

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2012

Week Six – "11-5 starts today."

"11-5 starts today." – sign in the South End Zone at Cleveland Browns Stadium for the Battle of Ohio Part Deux

The Look Man traveled to see the last winless team change its luck on Sunday. Apparently Browns players were inspired by a sign on the closed end zone that read: "11-5 starts today."

"It says they never give up," said special teamer Joshua Cribbs. "We were 0-5 and they're still packing the house. That's why this is Believeland and we're right there with them."

Cribbs contributed a 60-yard punt return in which he crossed up the Cincy defense by signaling the Browns players should get away. Typically, returners yell poison and wave their arms on short punts that might inadvertently hit their own teammates. Cincy interpreted the signal as a sign that they should not tackle, and Cribbs took off up the sidelines.

The Browns changed ownership on Tuesday, with former Flying J CEO Jimmy Haslam taking the helm. *"When we saw the jets fly across at the beginning of the game for the first time in a long time, that's when the feeling came. It was like, 'We got jets? Haslam's in town,'" Cribbs said. "Then there were jokes like, 'That's his jets.'*

Haslam's first official move was to relieve President Mike Holmgren, who is retiring at year end. After a lot of false starts, this feels like a real new beginning in Believeland.

On balance the Browns mixed big plays with a stout running game to get win number one in 2012. Perhaps Browns Fan is being Pollyanna with that sign, but the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. At least that's what some Chinese dude used to say on the corner of 105th and Carnegie in downtown Cleveland.

Without further ado, the Week that Was:

LAGNIAPPE

Urine Luck

The Browns beat the Bengals last Sunday, but the real epic event happened prior to the game in the Muni lots. Some guys induced a drunken Browns Backer to stick his head into a bucket of pre-digested beer as captured by the following YouTube:

<http://deadspin.com/5951804/heres-a-browns-fan-dunking-his-head-in-a-bucket-of-urine-for-450>

The Look Man stands by his belief that Browns Fan is the most dedicated of all NFL rooters. Or the craziest.

Big Nickel

If you missed the last two Shehawks games, you may not know that head coach Pete (Lewis) Carroll has fashioned a pretty good defense in the Great Northwest. Carroll is seeing just how far down the rabbit hole goes by bringing giant DBs together with a stout 4-3 line.

DBs Kam Chancellor, Brandon Browner, and mouthy Richard Sherman are busting up receivers while FS Earl Thomas plays centerfield. Browner's hit on Wes Welker last week was one of the best in the league, and dude brings the pain like a linebacker.

The weird part is that these guys are average 6'3" and run like the wind. Not only do they defend well, they cover like gloves behind a D-line that can rush and plug the run. Folks are raving about QB Russell (Athletics) Wilson, but the real story in Coffeetown is the defense, which is second only to Chicago in points allowed.

Richard Sherman made news last week by taunting Chowds QB Tom (Zoolander) Brady, tweeting, "Don't be mad, Bro" following the win. Sherman claimed Brady said they would talk after the New England win, which never materialized thanks to some physical defense. More importantly, the Hawks shut down the running game, forcing Zoolander to stop the clock with late incompletions. Wilson threw a game winning TD and the rest is Twitter history.

If you haven't seen this defense, with 400 pound D-linemen to go with 240 pound DBs, do yourselves a favor. D-linemen Alan Branch, Red Bryant, and gigantic Brandon Mebane give way to speed rushers Chris Clemons and rookie Bruce Irvin on passing downs in something called the Leo formation. They just might make the road to the NFC West flavored with Charbucks coffee.

Discount Double Check?

Marine Mammals RB Reggie Bush (43) made news this week by announcing that his 24-year old girlfriend has one in the oven. Like former presidential concubine Kim Kardashian, Lilit Avagyan is a dancer of Armenian descent who gained fame from appearing on *Dancing with the Stars*. The similarities with Kardashian don't end there, as demonstrated by the following photo:



Baby got back...

Bountygate Smoking Gun?

New Orleans Federal Magistrate Daniel Knowles has ordered NFL Commissioner Roger (Rabbit) Goodell to provide documents supporting the NFL's investigation of the Saints. The order came in response to LB Jonathan Vilma's defamation lawsuit, based upon Vilma's allegation that he had not received access to the documents related to Bountygate.

This development is interesting for several reasons:

- The NFL has not provided this ‘proof’ to any of the suspended players. This undue process was challenged by the NFLPA and represents a departure from the Tagliabue era in which the league meted out discipline only after the courts had acted.
- The NFLPA revealed an NFL sanctioned pay-for-play system from 1996 this week. The players funded the programs, including the late icon Reggie White. The league knew in '96 that hard hits led to head injuries but backed the program and made “Smash-for-Cash” videos available for retail.

These latest developments cast an even greater pall on Goodell's authority, forcing the Commish to recuse himself in favor of former commissioner Paul Tagliabue. Tags was a fair administrator who deserves to be in Canton for his contributions. The owners opposed his enshrinement, and Tags may now pull their collective fat from the fire.

Rabbit's handling of this and other matters are well chronicled by the Look Man. The league has not gained favor in the public eye, especially in New Orleans, which has felt the brunt of this malfeasance. Not to mention that the Super Bowl is in the Big Easy this winter. Hmmm.



"I love you, Man."

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

The Look Man usually reserves ZOTW honors for the pro game, but the Lying Irish made a good case last Saturday when they robbed the Stanford Cardinal out of an OT win. Thanks to Tailpipe J-Jax for the following recap:

Stanford scored on two consecutive plays at the end of the game only to have the ref (Ed Hochuli's son Shawn) call both plays dead before reaching the goal line. After both teams rushed on the field, Shawn briefly talked to his dad (aka The Hulk), then proceeded to announce on the public address system, for the teams to return to their sideline and the play was under further review.

(The Hulk Jr.) ruled there was no excessive celebration, even though there was no flag and the runner did score, but he could not determine when the whistle was blown so the runner did not score. Uh what? Yeah, thanks for the help dad. I thought the Stanford QB was going to punch him.

The Look Man has always had a disdain for the Lying Irish, and this is just another ugly chapter in an attempt to “restore the echoes.”

DallasatB-More – Mike (Dancing with the Stars) Carey: The Pokes dominated the game, losing largely on the strength of a 108 yard kick return, missed calls and somebad clock management. Zebra Mike Carey contributed mightily, keeping Baltimore in the game with some phantom holding calls. This from Tailpipe GB Shaw:

Carey = ZOTW, or no justice in the universe for the following reasons:

- *Multiple non-calls for offensive holding by the Dumpster Ducks,*
- *but multiple phantom calls for the same thing against the Cowboys,*
- *Blatant offensive pass interference on the dumpster duck TD, shoving Mo Claiborne TO THE GROUND, not called, but instead...*
- *called on (Pokes CB) Mo Claiborne, who, on review, didn't touch the cheating dumpster duck.*
- *Obvious holding on the kickoff return for the TD, not called.*
- *Phantom personal foul call on Felix in the 4th quarter crunch, for a chop block, which did not happen, and was even called "terrible" ... by the dumpster duck's former coach!*

That was, without doubt, one of the shittiest-called games in memory. Carey's crew handed this game to Baltimore, period. No other conclusion holds water.

The Look Man likes Dancing with the Stars, but someone must have comprising photos, because he has games with head-scratching calls that defy his skill.

No winner this week, as the Look Man didn't actually witness the calls. Unlike the zebras, he actually has to see it in order to call it.

THE LOOK AHEAD

The slate for Week Seven is excellent, with several big divisional matchups. The Detroit at Chicago, Genocide Victims at Jynts, and Stillers at Bengos should be critical, but Houston at Baltimore helps round out the week.

The Look Man is getting hot in 2012, with several good Pepto Bismol calls in Week Six. Here's the take on Week Seven.

Dallas at Carolina(+2)

The Pokes put up 240 rushing yards on the road last week in B-More, dominating the time of possession 40 minutes to 20. Their ground game is portable, and despite the possible loss of RB DeMarco Murray, they should be fine on Sunday.

The Look Man is not buying what Romo and Garrett were selling last week with regard to clock management at the end of the game. With 34 seconds and one time out remaining, the Pokes failed to run a play, and lost on a 51 yard FG miss. Garrett and Jerrah Jones talked about moral victories, but that is BS. This is the big boy league.

Romo rebounds as the Pokes take out an NFC opponent to begin a little momentum. Pokes cover and win, saving Garrett's job for another week at least.

Cleveland at Indy (-2.5)

Cleveland got off the winless schneid last week at home, and hit the road for a plucky Indy team. The storyline is going to be the number one pick overall against the number 22 pick overall. Andrew Luck has been up and down and the Look Man actually likes the deep ball Brandon Weeden is throwing.

The Look Man actually played football against Luck's dad, a QB for Cleveland St. Ignatius and the West VA Mountaineers. Like Andy, the dad was a big-framed kid who was a little nerdy until he took off on a sixty yard option TD.

Indy is a tough contrast. On defense, D-ends Mathis and Freeney can make life hell for offensive tackles and young QBs. Offensively, they are dependent upon veteran WR Reggie (Millionaire Playboy Bruce) Wayne, who is teaching the young boys how to win. The Browns made the mistake of not acquiring a similar player, and their young receiving corps is struggling to pick up the pro game.

Make no mistake about it: the Browns are the best (and only) 1-5 team out there. They rally for a win in the Drum, taking out the Horsies and getting on a little mid-season roll. Browns, baby, Browns.

Washington at Jynts (-6)

The Look Man has an expression for teams that have such physical defenses that beating them results in a loss the following week. It's called the Schottenheimer Syndrome, made famous by the Browns head coach in the 80s. You might have beaten one of Marty's teams, but it came at a cost.

The Niners may best epitomize the SS, and the Jynts beat them last Sunday. The Jynts are better on the road than at home, and Washington comes to town with momentum and history.

The Genocide Vix swept the Jynts in 2011, and are coming off a nice win in which Robert (Bob) Griffin III put up 170 rushing yards. Bob is looking good in 2012, and his team has a puncher's chance every time he steps on the field.

Here's the problem: DC's defense is awful with the loss of two pro bowlers on the D-line. Jynts win this one in a dogfight, but fail to cover. DC.

Jets at New England (-10.5)

The Look Man loves double digit division dogs, because it is a slap in the face of every player on that team. Tom Brady and the Chowds lost a tough one in Seattle, largely because they can't run the football. Whenever Zoolander throws the ball 50 times, he struggles the following week.

The Look Man is not fond of the Jets, but they cover in this matchup.

Baltimore Houston (-6.5)

Two 5-1 teams go head-to-head in this matchup, but the luster is off the pearl. The Dumpster Ducks have lost Ray Lewis, a pro bowl CB, and DT Haloti Ngata is dinged up. Noted headhunter LB Dannell Ellerbe fills in for Lewis, who was having a sub-par year anyway.

On the other side, the Slim Shadies lost LB Brian Cushing for the year, and got roughed up by the Pack on national TV. Houston runs a complex zone-blocking scheme, and QB Matt (Stump the) Schaub is solid on the roll out pass. Look for the Shadies to catch Ellerbe, giving RB Arian Foster a huge rushing day.

Schaub and the Shadies to rise up and smoke the Dumpster Ducks, who have given up over 200 yards rushing twice in 2012. Houston covers and wins.

Blitzburgh at Cincinnati (+4.5) [Football Night in America]

Three point home dogs do notoriously well, and this could be a trap game for the Burgh. QB (Big) Ben Rapelisberger twisted his ankle in practice, but should play. A bigger issue is the O-line, which is down to its last five healthy bodies. The Stillers also lost RBs Rashard Mendenhall in a physical Thursday night game at Tennessee. Tack on the loss of S Troy Polamalu, and you have a pretty banged up Stillers team.

The Bengals got the rap that they couldn't beat the big boys in 2011. They were swept by the Stillers and Ravens, and ended up limping into the postseason and two losses to Houston. Look for more of the same as the toothless Tiggers fail to exert their will at home in a night game. Stillers have won 12 of 16 in this series. Make it a baker's dozen: Stillers.

Detroit at Chicago(-6.5) [Monday Night Football]

The Monsters of the Furniture Mart return from a bye week, but are still not healthy. Jay (The Knife) Cutler(y) is still acting surly, and these guys are hoping to stay at the top of the NFC Norse by knocking off the Lions.

Bears chefe Lovie Smith is 5-1 against Jim Schwartz, and the Lions are known for slow starts. After scoring only 50 points in the first three quarters of games, Detroit has put up 73 points in the fourth quarter under QB Matt Stafford.

Stafford is completing 65.5 percent of his passes for 1,215 yards in this latter situation. He's targeting Calvin (Megatron) Johnson, who is catching balls in triple coverage. If Stafford attempts this against the Bears, he's going to put points on the board for that ball-hawking Bears D.

The Look Man likes the Leos in this one, largely because of the spread but maybe because he just hates Jay the Knife so much. Lovie's record after a bye is scary, but the Bears are offensively challenged, and Detroit is coming on. Lions cover.



Nuff said

EPILOGUE

Week Six was a real hoot, with several unusual outcomes. The Look Man got healthy with his picks, but there were a good number of upsets and surprises. Only two AFC teams are better than .500, and the NFC is the current cream of the crop.

Still, the season is young, and Week Seven is when the bye weeks begin to show an impact. Teams (like the Stillers) can now get guys back from the IR under the new rules, so look for the returns of big name players who can make an impact.

We're nearing the halftime of the season, and offenses should be clicking. Instead, we're seeing bad clock management and calls that are reminiscent of the replacement zebras. Interesting developments are still to come, but 2012 is an odd year nonetheless.

Peace,

The Look Man