

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2012

Week Eight – “As a Man Thinketh...”

"Today's locker room laugh from practice was hearing how Paul Ryan looked Colt McCoy dead in the eye & said "great job at Oklahoma State" – tweet from Browns LB Scott (Kodachrome) Fujita following Ryan's visit to Browns practice. Ryan previously referred to a rookie QB named "Brendon Wheaton" in a visit to C-Town.

In 1902, an author by the name of James Allen wrote a great tome on a life well lived. The article was called “As a man thinketh” and it described the concept that a person becomes the essence of his own perception.

If a person he believes he is good and honest, he will become so. If he revels in negativity, he will become that instead. Allen's stuff was pretty heady and a little thick, as it is written in twentieth century prose. Think King James Bible as spoken by a Quaker with a mouth full of oatmeal. Still, there's iron in his words, which capture the spirit of the post-Industrial Age culture.

William (Bill) Parcells, a great twenty-first century philosopher, boiled Allen's essay down to its essence: “You are what your record says you are.” Those words were truncated to “it is what it is” an expression the Look Man abhors, because it fails to express a complete thought.

Teams can say what they like about reasons for winning or losing, but the way that you win or lose says more than any words. Running the football and dominating the time of possession translates into wins. Tossing the ball all over the yard 50 times usually means a loss. Teams need to establish a personality and imprint it on the other team with their play

The Look Man hates finesse football, and more often than not, it leads to fishing trips in the postseason. Cincinnati rattled off a few wins with gadget plays, only to fall back to earth once teams game planned for them. Mike Shanahan nearly got RG3 killed with a ridiculous trick play, and then had to apologize for putting this franchise QB at risk.

The bottom line is that execution is paramount. Irrespective of the talent level, Belichick and the Chowds win double digit games each year. They don't have the most talent; they simply have the best and most consistent execution. Well, that and half the team wears black and white striped uniforms, but we digress.

Without further ado, the Week that Was:

LAGNIAPPE

The Dead Walking

The Look Man is a big fan of an AMC series called *The Walking Dead*. It's a story about a football head coach in San Diego named Norv Turner. Well, actually, it's a post-Apocalyptic fantasy about a rag tag crew of folks attempting to survive a sea of zombies.

Before you scoff at the premise, know that the show is huge on plot, dialogue, and symbolism. The ensemble cast represents various aspects of human nature and their interaction encompasses every facet of the human experience. The recent natural disasters tell us how quickly civilization can disappear. It's who you are when no one is looking that defines your character.

If you're not too busy on a Sunday night after the NFL, you might want to catch it. The first two seasons are available for rental, and the current season is about to get good. It's a little long on gore, but if you can get past that, you have a pretty good story.



Zombie Apocalypse hero

Why don't they call them Him-icanes?

Hurricane Sandy tore up the East Coast, knocking out power to millions and generally reminding us of Mother Nature's might. The pictures are incredible and the suffering is immense.

The NBA was forced to cancel the Brooklyn Nets home opener and the NFL trade deadline was extended so Belichick could steal a cornerback. The storm will have far reaching impact on gas prices and perhaps even Election Day. NYC mayor Bloomberg is getting killed for going forward with the New York Marathon, and perhaps rightfully so.

The Look Man's heart goes out to all affected by this tragedy. On the bright side, Bruce (The Boss) Springsteen will have lyric fodder for the next ten years.



"Daggone it, I can't find my lucky football."

THE LOOK AHEAD

The slate for Week Nine is intriguing. Last week yielded some odd results, and even though the favorites prevailed, some cracks in the foundation have appeared.

The Look Man was so-so in Week Seven, but he's looking to get healthy with a few upset picks this week:

Denver at Cincy (+3.5)

Peyton (The Sheriff) Manning brings his show on the road this week, with a visit to the Queen City. "I hear they have some weird chili there, but I think they need to learn about pizza. Papa John and I are giving away two million free pizzas this year as a promotion." said The Sheriff. "We figure to roll the Bungals like pizza dough on Sunday."

Well, perhaps the Look Man made up that last line, but you get the drift. Manning has averaged a QB rating well over 100 in twelve games against the Bungals, and he will do the same on Sunday. In many ways, Cincinnati is a wholly owned subsidiary of whatever team for which Peyton plays. Now that Manning owns all those Papa John's outlets, he can put the Nati in the same portfolio.

Donkeys win, continuing the Bungals downward spiral.

Baltimore at Cleveland (+3.5)

The Dumpster Ducks roll into C-Town fresh off their bye week, just in time to face a Browns team that has won two of their last three. With NT Haloti Ngata banged up, the Browns would like to run Trent (T-Rich) Richardson right down their gullets.

Head coach Pat (Please don't squeeze the) Shurmur is fighting for his coaching life under new management Jimmy Haslam. Mike (The Walrus) Holmgren has already been given a version of the home game and others are sure to follow unless the Browns can win eight games.

Look for continued growth by rookie QB Brandon Weeden and WR Josh (Flash) Gordon this week. The Browns put on a tour-de-force win for the ages and spank the pass happy Ducks on Sunday. Browns, baby, Browns for a cover and win.

Chicago at Tennessee (+3.5)

The Monsters of the Furniture Mart are the most overrated team that the Look Man has seen this season (followed closely by Atlanta). They escaped a loss last week courtesy of the zebras and some poor execution by Carolina, and they are one hit away from missing the playoffs. If Jay (The Knife) Cutler goes down, this team won't sniff the postseason.

Bears coach Lovie Smith needs to put the ball in the hands of his running backs and tell Cutler to shut the hell up. The Bears always feast defensively for the first six weeks of the season, and once folks figure them out, they begin to look pedestrian.

Look for QB Matt (Hair Club for Men) Hasselbeck to avoid turnovers and give the Bears a road loss in Nashvegas. HCFM should've been the starter all along, and this Tennessee squad is getting healthy. These guys make some noise in the second half, muddying the AFC playoff picture. Flaming Thumbtacks in a Pepto Bismol upset.



The Flaming Thumbtacks are on fire!

Blitzburgh at Jynts (-3.5)

The Burgh can't get a hotel in the Big Apple owing to Hurricane Sandy, so they decided to fly in Sunday AM for this 4 pm start. They will play the Jynts and return home in a 15 hour stretch, not even sticking around long enough to get caught in the gas lines in the Tri-State.

The G-Men are looking to continue their roll and help the populace forget the devastation of Sandy for at least a few hours. No word on how folks will actually get to the game, although the power should be back on by Sunday, allowing the locals to watch it on TV.

The Jynts are a much better road team than home team, and the Stillers passing game has shown dramatic improvement of late. QB (Big) Ben Rapelisberger wants to prove that his draft class, which includes Rivers, Schaub and Eli, rivals the Class of '83. He does it Sunday afternoon in a possible Super Bowl preview. Stillers cover.

Dallas at Atlanta (-4) [Football Night in America]

The spread of this one has been dropping from its initial double digit mark following the news that Atlanta LB Sean Weatherspoon will miss the game. The Pokes appear to be snakebit following another goofy home loss to the Jynts last week in which Romo threw picks and WR Dez Bryant couldn't keep his hands in bounds.

The Look Man likes the Pokes, and the recent period of unpleasantness falls squarely in the lap of head coach Jason Garrett. Garrett's country club coaching style has left the team undisciplined and offensively lazy, while the defense is playing solid ball in the absence of LB Sean (Bruce) Lee.

The media is killing Romo, who deserves some of the blame, but Romo routinely brings them back from a double digit deficits. If the Pokes would pound the football instead of flinging it 50 times a game, they would be playoff bound instead of circling the drain.

Look for a mini-rebound as the Pokes rise to the occasion to knock off the overrated Dirty Birds. Pokes in an upset.

Philly at New Orleans (-3) [Monday Night Football]

Romo isn't the only QB on the hot seat. Michael (Ron Mexico) Vick is feeling the pressure in the City of Brotherly love, and the Look Man thinks it's awful. While Vick does fail to make the requisite pre-snap reads, head coach Andy (The Walrus II) Reid has just as much blame.

Reid failed to provide a decent O-line for Vick, and his play calling fails to take advantage of the Iggles' best weapon in RB Shady McCoy. Shady should touch the rock 25-30 times per game, instead of having Vick chuck it 50 times.

Like the Pokes, the Iggles offensive laziness stems from the coaching. If you've ever seen a fat man eat, you know how Reid calls plays. Seeing The Walrus II always reminds me of Buddha;

there's nothing like hearing about spiritual discipline from a guy who is a biscuit and a coke short of four bills.

Now Reid's defense wants him fired based upon the capricious termination of its D-Coordinator. The Iggles are a dumpster fire, and it only gets uglier from here. Religious Icons roll.

EPILOGUE

Week Eight is always a Look Man favorite. For one thing, it usually brackets Halloween, and the cheerleader and fan costumes are a real hoot. The weather finally begins to turn cold, increasing the importance of the ground game. Alcohol, costumed women and cold weather is a perfect cocktail for outstanding football.

More importantly, it represents the halfway mark of the season, and teams realize time is running out. The Jynts were 7-7 at this point in 2011, going on to win the Lombardi with a late kick.

The Look Man likes a few surprise teams down the stretch. While the media is crowing about New England, Atlanta and Chicago, look for Indy, Miami, and Tennessee to get hot. Add the Browns to the mix, and you could easily determine the path to the Super Bowl in New Orleans.

Everyone though that last season was going to be jumbled due to the lockout, but this season is bizarre largely due to the changes in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The lack of sanctioned practices, which include hitting, is the reason.

Tackling is at an all-time nadir in the NFL, and offense has exploded as a result. Injuries and weather will be the great equalizer in the second half of the season, as teams come back to Earth, and other teams get hot running the football.

By the way, the Look Man heard that there's a presidential election this Tuesday. Do yourselves and us a favor and vote. James Allen will thank you.

Peace,

The Look Man