

THE LOOK MAN REPORT 2009

Week Twelve – Party Crashers

"Great quarterbacks, good quarterbacks, make plays. Jay Cutler had every opportunity to make plays for his team last night and every opportunity he didn't. That's how I judge a quarterback: Either you make plays or you don't." – former Hornheads QB Fran Tarkenton on ESPN Radio 1000 in Chicago

The Look Man has been under the gun the last few weeks and he missed the chance to comment on Belichick's brain cramp, the Browns' miraculous come-from-ahead loss to the Lions and the Bengals dominance over the Stillers and Dumpster Ducks. He's back now, just in time for the stretch run.

This season has been nothing short of incredible, and December will likely be one to remember. The AFC features several teams still in the hunt near the .500 mark, including Baltimore and Blitzburgh. The NFC is less competitive but the Niners, Pokes, Jynts, Iggles and Falcons still have a pulse. Jake Delhomme may have killed the Black Cats with his 21st pick of the year courtesy of a broken digit.

The advent of Thursday night and Saturday games make it a fun month. The Pokes travel to the Big Easy on 12/19, and the Bolts play at Tennessee on Christmas Day.

The Bengals have surprised everyone with a playoff push. It would be the first time that a team from HBO's Hard Knocks actually assembled a playoff season in the year they appeared.

If that happens the Ugly & Black will become the Tareq and Michael Salahi of NFL teams. Like the Salahis, they won't have more than 15 minutes of fame if they do make it. The Bengals have beaten zero teams based west of the Mississippi. If this holds, they will lose to Minny, KC and San Diego, and end up with a 10-6 record.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Two games stood out for the Look Man:

Arizona at Tennessee - Terry (Bottlegate) McAulay

Bottlegate was actually decent until the last drive, allowing the Flaming Thumbtacks to convert three fourth down tries by ignoring some basic rules. Apparently, it is news to Bottlegate that it is illegal to actually tackle a defender pursuing the QB.

Vince Young did go all PHILLIP RIVERS on the 99 yard drive, but only because his line was holding. If you examine the brilliant TD catch by WR Kenny Britt, you will notice the RT actually has a handful of jersey while VY is throwing the ball. Perhaps it's true that McAulay Culkin is really Terry's love child.

Tampa at Atlanta – Walt (Disney) Anderson

Walt Disney went Phantasia on the last drive of the game, allowing backup QB Chris Redman TEN attempts to get a game winning score. Typically, a team gets only four attempts once inside the ten yard line, but Walt called defensive holding twice, each carrying a mandatory first down. Finally, Redman converted on fourth and five, sending the Corn Kings home in a salty mood. Atlanta had better hope that Matty Ice's foot is not badly hurt, or they're out of the postseason.

The **Zebra of the Week** award goes to Bottlegate McAulay, who has now ensured that Tim Tebow will make millions in the NFL. By proving that a mobile QB can win games, he and VY are not only sharing high fives, but commissions on Tebow's future salary.

THE LOOK AHEAD

Detroit at Cincy (-13)

The Bengals are in the driver's seat for the playoffs, having swept the AFC Asgard Division for the first time ever. They should cruise over the Cadillacs, who have only two in the W column.

Not so fast, my friend. The Stripeheads are about to go Tiger Woods, crashing their rig into a fire hydrant in a game that won't even be televised locally. The Look Man didn't like the body language with new hire RB Larry Johnson, who doesn't even communicate with Cedric (The Butler) Benson. The Butler's back this week, owing to two consecutive hundred yard rushing outings by his understudies.

Look for the Cadillacs to work over the Bungals secondary with WR Calvin Johnson. The Ugly & Black doesn't match up with taller receivers like the ones in Houston and Oakland. If Stafford can go no-huddle and keep from getting planted in the process, the Lions cover. Lions.



Look! It's Carson Palmer!

Oakland at Blitzburgh (-14.5)

Big Ben returns after yet another concussion, and head coach Mike (Omar Epps) Tomlin has already been putting the troops through Hell. Omar knows that the Stillers need at least four more quality wins to make the postseason.

Hines (57) Ward voiced the attitude that everyone else on the Stillers had been feeling: Ben should have played in the biggest game of the season. Hines 57 apologized to Ben and the team this week, but not until he had revealed a crack in the Still Curtain. It's no secret that Rapelessberger is unpopular in his own locker room.

Essentially, he returned the favor to Ben, who complained during the off-season that he would like bigger receivers. Unfortunately, Limas Sweed's size hasn't translated into success, and Big Ben is stuck with smallish guys who hate his guts. Stillers.

Tennessee at Indy (-6.5)

Vince Young and the Flaming Thumbtacks are the Flavor of the Week after a fantastic last second win over the Cardinals, but they let down this week. Besides the fact that Peyton Manning is in the zone, the secondary in Tennessee is overmatched.

One has to wonder why it took an 82-year old owner to force Jeff Fisher to do the right thing. And the Look Man ain't talking about putting on a Peyton Manning jersey and saying, "I just wanted to feel like a winner." Look for the Colts to eliminate their nemesis from playoff consideration with a win. Ponies.

New Orleans at Washington (+9.5)

The Icons looked white hot with Drew Brees tossing a perfect 158.3 versus the Chowds last Monday. The problem might be that they were too high for that game. The defense was playing fantastic ball on pure adrenaline in the Superdome. That kind of game typically leads to laying an egg against an underrated defense in DC.

The Genocide Victims have little running game after losing two backs to the IR. Rock Cartwright leads the charge. Still, this one smells like a Pepto pick, as the GVs cover, but still lose to the Icons.

Dallas at Jynts (-2.5)

Dallas squeaked by the Genocide Vix, and then blew out the Grayders in their annual Turkey Day Two-fer. Now the Pokes are battling their annual December swoon as they head to the Meadowlands to face a G-men squad that has fallen apart.

The Jynts have been crushed by injuries, with Mike LB Antonio (Ambrose) Pierce as the latest casualty. Uber back Brandon Jacobs has stunk up the joint and change of pace back Ahmad Bradshaw has two bad ankles. Their secondary is a MASH unit that has given up big plays galore in the passing game.

Dallas would like to turn this game into *The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, mainly as retribution for Eli Manning's actions in the first meeting. Eli scrawled his name and the score onto the visiting locker room wall in the Jones Mahal, along with the words, "first win in the new stadium."

Tony (Decembe)Romo would like to clown the Jynts, giving head coach Captain Kangaroo the respect which has evaded him in Big D. The G-Men have not forgotten that Flozell Adams went Geigo on their knees in the last meeting, tripping and injuring two linemen.

Look for the Jynts to rise up and punk the Pokes, setting up a desperate run for the playoffs that ends with the rematch against the Iggles. The Look Man wouldn't count on the Pokes, and if they don't make the playoffs, Captain Wade will be the next Charlie Weis.

Minnesota at Arizona (+3.5) Sunday Night Football:

Favre! Warner! It's the battle of the Graybeards on NBC Football Nite in America! NBC used the flex scheduling provision to snatch this jewel from Fox, giving us the Game of the Week.

Brett (The Pope) Favre has turned water into wine in the person of Visanthe Shiancoe, a journeyman TE with six TD grabs. Bernard Berrian was decent in Chicago, but never really a number one. Sidney Rice looks like the long lost brother of Jerry (The GOAT) Rice. Rookie slot receiver Percy Harvin is off the chain with key catches in nearly every game.

Look for the Arizona receiving crew of Larry Fitzgerald, Anquan Boldin, and Steve Breaston to show that they're not chopped liver either. Kurt Warner is coming off a concussion courtesy of Lambs safety Oshiomogho Atogwe (means "I'll show you mine" in Swahili), but he will rise to the occasion in this NFC playoff preview.

The Look Man is not a Favre fan, and the 24 TD/3 INT ratio will not last. More importantly, the Swedes have gotten away from the running game that made them great, betting the house on an old QB with a drug problem. The contract extension of Brad (Mr. Potato Head) Childress is like spitting in the eye of the Football Gods.

Look for the now healthy Warner to let fly with a balanced attack that leaves the Swedes with a second loss on their record. The Pope will throw a couple of picks and Adrian Peterson will put

the ball on the retractable grass at least once. Deadbirds cover and win in the Desert, where teams go to die.

Baltimore at Breen Gay (-3) Monday Night Football

The Cheeseheads have been on a roll of late, since coach Mike McCarthy figured out that you have to chip the DE to keep Aaron Rodgers clean. They've ripped off wins over the Pokes and Lions in consecutive weeks, and face the Dumpster Ducks team that is desperate for wins to keep their playoff dreams alive.

The problem is that Baltimore has no receivers other than Derek Mason. Tack on the fact that QB Joe Flacco has a bad ankle, and even the losses of shutdown CB Al Harris and DE Aaron Kampman won't hurt the Pack.

The Swiss Cheese D is quietly figuring it out. Charles Woodson is having a Pro Bowl year, and rookie LB Clay Matthews Jr. is playing Big Boy Ball. The Pack wins outright, leaving B-more looking up at their wild card brethren in the AFC.

EPILOGUE

The league is topsy-turvy in 2009, with undefeated teams in Indy and New Orleans, matching up with teams in Cleveland, St. Louise, Detroit, Tampa, and KC that couldn't beat their way out of a wet paper bag. Indy and New Orleans have decent chances to remain unbeaten in the regular season, especially if their QBs remain healthy.

The Look Man has been watching the NFL for forty years and never seen two guys doing what Brees and Manning have accomplished. It's the NFL version of Sammy Sosa versus Mark McGwire, and it's happening right in front of us.

Both teams could easily lose this week, with the Ponies facing perennial nemesis Tennessee, and the Religious Icons coming off an emotional win in the Big Easy. Still, if you're a football fan, you need to take note because we won't see this happen again in our lifetimes.

Peace,

The Look Man