

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2012

Week Thirteen – Tragedy in KC

“That’s a good timeout by the Denver Broncos, because the clock stops.” – former Jynts QB Phil Simms on an actual broadcast

Week Thirteen was a hoot, with several upset wins and some general hoopla. The big downer was the Jovan Belcher story, which cast a pall over the entire week. The NFL likely should’ve canceled that game, but there’s no canceling the tragedy. It was, in a word, awful.

Without further ado, the Week that Was:

LAGNIAPPE

What’s up, Doc?

Roger (Rabbit) Goodell strikes again, this time with a *Time* magazine interview in which he proposes elimination of the kickoff. Goodell is spinning like a top after the head trauma lawsuit and this latest is more of the same.

The NFL saw a 40% reduction in injuries when they moved the kickoff back five yards to the 30 yard line. Since concussions are the primary injury on kickoffs, this is another attempt to avoid liability through re-legislating the game.

No word on how a team down two scores would climb back in with the elimination of the onside kick. Late game suspense is one of the greatest features of the NFL, and Rabbit is proposing to kill it with this harebrained scheme. At this rate, in a few years we might not even recognize the game we love.

Numbers Never Lie (NNL)

The Stillers, Baltimore and Cincy are all in the thick of the playoff and AFC Asgard Division race with four games remaining. The Stillers pulled off an impressive win over B-more to pull within two games of the division leader, and the 7-5 Bengals are using the “P” word pretty often.

Before Bengal Fan starts to gloat, here's another trend: Since 1999 (Browns 2.0) the Bengals have never made the playoffs when they lost to Cleveland.



“Ruh, roh...”

Like brother, like brother

Baltimore coach John Harbaugh got into it with Stillers coach Mike Tomlin after the Stillers' upset win on Sunday. Like his brother Jim's confrontation with Detroit el jefe Jim Schwartz, the thing nearly escalated into fisticuffs. The B-more coach was yelling, “Heyheyhey!” and trying to get his opposite number's attention after Tomlin's speed-shake.

No word on what really happened, but one has to wonder if the Harbaugh boys are simply sore winners and losers.



"He wanted foreplay, I guess."

THE LOOK AHEAD

Week Fourteen is juicy, with several good games. The great part about this week is that key non-divisional games will have serious impact upon division races. Here's the litany:

Kansas City at Cleveland (-6.5)

This game just ought to be special as the Browns West return to the scene of the crime. KC now includes former Browns head coach Romeo (The Bus Driver) Crennel, O-Co Brian Daboll, QB Brady Quinn (Medicine Woman), RB Peyton (The Avalanche) Hillis, and S Abraham Elam. These guys would love nothing more than to return to Cleveland and kick the Browns' collective butts.

In case you've been on a deserted island, the Baby Backs had an emotional home win after one of their own, LB Jovan Belcher was involved in a murder-suicide last week. It's a tribute to The Bus Driver that they were able to succeed or even play last week. Even Medicine Woman looked like a professional QB, going 19-23 for the "W."

The Browns have been on a little roll of late, and QB Brandon Weeden and WR Josh (Flash) Gordon have connected on some nice deep balls. It's ironic that the QB carousel in Cleveland featured Quinn, McCoy and now Weeden, with Browns Fan backing the wrong horse in nearly every case.

The Look Man nearly turned in his Fan Card behind Quinn and McCoy, and is now solidly in the Weed Man's camp. Weeden has an excellent deep ball, is athletic and will become a more than adequate NFL QB. Those other two will be selling insurance in two years.

The Browns and KC are both at the bottom of the NFL in offensive and red zone efficiency, so naturally look for this one to turn into a shootout. Browns, baby, Browns in wild one.

Dallas at Cincy (-3)

This game could be one of the best of the week, with 7-5 Cincy taking on a Dallas team that has climbed back to 6-6. Love 'em or hate 'em, Dallas is America's Team, despite the fact that they play .500 ball. The playoff picture hangs in the balance for both teams, so look for a big time slobberknocker.

Bengals DT Geno('s Pizza) Atkins is the best D-lineman in the NFL that no one even knows about. The Look Man saw him dismantle the Grayders two weeks ago. (Johnny) Carson Palmer and the Grayders had just run the ball three times for two first downs when Geno beat RG Mike Briesel (#65) and punished Mr. Tonight Show. The sack caught Palmer under the rib cage and slammed him to the turf. Palmer was never the same thereafter.

If Tony Romo gets hit that hard on Sunday, it's game over for the Pokes. The Pokes O-line is pedestrian at best, and RT Doug (World Be) Free stinks. The Pizza Man can destroy anyone in

a one-on-one matchup, so you have to double him and take your chances with Domata Peko and DE Michael Johnson.

The Look Man has watched the Bengals dismantle the Jynts, KC and Oakland, and yet still can't believe they are a playoff team. Each opponent had just played a physical game and failed to really even show up. The Bengals are playing a physical brand of defense bolstered by rotating multiple D-linemen into the mix. The result is fresh legs and a fierce pass rush that is pounding teams into submission.

Here's how you beat it: go no-huddle and keep the fresh legs on the sideline. Look for the Pokes to use this approach combined with a massive dose of the run game. RB DeMarco Murray is back, and the Ugly and Black always struggle against physical receivers like Jason Whitten and Dez Bryant.

Greenie of the *Mike and Mike Show* on the Deuce was interviewing former Dumpster Ducks HC Brian Billick, who is doing the color for Pokes-Bengals on Sunday. Billick's basic analysis: if the Pokes don't beat the Bengals, a good but not great team, they don't deserve the postseason.

Pokes win, setting the Bengals back in the playoff chase, and having to cancel Christmas. Too bad, because in the words of Santa, "...the Bengals have been sooo good this year, too." Head coach Marvin Lewis has done a fine job with limited talent this year, and deserves Coach of the Year consideration. Pokes.

Washington at Baltimore (+2.5)

Baltimore narrowly escaped San Diego with a questionable 4th and 29 conversion, followed by a physical game loss to the Stillers. They now face the NFL Flava of the Week in Robert (Bob) Griffin III, who is half QB, half cheetah.

If you saw Bob Griffin carve the Pokes and Jynts, you know what the Look Man is preaching. This kid is an incredible athlete and a natural leader. Amazingly, head coach Mike (The Rat) Shanahan has actually set aside his ego long enough to allow Bob to do his thing.

B-More is showing some cracks late in the year, and could struggle in this one. The Look Man calls the DC offense, the Chimera, because it's half pistol, half veer and half Bob Griffin. As odd as it looks, Baltimore may be well equipped to deal with it by using speedy edge linebackers and safety Ed Reed.

B-More needs this win, but here's the hidden stat: B-More will be looking ahead to Peyton Manning and the Donkeys in Week Fifteen. The Dumpster Ducks lose, opening up the AFC Asgard Division. DC shocks the world and keeps the NFC East playoff tension boiling with a win. Genocide Victims.

Chicago at Minnesota (+2)

The Monsters of the Furniture Mart lost a big piece when LB Brian Urlacher went down with a hamstring. Urlacher is overrated, but he is the key to the Tampa Two by virtue of his speed to the edges and ability to cover the deep middle.

Perhaps more importantly, Seattle beat this defense up last week, including injuries to CB Peanut Tillman and S Tim Jennings. After one of the most physically dominating fourth quarters in 2012, look for the MOTFM to struggle against the Hornheads.

QB Jay (The Knife) Cutler is going to have to make up for the defensive letdown with a fast start. Unfortunately, RB Adrian (All Day) Peterson is the Comeback Player of the Year, and his rebound from an ACL has been nothing short of incredible. All Day has been averaging a buck fifty rushing, and the Bears may never even see the football in this one.

If you witnessed last Sunday's zebraified attempt to rob Seattle, you know it is obvious the NFL wants to see the Bears in the postseason. Still, the Look Man is picking the Vikes to cover and win. You may just want to go with the former if you're doing it for amusement purposes only. Hornheads.

New Orleans at Jynts (-5)

The Religious Icons got punched in the nose last week and the Jynts got beaten by the Genocide Victims on Monday Night Football for the first time since Joe Theismann had two good legs. This week, both teams meet in a must win situation; the Jynts to stop the bleeding and the Icons to salvage any wild card hope.

Drew Brees is a Jynt-killer, racking up a 4-0 steak against Big Blue. He is tied with Marino with 63 games over three bills passing and would like to break the record in the Big Apple.

Eli Manning is better on the road than at home, but must be salivating at the New Orleans secondary. The Saints give up more scores than Lindsay Lohan, so it could get ugly early.

The Look Man likes New Orleans because he expects the zebras to get involved and prolong the suspense that is the NFC East division. If the Genocide Victims and Pokes win early, a loss could create a three way tie with three weeks to play. New Orleans covers and wins.



Larry French, Getty Images
Porter (Paints) Picks a Pass?

Detroit at Green Bay (-7) [Football Night in America]

The Look Man is not quite sure what happened to the Detroit Kitty Kats in 2012, and neither are they. Head coach Jim (May the) Schwartz (Be with you) has lost the team, and they are now an undisciplined, hot mess. Ndamakong Suh is a 'roid ranger, and the defense gave up a double digit lead to a rookie QB, losing to Luck and the Ponies last week.

Enter the Cheeseheads, who are on a roll despite several defensive injuries. DB Charles Woodson and LB extraordinaire Clay Matthews are out in this one, and the offense isn't healthy either. WR Jordy Nelson has a hammy, and no one is confusing the often injured James (Tony) Starks with Iron Man.

Green Bay has Chicago in Week Fifteen, so the Lookahead Factor could be in play here. Detroit is out of the playoff hunt, but the Look Man hates TD spreads in division games. There's an old Klingon proverb that "...revenge is a dish best served cold," and it's plenty cold in Green Bay. Look for QB Matt Stafford to light up the Cheesehead defense and cover the spread. Detroit.

Houston at New England (-3.5) [Monday Night Football]

This playoff preview is going to be a physical. Tom (Zoolander) Brady goes into this one absent playmakers. Backup WR Julian Edelman hit the IR this week, ending his season, and TE Rob Gronkowski is already out.

QB Matt (Stump the) Schaub and The Slim Shadies have something to prove here, and this game really could decide home field in the AFC playoffs. The Chowds are only two games back at 9-3, and if Houston wants to cruise to home field, they need to win this one.

The Look Man likes the Houston defense here. DT JJ Watt gets push up the middle and the New England O-line is dinged up. Look for JJ to swat a few Brady passes down, and generally disrupt the offense. The Chowds try to get an early lead to make Houston one dimensional. In truth, Houston is the most balanced team in the NFL, and New England is giving up chunks of yardage on defense.

Slim Shadies send a message to the Chowds and the rest of the AFC: the road to the Lombardi goes through Houston. Slim Shadies cover and win.

EPILOGUE

The Look Man is excited about Week Fourteen after taking a couple of weeks off. December is the fourth quarter of the NFL season, and like the NBA, it's when all the real action occurs.

Teams must solidify their running games, balance their offensive attacks and refine their personalities. On defense, everyone is nicked up, so it takes testicular fortitude to strap up and impose your will on the offense.

The NFC East and AFC Asgard Divisions are still in play with numerous teams having a shot. Celebrity Tailpipe GB Shaw is already looking ahead to weeks 15 – 17 and dreaming of playoff sugar plums for his beloved Pokes.

The Look Man is not quite that giddy, and doesn't believe Cincy or the Pokes make the Tournament. The important thing is that Indy, Miami, Cincy, B-More, Blitzburgh, Washington, Dallas and the Jynts are all up in the air in Week Fourteen despite four teams having already clinched divisions. New Orleans, Tampa, Detroit, Green Bay and Chicago are all in the NFC mix.

With four weeks to go, here are The Look Man's playoff picks with division winners on top:

N F C			
<u>East</u> Jynts	<u>West</u> Frisco Seattle	<u>North</u> Green Bay Bears	<u>South</u> Atlanta
A F C			
<u>East</u> New England	<u>West</u> Denver	<u>North</u> Baltimore Blitzburgh	<u>South</u> Houston Indy

We'll see how it all shakes out, but the fourth act is going to be special.

Peace,

The Look Man