

THE LOOK MAN REPORT 2009

Week One – Kiss da Baby?

"The thing is, now Cincinnati's got to get the Stanford band on the field."- CBS analyst Dan Fouts, with five seconds left in the bizarro-world Denver victory over the Bengals

Week One was a real blast, with heart stopping action, hard hits, upsets, and yes, the Play of the Year. Minnesota, New Orleans, Dallas and Baltimore rolled up yardage and points in an unlikely departure from previous seasons. Typically, defense is ahead of offense on the field, as it takes time for offensive players to jell. Any more jelling and those four teams will be jellin' like a felon with Dr. Scholls shoe inserts.

Week One featured the best play of the year with Brandon Stokley's *Immaculate Deflection*. We're now going to see if 16 teams are going to get into the win column or be slated for the home game in the postseason. 0-2 teams rarely visit the postseason, so the pressure is on.

Fantasy owners had a blast last week, with RB Adrian Peterson running wild in Cleveland and QB Drew Brees lighting it up. It feels like 2009 will be the Year of the Offense, with teams going video game on the scoreboards.

If you missed the Monday Nighter at New England, you missed a great game. For 58 minutes, the Bisons held serve. Then, KR Leodis McKelvin went nuts by returning a touchback and coughing up the rock. Even Kanye West thought that was a bad move.

The result was two TDs in two minutes as the Chowds pull a 'W' out of their posteriors. Dick Jauron has now lost three MNF games in the last minute of play. Jauron could be the first coach to get a version of the home game.

In other news, the injury bug has already begun to bite. Troy Polamalu had a career game going before being injured in the second quarter. Brian Urlacher laid some serious wood on Green Bay, and he's done for the year. Donovan McNabb has a cracked rib, and could miss 1-4 weeks.

Injuries are part of the game, but you hate to see superstars go down. It takes the sensational plays that motivate a team right off the field.

Without further ado, the week that was.

Hah Fiyav!

The Look Man attends a lot of Bengals games. Usually, the game is a yawner, barely qualifying as NFL quality. But last weekend against the Broncos, the Look Man experienced a phenomenon - - - The High Five Guy. You all know High Five Guy, giving high fives to establish his identity as a true fan. Well this HFG was off the charts, giving the high five to every single person who passed his seat.

The funniest part was that no one could escape Borat. Every single person coming up the steps got the obtrusive high five, especially comely young ladies. Early season football is nice as the women haven't yet put away the summer gear and there's plenty o' flesh. Suntanned, halter-topped divas with high heels and blue jean mini-skirts pranced up, gave a momentary glimpse of concern at HFG, and then provided the obligatory high five with a grin.

It looked as if HFG was going to grab on the women, and the fleeting look of fear as they sized him up was pure comedy. Even funnier were the folks who refused to touch HFG, giving him a sneer and a deft turn of the shoulder to avoid any physical contact. They seemed overly concerned about H1N1, and with good reason.

In the second quarter, a comely Cougar got overly excited about the high five, missing HFG altogether and nearly falling into the lap of the Look Man. All in all, it was fun, and 99 percent of folks gave it up.

During the 4th quarter, HFG crashed and burned as the Bengals scored a TD to take the lead, ostensibly sealing the win. He attempted to jump up, caromed out of his chair and into the aisle, slamming his neck on the guard railing. He didn't get escorted out, but every person within 20 rows jerked around to look.

What a long strange trip...

With Donovan McNabb on ice for the New Orleans game and perhaps beyond, the Iggles signed Pro Bowler Jeff (Jerry) Garcia this week. Jerry is back in Philly after requesting his release from the Grayders. Though most folks thought he was cut, Garcia actually saw the handwriting on the wall, and decided to take his bhang on the road for a real playoff team.

McNabb was injured during a rushing TD in garbage time. A trailing defender kned him in the back on a rushing TD in garbage time. The game was in hand, and the hit was late, long after McNabb was on the ground in the end zone. Oddly, this was only one of many questionable hits on QBs in Week One. In a QB-driven league, the NFL front office simply cannot allow us to witness another season in which 50 different signal callers are forced into action because of injury. We've already had two veteran QBs throw 4 or more picks in a game, and it's only Week One.

Philly Phan is phickle, and if McNabbsty struggles with a broken rib, Philly Phan will be calling for Vick, Garcia or Santa Claus to replace him. The Look Man hopes McNabb will be back healthy, with fresh legs to take the Iggles to the NFC Championship.

The Monsters of the Training Room

Typically the Monsters of the Furniture Mart defense starts like a house afire before cooling late in the year. This season, the early losses of starting LBs Brian Urlacher and (Leaning Tower of) Pisa Tinasamoa mean the defense will struggle early and often. It may signal the beginning of a new era of Chicago Bears football, one in which instead of a dominant defense and a paltry offense, you have a gunslinging offense and a bend but don't break defense.

Gone are the halcyon days where you had a young core of Mike Brown, Tommy Harris, Urlacher, Briggs, and Tillman. These guys were supposed to dominant the NFC Norse for the next ten years. Instead, it looks like the end of the road, with Brown in KC, Urlacher done for the year, and Harris and Tillman battling perennial injuries. After seeing Cutler's impression of a gunslinger, one has to wonder if any team so conceived, and so dedicated can long endure.

Bears Fan hasn't yet yelled out "HE GONE!" after Jay the Knife threw four picks last week. If they want to win, they need to have better run-pass balance, but if they get down early, Jay will load up the six-shooters.

Browns Study

The Look Man didn't even have to watch the tape to know what happened Sunday in Cleveland. The Browns turned a halftime lead into a blowout loss because the Vikes lost respect for the deep ball, which stunted the running game. Look for more of the same as the Browns head to Denver in Week Two. That is why Quinn must go.

Quinn's final line: 21 completions for 205 yards, one TD, one INT. Dink and dunk. He took a QB rating of 74.1 over winning the ball game. Well, at least Jane Seymour's QB rating is higher than Cutler's 43.1 after one week.

Pyramid Buildings II

Sunday Night Football serves as the unveiling ceremony for the new Pokes facility. Though true fans saw the \$40 million scoreboard in the preseason, we will now witness the coronation of the House That Jerry Built. There's a great spread in the Multi-colored Fish Wrap weekend edition.

Jerry Jones is hoping that he'll have a 2-0 record to go along with his billion dollar house. Otherwise, this gamble may not pan out as well as the one he took when he bought the Pokes in the late 80's. The Starheads were losing a million dollars a week then, and Jones leveraged his personal wealth to buy them and Texas Stadium for a then-record \$165 million. The Pokes are now worth ten times that figure.

Though the Pokes have sold 97% of their home games via personal seat licenses, they held back 1200 tickets for the locals. PSL owners are ticked off after paying \$25 to \$100K for the right to buy a \$160 seat. "We were forced to eat beans and rice just to afford this, said one fan. "Then again, we always eat beans and rice, but it's the principle. That Jerry Jones is one bad hombre."



Queue the Darth Vader theme...

The Look Man believes that he and Genocide Victims owner Dan Snyder will form an unholy alliance that will spearhead the work stoppage in 2011. Now that the stadium is driving his debt service, he has no wiggle room for player negotiations. Further, his deep pockets make him particularly disposed to the cap free season in 2010. All in all, Jones is the Darth Sidious to Roger Goodell's Republic.

NBC will no doubt give us a tour of the facility, replete with commissioned art, granite countertops and a nine-foot bronze statue of Tom Landry. If the game matches the hype, we're in for a doozy.

PLAYS OF THE WEEK

This one has some serious competition including Adrian Peterson's spectacular 64-yard TD run, and Troy Polamalu's one-handed 1st quarter pick in the season opener. But the only possible winner is the 87-yard TD by Brandon Stokley in Denver at Cincy.

Gus Johnson call of the *Immaculate Deflection* added to his growing list of on-air "playgasms". The Look Man called his number, and Gus didn't come up short, sounding as if he was about to get arrested in Memphis again, while Stokley calmly ate clock by running parallel to the goal line.

The real crime is that Stokley only had one catch on the day after being more open than Seven Eleven. Geico Insurance has signed Stokely to replace the money with glasses in their TV ads. They're still keeping the theme song, *Somebody's Watchin Me* by Midnight Star.



'Oos this Stokley fellow??

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

With all due respect to Scott Green, who did Bolts at Grayders, this week's award is given to Jerome Boger, for Denver at Cincy.

Jerome Boger(mill) nearly ruined the buffet at the Harrow Club with his clock management and two bad holding calls on the second to last Denver drive. Plus, it looked as if Bengals CB Jonathan Joseph might have picked that ball on the down just prior to the Immaculate Deflection. Any way you slice it, the Bengals got a big time banana in the tail pipe from the zebras.

Bogermill inadvertently contributed to the Bengals loss after taking 20 minutes to fix the clock after the Ugly and Black went up 7-6 with 38 ticks to go. After a prolonged discussion with coaches, booth officials, timekeepers and Ann Landers, Bogermill issued a rambling, nonsensical explanation about how the Bengals were not charged a timeout since they requested a review on the 1st down non-TD call. No team can request a review inside of 2 minutes anyway. Why steal 18 seconds off the clock?

Green does receive dishonorable mention for overturning a perfectly good TD catch by Oakland wideout Louis Murphy. Murphy got two feet down, spun, dropped on his tailbone, and turned over with the ball. When he covered up the ball to protect it from the DB who was still harassing him, the ball slipped a little. And Green decided that meant no touchdown, even after review. San Diego won 24-20 on a draw play with 18 ticks remaining.

Jerome Boger, you are the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week!**

THE LOOK AHEAD

Cincinnati at Green Bay (-9)

Shootout is written all over this one, after the low scoring openers for both teams. The Bengals D finished 12th overall in 2008, and actually looks better in 2009, including the three safeties look with Chinedum Ndukwe, Roy Williams and Chris Crocker all playing in the same set. That Big Nickel look worked really well against Denver and Brandon Stokley last week.

On the other side, the Pack is loaded with LBs. Brandon Chillar is a monster, AJ Hawk needs a haircut, Clay Matthews III is psycho, and Nick Barnett is 'roid raging again after returning from an ACL.

Bengals WR Chad Ochocinco has already gone on record as saying he will do the Flambeau Leap if he scores a TD. While folks may chuckle at Chad, the Look Man wonders why Breen

Gay is the only team in the league that allows this ritual. Any other team would get an unsportsmanlike penalty for what they routinely do in Dairyland.

Green Bay wins, but the Bengals cover to send the Ugly and Black to 0-2, setting up the Stillers Bengals in Week Three.

Cleveland at Denver (-3):

Kyle Orton's index finger is still bad, but he may lose the glove on his throwing hand this week. The Donkeys didn't get the ball to Stokley until just before too late in Week One, and even then it was an accident. Stokley's numbers: 1 catch, 87 yards, 1 TD.

Look for the Browns to shut down the Donkey's run, forcing Foo Fighters front man to throw early and often. The Browns lose, but Medicine Woman keeps his job just long enough for Baltimore to break him in two next week on the road. Denver.

New Orleans at Philly (EVEN)

McNabb is day-to-day after broken ribs, so it's likely we'll see backup Kevin (Korn) Kolb. Korn has looked shaky in limited action and he now has both Michael Vick and Jeff Garcia breathing down his back.

Drew Brees is on pace to blow up Dan Marino's season passing record - - - again. This time, he has TE Jeremy Shockey healthy, as well as all of his receivers. What he doesn't have is a dominant running game, so the Icons will have to win shootouts all year again.

Look for the Iggles blitzing D to put the fear of the Lord in Brees, who makes the most of his weapons. New Orleans is tough at home, not so much on the road. The Look Man likes the Birds on a hunch in this one, which could be an NFC Championship preview. Iggles.

Stillers at Chicago (+3)

Bears QB Jay Cutler(y) was anything but sharp last week at Breen Gay. Jay the Knife threw six picks, but the Cheeseheads only hung on to four. Despite the fact that his receivers caused most of them, you simply cannot do that in the NFL. The Look Man has a rule: you throw three picks and you'll be sitting next to the coach, even if your name rhymes with 'Harv.'

The locals aren't calling for Jay's head yet, but it could get ugly after this one.

This just in: the Stillers can't run the football. Big Ben saved the day despite a horrible running game against the Flaming Thumbtacks that the Burgh should have lost. Truth be told, the Still Curtain hasn't been a running team since the Bus left.

Look for the Stillers to light up the Bears secondary, and then assemble a running game against the Urlacher-less MOTFM. Stillers cover and win, making O-Coordinator Ron Turner's voice crack when he talks about his QB.

Baltimore at San Diego (-3)

With former D--Coordinator Rex Ryan gone to the Jets, the Dumpster Duck D gave up 24 points to a KC team led by (Chief) Brody Croyle. Chief Brody nearly closed the beaches at Baltimore, so look for Phillip Rivers to go rogue, throwing bombs and eating license plates.

Two big problems: (1) the Bolts already thin O-line got busted up last week, and (2), the usually staunch front seven couldn't stop the Grayders from busting them up for nearly 200 rushing yards. These two factors favor Baltimore, which has an excellent front seven and ground game.

The Look Man is going to take Baltimore to cover, setting up a possible AFC Championship rematch. He just doesn't trust Phillip Rivers against Ed Reed and Company, and Bolts RB Darren Sproles can't stand up to a physical defense. B-more gets the square.

Jynts at Dallas (-3) Football Night in America:

The Jynts won a very physical game with DC last week, while the Pokes looked for real after rolling up nearly 500 yards of offense at Tampa. This game is the inaugural for the new Taj Mahal stadium in Dallas, so look for plenty of kicks to hit the scoreboard.

Tony Romo (The Place for Ribs) sauced it up for 353 passing yards against the Tampa Two last week. Before doubting whether he really misses Terrell Owens, we need a little more data. Most of the deep balls he completed at Tampa looked like blown coverages, and Tony has a bad wheel this week (ankle).

The G-Men didn't exactly look great at Washington, and rookie WR Hakeem Nicks is out for at least two weeks. Eli Manning got roughed up in a game that wasn't nearly as close as the score indicated. The schedule isn't doing them any favors, having to face two NFC Beast opponents in consecutive weeks.

The Look Man thinks this will be the Game of the Week, with the Jynts front seven over-matching the Pokes aging O-line. Still, Dallas has a habit of winning home openers in new stadia. The Look Man sees a push, with Nick Folk hitting a late one.

Oh, and watch out for Pokes wearing black and white uniforms. The Look Man has a feeling the Pokes Palace may receive a lot of home cooking in 2009.

EPILOGUE

Week Two is going to be interesting, with the Jynts traveling to Big D on Sunday night. That game should be the capper to New Orleans at Philly (no McNabb) and the Stillers at Bears (no Urlacher). Baltimore at San Diego rounds out the early games in a possible AFC Conference Champs preview. NFL Sunday Ticket – it's a good thing

We're going to find out something about each of these teams this weekend. It takes about four weeks for an offense to really jell, and for a team to learn its personality. While it's still too early to write any team off, the cream will rise in Week Two.

Peace,

The Look Man