

## **THE LOOK MAN REPORT 2009**

### **Week Two – Ben Gazzara Time**

*"I don't have all the answers. If I did, I'd be a cab driver."-- Monte Clark at the press conference announcing his hiring as Detroit coach in 1978.*

There were some spectacular games in Week Two. Eli (Cheesecake) Manning threw 20 completions to two young wide receivers to deflate the Pokes in their home opener at the Taj Mah-Jones. Phillip Rivers went all LL Cool J to nearly get a win over a determined Baltimore defense. Only a fantastic fourth and one tackle for loss sealed the win for the Dumpster Ducks. DE Antwan Odom notched five sacks to headline a Bengals win over the Cheeseheads at Flambeau.

But the game of the week had to go to Indy, who beat Miami despite having the ball for only 14 plays in the second half. The Indy D was gashed for 10 yards per carry by the Wildcat, and despite playing for 45 minutes, won the game with a late pick. More importantly, they escaped the loss win Marine Mammals WR Ted (Mary Tyler Moore) Ginn dropped a TD with 18 seconds remaining.

Peyton Manning has done some things before, but his checks at the line allowed the Colts to escape certain death on MNF. He may do a lot of commercials, but Peyton Manning is now in the conversation with the greatest QBs of all time. Of all time.

Week Two also featured one of the most unusual stats in NFL history. You can count on one hand the number of times that teams run for over 200 yards and lose the game. In Week Two, Miami, Dallas, and Tennessee all suffered that ignominy. Bill Walsh was the first guy to challenge the notion that the run sets up the pass in the NFL. Now, not only does the pass dominate, you can win without a run defense.

The Look Man can't ever remember a better first two weeks in American football history. Even the college games have been excellent. Other than some serious Zebra of the Week action, it's been Alcoa Fantastic Finishes galore.

### **ZEBRA OF THE WEEK**

The field was huge this week. Many of these plays affected the outcomes, and the Look Man is having a difficult time picking a winner.

#### *Cincy at Green Bay - Ed (The Hulk Hochuli):*

On the anniversary of his gaffe to give Denver a win over the Bolts, the Hulk nearly imploded again with Bengals at Cheeseheads, offering a rambling description of why the clock had expired prior to Green Bay's clocking the ball. There were clearly two ticks minutes left, and in the Look Man's opinion, the Bengals were actually offsides when Green Bay spiked the rock.

#### *Carolina at Atlanta - Don Carey:*

Umpire Garth DeFelice got decked twice in the Black Cats game, each time due to Mushin Muhammad. The first occurred as Muhammad was rushing back to the huddle, and the second when Mushy was congratulating the TE on a TD catch. Both times DeFelice got delected, looking old and grumpy in the process. Both were high comedy, especially since the zebra refused to accept M-Squared's apology on either occasion.

#### *Cardinals at J-Ville -Gene Steratore:*

JAX WR Torry Holt got tackled by the DB, waited for the flag, and then nothing. The J-Squareds couldn't believe there was no flag on that play, and neither could the Look Man. That game was 10-6 at the time, and Arizona scored to make it 17-6 en route to a blowout win.

Tennessee-Houston Walt Coleman (Lantern):

Punt returner signaled fair catch, but the ball bounced from him to the defender who caught it on the fly. Zebra signaled fair catch interference, awarding the rock to Houston. Tacks Fan moans, Houston wins the shootout in a one possession game.

Pitt at Chicago (Scott Green):

Green allowed Chicago LT Orlando Pace to tackle All Pro James Harrison repeatedly to protect Jay Cutler(y). The Look Man wonders if Harrison is wearing a necktie on the field before realizing it was simply Pace. Harrison kept gesturing to the zebras to no avail following each takedown.

Jynts at Cowpokes - Mike (Dancing With the Stars) Carey:

Mike Carey should've ejected Flozell (Geico) Adams, who injured DE Justin (Friar) Tuck on a tripping violation, then later tripped Osi Humanurine. Flo led the league in penalties in 2008, and is on pace for another all-pro penalty leading season.



*I'm the CEO of Tripping!*

The **Zebra of the Week** award goes to Hulk Hochuli, who seemed really shaky on his anniversary. It's the second week in a row that a rambling explanation occurred on camera, and one can only hope it's the last.

Plays of the Week:

Ray (Ray) Lewis drilled RB Darren Sproles on 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 to win the game for the Dumpster Ducks. It was bad play calling by the Bolts, who eschewed the first down on a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1 despite having one timeout remaining. Ray Ray read the pulling guards, showing off his still exceptional speed to tackle Sproles for a loss.

Pierre (The Waiter) Garcon's bubble screen TD on MNF. Peyton read the blitz on the play before, but couldn't hit the hot read due to man coverage. When the Marine Mammals went zone blitz on the next play, the Sheriff calmly hit The Waiter for the go-ahead score.

Andre (The Giant) Johnson's one handed TD grab in the back of the endzone during Texans-Thumbtacks. Andre the Giant may be the most underrated wideout in the league, largely due to inept QB play by Matt Schaub. What a catch!

Darelle Revis' pick of Tom Brady in Chowds at Jets. Revis has now shut down Andre the Giant and Randy Moss in successive weeks. This kid might just be a playa.

Frank Gore and Frank Gore get honorable mention for four incredible long TD runs. Of course, it's easy to go 80 yards when no one touches you.

Goats of the Week:

Santonio Holmes dropping a go-ahead TD in the Blitzburgh at Chicago game. Ball hit him right in the breadbasket. Tack on the fact that K Jeff Reed, one of the best in inclement weather,

missed two at Spaceship Field, and it looks like Vegas was involved in this game. Of course, the Stillers might've just been whooping it up on Rush Street the night prior.

### YAC-ity YAC

Brady Quinn (Medicine Woman) stunk up the joint at Investigation Field last week. After two weeks, the Look Man now has the book on Jane Seymour. He can't read defenses because he's watching the line protection. Quinn takes off at the slightest hint of pressure, and dumps off for short passes on 3<sup>rd</sup> and longs. His QB rating is secure, but you can't win games that way.

More depressing are his YAC numbers. When a QB reads correctly and delivers the ball on time, receivers get Yards After Catch. Quinn's receivers are averaging just 2-3 yards of YAC, a sure sign that the ball is late and the read is poor.

## **THE LOOK AHEAD**

### Blitzburgh at Cincinnati (+4)

The Kimo von Wilkes Booth hit in the 2005 playoffs changed the destiny of two teams. It sent the Stillers on to two Lombardi's and cast the Bengals as pitiful also-rans. (Johnny) Carson Palmer has never been a guy who liked to get hit, but now he is shell-shocked. And so are his fans.

Big Ben did all he could to win at Chicago, but head coach Mike (Omar Epps) Tomlin will have his troops ready for this one. The Stillers have beaten the Bungals four times against zero defeats in the House era.

Look for the Stillers to shut down Cedric (the Butler) Benson, and put pressure on (Johnny) Carson Palmer. Mr. Tonight Show is missing a Stillers killer with Chris Henry having a bad quad. Hines (57) Ward has promised to take out defenders with the high crack back, and this game could get ugly. Stillers cover and win, sending Marvin Lewis to the locker room screaming, "It's YOUR football team. Find a way to FIX it!" Stillers.



*Will the real Stillers coach please stand up?*

### Carolina at Dallas (-8.5)

Last week the circus came to Dallas and the G-men went home with the kewpie doll, leaving Tony Romo (the Place for Ribs) looking like a clown. As the Look Man says, When the circus comes to town someone's going to get elephant dung on his shoes, and it will likely be the promoter who brought the circus to town. No one is looking closely at Jerry Jones' shoes, but he was as responsible for that loss as Romo.

That game featured Unintentional Comedy that was off the scale, including: (1) the coronation of Jerry Jones in his pyramid, wiping sweat off his dome because he opened the roof and turned off the air, (2) head coach Wade (Captain Kangaroo) Phillips' expression after the loss, and (3) no one talking to Romo on the bench after the three picks.

Captain Kangaroo even went Shanahanigans, with a last second timeout to ice the kicker that was nearly too late. The NFL made a lot of rule changes including the Hines Ward Rule on crackback blocks, but it still failed to address one of the worst rules in the books. The best line

following that game: What's the difference between the movie *Brokeback Mountain* and Dallas? None, with either one you have cowboys that suck!

The Pokes may finally be on to something with that little misdirection running play. Like the old Counter Trey that the Genocide Victims ran in the 80s, it's difficult to defend, and the sheer size of the Pokes O-line makes it very effective. The Starheads have finally found a way to utilize their offensive line size advantage (and it only took 3 years!).

On the other side of the ledger, the Black Cats are not as bad as advertised. Jake Delhomme has struggled, but they've been crushed by injuries to their FB, TE, DT and secondary. The Black Cats are getting healthy just in time for this Titanic clash on MNF [Delhomme! Romo! It's the battle of the color blind QBs on Monday... Night... Football!].

The Pokes had better not starting counting chickens this week. Carolina has its back against the wall. They're not a prototypical 0-2 squad, and their running game is better than advertised.

The Look Man likes the Black Cats to stuff that misdirection, forcing Romo to go vertical. Unfortunately, the Panthers run the same basic defense as the Jynts, so Tony has seen the defense in successive weeks. Still, take the Black Cats and the points in this one.

### San Fran at Minnesota (-7)

The Niners have looked good in the first two weeks, with outstanding rushing by Frank Gore, timely passing by Shaun Hill, and a nasty defense. They knocked Matt (Hair Club for Men) right out of the game last week and possibly his career with a back injury.

Former Bengals DE Justin (Dr Zachary) Smith has put on 30 pounds of muscle, and is a force on the edge. The rest of the defense is just nasty, with solid linebacking, and a shutdown cornerback in Nate (Mark Twain) Clements. QB Shaun Hill doesn't look the part, but he is a gutsy QB with accuracy and a good deep arm.

The Look Man's favorite Niners moment was in Week One, when head coach (Iron) Mike Singletary called timeout at a crucial time against the Cardinals. Instead of bringing the defensive captain to the sideline, Iron Mike huddled with his D on the field, gesticulating and talking deliberately. The result: his D holds, his offense scores and wins a close one in Phoenix.

No one yet knows if the Niners are for real, but the Look Man is picking them to stuff a dinged up Adrian Peterson, forcing Brett (The Pope) Favre to go vertical. Despite the crucifix that Singletary wears on the sidelines, his team won't genuflect to a color-blind Pope. Niners cover and perhaps win outright in St. Paul.

### Tennessee at Jets (-2)

Flavor of the Week, but the Jets will let down this week. They're a young squad, and they have injuries on defense. Plus, the Flaming Thumbtacks are the best 0-2 team in the NFL, and they will be bringing it on Sunday. Tennessee in a mild upset.

### New Orleans at Buffalo (+6)

The Icons have been winning on a hot streak by Drew Brees. The running game takes a hit with an injury to Mike Bell, and their defense is allowing 300 yards per game.

Buffalo is one of the best 1-1 teams around. They should've beaten the Chowds in Week One, and they rise to the occasion by covering against a very offensive squad from the Big Easy. Buffalo covers and wins.

Indy at Arizona (-2.5) Sunday Night Football:

The Colts won a game that they had no right winning last week on Monday Night Football. The Marine Mammals played as well as they could play, and Peyton pulled it out with a TD pass on one of his 14 second half offensive plays.

The only problem: the defense was on the field for 45 minutes in the Florida heat. The Ponies follow that one up with the Place Where Teams Go to Die. That's right, Scottsdale, AZ. The desert heat won't be as bad on a night game, but look for the Deadbirds to play with gusto against an Indy D that cannot stop the run. The short week doesn't help the Ponies and the schedule makers need to be examined.

The Deadbirds have been up and down, and the win last week in J-Ville was zebra-aided. They haven't shown the Look Man anything to doubt his prediction that they will miss the playoffs yet, but they will need this win to remain relevant. Arizona covers and wins, temporarily resuming the mantle of the NFC Conference Champs.

## **EPILOGUE**

We've seen some of the best football ever in the first two weeks. There are 0-2 teams that could easily make the playoffs, including Tennessee and Carolina. The 1-1 teams in Buffalo, Dallas, Blitzburgh and Arizona all look capable. Two and oh teams in Denver and the Jets could easily miss the postseason.

Fans love the NFL because of the parity, and the simple formula that doesn't eliminate their teams until late in the season. This season, teams seem to be more even than usual, and Week Three will go a long way to separating the pretenders from the contenders.

Still, it takes four weeks for teams to find their true identities. Don't get caught up in the media hype of the Jets and New Orleans just yet. Reggie Jackson of Major League Baseball was called "Mr. October." In the NFL, "Mr. September" doesn't always translate into a Lombardi.

Peace,

The Look Man