

## **The Look Man Report 2007**

### **Week Nine: Manhattan Style is New England Style**

*“If you can eat while doing it, it’s not a sport” - Jeremy Schaap, ESPN broadcaster*  
*“Have you ever seen baseball??” - Michael Smith, in response*

#### **PROLOGUE**

The 2007 NFL season screeched into its official mid-point in Week Nine, but the season has been anything but auspicious. While the New England-Indy game lived up to the media hype for a change, the tightly contested game served to underscore just how poor the 2007 season has been. Irrespective, the Chowds are the new Yankees, spending wildly in an over-arching pursuit of championship jewelry.

Teams either win big, or lose sloppy games that could have easily been won. Kick returns for touchdowns has become so commonplace that even the lowly Bungals have done it. Adrian (AP) Peterson wrote another story on running the football, going over 240 yards rushing for the second time in 2007. Bolts CB Antonio Cromartie etched his name into the NFL record books by returning a missed FG 109 yards to the Hizzie. Cromartie now has two TDs in two weeks, a pace which would obliterate Jerry Rice’s career record.

All in all, despite the increase in the salary cap to \$110 mil per team, veteran players who contribute on special teams are being kicked to the curb in favor of youngsters who cannot tackle. The net impact is sloppy play, records being broken on a weekly basis, and a general lowering of the standard of play. In other words, business as usual in professional sports.

Still, in the words of Parcels, the NFL “is what it is”, whatever that means. What it means to the Look Man is that fair or foul, there have been some sensational plays made in 2007, and the LMR will review them in preparation for what should be a rousing Play of the Year award at season’s end.

The Chowds-Indy and Seattle-Cleveland games were solid, but there are far too many bad games in 2007. Even the Flex Schedule won’t save fans from some real dogs, and the Turkey Day schedule will be blacked out for folks without NFL Network. Instead of the glory days of the NFL, it seems like we have a few good teams, and a lot of mediocre ones.

Without further complaint, Week Nine:

#### **WEEK IN REVIEW**

##### **Chowds at Indy (+5) [Game of the Eon]:**

For the first time in 2007, 9-0 New England failed to cover the spread. Not only have the Chowds been dominating teams, they rebounded from a ten point fourth quarter deficit to upstage the defending world champs. They beat Indy and the Zebras, who saw things no one else did. The Zebras are booked to appear on NBC’s Phenomenon, right next to illusionists Chris Angel and David Copperfield.

The Ponies wasted a 226 yard performance by Joseph (Live and Let) Addai, failing to convert in key situations. Reggie (Millionaire Playboy Bruce) Wayne dropped a TD pass, and the defending champs uncharacteristically scored FGs in the red zone instead of TDs. Without super weapon Marvin Harrison, they somehow refused to get the rock to TE Dallas Clark (Bar None). With all due respect to the new Snickers TV ads, real football fans know that Clark Bar is the confection upon which the Ponies feast.

The Chowds head into their bye week at 9-0, leaving the rest of the league shaking their collective heads. One now has to wonder whether New England can run the table, owing to their

weak second half schedule in comparison to the rest of the league. While Dallas and Indy are getting into the meat of their season, New England can count on playing the Jets and Dolphins. Even the Blitzburgh game will take place at the Blade in Beantown, and the groundskeepers have already begun watering the field to slow down the edge rush that gave Tom (Zoolander) Brady trouble in Indy.

The Look Man does owe an apology to Chowds Fan. Despite getting jobbed by the Zebras early, New England played sixty minutes of ball, winning a tough road game. This game is only the second good team they've played, and they're 2 and 0 in those matchups. Irrespective of the hype and the gratuitous love from the Zebras, New England really is a team for the Ages.

#### *Bungals at Bisons:*

The Bungals were predictably bad in Crapchester, allowing Marshawn (Smores) Lynch to go over the century mark in rushing for the first time. Smores also tossed in a passing TD since he was at the campfire. With the Bisons' return of JP Losman, it was hard to blame Dick Jauron for going with a real passer in the red zone.

The Bungals are now in a must win situation again. They head to B-more, where they have had good success. The home fans have already tossed in the Growl Towel, so the Ugly & Black have nothing to lose.

#### *Browns at Shehawks (+1.5):*

The Browns played in an epic that nobody saw outside of C-Town and She-Town. The OT epic featured Braylon Edwards dropping nearly every pass that came his way, while Jamal (Bam Bam) Lewis pulled a Bettis, scoring 4 TDs while racking up only 40 rushing yards. Bam Bam averaged about 2 yards a carry, but still saved the day for the Brownies.

Shaun Alexander struggled behind a dinged up O-line, but Matt (Hair Club for Men) Hasselbeck put up good numbers. He passed all over the Ugly Dawg D. The Shehawks blew it in OT by going for a 4<sup>th</sup> and one inside their own fifty. That, ladies and gents, is why Mike (The Walrus) Holmgren will never win the big one again.

The Browns carved out a nice home win, and now face off with the Stillers for first place. Cleveland hasn't won four in a row since the days of the Pandemonium Palace. Meanwhile, the Shehawks look to solidify their lead in the NFC Worst against the Niners.

#### *Pokes at Iggles:*

Romo proved that he is worth every penny by destroying the Iggles in Week Nine. Ribs King teamed with Terrell Owens to put on a spread that will likely clinch the NFC Least.

McNabb, on the other hand, reverted to his lack of health due to a substantial Dallas pass rush. Andy (The Walrus II) Reid coached like he was on drugs, and the Iggles are now playing for pride in the woeful NFC.

#### *Baltimore at Blitzburgh (MNF):*

The Stillers' 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration featured Hall of Famers galore as they demolished the Dumpster Ducks in the national spotlight. Bradshaw, Mean Joe, Franco, Rocky Bleier, and Mel Blount were just a few of the luminaries. Blount lived up to his name when he declared the Baltimore offense embarrassing in an interview.

The Stillers unveiled an economical throwing offense that capitalized on turnovers. LB James (Henry) Harrison was elected to a third term after turning in a Hall of Fame career in one evening. The Prez stripped McNair twice, picked a ball off and generally conducted an unimpeachable performance. This just in - - - this guy is good every year, until he gets his annual season-ending

injury. It's little wonder the Stillers cut loose Joey Porter (Paints). Paints is better with his mouth than with his pads.

## **LAGNIAPPE:**

### *Kellen is Jellin'*

Kellen Winslow Jr. was featured on ESPN E-60 piece during the week. The piece, conducted by Michael Smith, discussed the lacerated kidney, spleen, and torn up knee that kept The Soldier out last season. Winslow could've been the Comeback Player of the Year in 2006, but for Drew Brees. Instead, he is now leading the Browns to a potential playoff spot by playing with sheer guts and determination on a rebuilt knee.

His Week Nine performance against the Shehawks was reminiscent of his Dad's postseason epic in Miami. Look for him to do more good things en route to Honolulu in 2007.

### *AP 296*

Adrian Peterson locked up the Rookie of the Year award while posting a new NFL single game rushing record. He is on pace to shatter Eric Dick-Dawg Dickerson's rookie mark of 1800+ yards, despite a supporting cast that is weak. What he has is LT McKinney, LG Steve (Starsky &) Hutchinson, and Ivy League C Matt (Groening) Birk, who mow down the line at the point of attack. AP's speed makes pursuing DBs a back story as he refuses to even look to the side during a run.

Look for the Swedes to pick up Donovan McNabb in 2008, making them a serious competitor. McNabbsty will rejoin former OC Brad Childress, one of the ugliest coaches in the NFL. Childress is so hideous that he was turned down for a spot on Hair Club for Men's new TV spots.

### *Guys Gone Wild*

The Play of the Week competition was heated in Week Nine. Here's a summary of the contestants:

- *Antonio Cromartie, CB San Diego – 109 FG Return in Bolts at Swedes*
- *Maurice (MoJo) Jones-Drew – returned a KO for a TD early, then drilled a New Orleans DB who attempted to return an end zone INT after the pick sealed the game. MoJo knocked the guy into next Tuesday with a hit that said, "Look Man! You won the game, now let's not get silly." This move in addition to returning a KO 100 yards. MoJo's was one of four kick return TDs in one day and Devin Hester didn't even suit up;*
- *James (Henry) Harrison, LB, Blitzburgh - went wild in the Stillers-Ducks game, with a career in a night with sacks, picks, strips, fumble recoveries, and a nasty hit on S Ed Reed;*
- *Jason Witten, TE Dallas – posted about 30 yards of YAC after two Iggles defenders attempted to tear his head off on the tackle. Witten gave up his helmet, then ran with the wind blowing through his hair, nearly scoring a TD. Witten suffered a bloody nose on the play, but officially entered his name in the Mark Bavaro Hall of Great TEs with the play.*
- *Hines (57) Ward – lights out hits on B-Mores LB Ray (Ray) Lewis and S Ed Reed. MNF producers must be getting memos from the league, because they refused to show replays of Hines 57 and Santonio (John) Holmes drilling Ravens downfield late in the game. Hines 57 will be getting a letter from the Commish for his taunting following his concussive hit on Reed, but the Stillers WRs may be the best declating artists in the NFL today.*
- *Gary Brackett (and the Union Gap), LB Indy – incredible, diving pick of Zoolander's pass, that set up a nice scoring drive for the Ponies. Brackett laid out for the ball with great focus, then demonstrated his agility by getting up and taking off with it. Brackett may be one of the most underrated LBs in the AFC. The Ponies allowed overrated LB Cato (Green Hornet) June move on in free agency, largely due to the fact that Brackett and Kieho are better pass defenders.*

The number of great plays seems to be on the rise in 2007. Perhaps the NFL will assemble a video called *Guys Gone Wild* and promote it for insomniacs on late night cable.



Coming soon to NFL Network?

### ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

The Chowds-Ponies official had this one locked up from the get-go. Why the NFL would install a rookie zebra for the biggest game of the decade? John (Steve) Perry broke out his best *Journey* impression, calling bogus pass interference, catches out-of-bounds good, and generally looking like he was being chased by a lion on the Serengeti. Though replay overturned the most egregious calls, the players nearly erupted in fisticuffs after every snap. This behavior is a sure sign that the Zebras are blowing it.

NFL Zebra guru Mike (Pariah) Pereira defended the selection of the rookie zebra for this game, stating that three other officials on Perry's crew had worked Super Bowls. The Look Man ain't buying this particular brand of nonsense, as the usually flag free Chowds were whistled ten times for 146 yards. The ultimate downside is that Perry's crew swallowed the whistles in the fourth quarter, when New England's offensive tackles began going defensive, with takedowns on nearly every pass.

Gene Steratore got an honorable mention for giving Matt (Hair Club for Men) Hasselbeck a first down when he was clearly short of the sticks. In an interesting development, the Look Man discovered that OT reviews are automated, and the booth reviewed and overturned both this and the subsequent fourth down try. Luckily, the Browns were facing uber-coach Mike (The Walrus) Holmgren, who never saw a coaching decision he couldn't blow. What coach goes for fourth and one inside his own fifty yard line in OT? Other than Marvin Lewis, that is.

John Perry, *shoulda been gooo-oonne!* Now he's the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week**.

### THE LOOK AHEAD:

Week Nine features several battles for first place as the Browns, Jynts, and Donkeys all play for a share of the division lead. The Ponies are faced with a brutal second act to the Chowds game as they travel to San Diego.

The week rounds out with the Hornheads at Cheeseheads, Iggles at DC, and J-Ville at Flaming Thumbtacks. Here's the Look Man's take on the week ahead:

### Browns at Stillers (-9.5):

The Browns are looking to return the 34-7 drubbing put on them in Week One of the season. Unfortunately, the road to four wins in a row is blocked by the Stillers at Ketchup Field. If you saw what the Stillers did to the poor Dumpster Ducks on MNF, you know how tough that can be. Perhaps LB James (Henry) Harrison will be trying not to reveal his secret true identity in this one.

Derek (Neo) Anderson is hoping LB James (Henry) Harrison doesn't turn into Agent Smith or his attempt to conquer the Matrix will be thwarted. Of course, if Braylon Edwards keeps sneaking peaks at the secondary instead of catching the rock, it won't matter. Edwards has dropped nearly as many as he has caught, and he is second in TD receptions only to Randy (the Chronic) Moss.

Kellen Winslow would like to follow up an epic performance against the Shehawks with another strong outing, but his knee and shoulder are pretty banged up. The Look Man likes the Browns to cover after the Stillers' emotional outing on MNF. Still, it's tough to tell whether Romeo Crennel's coaching will have Cleveland's dawgs jumping from the Budweiser Clydesdale wagon into the front seat of the Miller Lite beer truck.

### Pokes at Jynts (+1.5):

The Pokes head to the Big Apple, where the Jynts look to avenge their entertaining Week One loss. The Jynts dropped 35 on the Pokes in Big D, only to lose by ten. After winning their last six consecutive, they believe they can beat Romo and TO into submission.

They may be right. The Starheads struggle against teams with good TEs. The only question is whether Jeremy Shockey qualifies. Shockey has the curse of the U, where NFL TEs go to struggle. He and Winslow are shadows of their collegiate selves, and now the mantle has fallen up Greg (Gregulator) Olsen in the Chi.

The Pokes used to struggle in road blue, but they will likely wear white in the Meadowlands. Moreover, their run defense is suspect, and the G-Men have an excellent tandem in Brandon Jacobs and Reuben Droughns. Expect the Pokes to beat the Jynts en route to a classic showdown with Breen Gay in the postseason.

### J-Squareds at Flaming Thumbtacks (-4):

The 'tacks are winning ugly and the J-Squareds are just ugly. J-ville hopes starter David (The Fugitive) Garrard can return from a high ankle sprain, but that would be a mistake. With Houston and Tennessee struggling, and Indy possibly losing in Bolts-ville, The Fugitive would be best suited to avoid this physical defense while getting healthy for a December stretch run.

The Thumbtacks' defense has not allowed a TD in seventeen post-turnover possessions in 2007. They may be without DT (Uncle) Albert Haynesworth, but this D is brutal. Uncle Albert is not so sorry, and he may be the most underrated DT in the NFL. Thumbtacks win, and look for a tie with Indy in the AFC South Division.

### Ponies at Bolts (+3.5) SNF:

The NFL schedule makers have no sense of humor at all, as the Super Bowl champs face off with the best 4-4 team in the NFL. San Diego lost a look ahead battle with the Vikes only a week removed from destroying Houston. The Look Man likes the Bolts in this one, but only because the Ponies lost a heartbreaker last week.

## **EPILOGUE**

Two quarters are in the books, with two remaining. As New England proved, it's a sixty minute game. History proves it's also a sixteen game season, and teams that win in the cold end up with jewelry on their fingers.

If your team can't run the ball consistently, perhaps it's time that they started. While the media loves a front runner, the team that finishes best is the one to watch.

Just ask the 2005 Stillers, who won consecutive games in the regular season to preserve their playoff hopes. That Stillers team won three wild card road games en route to Super Bowl XL in the D, so please do yourselves a favor: Don't believe the Hype.

Peace,

The Look Man