

The Look Man Report 2010 **Week Three: Blanda of Brothers**

"It's kind of sad. There should have been some way of having him leave that would give you a good feeling. There should have been something to bring a tear to your eye ... it's like the guy going to the electric chair." – Oakland WR Fred Biletnikoff on the departure of George Blanda in 1976.

Week Three brought the NFL back in balance. When it was all said and done, the unlikely became the commonplace:

- 1) Vick is the leading candidate for both MVP and Comeback Player of the Year;
- 2) The Bears are the last undefeated team in the NFC;
- 3) KC heads into the Bye Week as one of the last two undefeated teams in the AFC;
- 4) Eric Mangina is headed for Coach of the Year.

Well, perhaps that last item is a reach, but you get the Look Man's drift.

Dallas and Minnesota faced must-win situations and prevailed. It's pretty early for must win terminology, but it was fitting for these two. Dallas assembled a nice win in Who's-town, parlaying a strong running game with some YAC from Roy Williams and Dez Bryant.

Dallas now has the bye week to get things cleaned up, and 2-2 is the next hurdle. The Look Man enjoyed Wade Phillips' post game speech immensely. Captain Kangaroo poked fun at himself, saying he guessed he wouldn't get replaced by Mr. Green Jeans.

New Orleans battled upstart Atlanta, losing on a gimme 27-yard FG miss by Garrett Hartley. Atlanta now believes that they can compete for the NFC South division title.

Mike Vick maintained his roll, posting a 110 QB rating for the year while throwing for three TDs and running for another. The Iggles are setting up for their Game of the Year when Washington comes to town with Donovan McNabb at the helm.

Any way you slice it, league drama now rivals the best on television. Parity is back, baby, and it's appearing in theaters that you wouldn't expect. Any one not liking the 2010 season so far?

LAGNIAPPE

Haddon beat his head in...

Jacksonville WR (Casey) Kaseem Osgood kept his feet on the ground and his arms reaching for the sky last week by jumping out of a second story window. Osgood was kicking it with a nineteen year old Jags cheerleader when her ex-boyfriend showed up strapped.

The ex-boyfriend pistol-whipped American Top 40, then engaged in a shootout with the cheerleader. Several shots were fired inside the house, with no hits, but Osgood had to be treated at a local hospital for a busted grill and a tender ankle. Good thing he was

partying with the Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight or he might've appeared on the injury list with the designation "GSW."

Pundits have posited that the Bolts special teams are suffering due to the loss of special teams maven Osgood. The Bolts gave up two kickoff return TDs last week in Seattle, providing the margin of victory. Osgood hasn't been a receiving factor in J-Ville, and this latest episode may result in terminations for him and the cheerleader.

Where's the beef?

Pokes WR Dez Bryant got payback for not carrying Roy Williams' shoulder pads in training camp. Williams invited the entire team to a Pappas Steak House rookie dinner, resulting in a \$55K bill for Dez Bryant in Big D. Pappas is the parent company behind Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen, one of the Look Man's favorite haunts.

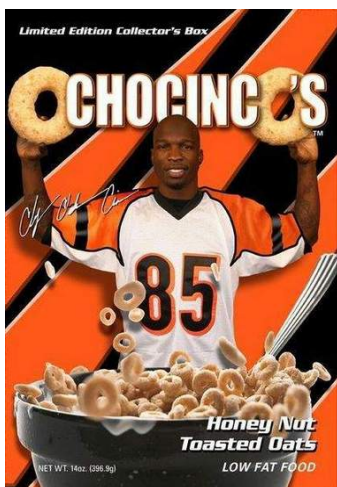
The capper was that several Pokes took home expensive bottles of wine from the 90 page wine list. Even inviting the offensive line is an expensive proposition in the NFL, but a whole team?

The Look Man doesn't like what this says about team chemistry in Dallas. It's not just bad form to hit a rook for the cost of a BMW, it's bad for the team. No matter how much scratch you make, half a hundred thou is a hit in the pocketbook. The Football Gods are watching, and they don't like ugly.

Viagra-O's?

Chad Ochocinco signed a promotional deal with a Blitzburgh based cereal company in the offseason. Chad's cereal was released this week, with a catch: the children's charity toll free number was really a sex line. The local grocer has pulled the cereal after numerous complaints from the conservative denizens of the Nati.

The league is not commenting, but they are pursuing some synergy with their wood drug advertising. Viagra and Cialis have asked to market the cereal, as well as having Chad model prophylactics on his dome.



The Ultimate Cereal Catch?

CELEBRITY OBIT OF THE WEEK

The NFL lost one of its most iconic figures this week when the oldest man ever to play pro football died at the age of 83 after a short illness. George Blanda played for the Bears, Oilers and Grayders until one month shy of his 49th birthday. In an age where we marvel at Brett Favre playing QB at age 40, Blanda played QB until he was 45. He went on to kick for another three years before being replaced by a young soccer style kicker named Fred Steinfort.

Not only did Blanda play, he had a miracle season in 1970, when he engineered five miracle wins at the age of 43, winning the Offensive Player of the Year award. Blanda threw and kicked his way to the AFC Championship Game that year with wins over the Stillers, Chiefs, Browns, Broncos and Chargers. The Broncos win featured a TD pass to WR Fred Biletnikoff, the guy for whom the best collegiate receiver award is still named.

The son of a Czech coal miner played a dual role as QB and Kicker in an era when QBs still called their own plays. His gutsy play was indicative of his passion for the game, and his curmudgeonly ways epitomized the Grayders' Commitment to Excellence.

The Look Man has a theory that greatness happens like ripples on a pond. Bill Parcells was coached in high school basketball by Vince Lombardi, then went on to work with a basketball coach named Bobby Knight at West Point.

Knight had a player there named Mike Krzyzewski, who went on to be pretty good. Blanda played collegiately at the University of Kentucky, and when Bear Bryant arrived there, Blanda famously said, " I thought this must be what God looks like. "

Blanda starred for the Houston Oilers, winning an AFL Championship in the inaugural 1961 season. Al Davis was on the losing end that year, so when he got a chance to acquire Blanda in 1967, he jumped on it.

The Grayders hired a young head coach named John Madden, who rebuilt them in his own image. Madden went on to callously cut a guy who still holds five NFL passing records. One of those records, most interceptions was recently eclipsed by Brett Favre, but the real story of Blanda is one of hard-nosed, humble play.

Blanda quietly disappeared during his last Raiders practice in 1976, leaving his empty locker and a stunned clubhouse. He didn't play Hamlet, torturing the team with retirement talk, unretirement talk, movies, and commercials for everything from blue jeans to TVs. Blanda went out, did his job, and went home.

Blanda was a quiet mentor to Darryl Lamonica, Ken (The Snake) Stabler, Fred Biletnikoff and RB Raymond Chester. In an era in which QBs weren't protected by the zebras he gave as good as he got. And what he gave was one of the gutsiest careers on record. He kicked a FG in the 1976 AFC Championship game at Pittsburgh in a 16-10 loss. It was four seasons after the Immaculate Reception, and those two teams hated each other more than stink hates soap.

Blanda holds the following pro football records:

- Passing TD's in a game: 7 (Tied with 4 others) November 19, 1961 vs. New York Titans[4]

- Most seasons played: 26 (1949–58, 1960–75)
- Most seasons scoring a point: 26
- One of two players to play in 4 different decades: (40s, 50s, 60s, 70s)
- Most PATs made (943) and attempted (959)
- Most interceptions thrown, single season: 42 (1962)
- Held record of most pass attempts in a single game: 68 (37 completions, vs. New York Titans on 11/1/1961) until 1994 when Drew Bledsoe had 70
- Oldest person to play in an NFL game: 48 years, 109 days
- First player ever to score over 2,000 points
- Oldest quarterback to start a title game
- Most total points accounted for (including TD passes) in a career: 3,418

These records are mere statistics, but Blanda's greatness lies in the fact that he was a tough, ornery son of a sea cook who never gave up. His Hall of Fame bust is as ugly as he was in real life, but not as hard.

Al Davis' teams were tough, physical and ruthless in those days. Now, they are simply pathetic. Oakland and the NFL lost a legend in George Blanda. We won't see his ilk again, and that's sad.

Rest in peace, George.



A little huck and buck from George...

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

The plains of the Serengeti keep yielding footage for the Discovery Channel. This week's contestants:

Mike (Dancin' with the Stars) Carey – Oakland at Arizona

DWTS got caught looking when Oakland QB Bruce (Almighty) Gradkowski took off out of the pocket. Bruce Almighty bowled Carey over, losing the rock in the process. It was worse than a Kurt Warner Paso doble, and the judges may well vote him off the show

like they did to his brother. Last season, Don Carey was a head referee in the NFL. This season, brother Don has returned to his back judge spot on the Clete Blakeman crew.

The Look Man has been waiting for this to happen to the umpires, who are now positioned to the QBs left. It's only a matter of time before it happens again, sending the NFL owners into a tizzy regarding how to fix this self-created problem.

Terry (Bottlegate) McAulay – Green Bay at Chicago

Bottlegate and Company are filing a workers comp claim for sore elbows after Green Bay set a record for penalties that had stood since 1945. That's WWII, for all you younger Tail Pipes.

Meanwhile, the Bears are welcoming seven new teammates who wear black and white uniforms. Chicago won a game after being dominated by Green Bay, simply due to bad officiating and ridiculous coaching by Mike McCarthy.

The game winning pass interference call was a lame duck throw in which both the DB and WR should have had an equal right to the rock. The Pack actually picked the ball on the play, but the zebras took it away. There were also numerous questionable holding calls on Green Bay that should not have been called in a division rivalry game.

McCarthy was badly outcoached by Lovie Smith, a termination level offense. He compounded the idiocy of challenging the late fumble by not allowing the Bears to score a TD. By throwing away a challenge timeout, he lost a chance to give the ball back to his offense with two timeouts AND the two minute warning. What a goof.

And the winner is: Terry (Bottlegate) McAulay, hooves down. Bottlegate stole that game from the Pack, likely because he knows that plastic beer bottles do pack a wallop. The lathered up Chicago crowd was in an ethanol frenzy, and Terry had no intention of dodging bottles Monday Night. Terry McAulay, you are the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week!**

THE LOOK AHEAD

Denver at Tennessee (-6.5)

Kyle (Foo Fighters) Orton has looked solid in his second year in the Denver offense. The problem has been scoring, as they failed to get red zone TDs four times last week versus the Colts. Perhaps Orton should grow back his Dave Grohl beard in order to get his mojo back.

Vince Young and the Flaming Thumbtacks have looked great against excellent opposition. Unfortunately, they will be looking ahead to VY's return to Texas in Week Five against Dallas. Young plays flat, and the Broncos cover the spread. Broncos.

Baltimore at Pittsburgh (-1)

Baltimore's offense got healthy last week against Cleveland, with Flacco putting up three TD passes to Anquan Boldin. The bad news is that RB Ray Rice got a knee in that contest.

The Stillers were good and lucky at Tampa, with Charlie Batch throwing the ball as far as he could and getting three TD passes. The Stillers need to run the football against a B-

More defense that gave up nearly 200 yards to Cleveland last week. These two teams hate each other, and this game is always a war.

The Stillers can go up two full games in the AFC Asgard with a win, and Baltimore knows this is close to a must-win. Baltimore always struggles in Sixburgh, and this is no exception. The Dumpster Ducks have never won at Ketchup Field with Flacco under center.

Stillers win, going into the bye week at 4-0 with Big Ben returning on the other side. Stillers.

Cincinnati at Cleveland (+3)

These teams have participated in two of the three highest scoring games in NFL history. No matter the record, they always play a close game, as indicated by the low spread.

The Browns have faced Terrell Owens five times previously with mixed results. Owens torched them in Dallas and Philly, but the Browns got him when he played in Buffalo last year.

Browns CB Sheldon Brown knows TO from his time shared in Philly, and he should be able to use that knowledge to shut him down on Sunday. Even if Brown doesn't cover Batman, he will give his backfield mates the knowledge to do so. Since (Johnny) Carson Palmer is forcing the ball to Owens, look for a long day for the Bengos offense.

Cleveland QB Jake (the Man) Delhomme is nearly ready to return, having practiced on Thursday. The Look Man would rest him for one more week so that the home fans don't ruin Jake's confidence. Seneca (Laxative Arm) Wallace can handle the load, but he needs to trust his receivers more. Not sure why since they cost Wallace a pick six in his first start in 2010.

The Browns need to shut down TE Jermaine Gresham, who never runs routes more than five yards from the line of scrimmage. SE Jordan Shipley has been open like 7-11, but Mr. Tonight Show is forcing it to Owens and Ochocinco.

The Browns offense showed signs of life last week in B-More, including 144 yards rushing for RB Peyton Hillis. Hillis was acquired courtesy of the Brady Quinn (Medicine Woman) trade to Denver. He will pound the rock and keep Mr. Tonight Show off the field. More importantly, his running can set up the play action needed for the receivers to get free against a quality Cincy secondary.

Look for the Browns to rebound, getting their first home win since the Clinton administration. If they don't, the Look Man is done featuring them for the balance of 2010. Browns, baby Browns in the Battle of Ohio in Week Four.

Houston at Oakland (+3.5)

Houston has been the darling of the NFL this season, and the games have been exciting high scoring affairs. Matt Schaub, Andre the Giant Johnson and Arian Foster have become the New Triplets, putting up great numbers.

That ends this week as a surly Grayders team returns home after Arizona stole one on the road. Grayders upset a banged up Houston team and make a statement in the topsy turvy AFC West. Grayders in an upset.

Carolina at New Orleans (-13.5)

New Orleans was knocked from the ranks of the unbeaten last week due to a missed FG by K Garrett Hartley. This week they signed kicking consultant John Carney, who at 46 years old has a chance to kick his age. Oddly, the Icons kept Hartley, who kicked three key FGs in the playoffs to propel New Orleans to the championship.

No FG will be necessary this week as the Icons cover the spread against an awful Jimmy (the Pickle) Claussen and the Black Cats. The Pickle throws picks, proving he is the next Fighting Irish QB to be overrated in the NFL. Saints.

Washington at Philadelphia (-6) [Game of the Week]

Mike Vick has captured the imagination of the sports world, while the guy who taught him got shipped off to DC. McNabb showed Vick how to be a pro QB, and the results are now evident. Vick was named the NFL Offensive Player of the Month with seven TDs.

McNabb is struggling in DC with the same demons he had in Philly: poor receivers, lack of offensive talent, and a head coach who grips in a tight game. McNabb is a bona fide top five NFL QB and potential Hall of Famer who took the Iggles to five NFC Championships and a Super Bowl. You don't just pick these guys up off the street, and Andy (The Walrus II) Reid let him go to a division opponent.

Vick's sub story is the number of hits he is taking in the wins. He was sacked six times in the Detroit win, and hit numerous times last week in Jacksonville. We're not talking about simple hits in the pocket here; he received a teeth-rattling hit on one long run in Detroit, and got lit up several other times. You only have a certain number of these hits you can absorb in a season, and the Look Man believes Vick is getting close to the limit.

The Look Man has gone on record as saying the Genocide Victims will be a playoff team in 2010. They start on Sunday, knocking out Vick, and beating a more talented Iggles team. Washington covers and wins, setting up calls for Walrus meat in Philly grocery chains.

Chicago at NY Giants (-4) [Football Night in America]

Da Bears have gotten a lot of love courtesy of a 3-0 start and a win over the Pack last week on Monday night. But the real story is that they often look good in the early season before folks figure out the Monsters of the Furniture Mart defense. Injuries and shortcomings appear around Week Six, and the Bears return to Earth.

The Jynts are on the verge of a complete implosion courtesy of player comments and media scrutiny. Head coach Tom Coughlin's disciplined approach wears on a team, and the G-Men are beginning to chafe under the bit. This week could determine their season.

The Look Man is not that fond of Big Blue, but their losses have been courtesy of a lack of poise. They incurred eleven penalties in the Tennessee game, six of them retaliation personal fouls.

They fix that problem this week as Eli Manning and Company expose the Bears defense in the New Meadowlands. The Bears jumped in the rankings despite obvious flaws, courtesy of a zebra-aided win over the Pack. Jynts.

New England at Miami (+1) [Monday Night Football]

The Marine Mammals weren't ready for Football Night in America, losing a close game to the Jets last Sunday. They now face the cream of the AFC East, and a loss to the Chowds would really hurt their playoff chances.

New England played just well enough to win last week at Buffalo, giving up multiple TDs to backup QB Ryan FitzPatrick. The Chowds defense is not very good, and New England has quietly lost seven of its last nine on the road.

Miami rallies and wins at Sun Life, turning the AFC East division battle into a war. Marine Mammals.

EPILOGUE

The first quarter of the 2010 season is nearly complete, and one factor has emerged. Four QBs threw for 400 plus yards in losing efforts in Week Three. The teams that are winning have done so with balanced rushing and passing attacks.

Houston, Indy, Blitzburgh and Chicago have run the ball nearly as well as they thrown it, and the record reflects their wisdom. Dallas and Minny went back to the run last week and came up with their first wins of 2010.

The odd phenomenon in 2010 is the early bye week for Dallas, KC, Minnesota, and Tampa Bay. It comes just in time for Dallas and Minnesota, but KC is on a roll right now. Any way you slice it, byes in Weeks Three and Four are way too early in a long season.

The NFL has already had five TV blackouts when early season euphoria is in full evidence. How in the world can it expect to add one home and one away game when it can't even sell out the games it has?

Peace,

The Look Man