

The Look Man Report 2007 **Week Twenty-Two: Do You Like Apples?**

"The offense--the strength of this Patriots team--got debaled."-- Emmitt Smith, ESPN commentator, HOF Running Back and president of the Dallas MENSA Chapter

PROLOGUE

One of the Look Man's favorite movies is Good Will Hunting, starring Beantown native Matt Damon. In the movie, Damon's title character, a townie, competes with an Ivy Leaguer for a girl. He faces off with the memorable:

Will Hunting: "Do you like apples?"

Clark: "Yeah."

Will Hunting: "Well, I got her number. How do you like them apples?"

Damon actually wrote and starred in the film with fellow Beantown buddy Ben Affleck. It's unlikely either would have written the script on Sunday, when their beloved Chowds went down to ignominious defeat in Super Bowl XLII.

Ladies and Gentlemen, THAT was a Super Bowl game. The first forty-one featured some great comebacks, some three point wins, but never a fourth quarter like the one we saw on Sunday. And never a defensive performance even close to rivaling the Jynt's virtuoso exhibition. The Jynt's effectively shut down the Chowds high powered offense, hitting and sacking Tom Brady over 20 times.

The Look Man is not really hatin' on the Chowds, he simply doesn't like a team attempting to buy a ring. Submitted for your consideration is the following, to be read aloud using your best Hubie Brown impression: "You have the highest payroll in the sport, you're going to have tremendous upside. Offensively, you're at the top of your game, blowing teams away with points. If you can shore up an aging and slow defense, you have a chance to win multiple championships while going 19-0. What's not to like?"

Afterwards, the debate raged on whether this was the greatest Super Bowl game of all time. There was little debate on whether it was in the top five, but the Look Man makes it his all time fave. Instead of tons of offense and a blowout, this one was about defense. The New England O-line sent three guys to Honolulu and the G-Men made them look like amateurs. Take away an MVP quality performance by Wes Welker, and this game would've been a blowout. The Chowds couldn't run, pass protect or throw for 3.5 quarters. Wow.

So, the New York Jynt's are champeens of da world after a 10-6 regular season. The Chowds only blemish on a spectacular season comes on the biggest stage. The Marine Mammals are still the only resident of Perfectville. The only down side is that we had to put up with ex-convict Mercury Morris yet again. Other than that, this one was special.

Without further gushing, the Look Man Super Bowl review:

THE BOWL IN REVIEW

A lot of casual NFL fans don't care for defense, and they must have been disappointed on Sunday. This game featured some of the best D of the year, with the G-Men providing the most. Although New York was down 7-3 at the half, it seemed like they were dominating the contest.

The G-Men changed the game by opening with a ten minute ball control drive. That drive set the tone, including a nasty Brandon Jacobs run over backup safety Brandon Merriweather. It was Brandon squared, and the bigger Brandon won.

Merriweather is best known for beating an FIU player with his helmet at the Orange Ball last year. He will now be known for allowing Jacobs to bounce him four yards before he could get some help on the tackle.

They obviously wanted to keep it close for a fourth quarter run, but the Look Man thinks they played it too tight to the vest. O-Coordinator Kevin Gilbride was nearly sitting on Eli's lap for most of the contest.

The Jynt's D-line dominated Brady, hitting him early, late and often. When your QB is getting blasted after throwing a bubble screen, you know you're getting pressure. By the fourth quarter, the Chowds were keeping TE Benjamin Watson in to help LT Matt Light. Light was getting beaten badly by Umenyiora, forcing New England to throw short. The pressure forced the Chowds away from the five receivers spread, and right into Spagnuolo's trap.

The bigger question might be why the Chowds called fifty-three passes (attempts plus sacks). The answer is that they couldn't run the football. They held hard running Boney Maroney to 39 yards rushing, and netted just 229 passing yards for a ridiculous 4.3 yards per attempt. This yards per attempt compared with 8 YPA during the regular season for Zoolander and the Chowds.

New England beat the Jynt's for two TDs in their Week Seventeen tilt, but the G-Men blew only one coverage in the Bowl. And that one was a slip that allowed Randy Moss to score late. By hitting Brady 23 times, they shortened the duration of coverage for their DBs. They also used deep linebacker drops to punish Wes Welker. Welker paid for nearly every one of his record tying eleven grabs. He was concussed at least once, getting up with rubbery legs.

Chowd Fan decried the lack of pass rush by free agent LB Adalius Thomas, but Thomas has not been a factor since he hurt his knee in the Week Five game vs. Cleveland. Thomas hasn't been the same player since, and Seau, Bruschi and Harrison couldn't even get close. Jacobs and Hedgecock picked up the blitz beautifully, giving Eli time and nice throwing lanes. Eli parlayed that time into becoming the QB wearing the number 10 to ever to win the Bowl. It's usually a number 12 that gets the W.

Despite awful punishment, Brady arose from the mat and threw a fourth quarter TD to Moss that looked like the game winner. Zoolander has done it so often, but this one showed incredible heart. Even Bruschi and Seau started making out on the sidelines like the game was over.

But Elijah Manning was not yet done. He engineered a masterful game-winning drive that included the top Super Bowl play of all time. His third and five bomb to Tyree was one for the ages. The winning TD pass to Plexiglass was simply icing on the cake.

You can say what you want about Eli, but he showed some testicular fortitude in 2007. Remember when he separated his shoulder against Dallas, and they said he'd be out for four weeks? He played through, and you know he took the needle to get by. Plus, he has sharpened his footwork, and he is stepping into throws. The Kid is going to be a good one, and (don't laugh) could actually get more rings than his big brother. NY has bigger market dollars to spend on draft picks and quality free agents.

A few SB XLII Bullets:

- Belichick left before Eli took a final knee, and it was reminiscent of Sam (Wicky Wacky) Wyche against the Niners. Sam I Am ran onto the field before the game winning extra point, and Niners boss Bill Walsh had to tell him to go back to the sideline. In Dr. Evil's case, Zebra

Mike Carey met him before his in-game handshake with Coughlin, notifying him that there was still one second left.

- Speaking of clock management, did you see Coughlin blasting the officials for stopping the clock in the 3rd/4th quarter? The Jyntz got a key first down around the 8:11 mark, and the zebras stopped the clock. Since the clock doesn't stop on out-of-bounds plays outside the last five minutes of the half and game, Coughlin correctly told the officials to wind the clock. He put them on notice that he wasn't going for any banana in the tailpipe.
- NE Safety Rodney Harrison was involved in the two big pass plays in the 4th quarter: TE Kevin Boss' 45 yarder (beyond Adaluis) and the Tyree catch, where he attempted a Gladiator style move to stop Tyree from catching the rock. Harrison is now guaranteed footage on every future Super Bowl highlight reel.
- The Patriots are definitely going to get their frequent flyer miles in next season. They play the NFC and the AFC West, including at Oakland, San Diego, Seattle and San Francisco. They also get their first look at Indy's new Lucas Oil Stadium. Of course, they have an historically weak schedule every year in the AFC East, and they will play just one home game against a winning team: Blitzburgh. New England will have just four games against 2007 playoff teams, one of the league's easiest schedules.
- The Look Man has one beef about the MVP selection in the Super Bowl. It could easily have gone to Wes Welker, who put on a show with eleven grabs to tie Rice's record. The Manning selection was defensible, especially in light of his Houdini move and game winning drive. Still, the Jyntz D-line made it possible. Justin Tuck had a strong case with 6 tackles, two sacks and fumble recovery. The entire D-line could have been selected as they played their guts out. Let's think about giving the MVP to someone other than QBs from here on, shall we?
- Did anyone see Spagnuolo use the Chowds' own favorite LB blitz against them? Teddy Bruschi loves to turn his back, then blitz right up the center gap. When Kawicka Mitchell did the same thing to drill Brady, the Look Man nearly lost it. Spags was masterful.
- Not to be cruel, but is anyone else happy that Seau did not get a ring? Junior acts like he just saved the world on every tackle of every game. His act is getting nearly as old as he is, and the Look Man couldn't help but giggle that he didn't get to perform that act even once in Super Bowl XLII.

LAGNIAPPE

Super Bowl XLII was not the only game in town, as free agency begins to heat up. Tender offers are due to players by February 29th, so stay tuned for NFL blips on the radar.

Filthy McNabbsty

It now appears that Donovan McNabb will be staying in Philly. B-More doesn't want to pony up more dollars on a free agent QB with a history of injuries, and the Iggles are not sold on Kevin (Korn) Kolb. Even RB Brian Westbrook came out in support of beefing up the receiving crew. If the Iggles can actually get a WR (Ocho Cinco is available!), they can contend for the NFC East.

The NFC East became the NFC Beast in 2007, with three teams in the postseason. Washington may struggle with a new head coach in 2008, but Dallas and New York will remain formidable. Philly will be improved with a healthy McNabb, who quietly stands behind only Brady and Peyton in winning percentage. The Look Man sees Dallas take a little step sideways with its coaching debacle (right Emmitt), but the Black and Blue Division is the quality of the NFC Conference in 2008.

Jynts D-Coordinator Steve Spagnuolo decided to turn down the DC job, and if the G-Men can resign key free agents, they will be a force for years to come. They're young, talented and deep, and that spells trouble for the rest of the NFC. Like years past, a strong and deep division bodes well for future playoff success for all of its teams.

What a Mind Job!

Derek (Neo) Anderson is demanding Romo-like numbers in Cleveland. Ironically, he performed poorly in big games, and he may be getting the big head (apparently he appeared in several SB week events). Neither Romo nor Neo have proven they can win on the biggest stage, and rags to riches stories don't often end well.

The Look Man is not advocating starting Brady Quinn (Medicine Woman) in 2008, but he would leverage Quinn against Anderson by using the highest tender instead of a new contract. It's simply too early to tell whether Browns Fan should tie his future to a kid that had one productive season. Plus, Cleveland could parlay 1st and 3rd round picks into a killer D-lineman or ILB. If Neo has a great 2008, you happily pay him \$67 million and hope he doesn't start dating a celebrity.

Revenge on the Sith

Belichick is getting killed for leaving the field with one second remaining in Super Bowl XLII, but he should be getting grief for a 4th and 13 try. Dr. Evil showed he has little faith in the guy who replace Adam (The Winemaker) Vinatieri. Instead of going for a makeable 49 yarder in a dome, he let Gostowski twist in the wind.

Dr. Evil is now facing more travails over Spygate amid former videographer Matt Walsh claims that he filmed St. Louise's walk-thru in 2002. The tapes that were destroyed by Roger (Rabbit) Goodell went back to only 2005, and the Chowds claimed that was the extent of their cheating. Should the NFL find that the Chowds lied about that, it would mean Belichick would be suspended for at least four games in 2008.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Mike (Dancin with the Stars) Carey put on a show of his own, with only one blown call. DWTS was forced to review and overturn a 12 men on the field penalty on a punt. The Look Man questions whether this play should even be reviewable, as the clock stops on the change of possession and subsequent TV timeout. The challenging coach has over three minutes to review the tape and challenge the call. It's downright unfair.

Carey's best call might have been the one he didn't make. When Eli Manning was getting roughed up by three Chowds on the historic Tyree catch, Carey swallowed the whistle. Carey said he was never close to whistling the play dead, but that if either Patriot had pulled Manning backwards, he might have had no choice.

"It didn't quite happen," Carey said. "But boy it was close. It was like a scene out of 'The Planet Earth' or National Geographic, where it's a lion jumping on the back of a wild horse," Carey said. You could see him just desperately trying to pull out and somehow he did. For some reason he turned around and ran back deeper in the pocket. Lucky for him that he did. He had a little safe haven."

That safe haven allowed Eli to make the greatest two player play in Super Bowl history. Folks are calling it *The Catch II*, but the Look Man prefers, *The Snag*. Tyree held on to the rock despite getting undressed by Rodney Harrison, using his helmet to control the ball. Harrison was actually holding his other arm while attempting to knock the ball out. What a play. What a catch. What great officiating.

Carey and crew called an excellent and unobtrusive contest. The best Zebras are nearly invisible, jumping in only to maintain order and police the contest. Carey called few penalties, and even forced Dr. Evil to endure the Look Man's favorite play by the Jynts by putting one second on the clock at the end.

Carey's crew did miss a facemask or two (one on the opening kickoff), as well as some holding. But all in all, it was the most unobtrusive officiating the Look Man has seen in the Big Game. It certainly put the Stillers-Shehawks crew to shame. Congratulations to Mike Carey for a job well done. You are the Look Man's **reverse Zebra of the Year** for a great job on the biggest stage.

EPILOGUE

The old adage in the NFL is that defense wins championships. The last three championship games bear that out, as Blitzburgh, Indy and the Jynts made the opposition wither. Teams out there should be taking notes, drafting solid D-linemen and linebackers. Otherwise, they will end up losing 51-45 shootouts, or winding up 10-6 and out of the playoff picture.

The Look Man went long after one of the greatest championship games of all time. We'll do a season wrap with the Brand New Car Award/Pro Bowl next week.

Peace,

The Look Man