

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2012

Week Nine – I Approved This Message

"I'm surprised the presidential candidates haven't promised a couple of high NFL draft picks to the Cleveland Browns."-- A tweet by National Public Radio weekend host Scott Simon with a nod to the intensity of the presidential race in Ohio.

The Look Man is happy to announce the silly season is over following last Tuesday's Election Day. Irrespective of the winners and losers, we can all return to normal commercials where no one approved the message.

Perhaps more importantly, the NFL season can heat up in the cold weather, and we won't have to endure banal political interviews on ESPN by Chris (Boomer) Berman. And that's a good thing.

Without further ado, the Week that was:

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

The Look Man has been known to go ballistic over zebra calls at NFL games, but last week he had good company. Long Suffering Bengals Fan Dave (Sundance) Sundin had finally had enough in the fourth quarter, and issued an eloquent summary of the officiating at Pall Bearer Stadium. Sundance's sentiment was echoed by many and helped capture the ZOTW award in the process.

Denver at Cincy – Scott (Seth) Green

The Bengals just might have gotten a Zebra of the Week special last Sunday, as Scott (Seth) Green went all Robot Chicken during the fourth stanza. The zebras missed a holding call on a 3rd and one, and then proceeded to litter the field with hankies. The net result was CBS capturing Cincy QB Andy (the Red Rifle) Dalton yelling, "You're giving 'em the game!" to the zebras.

The real story might have been the coaching job by Nati D-Co Mike Zimmer. Zim played a 3rd string SAM linebacker named Emmanuel Lamur (pronounced Leh-Mur'), a converted collegiate Safety and #59 on your program. The Look Man believes Zimmer installed him simply to address the no huddle offense by Peyton (The Sheriff) Manning, who seemed confused by the Nati defense until it really counted. Then, the Sheriff simply allowed the zebras to win it for him.

The Red Rifle threw three potential pick sixes in the game and all were dropped. The Look Man blames the new center Trevor Robinson, whose line calls and blocking were subpar. At one point, T-Rob got shoved into the Rifle so hard that he sacked the QB instead of the defender.

While the Rifle takes the blame, it's difficult to throw when you're running for your life. Marvin Lewis was pretty funny with his off-the-cuff remarks about Dalton needing to be more like a male reproductive organ to facilitate wins. The Rifle was less than tumescent, reminding the Look Man more of Ben Gazarra than Chuck Connors.

Bengals DT Devon Still (#75) is a different story. He's played a little in each game, but played well for a rookie in the absence of two injured D-linemen. Even Rey Mauluga (means "bad tackler" in Polynesian) was okay, or at least didn't get run over on every play.

While it still didn't result in a win for the Nati, the game was entertaining until Green decided on so much face time. A pity really, as Terence (T-New) Newman recorded two picks off the Sheriff after having zero on the season.

So the ZOTW goes to Green, claws down. Scott Green, you are the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week!**

LAGNIAPPE

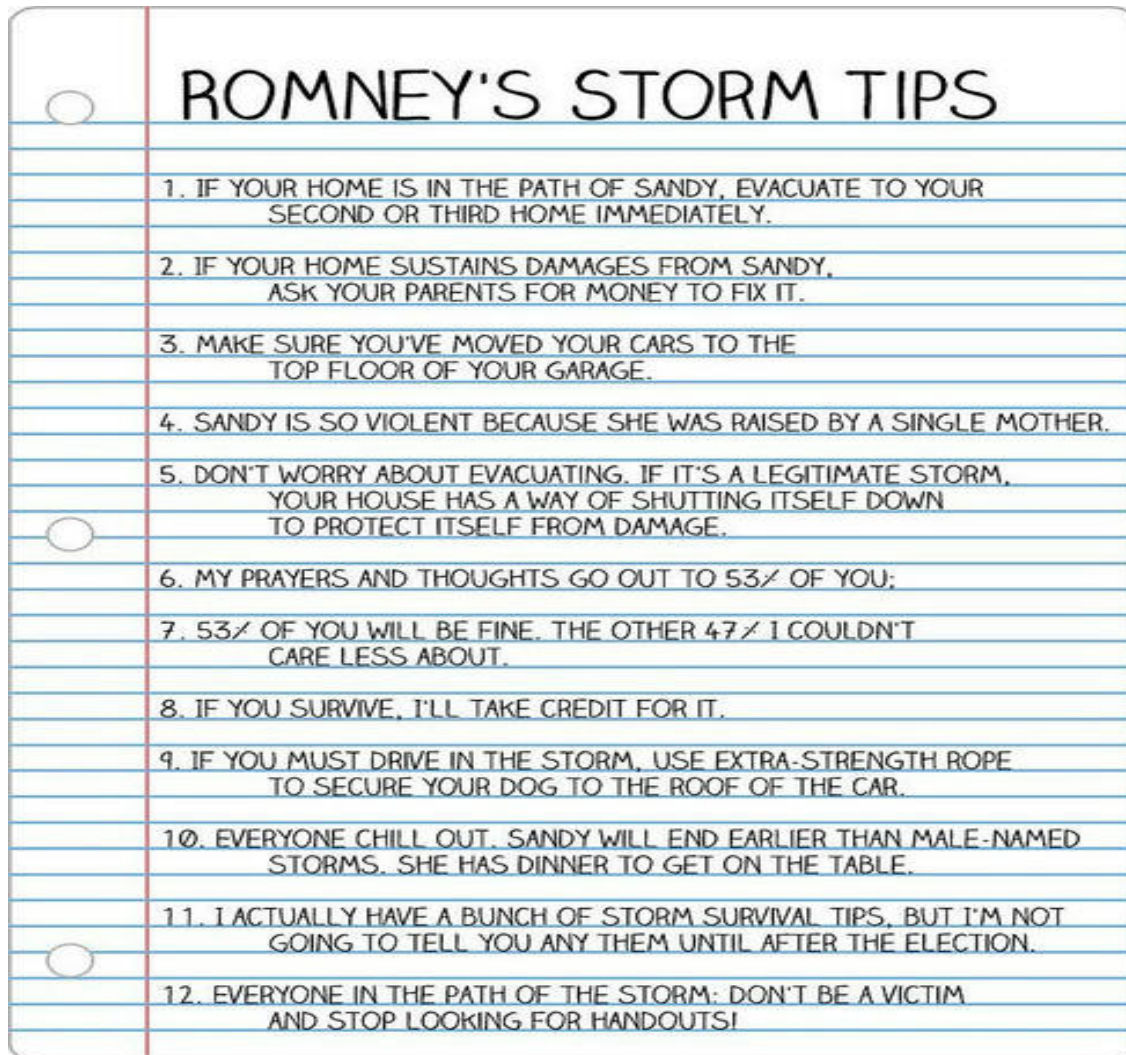
Spin the Bottle

The Look Man is not overly sanguine about *Deadspin*, the webzine that chronicles the worst in sports. Still, if you've never read the ongoing shtick *Great Moments in Drunken Hookup Failure*, you need to check it out.

The set up is a little sophomoric, but some of the "articles" are laugh out loud funny. NOTE: most of these are Not Suitable for Work (NSFW).

Storm Tips

The Look Man doesn't want to perpetuate the silly season, but the following tickled him. If you can't laugh at some of these, you're missing a funny bone.



"PETA is not happy that my dog likes fresh air."...

THE LOOK AHEAD

The Look Man was up and down in Week Nine, with a big miss on his vaunted Tennessee over Chicago Pepto Bismol Special, and prediction that the Pokes would bounce back in the ATL. Still, the Look Man still believes that both Chicago and Atlanta are overrated, and Week Ten should prove him correct.

Week Ten matchups are pretty pedestrian, with a few notable exceptions. The big divisional matchups are Pokes at Iggles, Detroit at Minnesota, and Bisons at Chowds. This is not exactly a murderer's row of games, but nicely offset by Houston at Chicago, Dirty Birds at New Orleans, and Jynts at Cincy.

The bye week has kicked in for several teams below the bubble, but for many of the preceding, these games represent do or die contests. Here's the whip around:

Dallas at Philly (+1)

The Pokes have been in the eye of the hurricane this week after owner Jerrah (The King of Pop) Jones defended his role as GM. Tack on the hot seat for Jason Garrett and Tony Romo (the Place for Ribs), and you have a perfect storm in Big D. Mix in the potential for the Pokes to hire Sean Payton with a little Barry Switzer and Jimmah Johnson controversy, and this thing got uglier than Hurricane Sandy.

Meanwhile in the City of Brotherly Hate, it's a foregone conclusion that Andy (The Walrus II) Reid is a dead man walking. Michael (Ron Mexico) Vick has gotten thrown under the bus by an offensive line that is well, offensive. Mr. Mexico has been hit nearly 200 times already this season, and nearly got knocked into the Yucatan Peninsula in Week Nine.

This Week Ten NFC Least tilt is the last hurrah for the loser. Between the two teams, Philly is trying harder to get its head coach fired, so take the Pokes and the points. Dallas.

Jynts at Cincy (+3.5)

The Bengals still can't beat the big boys and the Jynts got embarrassed by the Stillers last week. This matchup has the potential to be uglier than a fat chick in Spandex, and it might be a blessing that the game is blacked out in the Nati.

The Jynts come in angry, so of course Bengals WR AJ Green decided to throw another log on the fire by saying that their secondary had holes. These reckless comments were addressed by Jynts safety Antrel (Esther) Rolle, who told the Newark Star-Ledger: "I'll talk with my pads come Sunday. ... That's how we always approach the game and if you see me, you better duck."

The Look Man has always marveled at how well the Bengals play when they are not televised. Corey Dillon set a single game rushing record in one of these games, and the Bengals knocked off a 10-0 KC team in another.

Don't expect that to happen this Sunday, as the Bengals are down to their 4th string center. OG Clint Boling actually moved over to center this week in practice, and that can't be good when facing the Jynts. Big Blue has four DE playing up front, and they come from every angle. The Red Rifle better have his head on a swivel, because these guys will knock it off.

Andy (the Red Rifle) Dalton has thrown a pick in eight consecutive games, and throws a few more INTs in Week Ten, as the Jynts roll(e). Afterwards, noted Bengals Fan Bobby (Sim) Simminger will be quoted as saying, "I knew all along that Dalton wasn't the answer. Just look at his hair color choice: he should've gone for more orange to match the uniform pallet."

Jynts win, and Marvin Lewis begins to look for a new home for his foundation.

Crapchester at New England (-10.5)

The Bisons are getting healthier, but nobody beats the Chowds at the Blade following a bye week. Still, one has to wonder how a division opponent gets a double digit spread. The Look Man is not fond of the Bisons, but they cover in this matchup. Bisons.

Houston at Chicago (-1.5) [Football Night in America]

The Monsters of the Furniture Mart are earning their real nickname back after forcing four fumbles and scoring more defensive points than Cleveland's offense. The 51-20 ass-kicking that they handed to the Flaming Thumbtacks last week was incredible, punctuated by Matt (Hair Club for Men) Hasselbeck being fined 17 large for a horse collar tackle. HCFM had to play a lot of defense, because the rock was on the ground plenty.

The Look Man believes Bears QB Jay (The Knife) Cutler(y) is still bothered by balky ribs suffered a few weeks back. However, the D is scoring so often that it hardly matters. The Knife is starting with the rock already in the red zone, and the Bears are tough when they play from ahead. It allows the defense to pin their ears back and vivisect the opposing QB.

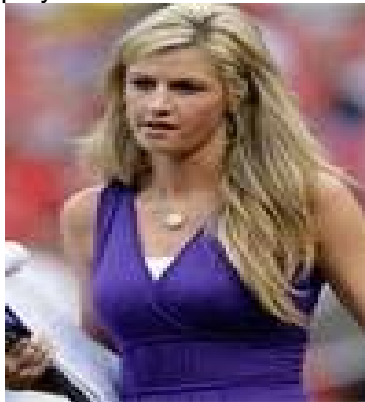
Here's the problem: Houston is very balanced. Their zone-blocking scheme neutralizes the pass rush and QB Matt (Stump the) Schaub has two solid tight ends. RB Arian Foster will have a huge rushing day, amplified by Schaub's passing. The Look Man will go out on a limb here by predicting Houston WR Kevin Walters will have a big day, actually becoming a household name in his own household.

Schaub and the Shadies rise up and pound the Monsters of the Furniture Mart, sending Cutler into Surly Girl mode. It also sends Tailpipes Teeple (of the People) and J-Jax into a depression when they realize they'll be spending another season on the Island of Misfit Teams. Houston covers and wins.

Detroit at Minnesota (+1)

QB Matt Stafford is getting hot, but WR Calvin (Megatron) Johnson has nerve damage in his hand. Just when it looks as if Transformers IV will have to wait until later in the season, the Cadillacs discover a running game. After the way Seattle and Tampa ran all over the Hornheads, don't expect this one to be as close.

The real issue might be the celebrity girlfriend of 2nd year QB (Sister) Christian Ponder. The rock singer revealed that he is dating ESPN sideline cutie Samantha (Remington) Steele. Steele is being billed as the new Erin Andrews, but given the celebrity girlfriend curse, the Look Man likes her as the next Jessica Simpson. As any Tailpipe knows, celebrity girlfriend equals bad play.



Steele is pretty in purple...

Here's the deal: Detroit's inability to stop the run could hurt their chances. Adrian (All Day) Peterson is leading the league in rushing after his return from ACL repair. If the Lions start slow, it could be tough to get the W. They need to start fast and force the Hornheads to eschew All Day for the passing game.

Detroit gets on a roll with a cover and win here, setting up the photo finish in the NFC Norse. Detroit.

KC at Blitzburgh (-13) [Monday Night Football]

The number thirteen is unlucky, but in this case, it might actually pay off. Head coach Romeo (the Bus Driver) Crennel is under siege after switching from an inconsistent Matt Cassell to an impotent Brady Quinn (Medicine Woman). Medicine Woman got the starting nod two weeks ago, only to get knocked into next season with a concussion. Cassell reappeared and stunk it up the following week.

Stillers QB (Big) Ben Rapelisberger looked solid against the G-Men, with an economical performance. The Stillers may be missing WR Antonio Brown, but they don't need him to beat the Baby Backs.

The Stillers are 3-1 without S Troy Polamalu and RB Rashard Mendenhall. They're getting healthy at the right time, and now get to feast on KC style pork ribs. The fans won't have the same pleasure, because the Look Man would not advise eating while watching this stinker.

Stillers cover and win, forcing KC GM Scott Pioli and the Bus Driver to look for new employment. Stillers.

EPILOGUE

Tony Romo was 19-2 in November before losing in Week Nine to the Falcons. That stat is pretty spectacular until you compare it with Romo's December and January records. Romo is like a reverse Reggie Jackson; instead of winning in crunch time, he's Mister November.

The Pokes are a .500 team that is posing as a contender. Like Notre Dame, the notoriety that they enjoy is not supported by the record. While their owner has done an outstanding marketing job, they have exactly one more playoff win than the Cleveland Browns in the last decade.

The Look Man predicted that the Pokes would miss the postseason, and it appears fairly likely. Better yet, they won't return to prominence until they hire a coach whose vision and authority rival that of their owner. Good luck with that Pokes Fan.

Peace,

The Look Man