

The Look Man Report 2007

Week Twelve: Thor's Twins

"Nothing was normal about today. We tried to make it feel the same, but I found myself thinking about Sean and imagining him out on the football field playing free safety for us." – Washington LB London Fletcher, on the shooting death of 24-year old Pro Bowl safety Sean Taylor.

PROLOGUE

In the epic film *Hunt for Red October*, US submarine communications officer Courtney B. Vance believes a Russian sub commander is doing high speed maneuvers through a deep underwater channel. He alerts his captain that the Red October will emerge between two stone towers at the mouth of the channel. The towers, known as Thor's Twins, become the rendezvous point for an underwater battle between Sean Connery and Scott Glenn.

The NFL has a parallel to Thor's Twins. After three blowout games on Turkey Day, part two of the twins appears this Thursday night, as Breen Gay invades Big D on an NFL Network exclusive. Brett (The Pope) Favre and Tony Romo (The Place for Ribs) headline a Titanic struggle between two NFC powerhouses.

The winner will likely have home field advantage for the playoffs. With temps dipping below zero in Wisconsin in January, the Pokes will be playing for keeps. After all, the fifth day of the week is named for the Norse god of war.

Sunday Night's game between the Iggles-Chowds matchup was high drama in spite of the largest point spread in NFL history. The 24 point underdog Iggles nearly ousted New England from the ranks of the unbeaten, but for an idiotic fourth quarter interception thrown by AJ (Touchy) Feely. New England went on to win 31-28, but not until they were exposed as having a soft and slow defensive middle.

In other NFL news, the Browns, Chargers, and Religious Icons all refuse to go away. Each won big last week, perpetuating their postseason dreams. Though the latter two appeared in the playoffs in 2006, Cleveland is hoping to right their ship with meaningful games in December, leading to an appearance in January for the first time since 2002.

The lack of quality QB play has not diminished the amount of drama, as mediocre teams make a play for the post-season. The NFC has Minnesota, Chicago, the Jynts, and Arizona all trying to keep hope alive.

Over in the AFC, Tennessee, Buffalo, KC, Denver, and Houston experienced palpable hits to their playoff hopes. With J-Ville and Indy setting up a stretch run, it could be a wide open *Hunt for Green January*. The AFC Souse teams could knock each other out of the mix, opening the door for a multi-tiered wild card tiebreaker.

Without further bad movie puns, The Week in Review:

WEEK IN REVIEW

Houston at Cleveland (-3.5):

The Browns hooked up their fifth consecutive home win as the Slim Shades came to C-town last Sunday. After Houston went up 7-0 early, the Browns came barking back, scoring two TDs to make it 14-10 at the half. Derek (Neo) Anderson threaded the needle with some sweet TD passes to Kellen Winslow and Braylon Edwards in traffic. When an NFL QB drills the ball into tight coverage, it's known as *throwing it through a keyhole*. Neo must've used some Matrix special effects on these babies, because there were agents everywhere.

In the second half, the Browns went straight smashmouth on both sides of the rock. Jamal (Bam Bam) Lewis ran for a buck thirty four, while the safeties delected TE insert name]. The Barking Dawg D played *ball go, I go*, picking off Houston QB Matt Schaub when they weren't sacking him.

Cleveland's defense has been surprising in the last few weeks, ringing up sacks and turnovers at crunch time. The loss of rookie CB Eric Wright proved inconsequential as Brandon McDonald shut down Pro Bowl WR Andre Johnson in an unexpected tour de force. McDonald also went Hamburglar, snatching a pick from Schaub to set up a score.

The safeties are beginning to play ball too, with cleverly disguised blitzes and wicked sticks. While the Browns shouldn't read too many of their own press clippings, they are clearly positioning themselves for a stretch run to the postseason. The ground game is beginning to click, and Derek Anderson is in the top five AFC QBs. That class just happens to include Tom Brady and Pete Manning. If Neo can get his footwork together, the Browns could be headed for something special. Cleveland Fan is now asking, "Brady who?"



Mayor McCheese bats one down

Flaming Thumbtacks at Bungals:

Tennessee came into the game limping after a tough loss to the Denver Donkeys in the previous week. The Bungals were also bruised following (Johnny) Carson Palmer's four pick performance against the Deadbirds. Who knew the game would turn into a blowout that might have saved the Bungals' season?

Mr. Tonight Show threw three TDs to Chad (The Dentist) Johnson, doubling his 2007 total. After the first TD, the Dentist shot a promo courtesy of the CBS endzone camera. He can expect the league to extract some gold from his mouth in the form of a hefty fine. It may have been worthwhile, since Chad emerged from a TD funk that started around the time his head began hitting the turf on a regular basis.

The most compelling part of this victory was the Cincy defense, which pounded Vince Young and held the Thumbtacks to six points. Young is the latest victim of the Madden Curse, having appeared on the cover of the 2007 version of the video game. He reinjured a knee against Denver, and appears to be struggling to find his groove in his sophomore season. One more bad game and Coach Jeff Fisher may have to start former Carolina hurler Kerry (Tom) Collins.

Marine Mammals at Stillers [MNF]:

Ketchup Field was a pile of hot steaming, or would that be cold steaming? Why do the Stillers allow HS football championships to rune their field each November? The fresh sod combined with several inches of rain to obliterate the field markings. The NFL needs to step in before we see another punt stick in the mud like a tee shot in the slop.

Joey Porter (Paints) was nearly called for unsportsmanlike just for talking smack the entire game. While Porter Paints had his best game as a Marine Mammal, James (Henry) Harrison, his replacement in da Burgh, punished Miami QB John (Stein)Beck. The rookie QB looked like a character from *Of Mice and Men* in the backfield, and took several sacks that knocked the Phish out of field goal range.

Worse yet, Steinbeck was enabled by Coach Cam (Candid) Cameron, whose play-calling was straight Allen Funt. Candid Cameron tried to go wide several times in the slop against a Stillers D that is far too fast for that nonsense. The Stiller won ugly, setting up their typical late season drive to the playoffs.

LAGNIAPPE:

Celebrity Girlfriend Equals - - - Pro Bowl??

The Look Man has posited that a QB with a celebrity girlfriend was a harbinger of failure. Tim Couch, Cade McNown and Jeff Garcia proved the hypothesis, imploding after their hookups with Playboy and Penthouse centerfolds. But this season, Tom (Zoolander) Brady and Tony Romo (The Place for Ribs) are actually succeeding in that circumstance.

The Ribs King has been knocking boots with diva Jessica Simpson, but his biggest test may come this weekend against his boyhood idol Brett (The Pope) Favre.

A Simpson family insider spilled the beans, saying that Ribs King got the digits by working Jessica's dad Joe. "Joe and Tony have been friendly for a while. Joe is a huge Dallas Cowboy fan, and Tony has always had a crush on her -- he even said on his Web site like a year ago that it was his dream to date her," said the source.

"Jessica has been in Nashville and Dallas recording her new country album. When Tony found out, he called Joe and said, 'I know she's not dating anyone right now, can I take her out for a drink at least? Jessica said it was OK for Joe to give Tony her number and they hit it off. They've been dating for a couple of weeks now, and Jessica is so happy. She's been texting everyone about how great he is. Of course, so has Terrell Owens."



Ask any mermaid...

One has to wonder that the hypermammarifous Jessica could even work the keyboard after her questioning whether 'chicken of the sea' tuna was really chicken. By all measures, Romo is enjoying the spotlight in spite of tempting Fate by dating the leggy bombshell from Texas. After

purported dalliances with Britney Spears, Sophia Bush, and *American Idol's* Carrie Underwood, Romo is obviously scoring on and off the field.

Chowd Fan Boos Victoria Secrets Model

Angry New England fans apparently disliked Victoria Secrets model Selita Ebanks during a halftime panty giveaway. When Selita appeared on the Gillette Jumbotron, she received a loud chorus of boos. Apparently Chowds were ticked that Tom Brady's girlfriend Giselle Bundchen wasn't the model in question.

Though Bundchen did attend the game to see main squeeze Blue Steel, she has severed her VS ties in a contract dispute. VS was ticked that Giselle might lose her girlish figure while carrying Brady's spawn.

One has to wonder what Chowds Fan was thinking. Any woman that wants to give the Look Man some panties is welcomed with open arms.



Got milk?

Jets Fans Sanctioned for Boorish Behavior

It seems Jets Fan has gone Bourbon Street and the League doesn't like it. In yet another case of Fans Gone Wild, Jets Fan has taken up the Big Easy chant, asking young women to reveal their assets at halftime. Failure to comply with the chants resulted in being pelted with plastic bottles, invectives, and saliva.

An elevated concourse provides the stage for public displays of semi-nudity. Security looks the other way (figuratively), as these displays unfold. The NJ State Po-Po provided security after the Stillers game, in which several women were abused. No arrests or ejections were made, according to George Zaftig, Meadowlands CEO.

"It was in recognition of a problem that had been gaining a little bit of momentum that we have observed lately," Zaftig said in an exclusive telephone interview with the Look Man. "Frankly, we were hoping to see some flesh after the disappointing performances by the Jets and Jynts on the field. The fans were even chanting 'T-I-T-S, Tits! Tits! Tits!', led by that guy with the fireman's helmet. Let's just say we wanted to nipple, er nip this thing in the bud."

The story reminds the Look Man of similar behavior at Mile High, when a buxom blonde couldn't keep her shirt on after each Donkey score. The fans went wild, cheering madly whenever Denver was in the red zone.

After each score, all attention went to the cheerleader, who promptly obliged during the high scoring affair. When Security asked fans to point out the offender, fans directed them away from the action. The funniest part was that it was only a preseason game.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Instead of the usual, the Look Man is taking time out to fete one of the NFL's worst Zebras. The Look Man finds himself giving kudos to Pete (Mushroom) Morelli, who actually came out of the shade and got one right in B-more. When Phil Dawson's kick bounced off the uprights, the crossbar and then back on to the field, Morelli consulted the Replay Official before deciding to take matters into his own cap.

Dawson's 51-yarder bounced off the upright, through the post and out after striking the stanchion. Field judge Jim Saracino's call was reversed in part due to back judge Keith Ferguson's assessment that the ball cleared the crossbar.

The back judge actually wanted to call the FG good, but he refused to show up the field judge. If you notice, the zebras line up directly under the uprights on FG tries. When the kick is made, they look at each other, give a nod to indicate the call, and then signal in unison. On Dawson's kick, they had several seconds of indecision before initially reaching the wrong call.

When it's done correctly, officiating can be a sweet example of team play. The best ones do it seamlessly, making quick, accurate calls in milliseconds. They almost always look for help from their teammates if they have doubt. The next time you see a zebra look to the side for the deft affirmative nod of another official, think about the coordination required to get the calls right.

Mushroom got the play right, earning him a reverse **Zebra of the Week** award for bravery. Mushroom asked the media afterwards if he got it right. When told that he did, he seemed very pleased indeed. Perhaps there is hope for Ron (A Lyin' in) Winters?

Honorable mention goes to Mike (The Rat) Shanahan, whose kicker icing TO tactic bit him in the ass against Tennessee. K Rob (My) Bironas missed on the first try, but drilled a 56-yarder following the ill-timed and ill-advised timeout.

The kick won the game after the replay official refused to allow a sweet grab by TE Bo Scaife inside of two minutes. ESPN showed two or three good replays of the Scaife catch, but the zebras refused to review it. Investigation Field continues to live down to its reputation. Fortunately, The Rat continued his idiotic moves the following week at Spaceship Field in Chicago. He may be on the hot seat after a year full of horrible coaching moves.

THE LOOK AHEAD:

December marks the delineation between contenders and pretenders in the NFL. Good teams win games in the twelfth month, while bad teams succumb to fatigue and pressure. Week 13 has an excellent slate of meaningful games as follows:

Breen Gay at Dallas (-7) [Thursday Night Special on NFLN]:

Green Bay's run game is maturing, and the Look Man still has questions about Doomsday Lite. Just as the Chowds lack of speed in the middle was exploited last week, the Pokes could get a wake up call from the Cheeseheads. Roy Williams will need to get on Trigger if he wants to stay with Jennings and the Pack TEs. The Multi-Colored Fish Wrap did a flattering piece on T-New, so look for him to be tested as well as the Dallas nickel vs. the spread offense.

On the other hand, Dallas is clicking on offense despite the injury to WR Patrick (Crayola) Crayton. The Cheeseheads are badly wounded on defense, with Kabeer G'Baja Biamila and Charles Woodson hobbling. Breen Gay expects Nick Collins, their injured safety to return. It won't matter unless TE Jason Witten has to help block on passing downs. The Pack still has underrated DE Aaron (Mein) Kampman, who may make antipasto out of RT Marc (Lt.) Columbo.

The Pokes will likely wear their ridiculous throwbacks tonight on NFL Network. Due to the dispute between the NFLN and cable companies, only a third of the nation will feel the need to regurgitate at the sight. The Pokes haven't exactly lit it up wearing the giant star unis, and this game is a big one.

The game will come down to turnover differential. The media is desirous of seeing a venerable QB whose wife is a cancer survivor play against the Chowds in February, so look for lots of zebra love on the road for Favre. The Look Man thinks the Cheeseheads are too nicked up to win, but the rematch in January may be different. Take the Pokes, but not the points to your local sports bar to see the game.

Cleveland at Arizona (EVEN)

The line is this game is indicative of how tough a contest it will be. Arizona defense is very underrated, and Kurt Warner and super WR Larry Fitzgerald (Kennedy) went schoolyard the last two weeks. Warner threw for a career best 484 in an OT loss after carving up the Bungals with his left hand.

On the other hand, the Browns are playing better defense of late. The problem will be bad matchups of small Browns corners versus big AZ wideouts. LFK is a beast, and Anquan Boldin stretches the field for RB Edgerrin (Jesse) James.

Arizona has developed one of the best home field advantages in football. They have already beaten Denver, Detroit and Blitzburgh at Retractable Grass Field, and the Browns could get victimized by a top five NFC defense if they don't keep their heads on a swivel.

The real key will be whether the Browns can stand up to the physical hits that AZ puts on them. Without their best DB, Adrian Wilson, and All Star LB Bertrand Berry, LB Karlos Dansby (#58) is taking up the slack. The Deadbird D punishes receivers and RBs, and TE Leonard Pope is solid.

Look for the Browns to go vertical early, then pound the rock against the Cards. K Neil Crackers has become a head case of late, so Dawson wins this on a long FG in the high altitude of Scottsdale. Browns, baby, Browns.

J-Squareds at Indy (-6.5):

J-Ville punished pretender Buffalo last week, and now heads to Indy with bad intentions. DT Marcus Stroud should be back for this contest, and the J-Ville D is playing lights out. The return of QB David (The Fugitive) Garrard turns this contest into an instant classic.

Pete Manning is looking good despite having half of his team in a MASH unit. Somehow, the Ponies have won big without (Starvin') Marvin Harrison. Good thing, because their team is hurting.

The Look Man likes the Jags, even without LB Mike Peterson. The Fugitive and his big receivers prevail in a smashmouth game, knocking Indy back into the Wild Card race. Ironically, New England is so far ahead that it won't matter because even AFC division champs will be forced to go to Foxboro. J-Squareds in a close one.

New England at B-More (+20.5):

The Good News: the Iggles offense provided a blueprint for beating the seemingly unbeatable Chowds. The Bad News: the Iggles defensive blueprint for shutting down New England can't be replicated unless you have two shutdown corners, extreme LB speed, and a QB that can throw the ball 30+ times with accuracy.

Chowds' LB Roosevelt Colvin was placed on injured reserve, ending his season. Team legal counsel Dewey, Cheatham and Howe announced Colvin had a foot injury, though it appeared trainers were working on his arm on the sidelines.

"It was announced as a foot? Was that what (we) announced? If that's what (we) announced, then we'll stand by that announcement," said Coach Bill (Dr. Evil) Belichick. "Also, Tom Brady will not start next week in Baltimore."

New England signed LB Chad Brown, 36, as well as WR Troy (Downtown Julie) Brown. Dr. Evil has yet to decide which one will replace Colvin at LB. It won't matter as Wes (Lawrence) Welker catches double digit balls over the middle at M&T Bank Stadium. Welker was heard to exclaim, "A one, anna two, anna hit it boys!," to the collected Iggles defense last week after catching 13 for a buck forty-nine. Chowds win to set up a duel with the Stillers in Week 14.

Hornheads at Detroit (+3.5):

God's Team continues to struggle after losing badly again. QB Jon Pickna is getting killed because O-Coordinator Mike (Megalomaniac) Martz has thrown the running game under the Escalade.

Minnesota's defense got on the map last week, even without uber CB Antoine Wingfield. Pickna's propensity for baking up turnovers hurts them again this week, as the Hornheads win with economical QB play, a strong running game and ball-hawking defense. Hornheads.

Jynts at Chicago (+1.5):

(T-)Rex Grossman pulled his own petroleum out of the fire with an OT win over Denver last week. T-Rex had a boatload of help from Devin Hester (Prynn), who posted two TD kick returns courtesy of Mike (The Rat) Shanahan's stupidity. The Rat also tossed in a third down pass when Chicago had no timeouts. The incomplection stopped the clock, setting Chicago up in good field position in regulation.

The loss of RB Cedric Benson (the Butler) may actually help the Bears, who replace him with the Other Adrian Peterson. OAP runs hard and is a better receiver than the Butler.

The Jynts are struggling to avoid a repeat of last season's swoon down the stretch. Eli threw three pick sixes against Minnesota, and this Bears team could duplicate that effort. Still, the Look Man likes the Jynts defense to shut down the Bears offense, and right their ship for at least one week.

Cincinnati at Blitzburgh (-7) [SNF]:

The Stillers suddenly look vulnerable, and face the suddenly dangerous Ugly & Black on Sunday night. The Bungals own the Stillers at Ketchup, having won three of the last four in Stilltown. Will it be ketchup on their Three Way, or tournedos of Tigger?

The Vaunted Bengals Offense blew up last week, with Mr. Tonight Show being reintroduced to the Dentist. The D has gotten healthy again, with (Ahmad) Rashad Jeanty back in the lineup; D'hani (Bowtie) Jones can now play his more natural outside LB spot. Bowtie punished Vince Young last week, and is now looking for more sartorial splendor in the grass of Ketchup Field.

The worry though, is that the Bungals run D is still as loose as the bowels of a ninety year old man on Ex-Lax.

The Stillers should be able to run in the quagmire, but it negates their defensive speed advantage. The Nati has no speed on D, but with Troy Polamolu and Santonio Holmes nicked up, they should be able to hang.

The Look Man likes the Nati to cover and win this one, forcing a tie atop the AFC Asgard. The Browns might slip into the playoff mix as a division champ, owing to Blitzburgh's daunting remaining schedule.

New England at B-More (+20.5) [MNF]:

Don't expect the Dumpster Ducks to threaten the Chowds' quest for perfection. Their defense is good enough, but Kyle Boller (Hat) doesn't scare anyone. Even after a tough game against the Iggles, the Chowds rebound and punish Baltimore, which might be the worst team in the AFC North. ESPN hosted the lowest scoring game in 38 years of MNF history last week and one of the biggest blowouts this week. Ugh.

EPILOGUE

New England was exposed last Sunday night, but it won't do much good for the balance of the league. In addition to the aforementioned prerequisites, one must also have a serious edge rush, solid blitz package and a cool head coach. The Look Man doesn't believe the road-challenged Stillers have what it takes to defeat the Chowds. It is not only tough to win at the Blade, it's nearly impossible with the crowd noise and the Zebra love.

The Chowds will lose in a road game to a team that is clearly inferior. The loss of LB Roosevelt Colvin for the year is a big blow. Ro Colvin is the only pure LB in a group that is overrated and over aged. In addition to weakness in the middle, the Chowds will now be forced to use safety help in the flats.

The large number of middling teams in the AFC virtually guarantees that a team with 11 or more wins will end up getting knocked out in the first or second round of the playoffs. It happened to San Diego in 2006, and they just might be in position to return the favor this season. Irrespective of whether it's the Bolts or someone else, somebody gonna have a problem after getting knocked out of the postseason.

The '72 Marine Mammals squad that went 17-0 has a special place in the Look Man's heart. The champagne popping ceremony has gotten ugly in recent years, but that team won with average players who performed above their talent. They were not the NFL equivalent of the NY Yankees.

Just as the Look Man doubts the Chowds will go undefeated, he sees the Marine Mammals winning at least one this season. And that one might be on December 31 against the Nati.

Peace,

The Look Man