

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2013

Week Eight – Halftime

"That Don Shula's a helluva coach. He can take his'n and beat your'n and take your'n and beat his'n."

"Sid, you must not be doing it right." - in response to Sid Gillman telling him that breaking down film was better than sex.

"Two kinds of ballplayers aren't worth a darn: One that never does what he's told, and one who does nothin' except what he's told. " – The late Oilers and Saints head coach Bum Phillips

PROLOGUE

The NFL lost an icon a few weeks ago in Oail Andrew "Bum" Phillips. Phillips built a solid career in Houston and New Orleans, and his trademark cowboy hat and ostrich skinned blue boots belied his colorful nature. Bum never wore that ten gallon hat in domed facilities; his mother taught him it was disrespectful to wear a hat indoors.

Phillips began his career in the 1950s as a high school coach in Texas. He was hired a decade later as a defensive assistant for San Diego by offensive innovator Sid Gillman. When Gillman became head coach at Houston in the early 70s, he brought Phillips with him. Bum became head coach and GM in 1975, and became the most successful coach in franchise history with a 59-38 record.

Phillips won games in physical style behind a solid running game and tough defense. He used battering ram Earl Campbell to wear down the defense with punishing runs followed by play action passing. Many believe he is responsible for Campbell's physical deterioration, but Phillips was an old school football coach.

Phillips leaves behind a wife and large family, including his son, Wade Phillips. The irony of his death was that he died within days of Houston owner Bud Adams, one of the original AFL owners. RIP, Bum.



Bum next to Bush 41

Without further ado, the Week that Was:

LAGNIAPPE

Hear the Bengals Growlin'

Everyone in the room has a different take on Andy (the Red BB Gun) Dalton. His overall passing numbers are solid, but there are some weird anomalies:

- 1) He's better on the road than at home. Dalton is averaging 3 TDs / 3 bills passing on the road and he even put up 300 yards last night in South Beach, despite several drops and four picks. Too often, he looks solid in other stadia, and pedestrian at Pall Bearer Stadium.
- 2) Dalton tends to focus too much on AJ Green to the deficit of open receivers. That pattern is affecting the growth of TE Tyler Eifert, much as it has Gresham.
- 3) Despite an above average O-line, he takes a lot of sacks. The sack numbers hurt his O-line's status in the league, but it is an artifact of not throwing red zone picks. Dalton threw his first RZP two weeks ago at PBS, and his second last night, an incredible stat given his lack of experience. He has nearly 50 TDs and 2 picks in the red zone since entering the league.

Sunday's tilt with the Jets was the exception. The RBBG hit seven different targets, including a Bengals record four TDs to fifth rounder Marvin Jones. Despite the losses of key defensive players, they continue to be most wildly entertaining team in the NFL.

Giovanni Bernard is an exciting player, and if the coaching staff can modify the offense to take advantage of their explosive offensive talent, this team can win shootouts and become a player in the tournament. Not bad for a city that was ready to send Dalton to the bench after a stinker at Cleveland.

Of course, the headline in Miami this morning was *Fish Put Safety on Red Rifle*.

Was it something I said?

The Marine Mammals continue to mystify, having spent nearly \$100 million in free agency bonuses, starting off with four wins and following with four straight losses to go to .500. QB Ryan Tannehill has been sacked more than any QB in the league in that span, and it is hindering both his development and the numbers of free agent WR Mike (60 Minutes) Wallace.

Last week it got even weirder, when starting RT Jonathan Martin left the team after an emotional break. Martin is affectionately known as "Big Weirdo" in the locker room, and things got ugly when ten guys asked him to join them at lunch. After Martin sat down, all ten stood up and left him alone at the table. Martin then proceeded to throw his lunch tray and cuss out everyone within earshot. He is now on medical leave for a non-football illness, and his return is unsure.

Martin suffers from "social awkwardness" a disease that nearly derailed the career of former longhorns RB Ricky Williams. Martin is looking at medication and this Marine Mammals O-line cannot afford his absence. Perhaps more importantly, the NFL and NFLPA are investigating whether this behavior constitutes an actionable hostile work environment.

Behavior Modification

Pokes WR Dez Bryant engaged in a war of words before and after his matchup with Detroit superstar Calvin (Megatron) Johnson. Megatron won that battle on the field, producing a 14 for 329 day that set a record for yardage in a regulation game.

Afterwards, Dez went postal on the sideline while up six with twelve seconds to play. Bryant had to be physically restrained after going all TO on his QB, TE and coaches. Owner Jerry Jones and the Pokes seem to believe that this behavior merely shows Bryant's passion for the game, but the Look Man begs to differ. Players play to win, not show up their teammates. The exciting shootout loss to Detroit drops the Pokes back to 4-4 in a division where they could easily be two or three games up.

The Pokes are a .500 team over the last decade, with exactly one more playoff win in that period than Cleveland. Given that Cleveland has seen 20 guys call signals in that period to the Pokes three, one has to wonder if the inmates are running the asylum in Big D.

It's time for the Pokes to put up or shut up. Either that, or blow up the team and rebuild. And more Jerry Jones on the sidelines isn't going to help much either way.



Would you trust this man?

THE LOOK AHEAD

Minnesota at Dallas (-10.5)

The Hornheads have returned to QB (Sister) Christian Ponder after a failed experiment with Josh Freeman. Ironically, the team likes Ponder anyway, and this move is likely to yield dividends. They should simply hand the ball to Adrian Peterson and get out of the way.

The Hornhead D is pretty awful, which is why the spread is so large. Tony Romo is Mister November, with a 90% winning percentage (17-2). When Dallas goes empty backfield, Romo is nearly unstoppable, even without key WR Miles Austin. Pokes win, Hornheads cover.

Blitzburgh at New England (-6.5)

The Look Man doesn't know how the Chowds are winning despite a list of injuries that reminds one of a MASH episode. The Chowds lost RT Sebastian Vollmer to a broken leg last week, and their run defense stinks right now. The Marine Mammals put up nearly 100 yards rushing in the first half and then threw the ball all over the yard in a 27-17 loss last week.

It's worth noting that Troy Polamalu and the rest of the Stillers D is long in the tooth, and they are very vulnerable. Stillers OG David DeCastro is out again this week, and the O-line is patchwork.

Tom Brady needs an arm transplant after throwing the ball an average of 40+ times per game. His receivers drop as many as they catch, and they badly need to run the football in the second half.

Look for the Stillers to run, run and run some more as they pull off a major upset this week. Stillers.

New Orleans at Jets (+6)

The Look Man is not sure why Drew (Cool) Brees and the Religious Icons are getting six at NY. The truth is that this offense is great in the Dome, and not so good on the road. In addition, the Jets win every other week, and NFL teams that lose by more than 30 have a whopping 70% win percentage in the week following.

Well, the Jets got walloped by the Nati 49-9 last week, so look for Geno('s Pizza) Smith to put up some numbers. The Icons defense hasn't given up a lot of points, but Gang Green is not chopped liver. Jets cover and win this game, especially since the Icons are looking ahead to the NFC matchup at Dallas next week on Sunday Night. Jets.

Baltimore at Cleveland (+2.5)

B-More is 10-1 following a bye and 19-3 following a loss under John Harbaugh, and the Browns need a home win like a dog needs a bone. QB Jason Campbell is hoping to soup his way to a win and solidify his hold on the starting job. Put it together and you have what might be the most entertaining game of the week.

Look for the Browns offense to shine after retaining Josh (Commissioner) Gordon following the trade deadline. Gordon gets bracketed here, allowing TE Jordan Cameron to get double digit grabs. The Browns will run enough to keep it close and win in a slobberknocker. Browns, baby, Browns.

KC at Buffalo (+3)

The Baby Backs stole one last week from the Browns courtesy of the zebras, and this week they face an underrated Bisons D. If you haven't heard of Bisons LB Kiko Alonzo, you will after this game. Kiko is a gamer and possesses one of the best football names in the business.

QB Alex Smith is still struggling and this team is undefeated on the strength of the running game. The real question is how long Reid goes without throwing the ball all over the yard, and how long the defense can keep teams under 20 points per game.

Thad Lewis is running the show in Crapchester, and he is a better QB than folks think. Unfortunately, Lewis is doubtful, meaning either Jeff Tuel (Time Taylor) or former Cheehead/Seahawk/Grayders QB Matt Flynn gets the nod. Either way, expect the Bills to establish the run using Fred Jackson and CJ Spiller. Bisons cover and win.

Indy at Houston (-2.5) - Football Night in America

The loss of WR Reggie (Millionaire Playboy Bruce) Wayne for the season is a biggie, and the Ponies are winning with defense. Luck and the Ponies can come back to the pack in the AFC Souse here, but only if Houston can parlay a staunch defense and QB Case Keenum into a 'W'. Houston.

Philly at Oakland (-2.5)

Grayders QB Terrelle Pryor is quietly becoming the best offensive weapon no one knows about, and he can be a game changer. While everyone is focused on Iggles coach Chip Kelly, Oakland is quietly using the spread better than any team in the league.

Nick Foles returns to the QB role following the loss of Ron Mexico to a hammy (again). Shady McCoy and the running game struggles with Foles at the helm, largely due to the fact that no one fears a 6'6" running QB with no rocks in his pockets. Grayders.

Chicago at Green Bay (-10.5) – Monday Night Football

Aaron (State Farm) Rodgers owns the Bears, having gone 10-1 against them on Sundays. Unfortunately, Rodgers is 0-2 against the Bears on Monday Nights, making this game a tough call.

The loss of Jay (the Knife) Cutler is hurting the Monsters of the Furniture Mart, but perhaps not as much as the losses of key defenders like LB Lance Briggs. Backup QB Josh McCown takes the reins, hoping that a staunch running game and minimal passing will do the trick.

The issue is whether Discount Double Check can parlay his banged up receiving corps into a win at Flambeau. TE Jermichael Finley and WR James Jones are out, but the Cheeseheads are actually running the football behind RBs Eddie Lacy, James Starks and Jonathan Franklin. A healthy dose of Jordy Nelson can't hurt, especially out of play action.

Look for Cheeseheads to beat the Bears in a closer game than the spread. Bears cover, Pack wins.



"Can I move to grill class?"

EPILOGUE

The halfway point of the NFL season has come and gone, and parity rules the year. The KC Baby Backs are the lone undefeated team, and chinks in the armor have arisen for the Enver (no D) Broncos. The Cheeseheads and Bengals are on a roll, each having won four in a row. New England and New Orleans have ground out wins against substandard competition, and even the Stillers, Jynts and Hornheads are showing signs of life after ugly starts.

With a plethora of teams within shouting distance of .500, and the biggest division lead held by the Bengals (with a 2.5 game lead before Thursday night's loss), anything can happen.

The second half is starting this week, and teams need to run the football as the weather turns ugly. Green Bay has already started the trend, with the resultant four consecutive wins. Look for other teams to follow suit, or fall out of the race as a consequence.

One of the teams that historically establishes the run is Seattle. They now have two tackles out due to injury, and it has made them pedestrian. While they are still strong at home, they were badly embarrassed on the road at Indy and nearly lost last Sunday at St. Louise, giving up seven sacks in the process of a 14-12 squeaker.

Running the football and stopping the run is basic to winning. Those who don't take this lesson to heart do so at their own peril.

Peace,

The Look Man