

## **THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2012**

### **Week Fifteen – The Superior Intellect**

*"Ed's charging \$1,000 an hour at his law firm." -- NBC's Al Michaels, on referee Ed Hochuli's crew taking forever to review a bizarre punt play in Patriots-Niners. Hochuli and his crew manufactured a close game with some questionable second half calls on MNF.*

One of the Look Man's favorite Star Trek TOS episodes is Space Seed, where the Enterprise comes upon a ship floating in space with a cargo of genetic mutants who threaten to take over the universe. The climax comes when Kirk is forced to battle a physically and intellectually superior opponent in hand-to-hand combat. Kirk wins the battle courtesy of a metal rod, saving his ship and the Federation in the process. Still, the look on his face in that scene captures the narrow victory, much like the look on Jason Garrett's face after beating the Stillers in OT last week.

The Look Man hasn't finished his shopping, and is now relegated to going out with the mall crazies. That story sets up a truncated LMR this week, featuring the Look Ahead segment only.

Without further ado, the Week that Will Be:

#### **THE LOOK AHEAD**

The Look Man has been up and down, but largely solid in 2012. This week, there are several key matchups, most of which the Look Man will miss due to a family Christmas party.

The Look Man is torn up about a family holiday function during the biggest week of the NFL season, and drama is likely to ensue. Especially, when the home town Bengals face off against the hated Stillers and there is no television in the selected party room.

At any rate, here are the Week Sixteen picks:

#### *Cincinnati at Blitzburgh (-3.5)*

The Bengals have been orange hot of late, racking up key wins and losing only to America's Team at the gun. That self same team was also able to dump the Stillers in OT last Sunday, setting up a "win and you're in" scenario for the Bengals.

Here's the problem: The Bengals are a wholly owned subsidiary of the Stillers. Big Ben Roethlisberger has simply owned them, and the Look Man sees no reason why it will end.

The Stillers are down to their fourth or fifth cornerback after key injuries. Polamalu has looked long in the tooth, having lost more than a step this season to injury. Like da Bears Brian Urlacher, Troy may need to think about retirement, because he has looked slow and injury prone the last few seasons.

Bengals QB Andy (The Red Rifle) Dalton must step up big time if the Bengals are to win this one. Perhaps more importantly, the Bengals Defense needs to keep the heat on Big Ben, who ahs criticized the play calling. Ironically, Ben was concerned that Heath Miller did not see the rock in the second half after dominating the first half at the Taj Mah Jerrah, the Look Man believes O-Coordinator Todd Haley will reverse that trend this week. Miller sees the ball – a lot, and the Stillers roll the Bengals.

This loss won't end the Bengals postseason hopes. Those get dashed next week when Baltimore rolls into Cincy for the season finale. That game will decide the AFC Asgard Division and the wild card. Stillers.

### Jynts at Baltimore (+2.5)

Eli and Jynts are giving Coach Tom Coughlin even more gray hair after getting shutout in the NFC Divisional playoffs rematch. They have struggled to maintain balance after some solid wins and horrible losses. The Look Man sees them as a team that is attempting to give their head coach a heart attack. The G-Men believe that they can flip the switch and win whenever they need to, and the Look Man agrees.

Jynts dump the Dumpster Ducks, setting up an Alcoa Fantastic Finish in the AFC Asgard next week. Jynts.

### Washington at Philly (+6.5)

The Look Man has enjoyed seeing the coaching job that Mike (The Rat) Shanahan has done regarding both Robert (Bob) Griffin III and backup Kirk Cousins. Playing Bob in this game, however, doesn't make sense.

While the Genocide Victims really need a win, why start Bob when you could always get the emotional lift by bringing him off the bench if you get in trouble. The Look Man believes that The Rat is simply getting too cute by half, and the result will be painful.

The Genocide Victims fail to cover here, and if they lose, it sets up a major battle with Dallas at DC next Sunday. Not sure if the winner even makes the postseason at this point, but don't be surprised to see both Dallas and DC upset this week in the ultimate lookahead. Iggles.



*"You dirty coppah!"*

### Cleveland at Denver (-12)

The Brandon Weeden era took a hit last week when the Genocide Victims used a backup QB to torch the Cleveland secondary for 329 yards. (Captain) Kirk Cousins looked like a starship captain who was able to defeat the product of genetic engineering, marooning the Browns' faint playoff hopes in the process.

But don't discount the Browns in this one. They are facing Peyton Manning and the Donkeys at Investigation Field in a game that says more about their team than the opponent. The Donkeys have beaten the Browns in ignominious fashion twice in the Nineties, and this game could be a measure of revenge. B-Weed needs to acquit himself for 2013 against a solid defense. The Browns have zero signature wins in 2012, and this could be the first.

Look for the Browns to balance the offense and put up a good fight in Denver. They may not come away with a "W", but the Look Man believes the defense will play hard down the stretch. If so, they may succeed in allowing D-Coordinator Dick Jaaron to return next season despite the housecleaning of coaches and front office.

Browns cover in this seemingly meaningless affair. Browns.

### New Orleans at Dallas (-4)

The Pokes received an early Christmas gift last week courtesy of Big Ben's game-ending pick. They now face Drew Brees and the Religious Icons in an important game. The game is important for two reasons:

- 1) Jason Garrett is fighting for his career in Big D. If the Pokes come back and go deep in the playoffs, Jerrah will likely retain him. Otherwise, he's out and Pokes clean house.
- 2) Icons head coach Sean (Secret Squirrel) Payton's deal was overturned in the wake of Bountygate. Payton is now a free agent, who can sign with any team. If Brees torches the Pokes, Secret Squirrel could be on Jones' short list.

So, the ultimate irony occurs here. If Brees torches the Pokes, he will lose his head coach and mentor. If he throws three picks, no one will be the wiser, since he's been turning it over all season.

Dallas wins, but doesn't cover as New Orleans bows out gracefully. Icons.



*Secret Squirrel in happier times...*

### Frisco at Seattle (-6.5) [Football Night in America]

The Niners just pulled off a great win on the East Coast over the Chowds. Their reward: they get to head 800 miles north to play for the division championship against the resurgent Seahawks.

Seattle has put up 50 burgers like nobody in 2012, but the win at Chicago was perhaps the most telling. This team plays solid, physical defense and can take your number one receiver out with relative ease.

Here's the problem: Frisco really doesn't have a number one. Since Colin Kaepernick took over, he's done it with a balanced attack, equal measures of Gore, Crabtree, and his own legs.

CK puts pressure on a defensive edge, as reflected in the New England game. IF you don't have speed at DE/OLB, you had better watch out, you better start to cry. The Look Man is telling you that CK is coming to town on a defense near you.

This game becomes very important based upon records and the Week 17 schedule. Both the Niners and Seahawks play bums, and the NFC home field advantage is already locked down by Atlanta. This game will decide the West, and if, like many believe, Atlanta gets rocked in the Division Round, the NFC Championship could move to the Left Coast.

The Look Man likes the Seahawks in this one. They have the Twelfth Man in the Stadium, and the inclement weather should favor them. Perhaps more importantly, the Look Man despises both of these head coaches, but dislikes Pete Carroll less than Jim Harbaugh. Carroll has

been ticking off the football gods by running up the scores of late, and that could make the difference. Hawks win but don't cover.

## **EPILOGUE**

The Look Man loves this point in the season, when Christmas and New Year align perfectly with the playoffs. It's like a present when you get meaningful Saturday NFL, not to mention the unofficial kickoff of the NBA on Christmas Day.

The 2012 season has alternated between the Year of the Rookie QB, and the Year of the Really Bad Officiating. But perhaps more than anything, it is the Year that Goodell Got Pantsed.

Roger (Rabbit) Goodell really reached bottom on Bountygate, but also the Zebra negotiations, player discipline and potential rules changes. You know it has gotten bad for him when MLB Commish Bud Selig actually has more gravitas.

Rabbit went from the Commish with the second most clout, to just ahead of Gary Bettmann in the NHL. He might have single-handedly resurrected Tagliabue's faint Hall of Fame hopes. Tags did a masterful job of sewing up Bountygate in a neat little bow, allowing NFL Fans to focus on football.

If Roger Rabbit's handling of Bountygate was an NFL offensive series, he would've suffered a false start, holding and illegal substitution on the same series.

The 2012 season started with trepidation but could end with promise. At least Week Sixteen is going to be a doozie.

Merry Christmas,

The Look Man