter the oldest player in the league at 41. Morten (The Great Dane) Andersen is ticked, and is expected to file a grievance with the AARP. The Great Dane hit four of five FGs en route to Atlanta's win over Houston. "It's fun to score points in crucial situations and help us win," the Great Dane said. "Would you like to join me for a Geritol and Gin?"

Plays of the Day

The Panthers David (U Can Drive My) Carr completed only three of his first 11 throws, but pulled a sweet summersault over would be tackler Derrick Brooks for a 15 yard gain. Carr used up all of his gas on the play, and the drive stalled, much like the Black Cats offense.

WR Andre Davis made a nice one-handed TD grab while in replacing André the Giant Johnson in Houston. Davis caught the rock over two DBs, cradling the ball in one hand under the arm of the cornerback, but the Slim Shadies failed to convert in the red zone, and Atlanta got their first win of 2007.

But the winner of the Play of the Day was Tony Romo, for a four yard run. Following a shotgun snap that sailed three feet over his head, The Place for Ribs kicked the rock while trying to recover it. He was just putting extra sauce on the meat, as he eluded two defenders, juke a third, and a fourth before running out of bounds. If Marion (The Predator) Barber hadn't been in awe of the run, Romo might've scored. Romo's Fran Tarkenton Special was one of the best plays of 2007.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK:

The ZOTW could go to Terry (Bottlegate) McAulay, who threw thirteen pieces of laundry in the lggles at Jynt's imbrogio. The Iggles' O-line was in flux with the loss of starter Tra Thomas, but the calls were non-stop.

But the ZOTW will instead honor the NCAA, which is joining the *Sideline Shenanahans Game Show*. Florida head coach Urban Meyer is now on the NFL page on kicker icing, as he called timeout just as the ball was being snapped in the Gators loss. The Auburn kicked hit the GW FG twice and got the win. Apparently Meyers is more ready for a NFL head coaching slot than we thought.

Even CBS commentator Dan Dierdorf claims, "...it's in vogue now to call these timeouts. DD also went on to say, "You're not going to beat the vaunted Stillers D with two QBs at the helm. The long and storied history of the Still Curtain cannot be sullied by a team like the Cardinals.

After the Cards won, DD said, "This Arizona team is perhaps the best team in the NFL. I don't see any way that Matt Leinart will be kept out of the HOF when he is eligible. He's simply too good to be denied."

THE LOOK AHEAD:

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

Detroit at DC (-3)

The Caddies have never won at DC, going 0-20. The Genocide Victims are coming off a bye week, looking to establish themselves as a contender.

Detroit needs to suck it up and run the football if they want to win. The NFC Least is turning into a running division, Eli Manning notwithstanding. This brand of physical football is both the key to winning and losing for all of the teams in the East.

If Megalo Martz can shelve the ego and run the rock, look for Pickna to continue to put up big numbers as the Motor City (S)Hitmen keep pace with the Pack.

Tampa at Indy (-10)

The Corn Kings are quietly racking up some wins, using a strong running game to eat clock while Jeff (Jerry) Garcia deadheads his way to Hawaii. Indy look to shuck the Kings after having played three very physical games in a row. This game is a rematch of a fabulous MNF shootout from a few years back, when Manning shucked the Kings with late night heroics.

Major injuries in the win over Denver included Marvin Harrison (knee), LB Rob Morris (knee), Bob Sanders (ribs) and Live and Let Addai (shoulder). It will be mighty tough to beat the physical Corn Kings with half the team in the hospital.

Tampa OT Luke Pettigout is out with a knee, and Garcia will get happy feet in the pocket. He will keep one eye on DE Dwight Freeney while looking downfield. Tampa still covers, as the Ponies injury bug makes them break stride and throw a shoe.

Blitzburgh at Seattle (+8)

The Stillers look to be ticked off after losing in the Desert last week, while the Shehawks won a physical division game against the Niners. Unfortunately, Troy Polamalu and Hines (57) Ward are injured, and the Toilet Tissue Curtain is vulnerable.

This one could come down to coaching as Mike The Walrus Holmgren takes on rookie head coach Omar Epps of the Stillers. Epps was comical with the game on the line in Phoenix, looking nervous while folding and unfolding his arms. With S Troy Polamalu and NT Casey Hampton hurt, he has good reason. Plus, backup NT Chris Hoke was knocked cold after taking on the Edge helmet to helmet.

The Shehawks use trickeration with backup QB Seneca Wallace to cover in this one. Arizona exposed the Stillers and the underrated Shehawks defense uses the knowledge to bring the Stillers back to the pack in the AFC playoff race.

Browns at Chowds (-16.5) Pepto Bismol Upset of the Year

Well, you knew it would come to this one. The Look Man likes this matchup because of the dreaded Look Ahead Factor. The Chowds travel to Dallas in Week Six for a possible matchup of undefeateds.

After scouting the Chowds last Monday, it is pretty obvious that New England plays cover two with a soft middle. Any team with a great TE and a decent running game can beat them by playing ball control and not turning it over. The Browns meet the criteria, as do Dallas and Indy, so forget about New England's dreams of 16-0.

The Browns shock the world by beating New England at Gillette, ruining Roger (Rabbit) Goodell's plan for a beefcake calendar featuring Tom (Zoolander) Brady and Tony Romo. Browns cover the ridiculous spread and win, prompting the NFL to investigate Romeo Crennel for installing cameras in the opposing cheerleaders' dressing room. The Look Man ain't hating on Romeo, who last got some ass when his fingers tore through the toilet paper.

Baltimore at Frisco (+3.5):

The revenge mojo is strong in the NFL, and this week will be no different. Former Ducks D-Co Mike Nolan and QB Trent Dilfer face Brian Billickgoat and their old mates. It's also the second road game in a row for the Ducks, so watch the Dilfer pickle their defense. Frisco.

Bolts at Donkeys (+1):

This is a tough matchup that might decide the AFC West early. Norv Turner needs to run the football and then run it some more. Bolts win and turn their season around by allowing Rivers to get sacked and injured.

Bears at Cheeseheads (-3)

Bears Fan is turning his postseason hopes to the Cubbies after falling three games behind Breen Gay in the NFC Norris. While everyone complains about the QB situation in Chicago, the real story is the injuries to the Monsters of the Furniture Mart defense. The Marc Columbo leg whip in the Dallas game knocked DT Tommie Harris out, and they can't get off the field on third down.

Having said that, the Pack can't run the football. It's only a matter of time before The Pope begins throwing picks, and it starts this week. Bears cover and win, tightening up the NFC playoff race.

Pokes at Bisons (+10) [MNF]

The wounded Bisons look for respectability against a juggernaut, while Romo wants to open up a combo Buffalo wings and ribs franchise. Buffalo is too wounded to offer up any blue cheese dressing as Dallas wins to stay undefeated.

Bungals at Bye(-14):

Nuff said.

EPILOGUE

The Chowds have developed a mean streak, going for a 4th and one while up big on the Bengals. They continue to throw long after the game has been decided, and their fans travel well. The Look Man witnessed Chowd Fan taking over Pall Bearer Stadium in the fourth quarter, nearly causing several fights.

The Football Gods do not smile upon this type of hubris, and the Chowds do down like free beer. Look for them to stumble this week against the spunky Browns, and again in Big D in Week Six.

Peace,

The Look Man