

## **The Look Man Report 2009**

### **Week Nine: Stay Thirsty, My Friends**

*“Chris Johnson showed some ‘gettin’-away-from-the-cops’ speed on that last run.” – CBS Analyst Gus Johnson on the ‘Tacks RB on a long run versus the Jags. Gus apologized for being racially insensitive for the remark, despite having been arrested for Dining While Black in Memphis*

We’ve reached the official midpoint of the 2009 season, and it has been a ride. The Look Man has joined other notables in getting fleeced by Vegas. Teams are blowing close games at a record pace, and the Zebras seem part and parcel of the conspiracy in recent weeks.

After Vegas got killed by teams covering double digit spreads early, most of the chalk games have been producing of late. There are two bona fide undefeated squads remaining, but the number of horrible teams has ballooned. Jay (The Knife) Cutler joined Kurt Warner and Jake Delhomme as QBs who’ve thrown five picks in a game. Tampa got off the schneid in their Creamsicle unis last Sunday, and join Cleveland, Oakland, St. Louise, and Detroit in the Battle for First Pick overall.

The season has been weird, but it’s going quickly. Week Ten features a lot of hype for the Chowds at Colts, and it may be justified. We’re about to separate the Good from the Bad and the Ugly, and it’s not a moment too soon for the Look Man.

#### **LAGNIAPPE:**

##### **Got a little Captain in You?**

The NFL has banned a guerilla marketing campaign before it really got off the ground. The League found out that Captain Morgan Rum planned to donate to the Gridiron Greats Assistance Fund for each time a player copped their pose following a TD. The GAF is a nonprofit that helps retired NFL players.

Iggles TE Brent Celek kicked off the campaign with the pose following a TD against the Pokes last week. Captain Mo had proposed donations of ten large during the regular season, jumping to 25 and 100 for the postseason and Super Bowl.

The No Fun League has struck again, this time short-circuiting the players’ intent to help their indigent brethren. Instead of worrying about this nonsense, the League should set up a retirement plan for guys like former Stillers center Mike Webster, who was living in his car prior to his Hall of Fame induction. Web even had to borrow a tie that matched his hideous yellow jacket in Canton.

##### **Bear Down**

The Monsters of the Furniture Mart are doing their usual mid season slide. Once teams figure them out (usually in Week Six), they begin to look pedestrian. Chicago has historically been a running team predicated on solid defense. Now, they’re a passing team predicated on nothing.

Jay (the Knife) Cutler had a reverse tour-de-force that few saw last night at Frisco. He threw three picks before the coaching staff began calling running plays exclusively. Jay then used audibles and his pastry knife to bake up a couple more turnovers, including the clincher in the endzone to end the game.

To date, he's thrown a boatload of redzone picks, which is the reason Denver sent him packing in the first place. Afterwards, he won't even look at the still photos of the defensive alignments, and often shrugs when asked why he's turning it over.

Upcoming games against good running teams will seal their Fate in 2009. Chicago could even lose to the Lambs, but either way, they have a fork protruding from their backs.

#### Halfway point:

Here's the view at the midpoint of the season as regards the playoffs:

#### AFC

Indy, New England - are looking solid and will cruise to the postseason. Cincy, Stillers, Denver, SD, Houston, B-More – four of these teams will make it, but it's anyone's guess which four. The Look Man still believes the Bungals will find a way to blow it, especially after losing WR Chris (Slim) Henry to a broken arm.

#### NFC

Minnny, Arizona, New Orleans – are all shoe-ins. Dallas, Philly, NYG, SF, Green Bay, ATL, and Carolina – again, three of these teams get in, but which ones? The Look Man ain't buying the Dallas hype machine, and still harbors hope for the Black Cats to turn it around despite Delhomme's troubles. Dallas still plays at New Orleans, and San Diego, and finishes at home against the Iggles in Week Eighteen.

#### Money for Nothing, Chicks for Free

Cleveland has been killed for being a punching bag and the worst team in the league. The criticism is justified and it comes from the top. Browns owner Randy Lerner inherited the team from his dad, and MBNA CEO Al Lerner. To date, Randy is on the hook to former coaches and GMs for \$21 million, plus another \$6 mill for former OC Rob (CHUD) Chudzinski. The Cannibalistic Human Underground Dweller got an extension late in Romeo Crennel's reign of terrible, and is now being paid to eat comely young women who venture too close to his lair.

If the Browns fire head coach Eric Mangina, the number rises another \$9 million for guys who aren't in town anymore. That's a lot of dough for a team that won't pay PR/KR Josh Cribbs, and benched QB Brady (Medicine Woman) Quinn to avoid an \$11 million bonus.

If your team is struggling and you wonder why, you need to closely examine the front office. The Browns have now eclipsed the Bengos as the worst front office in the NFL.

### **ZEBRA OF THE WEEK**

#### Walt Coleman (Lantern) - Pokes at Iggles:

The Look Man was flabbergasted to see Coleman doing the NFC Beast matchup, largely based upon history. The Camping Coot is known for refusing to overturn calls on replay, irrespective of the video.

It happened again on Sunday, when the Iggles failed on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and one to convert. Replay clearly showed McNabb dotting the beak on the Eagles midfield logo, thereby garnering the first down. Instead, Coleman upheld the call, costing Andy (The Walrus II) Reid a timeout and his last replay challenge.

Tailpipe GB Shaw complained about the Iggles DBs holding WR Roy Williams. That complaint would be justified if Roy could actually catch the rock. Williams couldn't catch a cold naked in Alaska, but after complaining all week, he got double digit balls from Romo, nearly costing the Pokes the win.

Alberto (Stay Thirsty My Friends) Riveron – Dumpster Ducks at Bengos:

The Look Man chuckled when he noticed the Most Interesting Zebra in the World doing the rematch between B-More and the Nati. Riveron is best known for the Monday Nighter in Miami, where he was booed roundly for the first penalty announcement in Spanish during Hispanic History month. He also once called a penalty for scoring a TD, just to see how it felt.

In this one, Mr. Thirsty and his crew convened for each and every penalty against the Ducks. The highlight was his theatrical display on a 4<sup>th</sup> down measurement that was later overturned by replay challenge. In all, he called 16 penalties, of which 13 were accepted. Can you say, "Vegas?"



*I drink Dos Equis...*

The call this week was tough, and there were numerous also-rans. Based upon the defensive strength exhibited by the Nati, the call goes to Coleman Lantern. Walt Coleman, you are the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week!**

**PLAYS OF THE WEEK:**

Marine Mammals at Chowds: Randy (the Chronic) Moss' stiff-arm to score on a long catch-and-run TD. The Chronic sent the Fish DB to his knees and scampered away for a game clinching score. Brady is beginning to look like Brady again, and the Chowds are 7-1 following a bye week under Belichick.

Stillers at Denver: Big Ben's sweet 25-yard TD pass to WR Mike Wallace for the game clinching score. Big Ben bought time and zipped the rock in there on a night where he went 21 of 29 with a 116 passer rating. The Stillers beat an underrated Denver defense, and Big Ben is having his best season ever. Not bad for a guy with two rings already.

*Ravens at Bengals:* Chad (the Dentist) Ochocinco's sideline grab between two defenders in the first quarter. Mr. Tonight Show shouldn't even have thrown this ball, but the Dentist picked it out of the air for a scintillating catch. Ochocinco also nearly pulled off another special sideline catch, but failed to get his feet in bounds.

## **THE LOOK AHEAD**

### *Dallas at Breen Gay (+3)*

The Pokes beat the Iggles last week in a nail biter decided by (Steve) Austin Miles. They travel to Flambeau to face a Cheesehead team that is giving up sacks like a cheerleader on barbiturates. Poor Aaron Rodgers might not even make it to halftime against Doomsday Lite, which has even gotten sacks from NT Jay Ratliff.

The wildcard factor could be the play of shutdown corners Al Harris and Charles Woodson. Though they've never faced an astronaut wideout previously, they do have experience with Roy Williams from his days in Detroit. The key will be whether the LBs can handle the run game while shutting down security blanket Jason Witten.

The Pokes are a little too high in the saddle following a win over the Iggles. Look for the Pack to cover in this one. The Pokes might win, but it will be a slugfest. Pack covers the number as Dallas has been reading too many of their press clippings.

### *Atlanta at Carolina (+1.5)*

The Look Man has been a Jake Delhomme apologist all year. Jake was leading the league in boneheaded picks until last night. Both teams need this win to keep pace with the amazing Icons in the NFC Souse Division, and both Delhomme and Matty Ice have struggled.

The Dirty Birds are vulnerable to the run game, and the Black Cats have a good one. If DeAngelo (Brown Sugar) Williams can hold on to the rock, Carolina rolls the up and down Falcons. Carolina.

### *Cincy at Blitzburgh (-7)*

The Nati has become media darlings following their sweep of Baltimore and late game heroics. After seeing the Bears get throttled in successive weeks, the luster is off the 45-10 mauling by the Nati. It's been twenty years since the Stripeheads have swept two division opponents. If they win here, they have a walk in the cake in upcoming games with Cleveland, Oakland, and KC.

Big Ben looks good and the running game is coming around in Blitzburgh. The rumor mill has the Stillers picking up former KC RB Larry Johnson based upon the performance of Fast Willie Parker. Parker is said to have lost it after racking up big carries the last few years.

The Stillers go to their classic style: pass early to get a lead, and then salt it away with the run game. The Bengals defense is better than advertised, but its strength is the defensive line rotation. Tomlin and the Stillers go no-huddle to address that weakness, and they end up atop the AFC Asgard Division. Stillers.

### Philly at San Diego (-1)

The Iggles are still offensively lazy, and now face their AFC mirror image. Phillip Rivers was a little too high after beating the G-Men last Sunday, so look for him to struggle. The Wingheads get uber-back Brian Westbrook back after two weeks in Concussionville.

The Bolts still can't stop the run, and they are doing it with smoke and mirrors. After falling three games behind the Broncos, they're back in the mix, but look for them to stumble. Norv Turner can't coach his way out of a wet paper bag, and Andy Reid needs a win to keep pace in the NFC Beast. Iggles cover and win on the Left Coast.

### New England at Indy (-3) [Football Night in America]

This game has been an annual rite since 2005 as the networks promote sweeps month. Tom (Zoolander) Brady and the Chowds bring their A game to the Ponies, who have struggled in the last few weeks. Despite close wins over Houston and the Niners, Peyton Manning has thrown the ball 50 times each week. Indy need more balance to win this one.

Indy gets RB Donald Brown back this week, but their secondary is a MASH unit. Safety Bob Sanders and LB Tyjuan Hagler are done for 2009, while DB Kelvin Hayden and K Adam (The Winemaker) Vinatieri both have knees.

On the Chowds side of the ball, LT Matt Light could return, but RBs Fred Taylor and Sammy Morris are out. The key to nearly beating the Colts is to run the ball and keep Peyton on the bench. That nearly worked for Miami, which lost despite possessing the rock for 40 minutes. Ditto for Houston and Frisco. It will be tough for the Chowds to run the ball, forcing Zoolander to challenge the rookie DBs for the Colts.

The Look Man has lost a lot of dough betting against Peyton this season. Not on Sunday Night, though, as Peyton always rises to the occasion under the lights. Indy covers and wins. Indy.

### Baltimore at Cleveland (-11) Monday Night Football

Baltimore has lost four of the last five, and Mangina announced that he is returning to Jane Seymour at QB. Put it all together, and the 11 point spread is justified.

Browns owner Randy Lerner attempted to avert a MNF boycott by Browns Fan by meeting with two representatives of the Dawg Pound. The game will likely be blacked out in C-Town, which doesn't seem fair. Any organization that would promote Medicine Woman deserves to have to watch the debacle that will ensue. Ducks cover and win, sending the Browns straight to the head of the class for Tim Tebow.

One has to wonder how Jon (Chucky) Gruden will come up with superlatives in this one, with the Browns stinking on ice and the Ducks having only Derrick Mason at receiver. Ducks.

## **EPILOGUE**

It's the Year of the Big Play in 2009, as we've seen:

- four runs for 50+ yards in the same game by two RBs (CJ and MJD) in Jags-Tacks;

- Iggles WR LeSean Jackson leading the league in 50 yard TD receptions;
- Pokes WR (Steve) Miles Austin producing 6 TDs in the last three weeks alone;
- Kick and punt returners averaging one to two TDs each week.

Because there's no salary cap in 2010, teams are cutting high-priced backups who provide depth in nickel, dime, and special teams packages. Special teams players are now rookies with little experience. The spread formation makes defenses vulnerable to long runs against huge, powerful backs. Missed tackles by DBs result in big plays.

The corollary of the spread offense is a record breaking year for sacks. Two guys have 10+ sacks already in 2009, threatening Michael Strahan's sack record of 22.5. Teams are gambling on the big play, and QBs are paying the price with picks and sacks.

We're running out of time for a salary cap, and the loser will be the fans. The NFLPA is backing the UFL, but the league is gearing up for a lockout. The net result could be a surprise Super Bowl winner, and a year of unlikely front runners like the Nati.

Peace,

The Look Man